

is indigenous to this country, growing out of the conditions here and expressing itself in the American manner. It is a socialism that is obedient to democracy and involves democracy. While at one in many essentials of its philosophy with socialism everywhere, it adopts the distinctly American type of expression, agitation and operation. It rests upon the principle of reciprocal rights and duties, and while it stands for the rights of society, including public ownership of the means of production and distribution and of all other social capital, it stands no less sturdily for the rights of the individual, believing the rights of society and those of the individual to be not antagonistic but interdependent and reciprocal."

The unique feature of the Clarion club, as a socialist organization, according to the same member, is that "it insists upon its members' studying and understanding the fundamental truths of democratic socialism; upon their making this understanding their special duty in the club and their primary obligation to the club; and upon their thereby cultivating a fitness for conducting socialist organization with intelligence and dignity, and qualifying themselves for enlightened citizenship—for taking their place, that is, in society and conscientiously doing their social and civic duties with propriety and effect. It is not the Clarionet's first ambition to run up and down the highways pinning socialist badges upon everyone who will let him, nor to applaud every crude or unintelligent action or step or piece of printing that bears the socialist label."

One significance of this Cincinnati club will be better appreciated, though its members say nothing on that point, when it is understood that both the socialist parties in American politics are dominated by and wedded to the German "scientific" socialism, which repudiates the principle of human rights and definitely aims only to build up and place in political control a class-conscious labor party, proposing then to let fatalistic "evolution go on in its inevitable course."

A socialist movement which diverges from this policy cannot but be welcomed by many who are not socialists as well as by many who are. Whoever hopes and works for better social order, in the belief that moral energy and not fatalistic evolution is the superior social force, that right and not might is the true social ideal, and that laborers are entitled to own as private property the wealth that represents their varying contributions to production, must look with satisfaction upon this Cincinnati movement. And its common sense method of keep-

ing in touch with the common sentiment of the time and taking advantage of opportunities to advance its ultimate purpose, instead of segregating its membership, must appeal to earnest men who are also practical. Of its specific purpose, however, there can be but one opinion among all who have learned to distinguish things that essentially differ. When its members think of labor products being in the category of "social capital," thus confusing the essential and vitally important differences between capital which is artificial and that which is natural, and in consequence propose the public ownership and management of both kinds of capital, they become responsible for a proposition which can neither endure the test of discriminating analysis nor survive a logical comparison with their own fundamental principles.

II.

Another significant institution of Cincinnati, much older and replete with historic experience and suggestiveness, while likewise of universal interest in connection with social questions, is the old Vine street church. As you enter the vestibule your eye catches the inspiring legend, inscribed over the outer door, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," a legend which is peculiarly appropriate to this truly religious temple. No less uplifting are the inscriptions, handsomely lettered upon the inner walls on every side. They are worth quoting as indications of the vital spirituality of this unique Christian church:—

Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.—Jesus.

Our country is the world; our countrymen are mankind.—Garrison.

Life without labor is guilt; labor without art is brutality.—Ruskin.

Far, far beyond our ken, the eternal laws must hold their sway.—Henry George.

The God who gave us life gave us liberty.—Jefferson.

Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.—Lincoln.

He does not really believe his own opinions who dares not give free scope to his opponent.—Wendell Phillips.

He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness.—Emerson.

No consecrated absurdity would have stood its ground in this world if the man had not silenced the objections of the child.—Michelet.

He's true to God who is true to Man.—Lowell.

We cannot be saved separately; we must be saved all together.—Tolstoy.

They should be first among all who contribute most by their labor to the good of all.—Mazzini.

Those who make private property of the gift of God, pretend in vain to be innocent.—Pope Gregory the Great.

What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.—Micah.

It is the evening service which we attend in this historic and inviting sanctuary of the God who reigns on earth as well as in heaven. A spacious low platform, backed by a large organ, with a desk far to one side and a choir

at the other, occupies the rear of the auditorium. As the sound of the organ subsides the pastor advances to the reading desk. There are few of the conventionalities of church service. A prayer when the occasion inspires one, but at other times the scriptural injunction:

When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues. . . . but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet—

is obeyed. A few announcements, among others a weekly economic class in the Sunday-school room, a daily free kindergarten in another of the church apartments, a fortnightly social gathering, also in the Sunday-school room, at which one learns that dancing is not tabooed. Then a hymn by the choir, one reading from the new testament story of the temptations of the Nazarene, and another from Ernest Crosby's "Plain Talks in Psalm and Parable," and the sermon begins.

