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Good Works.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Rechtfertigung*, Part IX.

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Faith is a light, and good works are its rays. The Lord said to His disciples: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5, 16; cp. 1 Pet. 2, 12. Good works are testimonies for, and fruits of,¹⁾ faith. Christ says: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Matt. 7, 17, 18; cp. with v. 21. And Paul calls love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, "the fruit of the Spirit." Gal. 5, 22. See also Titus 3, 14; Col. 1, 10. The fruits stand in a twofold relation to the tree: first, the tree bears them, that is, it puts forth buds and nourishes them with its sap; secondly, seeing the fruits, one can tell the species of the tree. So faith, through the Holy Spirit, brings forth good works and, *vice versa*, is known by them. Matt. 7, 20 we read: "By their fruits ye shall know them." And when the Apostle James wishes to describe "the wisdom that is from above," he says: "It is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." Jas. 3, 17. Such honor is due good works. But they have nothing to do with our atonement. The tree does not draw nourishment from the soil by means of the fruits, but through the roots. So we at all times apprehend Christ, our Lord, by faith alone and receive from Him forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Therefore Luther is right when he says: "Inwardly we become godly through faith; outwardly we show our faith through works of love. For Scripture speaks of man in a twofold way, first, of the inner, secondly, of the outer man. For Scripture must needs make this distinction

1) 1 Tim. 5, 8, 10: ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη. Titus 2, 7—10.

"The Psychology of Religious Awakening."*

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The Psychology of Religious Awakening is the title of a book that left the press in January of this year. It has been sent us for review. The author, Dr. Clark, bestowed much time and painstaking labor on the study of his subject. What is the result?

The value of this book lies in the fact that it defeats itself. The author intends to present a psychological study of what he chooses to call *religious awakening*. He himself defines both words of the term. He says: "In this study an attempt will be made to view religious experience as it is interpreted by the religious individual himself. Although the term *religion* has been given a large number of meanings, the religious person is likely to experience little difficulty concerning terminology. In the present investigation the term will be taken in the simplest sense as being the individual's conscious attitude toward, and relationship with, whatever that individual conceives to be the divine forces or influences having ultimate control over his destiny. In the case of such persons as those whose experiences constitute the data of the study here undertaken, *that force is conceived in personal terms as the God of Christian theology, and the attitude toward, and relationship with, Him constitutes the religion being considered.* It is recognized that many elements, such as moral duties, beliefs, and forms of worship, are inextricably bound up with this attitude; but these are regarded as concomitants and manifestations rather than a part of the vital principle of religion itself. When, therefore, *the definite religious attitude is formed and the personal relationship entered into,* or when the individual becomes aware that he has made a definite reaction to, and assumed a definite attitude toward, his God, *then he has undergone a religious awakening or experience*" (pp. 22. 23). (Italics our own.)

The author avoids the use of the word *conversion* "in order to prevent confusion of thought due to different meanings of the term"; but he admits that "it is indeed an important word in most discussions of religious awakening and the psychology of religious phenomena" (p. 34). He himself defines the word *conversion* according to its English usage as follows: "The English word *conversion* signifies a turning about, a definite change of front, a pass-

* *The Psychology of Religious Awakening.* By Elmer T. Clark, M. A., S. T. D., LL. D. The Macmillan Company, New York.

ing from one state of being to an altogether different state as a definite and specific act. When used in the realm of religious phenomena, it would seem more accurate to apply it to the emotional experiences of the more radical sort in which a sudden change from irreligion or non-religion to religion is involved" (p. 36). We ask, Why limit the use of the term to "experiences of the more radical sort"? Again the author says: "Conversion in the sense of a sudden and complete change of front by virtue of a more or less cataclysmic emotional upheaval is a genuine phenomenon, which has been experienced by multitudes of people" (p. 37). Why inject in the definition of the word conversion "a more or less cataclysmic emotional upheaval"? This is produced in so-called revival meetings and under very abnormal conditions and circumstances, where, in spite of an outward emotional upheaval, no real conversion may have resulted at all. The fact is that what the author has in mind when speaking of "religious awakening" is what we commonly call conversion. To get at the psychology of it, the author has procured the experiences of a large number of persons, 2,174, and then made his deductions, to wit: "In the entire range of the process the data indicate *three types of awakening*, which, indeed, *differ mainly in degree and often only in the subject's attitude toward his own experiences*. The three types have been called the *Definite Crisis*, *Emotional Stimulus*, and *gradual types*" (p. 39). (Italics our own.) Types two and three, however, do not come under the head of religious awakening as the author himself has defined it (see definition given above), for in type two he says, "No especial change is effected" (p. 42), and in type three, "No change of attitude was necessary" (p. 45).

