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Does Paul Call Jesus God?

We need not point out at length that among the pillars on which the Christian faith rests the doctrine of the deity of Christ is one of the most important, and that, if this pillar is removed, the whole structure must collapse. What Christ is and what He did, the glory of His person and the glory of His work, are inseparably bound together. We may think of what John says, John 20, 31: "But these [signs] are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." Evidently, according to the Scriptures, there is a close connection between the deity of Christ and the saving work of Christ. The Church has contended for the deity of her Lord from this very point of view. It was that great champion of orthodoxy, Athanasius, who, in the bitter controversy with the Arians, pointed out that, if we refuse to accept Christ as the true God, we lose the assurance and the comfort of the redemption. Half an hour's reading of Luther's writings will suffice to convince any one that the great Reformer recognized how intimately the two doctrines we are speaking of are united. He says, for instance (St. L. Ed., VII, 1557): "We must have a Savior who can rescue us from the power of the god and prince of this world, the devil, likewise from sin and death; that is, we need a Savior who is the true, eternal God, through whom all that believe on Him are justified and saved. For if He is nothing more nor any higher than Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, etc., He is not our Redeemer. If He sheds His blood for us as the Son of God, to redeem and cleanse us from sin, and we believe this and poke it into the face of the devil (*dem Teufel vor die Nase halten*) whenever he terrifies and torments us on account of our sins, then the devil is soon defeated and has to retreat and to cease molesting us." The Church, then, is not battling for a mere abstract or speculative truth when it defends the doctrine of the deity of

Vacation-Schools of Religion.

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I. Introductory and Historical.

“The primary responsibility and obligation of the Church, standing above all other responsibilities and obligations whatsoever, is the religious education of its childhood and youth.”

The quotation is from *The New Program of Religious Education*, by George Herbert Betts, (University of Southern California), Abingdon Press, 1924. That the Protestant churches generally have failed to recognize this paramount responsibility is being more and more fully recognized. In his little book *The Week-day Church School* (Presbyterian Board of Publication 1921) Walter A. Squires called attention to the inadequacy of present-day agencies of religious education. Commenting on this book, the *Presbyterian* said October 20, 1921: “In no respect has the modern Church failed more signally than in the exercise of its teaching function. A generation is growing up that is all but totally ignorant of Christianity and its significance. Even those who have been reared under the influence of our Protestant churches are, as a class, ignorant of the most primary facts and truths of the Christian religion. This of itself would seem to indicate that our present educational agencies are woefully inadequate.” As for the children in the Sunday-schools, “most do not receive over twenty-five hours of instruction throughout the year, and even that meager instruction lacks any continuity.” Rev. Ford C. Ottman, Presbyterian Fundamentalist, New York, said five years ago: “There is much talk of Christian education, but little in the way of accomplishment. Where shall we find such instruction given? Not in the home, except in rare instances. Not in the Sabbath-school, again with exceptions, with its large percentage of hopelessly incompetent teachers. Not in the public schools, which will have none of it. The Roman Catholic Church has been clever enough to discern the need and make provision to meet it. The Protestant Church is vociferous in protest and almost barren in accomplishment. The problem of Christian education will remain an unsolved problem until the Christian Church makes provision for adequate Christian instruction.” The *Churchman* (Episcopal), in 1921, printed an article by Rev. R. P. Kreitler voicing the same sentiment. Rev. Kreitler said: “Frankly, one hesitates to disagree with the broad statement made by our own Department of Religious Education in its pamphlet (No. 4,600) on the

general subject of this article; but it is wholly true to say: 'It is generally conceded that the Sunday-school of the past has been a failure.' Although it is quite possible to admit, the pamphlet goes on to say, that 'few will deny that the Sunday-school is totally unequal to the task of meeting the needs of the rising generation for religious training and instruction.'

Two measures have during the past ten years been marked within the American churches in order to supplement the Sunday-school. They are designated generally as the Week-day School of Religion and the Vacation Bible School. With the former, which calls for the release of children from public school hours one period a week, we are not now concerned. Our subject is the Vacation School of Religion, and the availability of this means of instruction for children over which our Church has spiritual supervision.

