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A Cry of Distress and a Plea for Justice.

Too late for notice in our last issue there came to us from the German Evangelical Mission Aid Society of Berlin-Steglitz the English edition of an address which Dr. Theol. Karl Axenfeld, Director of Missions, delivered before the annual convention of the Mission Aid Society in 1919. Though three valuable months have elapsed since the receipt of this address, the readers, we doubt not, will agree with us that its intrinsic value, its defense of eternal and essential rights, is such that even at this somewhat belated date the message of the speaker should be reiterated here. It is a simple plea for fundamental justice, and is well founded, particularly if one studies Article 438 of the Peace Treaty. We hold no brief for the Mission Aid Society, whose confessional basis is not fully known to us, nor do we subscribe to every sentiment expressed in the address. What the speaker, however, is battling for is an inalienable right of the Church of Jesus Christ, common and dear to every member of the Church.

The title of Dr. Axenfeld's address is, "Germany's Battle for the Freedom of the Christian Missions." The author says:—

The imminent conclusions of peace will not only bring about a great transformation in the political and economic life of the nations, but intellectual values, as well as the spiritual and the *religious*, are at hazard. There is a great danger that these most precious possessions of mankind will not be sufficiently regarded in the battle for wealth and power.

The chief point at issue, however, cannot be confined to the acquisition of additional territory by certain nations, nor to the reinforcement of

Instruction in Religion by Correspondence.

The text-book used is: *Luther's Small Catechism*, With Short Explanations and a Few Bible-verses for Very Busy People, by Wm. Dallmann.

The correspondence method cannot equal oral instruction. Besides other advantages, personal teaching gives opportunity of explanations which cannot be embodied in written questions or in a text-book. To supply this lack somewhat, I have added many explanatory notes. On the other hand, I have found that the correspondence method causes the pupil to think for himself, and to study the text of the Bible and of the Catechism for an answer to the question before him.

The writer looks upon these questions merely as an attempt upon which others will improve. He wishes to give a start to a line of work which in his opinion and experience is of value to pastors.

If the pastor deem it well, two series may be used as one lesson, though a short lesson is better than a long one. The notes frequently also serve to help the scholar in giving the correct answer.

Introduction.

SERIES I.

1. What is the text-book called which we are using for our instruction in the Christian religion?

NOTE.—Catechism, a book which instructs by the method of questions and answers.

2. What does Luther's Catechism explain?

3. What is the source of Luther's Catechism?

4. What is the Bible?

5. In what way is the Bible, which was written by men, the Word of God?

6. What does the statement 2 Tim. 3, 16: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, mean?

NOTE.—The writers of the Bible were aware that they were inspired. See 1 Cor. 2, 13.

7. Which are the two great doctrines of the Bible?

8. What does the Law teach us?

9. What does the Gospel teach us?

Part I. — The Ten Commandments.

SERIES II.

Of the two great doctrines of the Bible, the Law and the Gospel, let us consider the Law first.

10. How was the Law first given to man?

11. How was the Law later given to man?

NOTE. — The Law, which is briefly and concisely stated in the Ten Commandments, falls into two parts. To the first part the first three commandments belong, which tell man of his duty toward God. To the second part the last seven commandments belong, which tell man of his duty toward his neighbor, but which, since God has given it, is also a duty toward Him.

12. What is the sum of the first part of the Law?

13. What is the sum of the second part of the Law?

NOTE. — Evidently if we would keep these sums, we would keep the commandments. If we loved God with all our heart, we would have no other gods before Him, nor take His name in vain, etc.

If we loved our neighbor as we love ourselves, we would honor our parents, not kill our neighbor, etc.

14. Which is the First Commandment?

15. Who is the true God, who has given to man the Law and the Gospel?

16. Prove from Scripture that God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

NOTE. — The doctrine of the Trinity, that there is but one God, and that in this one God there are three persons, is incomprehensible; but that God is thus is reasonable, for the Supreme Being must be far above our human measurements.

