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A Symposium on Religious Education.

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The religious education of children has, in the last few years, been given unusual attention by non-Lutheran Protestants. Books, pamphlets, and articles in church-papers have been written; schemes have been suggested and tried. We shall, first, quote some of the printed literature which is before us, and then, secondly, draw conclusions and offer some comment.

A folder, *Some Questions Frequently Asked upon Cooperation with the Public Schools for Week-day Religious Education*, gotten out by the Department of Religious Education of the Protestant Episcopal Church, says the following by way of introduction:—

It is generally conceded that the Sunday-school of the past has been a failure. Few will deny that it is totally unequal to the task of meeting the needs of the rising generation for religious training and instruction. But all must recognize with a shock that the statistics show the appalling number of public school children who have no relationship to any religious institution and are receiving no religious instruction.

There is a growing belief, expressed by earnest workers of all churches, who are vitally interested in child welfare, that some additional effort must be made to give the children of to-day, the citizens of to-morrow, an adequate life equipment. Religious education and training must be an integral and vital part of this equipment.

While welcoming all experiments and efforts of whatsoever kind that look forward to this end, we believe that if the ideals of Christian character are to be in any measure realized, more time must be secured for the child to live them, and the best time is school time.

From the same folder we quote the following questions and answers:—

What is meant by cooperation with the public schools for religious instruction? We mean that the public school authorities shall assign to the pupils, upon the definite request of the child's parents or guardian, a portion of his school time to be given up to religious instruction at such

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

Africa. — A recent issue of the *Zululand Times* contained the following open letter:—

TO THE EDITOR, "ZULULAND TIMES":

SIR:—A word please *re* the article "Religion and Reason" in the issue of Thursday, July 13. I think that Bishop Talbot, of Pretoria, is taking upon himself a terrible responsibility in scattering broadcast his opinions about the inspiration of the Bible, in view of the words of the Savior, Matt. 5, 18: "For verily I say unto you: Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." I prefer to believe what the Bible is asserting of itself, 2 Tim. 3, 16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration . . . for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It is not true that no scholars to-day refuse to acknowledge errors and self-contradictions in the Bible. I could, for instance, point to

a Lutheran church-body in America, the Missouri Synod, this year celebrating its seventy-fifth jubilee. It has more than three thousand professors and pastors, more than one million church-members, all professing with one mouth that "all Scripture is given by inspiration." This church-body has strong outposts and missions in many, many countries amongst Christians and heathens. One of their professors, Dr. F. Pieper, has just issued a dogmatic work in three big volumes that I should think might perhaps be the most important Protestant dogmatic work issued for centuries.

I have no doubt that even scholars in the church represented by the Bishop of Pretoria are fully able and willing to take the bishop to task.

I am, etc.,

Entumeni.

H. J. S. ASTRUP.

The writer is a Norwegian, well known in our circles, who went to South Africa years ago to do mission-work. D.

United Norwegian Church. — A hopeful voice is raised in behalf of religious liberty by the *Lutheran Church Herald* (September 5). The editor notes the statement sent out by the "Religious Liberty Association" of Washington, D. C., concerning the attempt made in Oregon and Oklahoma to abolish private and parochial schools, and parallels this attempt with the futile one made in Michigan two years ago. He goes on to say: "In the first amendment to the Federal Constitution the provision establishing religious liberty is limited to acts of Congress. The various States have, regardless of this Federal provision, the right to do as they choose, although most States have the same provision as the Constitution of the United States in their charters. — One of the priceless blessings we have in this country is our religious liberty, but every once in a while some one feels called upon to interfere and try to impose his views upon some one else and curtail the liberties of his fellow-men by some restrictions. — America stands for religious liberty: That every man shall enjoy the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. The same liberty before the law is granted to the believer in the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Upanishads, the Koran, the Book of Kings, the Shaster, and the infidel as long as their religious practises do not interfere with public morality. We hope that the time will never come when our State legislatures or our Congress shall try to introduce any of the elements of the inquisition, either in favor of some kind of religion or against religion. A man's conscience cannot be regulated by legal enactments backed up by police and military authority. We feel confident that the people of Oregon and Oklahoma are not willing to be deprived of this inalienable right. Let us hope that the 100 per cent. fanatics will not be able to deceive the progressive people of these States into passing any such reactionary, mediæval laws." What lover of the United States does not share this truly patriotic sentiment? The spirit of the times is decidedly hostile to the old American ideals of liberty. Whence came our liberty? The average citizen will say: From an act of Congress. He is correct, looking at the matter from his secular view-point.