The preacher's smooth shaven face reveals a jaw too finely chiseled to be brutal, but massive and firmly set, suggesting extraordinary powers of patient endurance; while all the face above is expressive of the gentleness, charity and unaffected humility which are known to be characteristic of the man. His sermon has been carefully prepared, but is extemporaneous in delivery; and, in spite of flashes of eloquence that thrill the sedate church audience almost to the point of secular applause, the rhetoric and the elocution are so natural that the preacher seems to be conversing earnestly, heart to heart, with each individual listener.

The subject is "The Temptations of Jesus." The miraculous is disregarded, the preacher inferring from the narrative of the temptations that it is an allegorical representation of inward experiences of this great man of Palestine. His abilities were transcendent, and for a time he was popular. Why should he not selfishly conquer the kingdoms of the world? That temptation the narrator had symbolized by the story of the temptation on the mountain top. And then, why not turn his abilities to making wealth? This temptation was symbolized by the taunting challenge, when he was hungry, to turn stones into bread. Once more temptation comes. Alone in his teachings, all the wealthy and learned and respectable saying he was crazy and his own family suspecting it, he began to doubt himself, began to doubt that what he taught was right; and this is symbolized by the challenge to cast himself from the pinnacle on which he stood, and thereby test the genuineness of what he supposed to be his mission. These are the great temptations that come to all men of ability who forsake the good things of this world which they might

have for the asking, and take their stand for righteousness.

It is not strange that the preacher who could make such a sermon is not content to confine his work to a narrow ecclesiastical sphere. It would be as impossible for Herbert S. Bigelow as it was for Henry Ward Beecher. And so we find Mr. Bigelow out among the people, even on political platforms. And just as his predecessors applied the teachings of Jesus to the social and political sin of slavery, so he applies them to the grasping ambitions of imperialism, to the plundering of so-called protection, to extortionate taxation, and to that greatest of all social iniquities—the monopoly by the few of the earth which God made for all.

In this era of the new abolition, there is a peculiar fitness in the occupation of the Vine Street Congregational pulpit by Bigelow, and in the work which that church is doing under his leadership. For the Vine Street Congregational church was born out of the old abolition struggle; it was dedicated to the principle of equal human rights; and for its devotion to that principle then, it suffered the same kind of obloquy that it suffers now for devotion to the same principle; and it suffers it from people of the same class.

This church came into existence when the slavery fight was gathering force. Students in Lane Theological seminary formed a Students' Anti-Slavery league in 1834, which resolved "that it is the duty of slaveholding states to abolish slavery immediately." This movement was promptly rebuked by the pious faculty, in language which is not unfamiliar at the present time in connection with apologies for the vested wrongs of our day. They likened the anti-slavery agitation in the seminary to "whirlwind and lightning," and spoke of such things as explaining why "many of our best citizens are looking upon seminaries as a nuisance more to be dreaded than the cholera and plague." In sympathy with this action on the part of the faculty, the trustees suppressed the Students' Anti-Slavery league; and in consequence 51 students left Lane and went to Oberlin.

In the state of feeling indicated by that incident the Vine Street church of Cincinnati had its birth. It was organized April 9, 1831, as the Sixth Presbyterian church, by 13 men and 7 women, all abolitionists, who seceded from the First Presbyterian church because its pastor, Joshua Wilson, had embarked upon a defense of slavery on scriptural grounds.

The first pastor of the new church was Asa Mahan, an uncompromising abolitionist, who left it in 1835 to become president of Oberlin college. While pastor of the little Vine street

congregation he himself was ostracized by the rest of the Cincinnati clergy, and his little daughters were assailed with volleys of stones in the streets, one of them receiving injuries in that way, at the hands of the pro-slavery mob, from which she never recovered. The Lane seminary authorities urged the church to dismiss Dr. Mahan because "he was a disturber of the peace;" but he was faithfully retained until Oberlin sent for him, and was succeeded by a "disturber" like himself.

In 1846 the church changed its ecclesiastical connection from the Presbyterian to the Congregational. Its membership had risen at that time to 142. The present church site and building were acquired in 1848, and in that year the deliberations of the first evangelical anti-slavery convention ever held in America were conducted in this place, and conducted in peace, the arrangements of a mob to disperse the gathering having miscarried.

