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CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY.

(Continued.)

III. PUBLIC WORSHIP.

The pentecostal firstfruits of New Testament Christianity were not gathered in the streets of Jerusalem by a band of Salvationists, but in a meeting of the disciples who *were all with one accord in one place,*¹⁾ sitting in a house,²⁾ probably one of the thirty halls connected with the temple. We know that the 120 who formed the nucleus of this first Christian congregation, men and women, had been accustomed to meet for prayer and supplication.³⁾ At this pentecostal meeting, the *wonderful works of God*⁴⁾ were proclaimed, and Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and preached the gospel of Christ crucified and glorified.⁵⁾ There were those who *gladly received his word,*⁶⁾ which could not have been known to the apostles but by a profession of faith, which the new converts made before they *were baptized.*⁷⁾

Here, then, we have the various acts performed in the first meeting of the first congregation of primitive Christianity: the preaching of the word, the administration of a sacrament, confession of faith and prayer. Nor was this

1) Acts 2, 1.

2) Acts 2, 2.

3) Acts 1, 14.

4) Acts 2, 11.

5) Acts 2, 14 ff.

6) Acts 2, 41.

7) Acts 2, 41.

PARAGRAPHS ON THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

Some people are working with might and main to introduce the Bible into the public schools, and we are inclined to think they will succeed at least in part. The movement has been under way for some time, and the wind is shifting in its favor rather than against it. The religious press, the pulpit, conferences and conventions, individuals who have the public ear, are putting their shoulders to the wheels or hitching themselves to the traces. Judges and other State officials, politicians and the secular press are beginning to swing into position. By and by, petitions will be carted into our legislative halls, bills will pass through the first and second reading and go into the hands of the committees, there will be hearings and pleadings in the committee rooms, and finally the majority will have its way, and *something* will go into the public schools. What that will be is a different question. That it will be the Bible is hardly probable. It may be the New Testament. It may be a small volume of selections from both Testaments, a book prepared expressly for the public schools and approved by the organs of the State.

The final success of this movement will be chiefly owing to the fact that there is certainly something wrong about the public schools, something so thoroughly and unquestionably wrong that the most energetic efforts should be made to correct it. And while there were always those who knew that there was something wrong, there were many more who did not know, and who did not believe it when they were told, who looked upon our public school system as little short of perfection, as the pride of the nation, the Palladium of our country. Of late, however, growing numbers of these enthusiasts have begun to sober down and to awake to the fact, the undeniable fact, that there is indeed something wrong. Hence this growing un-

rest and this increasing demand that something must be done. Hence this movement to introduce the Bible into the public schools.

The endeavor to place the Bible in the public schools is but an effort to right one wrong by another wrong. Those who advocate the measure are physicians who have made a wrong diagnosis. They know that the patient is sick, but they do not know what ails him. The trouble with the public schools is not that something is not there which ought to be there, but that there is a large element there which should not be there. And no amount of addition will bring the correct answer where subtraction is required. This element which should not be in the public schools at all is made up of thousands upon thousands of children whose parents should know better than to send their children to a school which by its very nature excludes and must exclude religious training from its curriculum. The presence of these children in the public schools is the fundamental wrong with which we have to contend and for which there is but one remedy, to take these children away from where they do not belong and put them where they belong.

There is no religious training in our public schools, and this is not wrong but right. These schools are institutions of the State, a purely secular state, which very properly leaves the care of their souls, their relation to God, all their spiritual interests, to the citizens themselves. To define the religious duties of the citizen, to determine what is sin and what is righteousness before God, to lead the sinner to settle his account with God, all this is not within the province of the State. But these are precisely the fundamentals of all religious training and instruction. It is in these points that Jews and Christians, Roman Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans and Baptists, differ and must be per-

mitted to differ without interference on the part of the State. But instruction in conflict with or deviating from any citizen's conviction in any point of religion, when imparted in a State school and by a teacher employed by the State, is State interference which no citizen entitled to the use of such school should be made to suffer. The Jewish child is taught that to embrace Christianity is the fearful sin of apostasy from the God of Israel, and the State has no right to teach that child what the New Testament teaches, or what Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ and an apostate in the eyes of the Jew, inculcates in the name of Christ, who died under the anathema of the high priest of Israel. That the Jewish child is wrong does not give the State a right to correct him by an opposite doctrine. If it did, the State might go ahead and tell the Roman Catholic child that he is wrong in praying to the Virgin, and where would it all end but, consistently, in religious persecution? If the New Testament is a religious book, teaching and inculcating a religion other than that of the Jew, it is certainly out of place in an American public school as long as the Jew is capable of American citizenship.

Should all the millions of Christian children then grow up without adequate religious instruction merely on account of the comparatively few Jewish children in the public schools? Certainly not. *Our* children are not growing up without religious instruction, daily religious training in a Christian school, and in our synod there are nearly a hundred thousand children enjoying the same benefit. These children are where they properly belong, Christian children in Christian schools, Lutheran children in Lutheran schools, and we do not see any sufficient reason in the world why Methodist children should not receive religious training in Methodist schools, and Baptist children in Baptist schools and Presbyterian children in Presbyterian schools. Then these children would be where they properly belong. The

Bible, too, would be read and studied in all these schools, and being in the hands of Christian teachers and Christian children, the Bible, too, would be where it properly belongs.

