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Miscellanea

A Prominent Presbyterian Speaks of Colleges, Seminaries, Ministers, and Laymen

One of the most eminent Presbyterian divines of today is Dr. Mark A. Matthews of Seattle, Wash. Writing on the recent General Assembly of his church-body, the 150th, he glides into general observations of importance. His remarks will be found interesting and in some respects challenging. His article appeared in the *Presbyterian* of July 7.

"We have some fifty-odd so-called Christian colleges in America, but perhaps we have not a single real Christian college. Because a college teaches the Bible two or three hours a week does not make it a Christian college. It must major in the Bible, in Christianity, and in Christian experiences in order to reach the standard of a real Christian college. We should combine many, strengthen those that are worth while, and bring them to perfection.

"We have too many seminaries. We should have only three. Princeton is one of the greatest seminaries in the world and should be endowed and prepared to educate our boys. We need a seminary in the Middle West, perhaps in Chicago. The Chicago seminary should be made perfect. We also need a Western seminary, and perhaps the seminary at San Francisco should have all the assistance necessary to make it a standard seminary. All the seminaries should be required to force their students to master the English Bible, to study the technique of evangelism, and to learn how to manage and direct churches. Students that come out of the seminaries today are not competent to handle churches, because they have not been trained in that art. There ought to be a clinic in every seminary teaching methods and technique of Christian work. Had the seminaries taught the method of Christian work and had they trained Christian workers, there would not have arisen in this country the multiplicity of irresponsible schools purporting to do that kind of work.

"There ought to be a chair in every seminary teaching methods and technique and charged specifically with the duty of training Christian workers. Not on the theory that those Christian workers are to go out in the world and make it a profession or on the theory of vesting them with authority commensurate with the minister's, but they ought to be trained to do the work.

"Every student in every seminary should be sent out of the seminary in his third year and put under the care of some competent, successful pastor who knows how to handle a church. That young man should be trained by that minister for a year, then sent back to the seminary for his graduation. Literally, he should be made to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. The average minister does not know anything about time-keeping, appointments, or the science and genius of real work. But he could get that under some qualified pastor who would drive him and teach him to work.

"It is a great reflection on the seminaries that they have not trained and produced great teachers and leaders. When they need teachers to fill their own chairs, they have to import them. They ought to have trained them. Their professors should be products of the seminaries. The seminaries ought to have produced Hodges, Greens, Pattons, and Warfields to take the place of those heroes of the past. Let us begin now to fill our chairs with the products of our own seminaries.

"The churches are suffering today because self-starting, up-starting laymen are trying to dictate and run the churches. That cannot be done; it is not according to God's plan. But perhaps they are trying to do this because the ministers are not properly trained.

"The churches are making a great mistake in being relieved of the ministers who have passed a certain age, but who possess experience and understanding of human nature. Express your appreciation of your ministers and of all Christian workers who are doing their duty and doing it well. Encouragement is worth a great deal. We have gone too far in dismissing from service men because they have reached a certain age. That is silly, unchristian, and very expensive. A man ought to do his best work before he is sixty-five, that is if he has learned how to work before sixty-five. The last General Assembly recorded the loss of many of its most efficient men because of an arbitrary age rule. Let us correct that foolishness. It smacks too much of the decadent, decaying, bankrupting business world. Encourage the men who are doing the work, support them, sustain them, and make it possible for them to do better work. The last General Assembly either in practise, sentiment, or action brought these facts forcibly to our attention." A.

Concerning Purgatory

Assist the Souls in Purgatory is the title of a pamphlet put out by the Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Mo., with the episcopal imprimatur. It tells the Catholic all about purgatory, and it tells us from what sources the Catholics get their theology and on what they base their hope of salvation. We read: "Our Divine Savior once said to Ven. Marie Lataste: 'You can do nothing more pleasing to God than to aid the suffering souls.' And to St. Gertrude our Lord said: 'Every prayer, howsoever poor it may be, if said for the souls in purgatory, is acceptable to Me on account of the great desire I have for their release. . . .' St. Thomas Aquinas says: 'The least pain in purgatory is greater than the greatest suffering in this world.' St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, who in spirit beheld these sufferings, says that all the torments and tortures of the martyrs and the most intense fire on earth are like a pleasure-garden compared to purgatory. Many souls must suffer there a long time. Numerous souls who had been in purgatory twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years and even longer, appeared to Bl. Frances of the Blessed Sacrament. There is no doubt that the suffering souls love God with glowing love and are perfectly satisfied to suffer; also that the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and saints visit them and console them. . . . Christ Himself appeared to St. Catherine of Siena and revealed to her that she had obtained hundreds of great

