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Miscellanea

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Welch ein Vorbild! Unerreicht unter uns. Wieviel Kreuzesstöße, wieviel Ungebuld und Unglaube, wieviel Verzagtheit und Meinglaube bei uns! Und wir sollten doch Gott für solches Kreuz danken, 1 Petr. 1, 6, 7; Apost. 5, 41; 1 Petr. 4, 13. Jeder unter uns hat seinen Pfahl im Fleisch. Wieviel Murren und Klagen bewegen anstatt ruhigen Ergehens in Gottes Willen und Vertrauens auf seine Verheißung. Seine Gnade ist uns gewiß; was wollen wir mehr im Leben und im Sterben? Aber unser Gott ist freundlich und gibt uns noch mehr; er gibt auch uns besondere Offenbarungen, das heißt, Beweise, daß er bei uns ist mit seiner allmächtigen Hilfe und uns nicht verläßt, Ps. 97, 11.

Erkennen wir, wieviel uns noch fehlt? Laßt uns neuen Fleiß anwenden, Frucht zu bringen in Geduld! Lied 141, 12. 13. E. G.

Miscellanea.

“Rethinking Missions.”

This is the title of a book, a copy of which lies before me at this writing, which was issued as the culmination of a series of reports released by an Appraisal Commission, headed by Dr. William Ernest Hocking and published by the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Albert L. Scott, chairman. We say at once and with great vehemence: As the reports released to the press of our country were vicious in their denial of Christian truth, so the book is essentially blasphemous. It is necessary to refer to but one statement in the book to characterize its vicious and revolutionary position, namely, that in which the original objective of Christian missions, that of preaching one way of salvation, and one only, one name, one atonement,—“this plan with its particular historical center in the career of Jesus must become the point of regard for every human soul,”—is discarded.

It is not surprising that a book of this kind, subverting the foundations not only of Christian missions, but of Christianity itself, should appear at this time. It is the natural result of the unionistic and syncretistic attitude assumed by most so-called Christian denominations in our day. It began with the suffering of false doctrines within the denominations themselves and the recognition of Christian brotherhood without the unity of faith and confession. At the same time it proceeded from the so-called non-fundamental to the essential and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, exercising a false toleration, which struck at the very root of man's relation to his God. If one yields on the question of the Virgin Birth and of the inspiration of the Bible, he is bound soon to yield on the question of salvation through the blood of Christ and justification by faith in Christ. This is precisely what the book *Rethinking Missions* demonstrates. Its entire presentation shows an abysmal ignorance of the fundamental truths of Christianity. It proposes, first of all, to dissolve all so-called sectarian differences in the Foreign Mission fields. “It would,” as the *Literary Digest* has it, “seek truth in all major non-Christian religions and cooperate with them against paganism [?], the common enemy,

and it would put the missionary enterprise under one administration." In other words, Christians, Buddhists, Shintoists, Confucianists, Taoists, Mohammedans, and members of whatever other faith are to find the least common denominator in their several religions; agree upon that as essential, and treat everything else as non-essential.

As stated above, it is not surprising that this stage has been reached. It is the inevitable result of relinquishing the truth of the vicarious atonement and of the justification by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. The pagan religions have never possessed this truth, and most of the Christian denominations have abandoned it, since they have permitted Christ to be preached as a mere model, or exemplar, a paragon of good works and holy living. They have missed the essential features of His own teaching and of that of His apostles, namely, "that He redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death." It is not surprising, then, that, as the *Literary Digest* reports, the *Baptist* believes the recommendation of the commission to be right and that the *Churchman*, organ of the liberal wing of the Episcopal Church, gives the report its unqualified approval. It is to be expected that all Modernists will share this view and most likely make the whole question an issue in the interest of further Liberalism.

Fortunately, Christian consciousness is not yet altogether dead. The General Council of the Presbyterian Church in the United States makes the statement: "What is proposed is virtually a denial of evangelical Christianity." The *Presbyterian Banner* writes: "The churches will not, and ought not to for one moment, consider the abandonment of the evangelical basis of missions, resting on the conception of Christ as the only and sufficient Savior and Redeemer." In the *Presbyterian* we find this denunciation of the report: "It is an effort of Modernism, for lack of a better word, to check the noble work of evangelical Christians for more than a century. It is an effort to establish something in place of the old Gospel in other lands, as it has been done to a considerable degree in our own land." Similar statements are found in the *Missionary Review of the World* and in the *American Church Monthly*. The *Watchman-Examiner* is even more emphatic in its rejection of the report. It says that the Appraisal Commission is "rationalistic in its entire viewpoint." "The report of this commission is unjustly critical of the whole Foreign Mission enterprise." "What will the churches do with this report? Will they sanction it or reject it? In any case it will tend to cut the nerve of missions. If accepted and literally followed, it would mean death not only to Foreign Missions, but also to the Church at large. A non-missionary Church soon becomes a missing Church." "The report is but a further illustration of the fact that Modernism is becoming so deeply entrenched in our present-day religious life that many of its points of view are stated as though they were universally accepted by Christian people." And finally, to quote from only one Lutheran paper, the *Kirchenblatt* (A. L. C.) says: "Uns ist in den letzten Jahren nichts vor Augen getreten, was so krass den Unterschied zwischen neutestamentlichem Christentum und dem Modernismus ans Licht stellt wie dieser Bericht."