But what of those thousands of children whose parents are not Christians? Should they be left to grow up without schools like the little South Sea Islanders? Well, no. In the first place, the little South Sea Islanders are not all growing up without schools. Many of them are being trained in better schools than the children of some American parents who contribute toward the maintenance of the missionary schools thousands of miles away. And why should not mission schools be established in our large cities? We have a school right here in St. Louis for children in the slums, no matter what their parents may be, and scores and hundreds of similar schools might be established by the churches in our country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with the Bible and religious instruction in every one of them. What a field for such work New York and Philadelphia and Chicago and San Francisco would be!

We are well aware that we could not expect to get all the children of unchurchly people to attend slum mission schools. Some of these people do not live in the slums. Some of them live in the West End. But even some of these would gladly send their children to Christian schools if the churches in their neighborhood were alive to their duty and carried on schools for their own children. When we were a boy in a Christian school, we had schoolmates who were the children of wealthy infidels, although a public school was but a few blocks away, and we know of very genteel infidels who are sending their children to Lutheran schools to-day, although these children pass by a stately public school four times a day on their way to and from school.

Then there are unchurchly West End people who would prefer to have their children brought up to their own views, and who could well afford to support schools of their own color. And if they could, why should the community be taxed to give them what they can provide for themselves?

And yet there would be room for purely secular public schools in our country. In many places and districts the various churches are so thinly represented that they cannot maintain schools of their own. Many parents are unwilling to commit their children to religious schools and unwilling or unable to establish and maintain non-religious schools. There let the State step in and provide and amply provide schools and teachers for those children who would otherwise grow up with little or no schooling of any kind, schools open and available to all, Jews and Gentiles, schools as purely secular as the State is purely secular. Of course, these schools would be few and small compared with what our public schools are now. Most of the children of the churches would never set foot into one of them. All the churches would be stronger, stronger in quantity, stronger in quality. Few people would think of putting their children where they do not belong, and few people would think of putting the Bible where it does not belong.

We expect to see the waters of the Chicago River turned back once more to pour into Lake Michigan several years before we shall see the masses of Christian children in America gathered in Christian schools. But no matter what we St. Louis people may do to invert the current of that sluggish stream, it will take us quite a while to bring about the change. And whatever we "Missouri" people may say or do, it will take us still longer to bring about the reflux of those millions of children from where they do not belong to where they should properly be. We are pretty sure that this educational problem is a hopeless case; that

the only treatment which would lead to a cure will never be attempted on a larger scale, and that all the palliatives administered will leave the patient a hopeless invalid.

The palliative which was until recently printed in bold type in the educational *Materia Medica* was the Sunday School. But the puny looks of the children under treatment spoke louder than all the praises of that nostrum; and all the apparatus of Lesson Leaves and cards and Sunday School papers and pictorial charts and diagrams and conventions *et cetera* could not prevent this institution from sinking into discredit in the estimation of many who had eyes to see and ears to hear. People are losing faith in these dosings with soothing syrup and paregoric, which may be very good in their place, but cannot cure a disease which requires heroic treatment with a sovereign remedy. Said Professor Sylvester Burnham, of Hamilton Theological Seminary, in a recent letter: "I certainly hope that something may be done to better the present Sunday-school work. I am more and more impressed that it is accomplishing very little in the matter of imparting any real or useful knowledge of biblical teachings, either from the intellectual or spiritual point of view." And Professor W. N. Clarke, of Colgate University: "The unwillingness of the National Sunday School Convention at Denver to adopt reasonable improvements in method opens the way to other agencies and seems to render them necessary."

And now the palliative in which all the hopes of many are centered is *the Bible in the public schools*. What the children need is religious training. What they are now to get is three or five minutes of Bible reading a day. What the children need is sufficient food not only to keep them alive, but also to secure a steady and healthy growth. What they are to get is an allowance of a spoonful of milk a day. This is even worse than the Sunday School, which affords

about an hour a week, where this would not make it half that time. But even if the allowance were ten minutes a day, that would not constitute religious training. You cannot bring up a healthy child even on three spoons of milk a day; nor a sick one either.

The trouble with many who are now clamoring for the Bible in the public schools is that they have not received proper Christian training themselves and do not know what Christianity is. If Christianity were the religion of the Golden Rule, three minutes of Bible reading a day might be amply sufficient not only to inculcate the sum and substance of Christianity, but also to teach the children that the religion of the Bible is not Golden Rule Christianity at all. To make the Golden Rule, or the Law, the fundamental doctrine of religion for fallen man is not Christianity, but heathendom; and that cannot be learned from the Bible, though it be read ten hours a day instead of ten minutes.

Some of the Doctors who have expressed their sympathy with the new movement for religious education would be ready at once to sacrifice the Christian character of the religious training contemplated. A prominent Congregationalist, Dr. Josiah Strong, wrote some months ago: "There is a profound need of a great ethical revival in the church as well as outside of it, and a much better ethical training should be given both in the Sunday school and the day school. I am of the number who believe that religion affords the only adequate basis for ethical instruction. . . . Between the upper and nether millstones of Romanism and secularism, all religion will be ground out of our public schools. I would like very much to see inculcated in them the fundamental truths common to all monotheistic religions, namely, the existence of a God, man's immortality, and his accountability. Jew, Catholic, and Protestant alike believe in these fundamental truths." We must say, this

is putting rather a low estimate upon young America. If some one were to say, "Our schools are in need of a great intellectual revival; I would like to see at least addition and subtraction taught in them," this would be quite a compliment compared with what the Doctor has to say of the children in our public schools. For if inculcating "the existence of a God, man's immortality, and his accountability," is to be the coming ideal basis for "far better ethical training" than these children are now enjoying, in what Egyptian darkness of profound moral and religious ignorance must they be groping about until the great ethical revival shall have come!

A. G.

Theological Review.

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