

# THE ALABAMA PRESBYTERIAN.

## The Alabama Presbyterian.

A monthly paper for the dissemination of information in regard to the work of the Presbyterian Church in Alabama. This paper must be placed in every Presbyterian home in Alabama. Subscription price 50 cents per year in advance.

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The action of the Assembly in reducing the number of collections and combining several of the executive committees into four will cause a sigh of general relief to go up and down the land. Within the last few years so many special pleaders have been going to and fro through the bounds of the Church, each exalting his own special cause, and often unconsciously minimizing the importance of the work of another committee that our people have become hopelessly confused. The Committees are: Executive Committee of Foreign Missions; Executive Committee of Home Missions, including Colored Evangelisation and the Assembly's Evangelistic Work; the Executive Committee of Education and Ministerial Relief, of which the Committee of Schools and Colleges and the Assembly Home and School are now departments; and the Executive Committee of Publication and Sabbath Schools.

Along with this consolidation of executive committees, another radical change was made in making the standing committee on Systematic Beneficence a permanent committee. This committee consists of fourteen members and is charged with the duty of conferring with, and considering the reports of the executive committees and the benevolences of the Assembly and making recommendations concerning them. The changes suggested are wise and if carried out will undoubtedly prevent friction in many instances, and at the same time will result in the saving of thousands of dollars.

The Board of Trustees of the Synodical College for Men did a very graceful thing in conferring the degree of Doctor of Divinity upon Rev. W. J. Caldwell, of the Woodlawn Church, and Rev. U. D. Mooney of the Second Church, Birmingham. The honor in each case is worthily bestowed.

History is always his story. Each man writes the thing as he sees it or hears it, or as his training enables him to glean it from the records of the past. The history of the Presbyterian Church in Alabama ought to be written, and it ought to be written now. There are other ruling elders in the Birmingham District who are thoroughly familiar with the beginnings of Presbyterianism in Jones' Valley, and they can if they will tell a thrilling story.

A ruling elder in the Avondale Church, Birmingham, is undertaking the collating of facts and figures with a view to writing the history of the church from its beginning. Why should not others follow his example in their home churches and thus begin the history of the Presbyterian Church in Alabama?

From the middle of a long article in a magazine the following is taken: "The tendency now is not only to make people believe that they can live without a divine Savior, but also that they can live without the church."

"The church" means a whole lot of things; for present purposes let it mean simply the assembling of people at stated intervals for divine worship, in buildings set apart for that purpose. Very many very respectable people perhaps attend political meetings, the theater, social gatherings, and in many cases benevolent orders. The human is a gregarious—one has said, a religious, animal; if this is so, one ought to attend church, first, because there only are his socio-religious demands met—it is reasonable that he should; and second, he needs a somewhat to counteract the not always beneficent influences of pure secularism; in a word, he needs diversion from the habitudes of everyday life in contact with the world. There is a quiet, rhythmic, decent atmosphere at church that is in strong contrast with the hurly-burly of even a respectable secular world.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was probably a Unitarian, at any rate he attended a church of that cult regularly when at home; during his vacation in Pittsfield, an Episcopal church; while in Beverly, a Baptist church. He has written: "I should go to church for various reasons, even if I did not love it; but I find great pleasure in the midst of devout multitudes, whether I can accept all their creeds or not." Then he adds: "There is a little plant called Reverence in a corner of my soul garden which I love to have watered about once a week."

The professed Christian cannot "for-sake the assembling" of himself with God's people without doing violence to his solemn obligations as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Independent of June 2, there is an editorial: "The Heresy Charged in the (U. S. A.) General Assembly."

From this it appears that the charge brought against young Mr. Black, or rather the Presbytery which ordained him, and the Synod which approved, were more serious than those for which Professor Briggs was sacrificed." "The young man who was not ready to assert his belief in the Virgin birth, nor in the miracle of (the raising from the dead) of Lazarus; nor in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, and yet the General Assembly was unwilling to have a trial \* \* \* and let it go that that young man simply had a less degree of confidence in the Virgin birth than in other essential doctrines!"

That is evidently the gist of it all! A candidate for the ministry who refused to accept as true certain fundamental doctrines of the Evangelical Church was ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. That is all. "But the Assembly warned Presbyterians to be careful in examination of candidates in the future." "But," adds the Independent, "they will not in the future be obliged to exercise greater stringency than did the General Assembly."

Let us hope that this last statement is but the surmise of an editor without ideas of theology, if he has any, run counter to those that have always been held by the Presbyterian Church. For it would be a sad day for the cause of evangelical Christianity, should Presbyteries ordain to the Gospel ministry men who refuse to accept as true the doctrine that involves the essential deity of our Lord; and deny that doctrine which the apostle Paul made the pivot of the Gospel. But we shall see.

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY—1910 By Rev. J. A. Bryan.

The Lewisburg Assembly was preeminently an Assembly of prayer. A spirit of prayer pervaded every meeting. Every morning from 9 to 9:30 was spent in real, earnest prayer for God's blessing upon the work of the Church. These seasons were times of great spiritual uplift to all of us. The commissioners confessed sin—sins of the Church—and pleaded with God for an outpouring of His Spirit upon all the departments of our work.

The Lewisburg Assembly was a very brotherly Assembly. No one could listen to the discussions, the prayers, without thinking of the verse in the Psalm—"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." "The fruit of the Spirit is love." So far as writer heard there was not a harsh word spoken—"no temper lost." We sat in the heavenlies "with Christ and the brethren."

The Assembly was a Missionary Assembly. Both branches of the Church's work, "at home and abroad," received the prayers and mind of the commissioners. The brethren were burdened with the desire to offer Christ to the perishing countrymen and also to those on foreign shores. The interest in the salvation of the Negro at home is increasing. The stranger within our gates was kindly considered. The whole work of our Church at home and abroad was laid upon the heart of the Assembly as never before in its history.

The cause of Christian Education was not forgotten—two evening meetings were devoted to hearing four splendid addresses on this subject. Over 94 per cent of our preachers are trained in Christian colleges. In secular institutions only four out of every thousand students are looking forward toward preaching Christ. In 22 Presbyterian

institutions 140 out of 1000 students are studying for the ministry. Over 97 of our candidates are in our Church schools. "Christian Education is fundamental."

The Assembly Home and School won a place in the heart of the brethren. Two hours were spent in telling of its needs and its great work. Why not pray more for and give more to the children of our brethren who have gone before us?

On the whole the Assembly of 1910 was "The Ideal Assembly."



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