We see only one possible good feature connected with the report of the Appraisal Commission and with the book *Rethinking Missions*, namely, that referred to by the *Christian Century*, which suggests that it portends a major battle along the old lines. If the report arouses the denominations which still preach the vicarious atonement to the need of studying the inerrant truth of the Gospel once more, of reaffirming the fundamental doctrines of Christianity with new vigor, of insisting upon the exclusive character of its message, and of reconsecrating themselves to the task of preaching salvation through the blood of Christ, then it may be a fortunate thing that it was published.

P. E. K.

Where Does Our Educational System Fall Down?

It can hardly be said that we have failed in providing a systematic training for the preschool and for the elementary-school age. Our parish, or Christian day-school, system is as close to perfection in design as any school system conceivably can be. The religious training which is given in a full course of one of our schools surely has the prospects of laying a foundation of Christian knowledge which will presumably last through life. In a measure the same objective is reached through other agencies besides the regular Christian day-school, such as the Sunday-school, preferably in connection with a Saturday-school and some form of the summer-school. The instruction thus provided for, together with that of the training class in the preconfirmation year and of thorough confirmation instruction preceding admission into adult membership in the congregation, may be considered to be as nearly adequate as can be expected on the part of fallible human beings.

But what are we doing in an official way for the period following confirmation, not only the junior age, but the entire adolescent period? The information dispensed in the preadolescent age will in most cases not become functioning in church activities unless the proper training is provided. The various changes attending puberty usually set a definite boundary between the thinking of childhood and that of adult age. Young people in the age of early adolescence, of middle adolescence, and even of late adolescence must be given not only further instruction, but also practical training in the activities of the local congregation and of the Church at large. Where such training does not obtain, it is a rare occurrence for young people to gain the ability to perform the work of adult members of the congregation. Only a small percentage of our members is familiar with every department of their own congregation's work, with the objects of our Synod, with the field of missions. Very few of them can express themselves with intelligence and ease in the voters' meeting, in the meeting of the ladies' aid, or in that of any other organization. Many of those who possess a certain glibness of speech lack the basic information concerning the precepts of the Bible concerning the government of the church, the relative position of men and women, and scores of other questions.

What have we as a church body done till now in order to give our young people systematic training along these lines, so that they may take an intelligent interest in all the affairs of the congregation, in all the church-work that is carried on, in systematic and adequate giving, and in

the many other features connected with a Christian congregation functioning along the lines indicated by Holy Writ? We have acknowledged the work of the Walther League, even encouraged their endeavors by appropriate resolutions, and we have elected a board to act in an advisory capacity with reference to young people's organizations. But all these efforts are not yet reaching one half of our young people.

What we need at this time, what we should have had for decades, is a thorough system of training for *all the young people of postconfirmation age*. It is necessary for *every pastor and for every congregation* to take up this matter, to make a thorough study of the needs involved, and to make such provision for some form of systematic instruction and training of our young people as will meet the requirements of the Word of God. Far better for the pastor to be absent from some meeting of a board of the congregation than to miss a meeting of the young people. And we might consider very seriously whether but one meeting night in a month is adequate for the needs of our young Christians, whether we ought not to make some provision to counteract the influence of encroaching worldliness by positive activity instead of by peremptory prohibitions. The matter is worthy of our most earnest consideration.

P. E. K.

„Verzage nicht, du Hähnlein Klein.“

Auf verschiedene Anfragen hin sei hier mitgeteilt, daß die Forscher über den Ursprung des Liedes früher ziemlich geteilter Meinung waren, daß man aber in neueren Werken sich mit ziemlicher Sicherheit über den Verfasser ausspricht. Koch (Geschichte des Kirchenlieds und Kirchengesangs, IV, 254 ff.) hält den Schwedenkönig Gustav Adolf für den Verfasser. Er behauptet, daß der König „dieses Lied mit seinen drei Versen ursprünglich in Prosa verfaßt hat nach der Leipziger Schlacht im Jahre 1631, und auf sein Geheiß sein Feldprediger, Dr. Jaf. Fabricius, . . . es in Reime brachte, worauf es dann im schwedischen Feldlager häufig gesungen wurde“. Demgegenüber aber halten die neueren Hymnologen mit großer Einstimmigkeit fest an der Aussage des M. Jeremias Weber, Diaconus an St. Nikolai in Leipzig, der das Lied mit der Aufschrift druckte „Herzfreudiges Trostliedlein auf das von der evangelischen Armee in der Schlacht von Leipzig am 17. September 1631 geführte Kriegslosungswort ‚Gott mit uns!‘ gestellt von M. Jo. A., Pfarrherrn zu Großen-Sommern in Düringen“. Dies war kein anderer als der Pfarrer Johann Michael Altenburg, der auch sonst als geistlicher Niederdichter bekannt ist und der im Jahre 1631 nach Erfurt fliehen mußte, wohin die Nachricht von dem Siege bei Leipzig sehr bald gelangte. Für Altenburg als Verfasser haben sich unter andern entschieden Julian (A Dictionary of Hymnology, 54), Hunton (Favorite Hymns, 194) und Dorisch (Das deutsche evangelische Kirchenlied, 135). Vgl. auch Brown and Butterworth, Story of the Hymns and Tunes, 84. P. E. K.

Automobiles in the Service of the Gospel.

The Wichern Society in Germany has five motor-cars in its service, which tour Germany regularly during the summer months. Last summer each motor-car was the center of fully one thousand open-air meetings. The smallest attendance at these meetings was 40 persons, the largest 400.

Holland News Bureau.