

The Christian Sun.

State Library

IN ESSENTIALS—UNITY, IN NON-ESSENTIALS—LIBERTY, IN ALL THINGS—CHARITY.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

RAILWAY RATES.

President Roosevelt last year, as the interpreter and the champion of public opinion, compelled Congress to pass the Railway Rate Regulation Law. This law is in the right line, but it is not explicit enough. It grants to the Interstate Commerce Commission power to fix rates; but gives them no standard by which to be governed. What is needed is a committee of experts—on the one hand of railroad managers and on the other of capable business men representing the people—to settle on a standard and come to an understanding. Then the commission can act without laying itself liable to adverse criticism from either party to the contest. As it now stands this commission has no basis of comparison, no standard by which a fair and equitable rate on freight and passenger transportation may be established and maintained.

Not alone has the central government taken up the regulation of railroad rates in earnest, but many State Legislatures are taking a hand in the matter. In his message delivered before the General Assembly at its opening this January Governor R. B. Glenn of N. C. recommended a flat fare of 2½ cents per mile for passengers. A member of the General Assembly of the same state has introduced a bill for a 2 cent fare and scores of other bills looking to the reduction of railway rates in N. C., have been introduced.

Representative Williams, of Duplin County, has gone a step farther. His bill forbids any public service corporation doing business in N. C., to declare a dividend of over six per cent, the balance of the profits to go to a sinking fund and to the State of N. C. It would seem from the number of bills introduced that our General Assembly means business and that we are to ride cheaper in the future.

But our General Assembly and all who are considering the question of Railway Rates will do well to recall that the earnings of railroads can be expended in three ways. 1st. They can be spent in introducing safety appliances and better equipment, comfort hours for employees, and in greater comfort and safety to the travelling public.

2. They can be curtailed (which from the standpoint of the railroad is the same as expended) by reduction of fares and rates.

3. They can swell the dividends declared. As to number three we will not have much to say. There is no doubt that too much of the earnings of our great railway systems has gone that way—gone to swell fortunes already swollen beyond a safe size for a Republic.

There is much to be said on number two. The deplorable, awful catalogue of wrecks that have brought death, suffering, and misery to thousands during the past year is involved in this. If railways were compelled to install the very latest safety appliances and to equip their roads with the very best rolling stocks on the market and work their employees only a reasonable number of hours, wrecks would be fewer and travel safer and life sweeter. The railroads of N. C. certainly need attention along this line and our legislators will do well to address themselves to this line of the railway question.

Now as to number one. There is no doubt that the railways can afford to carry passengers and freight, provided all pay alike, and that is what the Rate Regulation Bill passed by Congress stands for, for less than they are now carried. They might not be able to carry them for less and at the same time meet the demand of number two as to safety appliances, equipment, and number of hours of employees. But if they can not be made to do both at once, would our legislators not do better to see that good roadbeds, safety appliances, best equipments, and shorter hours for employees are installed than to raise such a hue and cry over the passenger rates? We have paid these rates so far with poor equipment, could we not

pay them with better grace if they were well equipped? Let our legislators look out for our lives first and our savings from lower rates second.

THE STATE AND THE CHURCH IN FRANCE.

The campaign for the restoration of the Christian Sabbath in France and Spain is still attracting attention from all parts of the world. In France the labor unions are all causing friction by trying to enforce the new Sabbath or holiday law to its fullest extent. This law requires every employer to give every employee under his charge one day in seven for rest. The labor unions are trying to make this day mean the Sabbath and thus force all shops, stores and factories to suspend business on this day. And here is where the friction is. France has long known no Sabbath for the laboring classes and it seems an impossibility to the employer to close his place of business on the Sabbath and give all his employees a holiday and a rest on that day.