17. Which false gods have the heathen?

18. Which false gods are worshiped also among civilized people?

NOTE. — Yea, when anything is done against the will of God, it is worshipping a false god; for in doing contrary to the will of God, we fear, love, and trust something more than God.

SERIES III.

19. Which is the Second Commandment?

20. What use of the name of God is a vain use?

21. What use of the name of God is a proper and beneficial use?

22. At the beginning of Luther's explanation of every commandment, the explanation of the First Commandment is repeated: "We should fear and love that we may," or, as the case may be, "may not," etc. These words call our attention to the source and motive of keeping the commandments.

a) What is *not* to be the source and motive of keeping the commandments?

b) What *is* to be the source and motive of keeping the commandments?

23. Which is the Third Commandment?

24. To sanctify means to separate from common use for special use. How do we sanctify a day?

25. When do we sin against this commandment?

NOTE. — Let us remember that the Third Commandment is a part of the Law of God binding just as much as the other commandments. As it is sin to kill and to steal, so is it sin to omit public and private worship of God.

26. Which is the Fourth Commandment?

NOTE. — Since government, teachers, and pastors, take, in certain things, the place of parents, or assist them, they also come under the heading of the Fourth Commandment.

Notice that God says: "Honor." The obedience of children to parents should flow from the honor due to parents, because God has placed them over us.

27. Which promise does God add to this commandment to show the importance He attaches to the keeping of it?

NOTE. — Obedience to parents is the foundation of order. Disobedient children will be disobedient scholars and citizens.

28. In how many things are children to obey their parents?

29. When only should children deny obedience to parents, teachers, government, pastors, etc.?

SERIES IV.

30. Which is the Fifth Commandment?

31. What is forbidden in this commandment?

32. What is commanded in this commandment?

33. How does our heart commit murder?

34. What does God say of revenge?

35. The Jewish teachers taught: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." But what does God command Matt. 5, 44. 45?

36. Which is the Sixth Commandment?

NOTE. — Adultery is impurity in sexual matters, and applies to the married or unmarried, and to deeds, words, or thoughts.

As to marriage, it is a lifelong union. The only ground for divorce is stated by Christ in Matt. 19, 9.

The honor due to parents demands that they be consulted and their consent obtained in the matter of engagement and marriage.

37. Which is the Seventh Commandment?

38. What is forbidden in this commandment?

39. What is commanded in this commandment?

NOTE. — As in other commandments, so also in the seventh, God demands that our hearts, too, shall be free from disobedience. In the Fifth Commandment hate was heart-murder, in the sixth lust was heart-adultery, and in the seventh jealousy and envy is heart-stealing. God judges differently from man; man judges externals; God, both externals and internals. We are guilty as to sinful external actions and also guilty as to sinful internal actions of heart and mind.

SERIES V.

40. Which is the Eighth Commandment?

41. What is forbidden in this commandment?

42. What is commanded in this commandment?

NOTE. — In the Eighth Commandment, God guards the good name and reputation of the neighbor. A good name is a very valuable possession.

43. With what words does the prophet of God tell us that our heart also may sin against this commandment?

44. What do both the Ninth and Tenth Commandments forbid?

45. What is the meaning of "to covet"?

NOTE. — In these two commandments it is evident from the wording of the commandment itself that God judges the heart also.

SERIES VI.

46. How does God call Himself in relation to all the commandments?

47. What is God eager, or jealous, to do with iniquity, or sin? — *Answer*: "Visit it," that is, "come with punishment."

48. What is God eager, or jealous, to do with those who keep the commandments?

49. Prove from Scripture that sin is punished.

50. When only could we go to heaven by way of the commandments?

51. But in what condition are we since the Fall?

52. What can we therefore not keep?

53. By what can we therefore not be saved?

54. Of what value is the Law nevertheless?

55. Who sinned first?

56. Whom did the devil lead into sin?

NOTE.—Man of his own free will permitted the devil to lead him into sin. It was in the power of man fully to oppose the temptation.

