

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.