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## Editorial Notes and Comment



WAR has interfered with many lines of activity, and has made some changes necessary in the work of the Church. It has been advocated by some that the Church's foreign mission work should be given up or greatly curtailed upon the ground of expense. But certainly the Christian people of this country cannot and will not make the plea that they cannot give the money needed. Our church made a very creditable advance in its contributions for this cause during the past year. The total amount was \$670,287, an increase of \$83,743 over the preceding year. But owing to the increased cost due to high prices our Executive Committee has been left with a deficit of \$128,131. This is a call to all of God's people to come up to the help of the Lord. When the war began nearly four years ago it was thought probable that Great Britain and Canada would have to give up their foreign mission work, and that it would be necessary for America to take it over, if it were done at all. But instead of the gifts for this cause falling off they have increased, notwithstanding the fact that Great Britain has felt the effects of the war not at all realized in this country. The need is great. The opportunities are unlimited. God's people have the money. Shall the work be abandoned or shall it be done?

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CARELESS legislation by the General Assembly has been mentioned several times lately by our correspondents. As we have watched the proceedings of the Assembly for a number of years, we have become convinced that such occurrences are due not so much to individual carelessness as to the manner in which the business is sometimes transacted. It sometimes occurs that matters that are closely allied are put into the hands of different committees. When their reports are made, each one is ignorant of what is in the hands of the other, and each makes its report. The reports are presented to the Assembly, and nine times out of ten the report is adopted as presented. A body of the size of the Assembly cannot possibly study carefully all of the reports presented, when the only opportunity it has of gaining a knowledge of most of them is a single reading by the representative of the committee. It is also impossible for the clerks to keep up with the contents of all the reports that are presented. It is their business to record the actions taken by the Assembly. They really have no right to criticize any report but must assume that the report expresses the mind of the body. Another source of careless legislation is due to the fact that oftentimes a report has to be prepared very hurriedly and the committee does not have time to study carefully the law or the former actions of the Assembly on such

matters. No committee could be expected to know all these things connected with all subjects. It is not therefore the committees or the clerks that are responsible for such mistakes as occur, but the responsibility rests upon the system under which the Assembly works, and especially the haste with which its business is so often transacted. By way of remedy we would suggest that more time should be given to the consideration of the many important matters that come before the Assembly. And further than that we believe much good would result from the appointment of an able revisory committee to whom all papers should be referred, after they are adopted by the Assembly, that they may be studied to see whether they are consistent with themselves, with the law of the Church and with former actions of the Assembly. The next best method to this will be to require all reports to be printed for distribution among the members of the Assembly before they are presented. The cost would not be great, and the result would be that the members of the Assembly could study them far more intelligently than by having them read.

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FOREIGN Missions pay. If there is reason for investing labor and means in any part of work of God, with the idea that results will be accomplished, those reasons hold good in the foreign work. There was a time when those of little faith questioned whether it was wise to spend money and effort to carry the gospel to the heathen. Sometimes ten or more years of labor and toil were spent before the light dawned in the first soul. But the laborers had faith and they toiled on. The church had faith and it continued its support. But today such conditions cannot be found in any of the mission fields. All over the world the gospel is finding ready access to the hearts of those who had long been living in a worse than Egyptian darkness. In proportion to the men and women and money employed greater results are being accomplished in heathen lands than in our own country. In 1917 in our church in this country there were 361,257 members including ministers. For each 18 of these one soul was led to Christ during the year. In the same year in our foreign mission churches there were 38,616 members including foreign missionaries and the ordained native ministers. For each 7 of these one soul was led to Christ. This shows that the church in heathen lands is growing much faster in proportion than it is in this country. And if we were to compare the cost we would see that the proportion would be even still more in favor of the foreign fields. Without investing any less here, let us invest more largely where we shall receive the larger dividends.

MAY the month of flowers belongs to Foreign Missions in our churches. And what better use can we put this month to than to use it as the occasion of making offerings to God in thanksgiving for all the beauty with which He has surrounded us here in this life? When we compare the beauty of our religion and the lives it produces with the hideousness of the heathen religions and the ugliness of the lives that are developed by them, our whole hearts ought to go out in thankfulness to the God of all beauty. There are many ways in which we may show our thankfulness, but there is none in which we can show it in a more unselfish way than in giving our service or our money to give the gospel to those who are in the darkness and ignorance of sin.

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THE General Assembly is soon to meet, for evidently it is the sense of the great majority of the Church that its meeting should not be postponed. The Assembly has asked that the whole Church shall offer prayer for God's blessing upon its deliberations. Many are the criticisms that are passed upon the body and its actions. If all these criticisms were turned into prayers, there probably would not be so much to criticize. The members of the Assembly are chosen as the representatives of the Church to do the Church's work. The Church ought to aid and support them in every way possible. And there is no better way to do this than to go to God in prayer asking that He will guide them in all that they do, giving them wisdom and grace to devise things wise and liberal for the building up of the kingdom of God.

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PATRIOTS have many ways of showing their patriotism during these stirring days through which we are passing. It is not enough to be a citizen of this country and swear allegiance to the Government. Patriotism is a state of mind and heart, but if it is real it will find more ways of expressing itself than in cheering when the band plays. It demands the loyal support of the Government in all that it undertakes, where no principle of right is violated. This calls upon all of our citizens, who can by any sacrifice do so, to buy Government Bonds or War Savings Stamps. Every suggestion in regard to Food Conservation should be carried out just as far as possible. Help should be given to every movement for the welfare of the soldiers. The patriot should be an optimist and expect his Government to succeed. Above all the patriot should have firm faith in God. When all the men and women, boys and girls of this country are true patriots, we will have a nation that will be able to meet any foe.