57. What is original (noun: origin) sin?

58. What is actual (noun: act) sin?

59. What proceeds out of the human heart, it being by nature sinful and inclined toward all that is evil?

60. What does James say of a person who neglects an opportunity to do good?

Part II. — The Creed, Our Christian Faith.

SERIES VII.

61. Which is the Second Chief Part of Christian doctrine?

62. What is the Creed?

63. How many articles are in the Creed?

The First Article.

64. Which is the heading of the First Article?

65. How does this article read?

66. The person mentioned in this article is called God the Father? What must He therefore have?

67. Who is the true God?

68. One person in God is called God the Father Almighty. What does "almighty" mean?

69. How did He prove Himself to be almighty?

NOTE.—Our reason tells us that an almighty being made the world. How God made the world, we learn from Scripture. Read Gen. 1, also Heb. 11, 3.

70. What does the Creator do with the creation?
 71. In order to preserve man, with what does He provide him?

NOTE.— Without the blessing of God, without the sunshine and rain, the work of man would bear no fruit.

72. Against what does God defend and protect us?
 NOTE.— God protects from all evil, that is, from all evil which hinders our salvation. All other so-called evil is conducive to salvation.

73. What prompts God to deal thus with us?

74. What, therefore, is our duty towards God?

SERIES VIII.

The Second Article.

75. Of what does the Second Article of the Creed treat?
 76. How does the Second Article read?
 77. Which words of the First Article are to be repeated at the beginning of the Second Article?

NOTE.— Creation is especially ascribed to God the Father, though the Son and the Holy Ghost also take part in it. Redemption is especially ascribed to God the Son, though the Father and Holy Ghost also take part in it, for instance: The Father gave His Son, the Holy Ghost anointed Jesus with power for the work of salvation. Sanctification is especially ascribed to God the Holy Ghost, though the Son and the Father also take part in it. It cannot be otherwise, for God is triune, three distinct persons in the one divine essence.— This is not contradictory; for God is three as to persons and one as to essence; yet the Trinity transcends our comprehension. That this must be so is reasonable; for if there be a God, He must be above the creature, supernatural.

78. The work of redemption is especially ascribed to God the Son. What did God the Son become in order to save mankind?

79. What names did He have as a man?

80. What does Jesus mean?

81. What does Christ mean?

82. In the Old Testament one who was anointed, was thereby installed and set apart for some office. Into what offices was Jesus installed and set apart by His anointment?

83. Is there any other Savior besides Jesus? Answer by citing text from Scripture.

84. In becoming man, the Son of God received into His person a human nature, so that He has now both a divine and a human nature.

- a) Prove from Scripture that Jesus is God.
- b) Prove from Scripture that Jesus is also man.

SERIES IX.

85. Why was it necessary that the Savior of man be a man?

86. Why was it necessary that the Savior of man be at the same time God?

87. Prove from Scripture that God sent His Son to keep the Law for man. See also 2 Cor. 5, 21.

88. Prove from Scripture that Christ endured the punishment which the Law imposed upon sin. See also Gal. 3, 13.

89. What position does Christ hold before the Father by the force of His work of redemption? See 1 John 2, 1. 2.

90. What can Christ be called because "*He* was made sin for us," because "*He* hath borne our griefs"?—*Answer:* Our Substitute, our Vicar.

NOTE.—Therefore we speak of "vicarious atonement."

SERIES X.

91. Christ's descent into hell, of which the Apostles' Creed confesses: "*He* descended into hell," is based on 1 Pet. 3, 18—20.

a) Christ did not descend into hell to suffer. What did Christ do in the prison of hell, according to 1 Pet. 3, 19?

b) That this preaching did not offer salvation to the damned is evident from 1 Pet. 3, 20. Of what did Christ according to this verse remind the spirits in hell?—*Answer:* Their disobedience, their misuse of God's long-suffering and patience, thereby declaring their punishment to be just.