graces through the intercession of these holy souls. A certain poor soul said to Bl. Frances of the Blessed Sacrament: 'We, too, recommend your needs to God. Whenever a person remembers us, we all remember him before God and obtain graces for him, especially the grace to serve God faithfully, to avoid sin, and the grace of a happy death.' St. Bridget relates that she once heard many souls praying, '*O God, reward those who help us in our misery.*' St. Alphonsus Liguori and Cardinal Belarmino are of the opinion that the poor souls may be *invoked*. . . . Among the suffering souls there is a class which is seldom recommended to the prayers of the faithful, namely, the *souls of deceased priests*. Our Divine Lord once spoke to Ven. Marie Lataste: '*My daughter, pray much for my priests, for they are entirely too little prayed for. Too often the faithful forget that it is their duty to pray for priests, who are their fathers as regards their salvation.*' We read in the life of Bl. Frances of the Blessed Sacrament that two Popes, many bishops, and especially a great number of priests appeared to her, begging her assistance. . . . Many departed souls have appeared to their benefactors to express their gratitude and to assure them of their intercession in heaven. Let us resolve to be especially charitable towards departed priests. Parents also whose sons are preparing for the priesthood should be most charitable towards souls of deceased priests. This will aid their sons to become good priests, worthy ministers of the altar. . . . Mary, the saints, and the guardian angels of the souls that are delivered will be eternally grateful to us if we succor the holy souls. . . . Let us often make *acts of the love of God*; these interior acts are of unspeakable value. 'Every act of love merits life eternal,' says St. Thomas. . . . The Benedictine Sisters pray day and night without intermission before the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed. Besides having the names of the departed inscribed, living persons may be enrolled and likewise share in all the Holy Masses, Communions, prayers, and good works heretofore mentioned, that they may thereby obtain the grace of final perseverance, of worthily receiving the last sacraments, and of dying a happy death. . . . In our Adoration Chapel at Clyde, Mo., and also at Mundelein, Ill., we are privileged to have the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed by day and night. It is becoming that twenty wax candles should burn constantly before the exposition throne. Many of our friends ask to have a *candle placed on the altar for their special intention*—some, to beg for the conversion of a sinner; others, as a petition to God to grant *relief to their dear ones in purgatory*; others, for help in some necessity. The living Heart of Jesus in the Sacred Host will be moved to mercy and compassion by this act of faith and generosity. In return our Lord will bestow signal graces on the living and grant consolation to the departed.—For an alms of 50 cents, a large wax candle will be burned one whole day and one whole night in our Adoration Chapel before the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed; for \$3.50, one whole week; for \$12.00 one month. . . . The holy doctors St. Gregory and St. Jerome say that the souls for whom a Holy Mass is being said and those for whom the priest makes a memento, *experience no pain during the time of the Sacrifice*. By having Masses said for the poor souls, we can obtain *marvelous graces*. Numberless persons