The church, now grown to maturity, and thoroughly ambitious as may be inferred from what has been already told, was one of the few religious organizations of the country at that time which did not piously and cordially support the pro-slavery regime, and one of still fewer that gave direct encouragement to the anti-slavery agitation. Among the acts of discipline recorded in its books is an expulsion for slaveholding, one for taking bribes to return runaway slaves, and one for enlisting in the United States army for the invasion of Mexico. Its membership included Levy Coffin, famous as a promoter of the "underground railway," which was the slang name of the system for aiding escaped slaves upon their painful and dangerous journey from the Ohio river up through the state of Ohio to the "Western Reserve" and thence over to Canada and freedom. The church building itself was "unlawfully" used by Coffin, on at least one occasion, as a place for the temporary concealment of what the laws euphemistically described as a "fugitive from service." The congregation had no respect for "property rights" of that kind.

The pastors succeeding Dr. Mahan were H. Norton; Jonathan Blanchard (later president of Knox college), who is described as having "poured the hottest kind of biblical hot shot into the Presbyterian slave ship manned by Dr. Wilson and his pious crew;" Charles Brandon Boynton (afterwards a congressional chaplain and the founder and first president of Howard college); Charles H. Daniels; Josiah Strong, who wrote his famous "Our Country" in the church during his pastorate; William H. Warren; Norman Plass; and the present pastor, Herbert S. Bigelow, who came to the church fresh from Lane seminary, in 1886.

Throughout its abolition career this church was looked upon by the comfortable folk and pious, as a nest of troublesome lepers and dangerous vipers. Stones were hurled by mobs at its sacred walls, and its pastors were not only ignored professionally by the other orthodox ministers, but were personally snubbed by them when they met upon the streets.

All this changed when slavery collapsed and it was no longer disreputable to stand up for freedom. As suddenly then as did Saul of Tarsus, but much more discreetly than he, the orthodox ministers of Cincinnati saw a great light, and marched into Freedom's camp behind what they had called "the speckled" Vine street church, with its abolition "lepers" and "vipers" and its "disturbers of the peace."

But it is useless to cry "peace! peace!" when there is no peace. One great iniquity—chattel slavery—had been abolished, and the Vine street church had taken a noble but unpleasant part in the work. Another iniquity now loomed up—the monopoly of the earth, with the economic slavery it produces, more subtle but not less dreadful and pernicious than slavery of the chattel type,—and Vine street church was drafted again into the noble but bitter service. It is to-day repeating, in form somewhat different but in substance the same, its history of half a century ago. This second experience in the perennial struggle for human freedom began soon after the admission of Mr. Bigelow to its pulpit.

Mr. Bigelow came there a conventional minister, quite prepared in all good conscience to obey the injunction so strikingly phrased by the elders of the Negro church in a Southern state, when they admonished their young pastor to "preach Christ and Him crucified, and leave this here complicated question of hen roosts alone." But an impressive experience vitalized his life. With his wife, a graduate of Oberlin and a woman of like devotion to principle and like strength of character with himself, he went to live "among the people," down in the tenement district. His experiences there opened his eyes, and he began to preach against the social iniquity thus unexpectedly revealed. He had gone into the slums to benefit their denizens; but it was he who got the most benefit. Their deplorable condition made him ask its cause; and, from having supposed it was due to their own delinquencies, he discovered that it was due to delinquencies of society. He realized the social maladjustments and awoke to the fact that infidelity was masquerading now, as in the days of his predecessors, in the outer trappings of reli-

gion. A bright light shone before him, and a cross appeared in the sky. The revelation had burst upon the right man. True to the traditions of the church of which he was pastor, this worthy successor of a line of courageous preachers of righteousness, took up the work where they had laid it down.

But now the church turned against him. It took a stand with reference to the new abolition where the First Presbyterian church had stood with reference to the older one. And, curiously enough, considering the history of the church, the first outbreak was over the question of admitting a Negro to membership.

At one of Mr. Moody's revival meetings this Negro had expressed a desire to join a Congregational church, and Mr. Moody referred his name to Mr. Bigelow. The latter called upon the Negro, and, satisfied with his state of mind, arranged to admit him as a member of the Vine street congregation. A vigorous opposition was made at once to taking a man of the old slave race into the church, but enough of the traditions of the organization remained to enable Mr. Bigelow to hold the church true to its original impulse.

The hostility to him grew, however, stimulated as it was not only by this recognition of human equality as to race, but also by his outspoken recognition of human equality as to rights to the earth. It grew so strong that he resigned, with the reservation, though, that he had no desire to leave. He had resigned only to enable the congregation to express itself. By a congregational vote of 80 to 60 he was requested to withdraw his resignation, and, the minority being largely composed of non-attendants, he did so. Then came a series of persecutions, beginning with attempts by the minority to prosecute him for heresy without specific charges, going the length of subjecting him to fears of personal violence and of maliciously assailing him in the newspapers, and ending with an attempt by the church officers to starve him out by withholding his salary.