92. What did Christ prove by His resurrection?

NOTE.—Only that man who has at the same time a divine nature can give life unto himself.

NOTE.—Had Christ remained in the grave, it would have been evident that sin was stronger than He, and that His work was a failure.

NOTE.—Only he who has life in himself can impart it to others.

93. For what purpose did Christ ascend into heaven?

94. For what purpose will Christ return visibly from heaven again?

NOTE. — There is no basis in Scripture for the belief that Christ will return to reign for a time on earth. Neither is there a foundation in Scripture that the dead who died in unbelief will be granted another opportunity to embrace the Gospel.

SERIES XI.

The Third Article.

Introduction: The Father has created us, the Son has redeemed us. Now it is necessary that we accept the redemption. This the Holy Ghost works in us. In this way He sanctifies us (see heading of Third Article), that is, He makes us holy; for if we accept the perfect Christ and His perfect salvation, God regards us as sanctified and holy. Our Substitute has fulfilled the Law for us and has endured punishment for our sins.

God the Father created us, not we; God the Son redeemed us, not we; thus also the Holy Ghost sanctifies us, not we.

95. How is man by nature in spiritual things, in things pertaining to God, to the Spirit, according to Eph. 2, 1?

NOTE. — A dead person, a corpse, has no activity, cannot do anything; thus a spiritually dead person cannot do anything in a spiritual way. — Other texts stating the same truth are 1 Cor. 2, 14; Rom. 8, 7.

96. If a man is spiritually dead by nature, what cannot he by nature do? See 1 Cor. 12, 3.

97. Who teaches us who Christ is, and what He has done for our salvation? Who also works faith in this Savior in us?

98. What means does the Holy Ghost use to teach us who Christ is, etc?

NOTE. — Since the Holy Ghost in this work turns us from spiritual death to spiritual life, from spiritual darkness to spiritual light, this work is also called "conversion" (turning), "regeneration" (act of being born again, new birth). As stated before, the work of God the Holy Ghost is also called sanctification; for by faith we are sanctified, we accept the holiness of Christ, our Substitute.

99. The Holy Ghost has made you a Christian, has brought you by the Gospel to faith. What strength does He give you at the same time?

100. To what extent should we as Christians live to the glory of God? See 1 Cor. 10, 31.

SERIES XII.

101. What is the whole body of believers called?

102. How is the Church since faith is a matter of the heart?

103. Why is the Church called "holy" and its members "saints"?

104. Why is the Church called "Christian"?

105. Where can we be certain that the Church exists, though it is invisible?

106. Why can we have this certainty?

107. Who belongs to the visible Church?

NOTE.—The visible Church is a mixture of believers and unbelievers (hypocrites, in this case, for they sham belief). See the parables Matt. 13, 24—26 and 47, 48.

108. What are the marks of the true visible Church?

NOTE.—The Lutheran Church has these marks. This does not declare it to be the only saving Church. In other denominations also there are, because the essential truths of the Gospel are preached, believers, members of the invisible Church.

109. When do we properly use the doctrine concerning the Church which we have now considered?

a) Concerning the invisible Church?

b) Concerning the visible Church?

NOTE.—It is by all means best to belong to the true visible Church, because faith is best nourished by the pure preaching of the Word of God. Every error is a danger to faith.

c) By doing what for the true visible Church?

d) By taking what position as to other churches?

SERIES XIII.

110. The members of the holy Christian Church daily receive forgiveness of sins, for continually their faith clings to Christ and His holiness. Who forgives sins or justifies, declares just?

111. Do we merit it? See Eph. 1, 7.

112. For whose sake does God forgive sins?

113. How for Christ's sake?

114. What is the hand of man by which he accepts God's offer of forgiveness found in the Bible?

115. How is a man therefore said to be justified? See Rom. 3, 28; 4, 5; Gal. 2, 16.

116. If justification, forgiveness of sins, be by faith, by accepting God's present, what is excluded on our part?

117. What is therefore displeasing to God?

SERIES XIV.