The Vacation Day-school is not a new institution in the American Lutheran churches. While it has been an experiment for two decades at most among any of the Reformed communions, the Swedish and Norwegian Lutherans have had summer-schools of religion ever since the beginning of mass immigration. In the Norwegian Synod and in the Augustana Synod they were known as "parochial schools," "Menighedsskole," "Sommarskola," or "Swede school." In 1860 — sixty-seven years ago — the Augustana Synod had 18 "parochial schools," and these schools, if we are correctly informed, were "Church Vacation Day-schools" from their very start. They made slow progress during the first three decades of the history of that synod. Beginning with 1890 and continuing for thirteen years, the Swedish Vacation Day-schools grew very rapidly in number, strength, and influence. In 1902, just about the time when the first attempts were made to introduce the Church Vacation Day-school into the Reformed churches, the Augustana Synod could report 3,847 weeks of Vacation Day-school, attended by 21,900 scholars, who were taught by 577 teachers. That year proved also to be the climax. Since 1903 this institution has been decreasing both in number of weeks and of scholars. The last report available shows that in 1920 there were only 256 congregations having Vacation Day-schools, with a combined number of weeks amounting to 1,485 and of scholars to 8,895 — a mere shadow of what it used to be. The failure of the Church Vacation Day-school in the Augustana Synod is ascribed by a writer in the *Lutheran Companion*, 1922, to the following causes: 1) Lack of religious interest on the part of the parents for their children; 2) wrong conception of the purpose of the Church Vacation Day-school;

3) the common belief among Christian people that the Sunday-school gives sufficient religious instruction to the children; 4) the rapid disappearance of the Swedish language in the home, the Sunday-school, and the church; 5) lack of system — principles and the programs — in the Church Vacation Day-school; 6) lack of suitable text-books and other essential school materials; 7) lack of competent teachers.

The Norwegian Synod likewise, for many decades, regarded the summer-school as the sheet-anchor of its religious instruction. Its Normal School at Sioux Falls trained scores of teachers who devoted themselves entirely to this work. (In pioneer days public schools kept about six months in the year, and the other half year could be given to the "parochial school.") The decline of the institution among the Norwegians is probably due to the same causes as among the Swedes. We would, however, in the case of both the Norwegian and Swedish Vacation-schools, instance as another cause of decline the lengthening of the public school course to nine months (instead of six), which resulted in a curtailing of the time available for the work of trained summer-school teachers.

In our own Synod, and in the Synodical Conference generally, the summer-school has never held the position of eminence as in the Scandinavian synods. From the beginning our churches have had Christian day-schools, paralleling the public school system of secular instruction, together with daily religious instruction. This ideal means of childhood training is experiencing a strong upward turn, both in numbers and in quality of instruction, within the past five or six years, and no one in our Synod could probably now be found who would propose that we abandon the daily year-round Lutheran school and substitute the vacation school. On the other hand, it should be recognized that the Vacation-school has been an established institution in our Synod for many years. Many of the *Gemeindeschulen* formerly listed in our statistics were, in fact, either Saturday- or Vacation-schools. The following statistics have been supplied through the kindness of Statistician Eckhardt: 897 Saturday-schools, 20,264 pupils, 769 pastors teaching.

II. Establishment of a Vacation-School.

It may be possible for us to gain some practical hints for the inauguration and conduct of a Vacation-school of Religion from the following report of a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Lathem, of Chester, Pa. Preparation was made: "First. By preaching a number of sermons, six or seven, in which the prevailing ignorance of

the Bible was set forth, the necessity of knowing it; and it was shown that this could be done only by making the Book the subject of study, recitations, tests, reports, etc., the same as in public schools.

“Second. The pastor canvassed every family connected with the church where there were children and young people, note-book in hand, personally set the need before them of their children becoming acquainted with the Word of God; secured promises from all who were willing to make the same, that they would remain home during the month of July and send their children to the school.

“Third. Frequent announcements were made, and everybody was encouraged to talk about it and to look forward with expectation. The outcome was awaited with considerable anxiety.

“The enrolment during the first year was 193; average attendance, 163.

“In every respect it was like a public school, except the textbooks, which were either the Bible or books that set forth its history, geography, or leading principles.”

On Friday night of the fifth week the school closed its first session. A public exercise, in which each class had ten minutes assigned, to show parents and friends something of what they had learned, revealed to all present how much can be accomplished in five weeks of five days each, and three hours a day, of consecutive effort.

III. General Scope.

The *raison d'être* of the Vacation Religious School has been stated as follows by a Swedish Lutheran writer: “Each congregation should have one in order that the work of the Sunday-school may be supplemented and the religious education of our youth, at present universally inadequate, be enlarged and conducted according to the best educational methods. Why should we allow one-fourth — more or less — of the child’s year to be spent in idleness and then complain of lack of time to teach him religion? The program of the public school leaves the children idle for three months each summer. Isn’t this the great opportunity of the Church to recruit its own ranks and Christianize the growing generation? Why should we not bring together the three great factors — idle children, unoccupied churches, and willing teachers (students and public school teachers) — and use them in the Church Vacation Day-school to the upbuilding of the Kingdom and the

saving of childhood and youth? A Vacation Religious Day-school of six weeks, for three hours a day, is equal in point of time alone to three years of ordinary Sunday-school instruction as the average Sunday-school is conducted to-day."