We doubt if there has ever been a lawgiver that surpassed Moses even in laws dealing with secular occupations. There is likely economy even for the miser in keeping the Sabbath. French greed is blind to the best interest of its material interests, to say nothing of its religious welfare. The cause of her millions of laborers smites to heaven and an avenging God will hear their cry and answer in relief, or else one-day France will pay a heavy penalty for persistent violation of a law of the God of nations.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING.

"The evening and the morning were the first day." God had said, "Let there be light."

He began that way, and he continued: for we read, "The evening and the morning were the second day."

It has been man's way to turn morning into evening; but for a considerable period man had not been created, there was no interference with God's way; and we read, "The evening and the morning were the third day."

Man has the habit of turning the plain into the mysterious, the truth into error, the light into darkness; but God's way was that originally followed: to turn darkness into light; and "The evening and the morning were the fourth day."

Man makes life a tragedy. As far as he can, notwithstanding his laws, his houses, his governments, his medicines, and his physicians, he ends life with the tomb. But God turns death into life. (Man later arrogantly turned life into death, but God defiantly turned it back by a resurrection.) God's way to make the morning to be the effect, the result, the end; and "The evening and the morning were the fifth day."

Man begins with the positive, and turns it into the negative. God begins with the negative, and turns it into the positive. Man exhausted the wine at Cana of Galilee; but Jesus had learned God's way of doing things, and turned the water into wine.

Morning followed evening until the sixth day, when man came; and while man was still young, "The evening and the morning were the sixth day."

But how changed things were after that! There came a moral struggle. Man at last got men to saying, Day and night, instead of, Night and day. God's order was thus reversed. God's logic had been for darkness to yield to light. Man's logic was forced into human language, and the day went out in gloom.

Man turned the Garden of Eden into a cemetery. God turned a cemetery into a Garden of Joseph of Arimathea, a resurrection center. Man crucified the Saviour as a felon; but God turned Calvary into the mountain of righteousness.

In the beginning of man's career God had given him speech, and almost its first exercise was practical; the naming of animals. But man in a few centuries, having migrated for earthly prosperity to rich, slimy, alluvial plains, thought to lift himself out of the per-

ils of his low-lying levels, not by obeying God, but by his own egotistical civil engineering; and his Tower of Babel became a tower of babble, with confusion of tongues. Man's speech became gabble; and a group of housewives or a company of modern reporters cackle like a yard of hens. Man turned one of the finest gifts of God, intelligent speech, into the gibberish of society or the deadly slander of malice. But then again comes God to the rescue: he seizes on the words so commonly serving as arrows of hate and death, and makes them to be a gospel of love and life.

By their own skeptical interpretation of evolution men demonstrate that their logic of having descended from the trees is only a monkey-parrot chatter. But God takes that senseless, unscientific babble (whose accompanying gestures are directed no higher than the tree-tops), and makes it the music of angels' voices, singing, "Glory to God in the highest," which excites saving faith, and makes holy the purposes of untold myriads of the sons of God.

Notwithstanding God's beautiful re-creating of human speech, turning its brute grunts into the language of heaven, its evening into a divine morning, man, who often loves darkness rather than light, so degrades language that he vacates the words of Scripture of word-meaning, and argues against their use for the proof of heavenly truth. But Jesus has so thoroughly learned God's way of doing things, that he turns human speech into more than proof: a very chariot of salvation; saying, "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." Yea, he says, "The words that I say unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." The words are more than monkey-chatter; Jesus turned human jabber back again into words—works—gospel.

God had said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." And man took that prophecy, tortured it through the ages, degraded it among various nations, corrupted it into the legends of vulgar Latin and Greek poetry and mythologies, until gods and goddesses were pictured as gratifying human lusts in various forms. But God seizes on his own prophecy again, though so bestialized by man, restores to it a purity as to divine parentage then forgotten in earth; showing that the real Child of God must be a child of the Spirit; and Mary herself in wonder exclaims, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. . . . From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

It is evident that God is determined to have his own way, though he allows man his freedom; and God's children need not fear. He will certainly turn evil into good, the carnal into the spiritual, the flesh into spirit, lust into love (agape), the beastly into the divine, the earthly into the heavenly, the evening into the morning.