For months his income was almost nothing, and he and his wife were literally upon the verge of starvation. But her unflinching encouragement and his own will held him steadfast until new officers were elected.

By this time, his courageous preaching, while it had driven many of the old members out and brought many new ones in, had changed the congregation from a wealthy one to a poor one, and nearly five years elapsed before the church again rested upon a satisfactory financial basis.

But the long fight is over now, and few congregations in Cincinnati are on a more secure financial footing than

the Vine street church. In other respects it stands with reference to the other churches as it did in the forties and fifties. It is a despised, hated, feared, but fearless and unswerving pioneer in Christian righteousness. It is led by a pastor, who, like the old pastors, is ostracized by the pastors of the other orthodox churches. And these others, like their predecessors of the abolition era, are "either in open alliance with the plundering powers that be, or are languidly marking time on the green velvet lawns of neutrality."

The spirit in which the work of this church is conducted, a revival of the spirit of liberty in which it was born, may be inferred from what has been told. It is definitely outlined in the following address of the pastor to the public:

It is the aim of this pulpit to teach that the noblest conception of God is that of a father who loves all of His children. It follows that men are brothers and that the fruits of Justice and Love between man and man—nation and nation—are proof of a vital religion. Faith in God involves the belief that there are natural laws touching every part of our life, and that by discovering and obeying these laws men may create the conditions of their own happiness. Bodily disease is an evidence of the violation of natural law—political disease an evidence of the violation of natural law—social disease an evidence of the violation of natural law. We exalt the virtue of open-mindedness, that men may readily accept each new truth that leads to a better understanding of these laws. It is the aim of this pulpit to help men to adjust their life to the righteousness of natural law, that they may become more brotherly, that their politics may be purified, that social conditions may be made more just, that the material as well as the moral—the communal as well as the individual—life may be improved. Liberty, Fraternity, Progress, Justice, Love—these we hope to be the ideals of this church, and we claim for our field of service the entire life of man, believing the highest form of worship to be an intelligent devotion to the good of a World-Wide Humanity.

The church and the pastor of our day that stand for such principles, and with such a history for a background as this church can justly pride itself upon, may feel with certainty, let the temporary obloquy they suffer be what it may, that they are in the van of Christian progress. They are living over again the experiences of the earnest men and women who 70 years ago gave to the Vine street church of Cincinnati, under Mahan and Blanchard and Boynton, the impulse which so far from being spent, has received a new and stronger impetus under the pastorate of Bigelow.

L. F. P.

Tom—Would you call a man who had to black his own shoes a gentleman?

Dick—Lemme see! I'd call that man a gentleman who could black his own shoes without wondering whether a man who had to black his own shoes was a gentleman.—Puck.

NEWS

The South African war continues to be the chief subject of news interest. Gen. Methuen's return after capture by the Boers (p. 791) has been followed by a conference between acting President Schalkburger, of the South African Republic, and Lord Kitchener. It took place at Pretoria and was preliminary to an interview between Schalkburger and President Steyn, of the Orange Free State, which the British ministry had authorized. The significance of this procedure is altogether a matter of conjecture. Nothing authoritative is known about it except that in the British House of Commons on the 25th, Mr. Brodrick, the secretary for war, announced that Mr. Schalkburger had about two weeks before, asked Lord Kitchener for safe conduct through the British lines and back, in order to see Mr. Steyn with reference to possible peace proposals, and that Lord Kitchener, with the consent of the ministry, had granted the request.

As reported by press dispatches from Pretoria, Mr. Schalkburger, F. W. Reitz (ex-secretary of state of the South African Republic), and Commandants Lucas Meyer and Krogh, arrived at Pretoria on the 23d, on a special train from Balmoral, 50 miles to the east, under British escort. They had come into Balmoral from Rhenoster kop, to the north, under flag of truce; and, upon arriving at Pretoria, on the 22d, had held a conference of three hours with Lord Kitchener at his headquarters. Late in the afternoon they took a train under British escort for Kroonstad, in the Orange Free State, where, presumably, they were to meet President Steyn. As yet (March 27) no further news on the subject has been received.

It was understood that an armistice had been arranged pending this interview, but the fact now appears to have been otherwise; for on the 26th Lord Kitchener reported the capture of 135 men of Delarey's command with five field guns and a number of horses and wagons. This was the net result of a combined movement to capture Delarey, similar to the recent unsuccessful one (p. 728) for the capture of DeWet. But like DeWet, Delarey escaped. No details are yet reported except as stated above.