IV. Purpose.

At this point certain perplexing problems begin to rise into view. We have congregations with daily parish schools, with Sunday-schools, with both day-schools and Sunday-schools, with Saturday-schools, and with Sunday- and Saturday-schools, and in each of these categories we easily recognize conditions which will affect not only the method, but the very purpose of the Vacation-school.

The following principles may be accepted as basic:—

1) The Vacation-school must never be urged as an adequate substitute for the regular Christian day-school.

What it lacks is the permeation of the child's entire school instruction and discipline by means of the Word of God; the daily religious instruction throughout the school-year; adequate text-books and trained teachers. While the lack mentioned last can be overcome in course of time, the first two deficiencies are, by the very nature of the case, inherent in the Vacation-school.

2) The Vacation-school is an efficient substitute, within certain limits, for the Sunday-school.

It is a *school*, with school atmosphere and program, while the Sunday-school session is to a large extent a "children's service." It supplies instruction connected through consecutive days of the week, while the Sunday-school is handicapped by the six days of non-Christian education which intervenes between sessions.

It is handicapped, however, as compared with the Sunday-school, by a lack of text-books. As for a teaching staff, it will have a slight advantage over the Sunday-school if the forces available during the summer months are employed. (See *sqq.*)

3) The Vacation-school must not duplicate the instruction material or the program of either the day-school or the Sunday-school, since in its very constitution it partakes too little of the pedagogical scope and even method of either.

4) Where a regular day-school is established, the Vacation-school should be regarded —

a) As a missionary institution (for pupils not enrolled in the day-school); or

b) as a supplement to, or introductory course of, the instruction preparatory for confirmation (for children who have either had insufficient preparation in the day-school or have attended only Sunday-school); or

c) both a) and b).

V. The Pupils.

The pupils instructed in the Vacation-school will accordingly be —

a) The Sunday-school pupils. In this case the need of a separate course, differing from the Sunday-school in method, subject-matter, and text-material, is apparent.

b) The missionary material of the neighborhood, not enrolled in any institution of the Church (either Sunday-, Saturday-, or day-school).

c) Backward students in the upper classes of the day-school — or such as have for any reason failed to receive adequate instruction there (vacancies, poor teachers, language question) — preparing for confirmation.

d) Introductory course for confirmation class, where the Church has only a Sunday-school and only a year's course of preparation for confirmation.

e) The children of missionary congregations which cannot be served by the missionary in charge (preaching-stations); in which case the missionary would reside in the field for the months given to summer-school work, or a student would be placed in charge.

f) Children of all-English congregations which desire some work in German, and *vice versa*.

VI. The Teachers.

Where the enrolment is small (up to 25 or 30), the pastor will probably be the teacher. He may find help by securing the assistance of public school teachers on vacation and at leisure; theological students; students from our Normal schools; the more efficient Sunday-school teachers. Such assistance, of course, becomes necessary when the school runs above 25 or 30 in enrolment.

VII. Course.

In view of what has been submitted under Section 5 about the scholars who come into consideration, it is clear that the course and methods of the Vacation-school will vary considerably, no two schemes really being available for the various types of enrolment

there sketched. In suggesting the distribution of religious branches and activities herewith appended, we have in mind a Vacation-school of Religion which supplements, or is a substitute for, regular Sunday-school work, because in practical importance this need comes first. The educator will easily perceive the pedagogical principles basic to the distribution of work here recommended. It may not be amiss to say that the experience of the writer, during his summers of Vacation-school Work while a member of the Norwegian Synod, is here drawn upon.

We have in mind a Vacation-school taught by two teachers with five sessions a week, 9 A. M. to 3 P. M., for six weeks.

The various types of instruction which enter into a course of summer-school may be summarized as: Memory Work (Scripture-texts, Catechism, Prayers), Catechetical Instruction, Bible History, Hymns, Hymn Tunes, Report on Sermons, History of the Reformation, History of the Missouri Synod, Biblical Geography, Church-year. As distributed over a school of eight grades, this material may appear as follows:—

Grade 1:—

Text of Commandments and of Creed; the Lord's Prayer.
Bible stories.
Five Scripture-texts.
Children's prayers.
First stanza of five children's hymns.
Singing of hymns.

Grade 2:—

Catechism and Bible stories combined with 1.
Additional prayers and first stanzas; five additional Scripture-texts.
Hymn tunes.