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CONSCIENCE NOT AN INFORMATION-BUREAU.

If conscience is a safe guide to what is right and wrong then the Bible is not needed. There is no half-way ground here, for a guide that needs guidance is no guide at all. And as a matter of fact, conscience is not a guide, and because so many souls mistakenly think it is, confused and wandering errors in the pathway of life are constantly made. Conscience is a monitor. It prompts and prods; it urges "Do what you know to be right; do not do what you know to be wrong." But it does not instruct us in what is right and what is wrong; it is not a bureau of information. That instruction we receive from God in many different ways, of which the Bible and the training of parents and teachers are some. Therefore it will not do to settle back in the easy assurance that we have a safe guide in conscience. We have a tremendous responsibility to learn, from sources outside of ourselves, what is our duty, and those sources are always available when we really seek them.—S. S. Times.

AN ADDRESS TO THE MINISTERS OF THE STATE.

"To the ministers and pastors of all evangelical churches of the State of North Carolina, the Ministerial Association of the county of Mecklenburg sends greeting. We earnestly address you on a subject which is vitally related to the welfare of State and Church. We rejoice to know that "never in the history of the agitation against drunkenness and drunkard-making has the situation been more hopeful. Temperance teaching in the Sabbath-school, the physical effects of alcohol systematically taught in the public schools, these and like means of educating the coming generations of church members and citizens are surely leavening the lump of our people."

While we all, as ministers of the gospel, unsparingly denounce the saloon business and are uncompromising in our opposition to the union of Church and State, yet we are thoroughly convinced that in the great battle against the liquor traffic, we as Christian citizens, should be found on the "firing line." We are also convinced that our lack of organization renders us less effective as advocates of the temperance cause; and to this extent lends encouragement to the enemy. The good people of North Carolina have deliberately resolved to close up the saloons. Would not this glorious consummation be hastened by the effecting of such an organization as is contemplated in this address?

We would respectfully make the following suggestions:

1. That in every county of the State an organization be formed composed of all the evangelical ministers in the county.
2. That the officers be: President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer, said officers to be elected every six months.
3. That the meetings be held at least quarterly, at some central point in the county.
4. At the regular meetings such questions as prohibition, divorce, 'social evil,' a reformatory, Sabbath observance, etc., should receive due consideration.
5. That at every meeting a carefully prepared paper be read on some reform measure, after which the subject be open for general discussion.
6. That arrangements be made for the discussion of these important subjects at different points in the county.
7. Such an organization will not only promote the cultivation of the social side of life, but may prove educative to a higher degree.
8. Said organization would constitute a basis for a state executive committee and also for a state convention when the necessity arises.
9. This would enable the state committee to come in close touch with the legislature and lend aid to the enactment of laws favoring reform movements.
10. This organization is to be in no sense antagonistic to the Anti-Saloon League, but is designed to co-operate with it in all legitimate measures.

After the adoption of the report a committee of five was appointed to form a State ministerial association. The committee is constituted as follows:

Rev. A. R. Shaw, pastor Tenth Avenue Presbyterian church; Rev. H. K. Boyer, pastor Tryon Street Methodist church, South; Rev. H. H. Hulten, pastor First Baptist church, Rev. R. C. Holland, pastor Lutheran church, and Rev. W. W. Orr, pastor East Avenue Associate Reformed Presbyterian church.

The town of Burlington, N. C., in Alamance county, has for some time had a pastors' organization. Of this organization Rev. C. Brown Cox is chairman and Rev. J. D. Andrew, Secretary. These brethren through their city association have undertaken to organize the Ministers of Alamance in accordance with the principles of the above printed address. The organization will be effected Feb. 5, 1907, at 11 A. M., in the Presbyterian church of Burlington. Surely this is a good work and all ministers in the county should be present and participate.