118. In question 99 we heard that the Holy Ghost, who has brought us to faith, gives us also strength to lead a Christian life, that is, to do good works. What kind of faith, namely, has the Holy Ghost wrought in us?

119. If there be no Christian life, no good works, of what is that a sign?

120. What will happen on the last day with all the dead?

121. To what will they be resurrected who on earth have done good works for Jesus' sake as an evidence and proof of their faith in Him as the Savior from sin?

122. To what will they be resurrected who on earth have done evil, which is an evidence of their unbelief?

123. How great shall the glory of the believers be in heaven? See Rom. 8, 18.

124. How long will life and the glory last? See Ps. 16, 11.

Part III. — The Lord's Prayer.

SERIES XV.

125. To whom is prayer to be directed?
126. How is prayer to be offered?
127. What does it mean to offer prayer "in the name of Jesus," or "for Christ's sake"?
128. For what things should we pray primarily? And why?
129. Since we do not know whether the earthly things we pray for are good either for our temporal or eternal life, what do we add to the prayer for earthly gifts?
130. Why does Jesus teach us to address God as Father?
131. What is the name of God?
132. When is it hallowed?
133. When not?
134. Which is the kingdom of God?
135. How do we enter it?
136. Which is the will of God?
137. What wills oppose it?

SERIES XVI.

138. Why do we pray for daily bread, though God gives it also to the wicked, who do not pray?

139. What is meant by daily bread?

NOTE.—*Daily bread.* Daily = this day; opposes worry for the future. *Bread* shows that God has promised only necessities.

140. What is a trespass?

141. What do we ask God to do with our trespasses?

NOTE.—Recall in whose name we pray, for whose sake we ask hearing.

142. Were our sins not forgiven, what would they hinder?

143. If we earnestly seek remission of sins, we also resolve to desist from sinning. Also from sinning what sins?

NOTE.—Asking for forgiveness of God, and refusing to forgive our neighbor, actually makes our prayer read: "Father, forgive my trespasses, but there is one trespass in which I desire to remain, namely, to be irreconcilable, unforgiving towards my neighbor."

144. Who does not tempt to evil?
 145. Who does?
 146. To what do they tempt us?
 147. When thus tempted, for what do we ask God?
 148. From what in general do we ask God to deliver us?
 Also, when do we ask Him to protect us from evil, and give us blessing and grace?

149. Which are the introductory words to the prayer?
 Which the concluding words?

NOTE. — "Thine is the kingdom": Thou art our King, and therefore to Thee we are to pray. "Thine is the power": Thou art a powerful King, and therefore Thou canst hear our prayer. "Thine is the glory": Thou shalt have all glory and praise for hearing this prayer.

150. What does Amen mean?
 151. Why can we add Amen to these petitions and to all true prayers?

Part IV. — Office of the Keys.

SERIES XVII.

152. What is the Office of the Keys?
 153. Which are the Keys? — *Answer*: Absolution and excommunication.
 154. What are the Keys to do?
 155. What is this power?
 156. Why is this power called the peculiar power?
 157. Who is the Church to whom Christ gave the Office of the Keys?
 158. How do Christians attend to their Office of the Keys?
 159. Quote one of the Scripture-passages wherein this Office of the Keys is given to believing disciples of Christ.
 See also Matt. 18, 15—20.

NOTE. — General confession of sins is made in the public service by all present, and the minister, as representative of the congregation, uses the Office of the Keys in absolving those who repent of their sins, believe in Jesus Christ, and earnestly purpose to amend their sinful lives. But the absolution can also be given to individuals; and this is done in private confession.

160. To whom did David privately confess his sins?
 161. Who then spoke the absolution in the name of God?
 162. Is private confession obligatory?
 163. Why is it especially beneficial?

Part V. — The Sacraments.