Grade 3:—

Luther's explanation of the Ten Commandments.
Five children's hymns.
Five Scripture-texts.
Morning and evening prayers.
Bible stories.
Singing.

Grade 4:—

Luther's explanation of the Creed. Words of institution of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
Five Scripture-texts.
Five other children's hymns.
Review of prayers learned in 1—3.
Bible stories.
Singing.

Grade 5:—

Luther's explanation of the Lord's Prayer. Full texts of Holy Baptism.
 Five Scripture-texts.
 First stanzas of ten hymns.
 Prayers on entering and leaving church. General Confession.
 Report on Sunday sermon (Monday work).
 Memorizing of titles of books of New Testament.
 Reading of gospel selections.
 Outline of life of Christ.
 Outline of geography of Palestine (New Testament age).

Grade 6:—

Full text of the Lord's Supper.
 Proof-texts under Ten Commandments.
 Catechetical treatment of Ten Commandments.
 First stanzas of ten additional hymns.
 Reading of Gospel selections (with 5).
 Outline of life of Christ (with 5).
 Review of all prayers.
 Memorizing of titles of books of Old Testament to prophets.
 Report on Sunday sermon (Monday work).
 Outline of geography of Palestine (New Testament age).
 Life of Luther.

Grade 7:—

Review of Catechism.
 Catechetical treatment of Creed.
 Proof-texts under First and Second Articles.
 Ten hymns.
 Memorizing of Old Testament prophets.
 Reading of gospel selections (with 5 and 6).
 Outline of life of Christ (with 5 and 6).
 Report on Sunday sermon (Monday work).
 Outline of geography of Old Testament world.
 Life of Luther (with 6).

(NOTE. — Material changes in the above-listed subject-matter are indicated if the scholars in view are those of Groups c) and f) under Section 5.)

Grade 8:—

Review of Catechism (with 7).
 Catechetical treatment of Creed.
 Proof-texts under Third Article.
 Selected Psalms (1, 23, 46, 103).
 Ten additional hymns.
 Reading of epistle selections.
 Outline of life of St. Paul.
 Report on Sunday sermon.
 Outline of geography of Old Testament world.
 History and organization of the Missouri Synod.

Program.

The application of a few general principles is attempted in the following.

The order in which, roughly speaking and with observance of the laws of fatigue and variation, the faculties of the child should be employed in following so diversified a program as above suggested, may be stated thus: Memory, Reason, Perception, Assimilation, Self-expression. In accordance with this scheme we should have the following sequence in the daily program:—

After the opening devotion:—

Recitation (Catechism text; Scripture-texts).

Catechetical instruction.

Bible reading and Bible stories.

Biblical geography.

Singing.

In the afternoon:—

Recitation of prayers and hymns.

Catechetical instruction.

Singing.

Report on Sunday sermon.

Life of Christ.

Life of St. Paul.

History of Synod.

Singing.

Lesson Material.

The lesson material used in the Vacation-school of Religion should by all means be different from that in the Sunday-school when the latter is being supplemented by the Vacation-school, the children being the same in both courses. Simply to duplicate the course of the Sunday-school would be a waste of time if the Sunday-school has any value at all, — and it surely has, — and would, even with a low-grade Sunday-school, throw this institution out of gear.

At a joint meeting of the General School Board and of the Sunday-school Board held three years ago steps were taken to provide material also for use in Vacation-schools.

SCHEDULE 1.

We have accordingly available for Vacation-schools:—

English Bible.

Luther's Catechism, tract edition.

Sunday-school Hymnal.

Ev. Luth. Hymn-book, with tunes.

Stellhorn-Kuehnert, *Elementary Bible History.*

Loose-leaf form of the same text.

- P. E. Kretzmann, *Search the Scriptures!* (the Bible itself, New Testament, being class text).
- Theo. Kuehnert, *Graded Memory Course* (Scripture-texts, hymns, prayers).
- Graebner, *The Story of Our Church*.
- Buchheimer, *Little Folded Hands*.

SCHEDULE 2.

We are lacking:—

- A selection of Bible stories suitable for Vacation-schools.
- A book of catechetical instruction, Schwan being quite out of consideration.
- Text containing outline of life of Jesus and of St. Paul.
- Elementary geography text, or, at least, maps (under consideration).
- Selection of references for reading gospels and epistles.
- An outline life of Luther.

The gathering of all material, including catechism, hymns, and prayers and everything listed in Schedule 2, into three handbooks for Primary (Grades 1—3), Intermediate (Grades 4—6), and Advanced (Grades 7 and 8) work is a prime necessity if the work of our Vacation-schools of Religion is to function properly for the purpose which has called them into being.