have been aided in their necessities by having Masses said for the souls in purgatory. The Mother of God once said to St. Bridget: 'I am the Mother of the poor souls in purgatory, for all the sufferings they have deserved are being mitigated more or less every hour by my intercession.' According to St. Bernardine of Siena, Mary has special dominion in this prison of souls, the spouses of Christ, and consoles and delivers them. She even *descends into purgatory on Saturdays*, as she promised Pope John XXII, and also on *her feast days*. St. Bernard says, 'Mary has great power over purgatory.' Jesus Christ has appointed her dispensatrix of His infinite merits. She holds in her hands, as it were, the key of the Divine treasure. If the poor souls are worthy of the benefit, Mary can deliver them from their torments. . . . The heroic act of charity consists in offering for the souls in purgatory, through the hands of Mary, all one's good works and likewise those which may be offered in our behalf by others during our life and after death. A priest who has made the heroic act can by every Holy Mass that he says release a soul from purgatory by way of suffrage. Dionysius, the Carthusian, tells of a holy virgin, Gertrude, who was accustomed to offer up every morning all her good works for the poor souls. When she came to die, the evil spirit filled her with alarm and endeavored to drive her to despair, by representing to her that she had no good works left for herself, as she had carelessly given them all away, etc. Thereupon our Lord appeared to her in radiant splendor and said: 'Why art thou so alarmed, My daughter? That thou mayest know how pleasing to Me was thy charity towards the suffering souls, I remit to thee the entire punishment that had been decreed to thee.' Prayers to be offered: "O my God, in union with the merits of Jesus and Mary, I offer up to Thee for the poor souls in purgatory, all my works of satisfaction, as also those that may be offered up by others for me, during life, at my death, and after my death. Amen." "O good Jesus, in union with Thy prayers or Thy divine works performed while on earth, I offer Thee this prayer, this good work, for the redemption of these souls." The concluding paragraph gives these instructions: "Pray especially, as said above, for the souls who are nearest deliverance. Descend into purgatory and ask: How much do you still owe your Lord? Perhaps one more Holy Mass, or a Holy Communion, or an alms? Take this debt upon yourself and it will be remitted to the soul which, as the last farthing is paid, can enter the eternal beatitude of heaven."—The 8th edition of this booklet appeared in 1931. E.

Francis de Sales on Preaching

A brother kindly sends us an excerpt from the works of a famous Roman Catholic bishop which will be read with interest: "The philosopher Aristotle says that the form of a thing is its being and soul. If you tell the most wondrous truths but tell them badly, they will profit little. The art is to say but little, and that well. Now, to do this in preaching, you must . . . speak warmly and devoutly, simply, clearly, and with confidence; you must thoroughly love what you teach and believe what you say. The sovereign art is to be artless. Our sermons

should be kindled not with vehement gesticulations or an excited voice but with inward devotion; they should come from the heart rather than the lips. Say what men will, it is the heart which speaks to hearts, whereas the tongue reaches no farther than men's ears." (From *Spiritual Letters of Francis de Sales*, translated by H. L. S. Lear.)

A.

The American Medical Association and Contraceptives

"Through its House of Delegates, which constitutes its entire voting power, the American Medical Association at its recent annual convention held in San Francisco denied that it had endorsed contraceptive practises at its Atlantic City convention last year. The reason for this forthright declaration was the widely heralded misstatements of the press reports declaring that the Association had changed its policy concerning birth control and that it favored the use of contraceptives. The Association is to be congratulated. In an open letter to the *New York Times*, July 27, Ignatius Cox, S. J., wonders 'how this more recent and momentous statement escaped the keen vigilance of the press.' Especially, we add, when lately it gave such prominence to foreign dispatches on the trial and acquittal of a prominent English doctor who as a test case pleaded guilty to the charge of performing a criminal abortion!"

America, Aug. 6, 1938.

Die „Unstimmigkeiten“ in den Evangelien

Diese vorgebliehen Unstimmigkeiten werden von den neueren Theologen als Grund für ihre Verwerfung der Verbalinspiration angegeben. Friedrich Büchsel, Professor in Koftod, der in seiner Schrift „Die Offenbarung Gottes“ behauptet, daß „die Apostel und ihre Schüler auch als Zeuger der Offenbarung Gottes nicht einfach aufgehört haben, fehlsame Menschen zu sein — Irrtümer sind bei ihnen nicht einfach ausgeschlossen“, und seine Schrift mit der Aussage schließt: „Der Gedanke der Inspiration von Worten muß aufgegeben werden“, schreibt auf Seite 77: „Der historisch Geschulte . . . wird in den Evangelien Unstimmigkeiten, unzuverlässige Berichte, legendäre Stücke u. a. m. feststellen und das älteste und die jüngeren Evangelien zu sondern versuchen usw.“ Wir fragen natürlich: Welches sind diese Unstimmigkeiten, die die historisch Geschulten festgestellt haben? Nun, Büchsel nennt eine Unstimmigkeit. Eine wäre ja auch genug, seine Sache zu beweisen. Diese eine Unstimmigkeit wird auf Seite 10 so dargelegt: „Jesu Präexistenz ist im Johannesevangelium klar und überzeugend bezeugt, vor allem, weil sie als Folge der Liebe des Vaters zum Sohne, die grenzenlos und darum auch nicht in Grenzen der Zeit eingeschlossen ist, nicht als metaphysisches Postulat oder Auskunft zur Lösung kosmologischer Problematik erscheint. Indessen, so sehr das Johannesevangelium Zutrauen verdient und deshalb Jesu Präexistenzbewußtsein und Präexistenz zuguerkennen ist: die synoptischen Evangelien berichten nichts von ihr. Deshalb muß es auch gestattet sein, bei dieser Unstimmigkeit der Berichte die Sache im Geheimnis zu lassen, wenn auch die völlige Ablehnung der Präexistenz Jesu mehr behauptet als berechtigt ist.“ In dem also, was die Synoptiker über die ewige Gottheit Jesu sagen und was Johannes darüber sagt, liegt