SERIES XVIII.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

164. Why is the water used in the sacrament of Baptism not simple water only?

165. Which is that word of God in which the water is comprehended, and with which it is connected?

166. What does the word "baptize" mean?

NOTE. — That "baptize" is not restricted to application of water by immersion is evident from Mark 7, 4, where the text speaks of washing (original Greek: baptizing) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and of tables. Tables (table-beds) were not immersed when cleaned. To baptize, therefore, means to apply water, the mode of application not being designated.

167. What does baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost mean?

168. Which words in the command of Baptism include the infants?

169. What does the Catechism say as to the benefit of Baptism?

170. On what Scripture-texts does the Catechism base its statement as to the benefit of Baptism?

SERIES XIX.

171. The great things told us concerning Baptism are backed by what?

NOTE. — Being backed by the Word of God, they are supported by God Himself, by His power and wisdom, by His work of salvation.

Christ saved us. This salvation is placed into the Sacrament, from which our faith takes it.

172. In Gal. 3, 27, we are told that in Baptism we put on Christ. Christ and His work covers us as a garment. Paul,

in Rom. 6, 3, makes particular mention that in Baptism we share in Christ's death. Baptized Christians are considered by God as having died in Christ for their sins. But Baptism has its influence also on the life of a Christian. In verse four of chapter six, the Apostle writes: "We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." When Christ was buried, He was buried as the sin-bearer, God having made Him to be sin for us; but when He arose, He had a glorious body and He was no more the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

So we are buried with Christ by Baptism.

- a) What should we therefore daily mortify?
- b) What should daily come forth and arise instead of that which we mortify?

SERIES XX.

The Sacrament of the Altar.

As in Baptism, we have in the Sacrament of the Altar first the institution of God; secondly, the external means; thirdly, the spiritual benefit.

173. How many times are the words of institution recorded in Scripture?

174. How does Christ describe His body and blood which He gives to the communicant in, with, and under the bread and wine?

175. In what words does Paul in 1 Cor. 10, 16 teach the real presence?

176. What, namely, do the words mean: "The cup of blessing . . . is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread . . . is it not the communion of the body of Christ"?

177. How does Paul in 1 Cor. 11, 27 teach the real presence?

NOTE. — If Christ's body and blood were not present, the unworthy communicant could not be said to be guilty of (misusing) the body and blood of the Lord.

While the bread and wine, and the body and blood of Christ, are at the same time taken with the mouth, the bread and wine are taken in the natural manner, the body and blood in a supernatural manner. Such eating and drinking takes place only in the Sacrament, and is therefore called sacramental eating and drinking.

SERIES XXI.

178. For what purpose were Christ's body and blood given and shed for us on the cross?

179. Now, if Christ's body and blood, which on the cross were given and shed for us for the remission of sins, are given to us in the Sacrament, how will this make us concerning the remission of sins?

NOTE.—A receipt is a good reminder of the payment of a bill. A better remembrance would be to have the money paid for the debt ever before you. Now, in the Lord's Supper, Christ's body and blood, wherewith He paid the debt and guilt of sin, is present and received, though invisibly, yet truly, according to His Word; hence the Lord's Supper certifies to us, by the real presence of Christ's body and blood, the payment of our debt, the forgiveness of our sins.

180. What does Paul admonish us to do before we partake of the Sacrament?

181. Since the remission of sins is received by faith, and faith is preceded by repentance and connected with the strength and purpose to leave off sinning, what question will a person ask himself before attending Communion?

182. What does an impenitent person living in open sin not desire?

183. What, therefore, must be refused to him?

184. Who cannot examine themselves as to their worthiness, and are, because of this inability, to be excluded from partaking of the Sacrament of the Altar?

NOTE.—Lutherans practise close communion, that is, they refuse the Lord's Supper to those holding false teachings, because Paul writes 1 Cor. 10, 17: "For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." As the members of the human body agree with each other, so should there be agreement among those communing together. Eating of one bread and drinking of one cup, they should also be one in faith.