'Tis strange that the entire book was written on the subject of "religious awakening," or conversion, and that, while this was being done, the real authoritative source, the Bible, in which God Himself tells us what conversion is, has been ignored. With reference to it the author says: "The critical and scientific spirit has reached the rank and file of the people and brought about far-reaching changes in ideas concerning the Bible and other religious conceptions. Theology has changed, too, if not in its creedal statements, certainly in its presentation and interpretation to the people; *the doctrines of eternal damnation, personality of the devil, total depravity, and similar theories are seldom or never heard in present-day sermons*. Religious education, which is now an influential instrument in every leading religious denomination,

has definitely passed from the stage of instruction in Biblical facts to a thorough program of spiritual development, professing to find the new-born child in spiritual harmony with God and proposing to keep him in that state without any spiritual or moral hiatus, thus eliminating the necessity for the tremendous emotional upheaval which the older evangelism made essential to salvation or at least highly desirable" (p. 21). It is under these changed religious conditions of our time that the author, as he tells us, has made a new study of religious experience or religious awakening, or, as we would put it, conversion. But in order to have any value, such a study ought to be made in the light of Scripture itself. Had the author gone to the Bible to find out what conversion is rather than to 2,174 individuals who found their "religious awakening" under various kinds of preaching, theology, and religious influences, he would have gotten some reliable and useful facts. From the Bible he would *not* have learned that the original nature of man since the Fall contains a capacity not only for evil, but also for good (p. 94), but that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," John 3, 6, and that St. Paul says: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," Rom. 7, 18. He would have learned from the Bible that conversion is always an instantaneous act, a man being either converted or not converted, a believer or an unbeliever, in possession of his salvation or not in possession of it; there is nothing betwixt and between, no neutral ground. To those who had "denied the Holy One and Just" and who had "killed the Prince of Life," the apostle said: "Repent ye and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3, 14. 15. 19. And wherein this conversion consists we learn from the book of the prophet Joel, where we read: "Rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord, your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil," Joel 2, 13; and also from Jesus, who says: "Repent ye and believe the Gospel," Mark 1, 15. "Conversion, in its stricter sense, is the work of God by which man is through the Gospel translated from a state of sin and wrath and spiritual death, in which by nature all men are, into a state of spiritual life and faith and grace, in which alone the sinner can enjoy the benefits of Christ's redemption. — Conversion, in a wider sense, is the process whereby man, being by the grace and power of God transferred from his carnal state of sin and wrath into a spiritual state of faith and grace, enters upon, and under the

continued influence of the Holy Spirit continues in, a state of faith and spiritual life." (*Outlines of Doctrinal Theology*, by Dr. A. L. Graebner.) Man is either in the old state of sin or in the new state of grace. From the Bible, Dr. Clark would also have learned that conversion is solely the work of God, who through the Gospel works repentance and faith in the heart of the sinner; for Peter says: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. 1, 23.

The author of *The Psychology of Religious Awakening* no doubt felt that something vital was left out in his discussion and that in religious education this must be supplied if the latter is to accomplish its purpose; for in his concluding chapter, under the caption "Dangers of Religious Education," he says: "Certainly nothing could be more important than the formation of moral habits; but such habits do not constitute religion. Most religious persons believe that moral habits are not likely to be successfully cultivated among a very large section of the population save as they are grounded in, and motivated by, religious faith and sanctions. Though moral actions and religion have always been intimately related, they have never been identified by persons authorized to speak for religion. An identification of them by religious education will mean the cutting of the ground from beneath its own feet, since no separate educational agency is necessary for habit formation on a mechanical basis. That this danger is present is indicated by the large occupation of religious education with technique and the relative neglect of the fundamental philosophy of the Christian religion. Shelves of volumes on method, organization, curriculum, and tests are available, yet no worker in the field has as yet attempted seriously to interpret the underlying philosophy of Christianity into modern educational terms. . . . Religious education is in danger of forgetting the power and need of conversion, defined as reclamation by an emotional cataclysm. . . . In such an age as the present it should be remembered that humanity never has recognized, and doubtless never will recognize, religion as a 'science' in the ordinary acceptance of that word; it demands of religion a philosophy which transcends the scientific and offers a livable hypothesis concerning the eternal mysteries of the nature of God, of contact with the divine, of redemption, of immortality. Nothing short of such a livable hypothesis will satisfy the race, which will abandon religion when it fails

to offer an answer to the deepest cravings of human nature. Here emerges an outstanding demand, previously hinted at. It is that religious education seeks a firm basis in a reinterpretation of the fundamental philosophy of the Christian religion. This philosophy is contained in the great doctrines of the Church, which set forth hypotheses concerning God, redemption, and eternity. These doctrines are indeed expressed in the terminology of the past and embody conceptions which the modern mind experiences difficulty in entertaining. But they are of psychological origin and underlaid with profound psychological truth, in virtue whereof the religious population clings to them with unflinching fidelity. If religious education is to secure and maintain a rapport with the heart of religious humanity, it must base itself in the Christian philosophy and reinterpret the doctrines thereof into its own terms. . . . Into the field are going an increasing number of women and laymen without previous theological training, who must deal almost exclusively with methods and the more obvious aspects of Biblical literature and religious principles. In the field of general education there has been the complaint that teachers were well equipped with content material, but wanting in technique. Religious education should not reverse the situation by coming into the hands of leaders who possess *technique without content*" (pp. 155. 158. 159). (Italics our own.)

The "content" which is lacking in modern religious education and the preaching of the Modernists of our day is what Dr. Clark calls the "philosophy of Christianity" or "the fundamental philosophy of the Christian religion." Calling that which is lacking by its right name, it is Bible religion, or Bible Christianity. The Christian Bible student, having read Dr. Clark's book, soon realizes that such a religious structure as Dr. Clark gives us, even as that of the Modernists of our day, must fail because it is not only flimsy in itself, but above all, because it lacks the necessary foundation, and out of it all emerges the outstanding demand that this foundation is needed, if the right kind of religious structure is to be built and is to stand. Dr. Clark himself seems to have felt this. Had he written a book on "The Spiritual Doctrine of Conversion," showing which experience in the life of man measures up to it and which does not, he would have done many a real service. As it is, the only value of the book lies in the fact that it has defeated itself.