From this view-point, however, the grant of our American liberties will rarely be more than a political expediency, that can be and ought to be supplanted by something else when changed conditions demand it. Even now there are numerous voices raised that clamor for an adaptation of the Constitution to the needs of a new age, etc. What men have made men will unmake when it suits their ends to do so, and they have sufficient political power to do so. From the secular political view-point there is nothing permanent about the liberal provisions of our Constitution. Let no one be deceived on this point. It is not likely that the Constitution will be abrogated, but it is not impossible that it will be slowly amended to death, and men who appeal fervently to its provisions as originally framed will discover that they are hugging a corpse. The Christian citizen of the United States regards his liberties under our Constitution as a heavenly boon, come down from the Father of Lights, like any other good gift. It came through men, but God wanted it to come. He designed it as a blessing for men, especially for His believing children. These recognize the mercy and favor that lies in the grant of these liberties. They are grateful for them, and humbly and earnestly pray for their preservation. But God, too, can take away these liberties, or suffer them, to be taken away, because men do not make the right use of them, and even His Christians have failed to make the best of the glorious opportunities which a benign Providence had created for them in the land of the free. Also from the spiritual view-point we hold no absolute deed of ownership to our liberties. We may need the punishment that may come with the abrogation of these liberties. Our times are most serious and critical times, and the spirit of tyranny and persecution that is abroad in our land should incite us to repentance for the purification of our faith and to incessant prayer.

D.

"Internal Enemies of Christian Education." — Under this heading, the *Sunday Watchman* (August 6, 1922) says: "Catholics are being much excited by the attacks made on parochial schools in different parts of the country. This commotion shown by the good people is a sign that their faith is living. But the same is not an indication that their faith is as intelligent as it might be, for while they are praying against the external enemies of our school system, they are doing nothing to resist its internal enemies. These are of two classes. The first class is made up of those parents who will not send their children to a Catholic school and all grown-ups who for want of proper training will not themselves go to a Catholic school. The other class is made up of those who are too apathetic to encourage Catholic education, either morally or financially. In membership each class is legion — doing the devil's work a hundred times more effectively than the demoniac band which the Lord permitted to possess the herd of hogs. However, let the ardent advocates of Catholic education remember that these internal enemies can be converted into friends. As much campaigning for this mainstay of the Church in America as you and I are doing for our favorite candidates for political offices will effect the change." — What the *Watchman* says

concerning internal enemies applies also to certain internal enemies of Christian education in other denominations. External enemies of Christian education are not as dangerous as those that lurk within the pale of the Church. If we shall lose our own Christian day-schools, it is because we neither esteem them nor effectually work for them.

MUELLER.

The National Boy Movement.—The *Sunday Watchman* (August 13, 1922) reports editorially: "The press reports that the Knights of Columbus at their Atlantic City convention appointed a committee to look into the whole question of a junior organization. The Masons, of course, are caring for their youngsters, especially in the De Molay order. This latter is a secret society, and takes boys as young as twelve. The sons of Masons and the chums of these sons are eligible to membership. The Knights are in a position to launch a boy movement, a movement that will have its own intrinsic merits, and still serve as a training-school of Columbians. But the movement must not be secret. We must not take boys at an age at which they should be at home. Between fourteen and eighteen would seem to be the desired years of eligibility. The boy could be taken when he leaves the eighth grade, when the ordinary boy starts to work, and be given such help to develop and enjoy himself as he would otherwise lack." No doubt this movement will be launched sooner or later. The Roman Catholic Church is always watchful, and has a rare ability to turn lessons, learned from its enemies, to practical usefulness. What the editorial says of the De Molay order is true. It is a secret order under the fostering care of Masons. When, however, the writer states that the Catholic junior organization must not be secret, he prevaricates. The Knights of Columbus are as much a secret organization as the Masons, and their secret machinations and plottings are as dangerous to the cause of the Gospel and to the welfare of our free republic as those of any other secret organization. Rome is certainly on the alert to guard its own and promote its prestige.

MUELLER.