eine Unstimmigkeit vor. Die Bibel kann nicht wörtlich inspiriert sein, weil derartige Unstimmigkeiten, unzuverlässige Berichte, legendäre Stücke in den Evangelien gefunden worden sind. Wir brauchen uns nun nicht zu bemühen nachzuweisen, daß hier keine Unstimmigkeit vorliegt. Die Synoptiker I e u g s n e n ja mit keiner Silbe, was Johannes über die Präexistenz Jesu sagt. Von einem Widerspruch kann keine Rede sein. Ja, sie lehren ausdrücklich die Präexistenz Jesu, z. B. Matth. 1, 20—23; 10, 13—17; 22, 42—45. Es herrscht zwischen den Synoptikern und Johannes völlige Übereinstimmung. Allerdings gebrauchen sie nicht dieselben Worte. Johannes sagt viel mehr über die ewige Gottheit Jesu als die andern Evangelisten. Das war eben sein Thema. Sollen und müssen die andern Evangelisten dieselben Worte gebrauchen? Muß jedes Evangelium mit dem Prolog des Johannesevangeliums beginnen und dann Wort für Wort das Johannesevangelium bringen, so daß wir vier gleichlautende Evangelien hätten — sonst ergäbe sich eine „Unstimmigkeit“? Doch genug hiervon. Wir wollten nur an einem Beispiel zeigen, daß es mit der beliebten Rede von Unstimmigkeiten in der Bibel nicht weit her ist. Die neueren Theologen machen es sich sehr leicht.

Über das, was Büchsel über die Präexistenz selber aussagt, schreibt die „Kirchliche Zeitschrift“ (Jan. 1938, S. 44) in einer Rezension der Schrift Büchselfs „Theologie des Neuen Testaments“: „Die zweite Auflage des Werks hat eine Erweiterung erfahren. Ob das freilich immer eine Besserung bedeutet? Wir bezweifeln das mehrfach. So wird jetzt in § 26, der von dem Verhältnis des synoptischen und des johanneischen Berichtes über Jesu Verkündigung und Lehre handelt, im Text ein Absatz eingefügt, der unterstreicht, daß nur das Gemeinsame dieser beiden Berichte als das Gesicherte angesehen werden kann, und in den Anmerkungen heißt es: „Die Präexistenz Jesu kann nicht zu dem Gesicherten, was uns über ihn überliefert ist, gerechnet werden“, obwohl sie allerdings Büchsel nicht bloß „ein Stück Christushypothese“, sondern „ein Stück der Christustatsache“ ist. . . . Dagegen kann man sich freuen, bei der Darlegung der Logoslehre bei Johannes (S. 162 ff.) nun den Satz eingefügt zu sehen: „An eine Verwandlung des Logos im [1] Fleisch oder an ein bloßes Wohnnehmen des Logos im Fleisch denkt er nicht. Der Mensch Jesus und der Logos sind dasselbe Subjekt: der ewige Sohn Gottes (Joh. 17, 5. 24; vgl. 1, 14).“ Es kommt uns vor, als fänden sich „Unstimmigkeiten“ in den verschiedenen Aussagen Büchselfs.

Wir teilen hier nebenbei das Schlußwort von D. Reus Rezension mit: „Die Entscheidung über die Zuverlässigkeit der einzelnen Schriftausagen wird im ganzen noch mehr als früher in die Hand der menschlichen Überlegung gelegt. Wir müssen dabei an jenes Wort denken, das wir kürzlich über die theologische Arbeit des 19. Jahrhunderts gelesen haben: „Die Ergese ist gründlicher geworden, aber die Autorität der Schrift ist ins Wanken geraten.““

G.