Agassiz and Evolution.—If evolutionists claim that every scientist in the last half century has been an evolutionist, the following narrative taken from *Random Memories* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co.) written by Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow, the son of the great poet, proves the contrary. The author says: "With all of Agassiz's charm and good nature, the mention of Darwin and his theory acted upon him like a red rag to the bull, and he would become so excited and furious that it would be wise to drop the subject as quickly as possible. Then he would calm down with a great burst of laughter at his own rage. He would never allow that Darwin had a leg to stand on, and always argued that if the Creator could make many species develop from one, He could equally and with more reason create all the different species. I do not know whether he ever changed his mind or even accepted what all the rest of the scientific world came to accept as one of the fundamental principles of creation—the development of species." We are pleased that Ernest Wads-

worth Longfellow did not hesitate to narrate this incident. To deny the claims of Darwinism — and scientists have long modified the original views of Darwin — does not discredit the great Agassiz, but rather proves that he was indeed a great scientist, that is, a scholar holding rigidly to facts and disavowing unproved hypotheses, even though the whole scientific world should accept them. This class of scholars seems to have become extinct in our time. MUELLER.

The Ministry of Healing. — The *Churchman* (August 19, 1922) very urgently endorses the ministry of healing. Writing editorially it says: "For at least two decades psychotherapy has been practised by clergymen of our church. We are convinced that the ministry of healing has scarcely entered upon its great career of service to humanity. That the religion of Jesus Christ can heal both the souls and the bodies of God's children is increasingly becoming the conviction of churchmen. It is a buoyant and health-giving faith to hold. Men and women in their pain, doubt, and despair are clinging to the *healing* Christ. The new knowledge gives support to this faith. It is likely to transform the practise of religion and to bring back worship and ardor to the hearthstone of the homes. Let us have a ministry of healing! Let us encourage it and give to it the support of our best intelligence!" We believe that rather the contrary will take place. If the Christian ministry ventures to heal bodies instead of souls and lays stress on the elimination of earthly trouble instead of the spiritual trouble of sin, there will be far less worship and ardor than there is now. Of course, every Christian pastor will pray also for the temporal well-being of his parishioners, particularly for the restoring of the sick, if it be God's will. However, if Christian ministers become psychotherapists, they are sure to cease to be evangelists. The social gospel of our day is seeking many doors by which to enter the Church and displace the Gospel of salvation.

MUELLER.

Religious Books Popular. — "A publishing firm in the United States in the first four months of 1922," says the *Christian Register* (August 13, 1922), "published seventy new volumes on religious subjects. The *London Times*, speaking of books issued in Great Britain in 1922, states that while the greatest number consisted of works of fiction, books on religion came next. There were 967 works of fiction and 563 volumes on theology or other forms of religious activity. Publishing houses are criticized for rejecting manuscripts that have 'literary merit' and accepting only those whose chief recommendation is that they will sell. However, the making of books is a business and is as much a commercial venture as the manufacture of shoes or the establishing of a transatlantic line of steamships. The first business of those who are making books is to find out as accurately as possible what the public read yesterday and what it will read tomorrow. If these men are printing religious volumes in increasing quantities, they are printing them because they serve a growing demand. Writers on religious subjects who treat their themes in a serious, convincing, and readable manner are sure of an appreciative

circle of readers. The books on the relation of business and religion, written by Roger Babson, have had a wide sale because they were written by a writer who knew how to state universal truths in a positive, forceful way. Religion is a living issue — as living as medicine, law, or business. Religious books, authorities a dozen years ago, are no longer reliable, for new truths are constantly being unearthed and library shelves must be cleared to make way for them. There is reason enough why religious books are the best sellers among works other than fiction.” — The foregoing remarks on a greater interest in religious books we find substantiated in other periodicals and papers that deal with the sale of books. The fact is that people in our time are assiduously reading books, both orthodox and otherwise, and this suggests the duty to place upon the market an ever-increasing number of religious books that set forth the truth of the Christian religion and ward off the uncountable errors scattered broadcast to-day. The great trouble with most religious books written to-day is that they lack intrinsic value, not only because they are full of falsehoods, but because they are written for the hour. Perhaps there is no other market so apt to cheat the public as the book market. In nine cases out of ten the buyer is likely to get a useless, indifferent, or even dangerous book. If ever Christian pastors and laymen had reason to be careful in investing their money in books, it is right now. Lutheran Christians will do well to confer with their publishing houses before purchasing books on religion.

MUELLER.

Roma Semper Eadem.—A notice in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (September 23) informs the readers that the noonday devotions at the Old Cathedral on Second and Walnut Sts. during October will “consist of the rosary devotion and in November of prayers for the holy souls and benediction. The rule of a plenary indulgence is in force for those who visit the Old Cathedral, this being the same as is imparted to those visiting the seven churches at Rome.” D.