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EDITORIAL COMMENT

"Every idea is a force, and therefore a commencement of an action."

It is reported that the Rev. R. J. Campbell has issued a call to the advocates of "new theology" to come together and organize, which means the formation of a new sect. Meanwhile various leading Congregational clergymen of Great Britain have united in setting forth a statement of faith, apparently to offset Mr. Campbell's propaganda. While we on this side of the Atlantic are engaged in bringing the sects nearer together by way of "federation," the British brethren, both dissenters and Anglicans, seem in danger of entering upon a stage of sharper division. In all these movements it should not be forgotten that many of the sects arose by good and sufficient causes from certain distinctions in human nature, circumstances, and convenience; and they continue largely by virtue of harmless and honorable traditions and sacred associations. Moreover, some of them are quite modest regarding their own excellence, and thoroughly generous regarding others, both in sentiment and in practise. Indeed, if one had occasion to summarize the unsectarian work which is now being done by the "one hundred and fifty sects" in the United States, it would astonish many of those who are so grieved over the divisions of the church among us.

One man who has discust this matter is of so high authority that his words perhaps require special attention. He can see in this connection hardly more than the one awful fact of formal division and the sin of sectarianism; and he lays the blame on Protestantism. He says: "The truth is Christian unity and Protestantism are utterly alien the one to the other. . . . Protestantism, in its root principle, is the utter negation of Christian unity." He seems to forget that the great reformers protested not against the unity of the Catholic Church, but against its tyranny, which is the very essence of sectarianism. True, this protest resulted in sects in great number, which we all desire ultimately to get rid of. Meanwhile, however, human nature being such as it is in a large number of people, a sectarian religion is the only kind possible to them. The excitement of rivalry and the pleasures of distinction, social and religious, and even some forms of spiritual pride, have often saved people from the worse vices of indifference and decay; and have saved the churches from dissolution unto the day when a better spirit could get possession of them.

INDEED, that day has not yet come for all parties. Many of the denominational managers will not instruct their local missionary agents to keep out of the way of others who are at work in the same field. And there are still "very good people" who will "pack" the membership of a union church in order to steal it for their sect. The spirit of brotherly love is not yet strong enough in all bodies to render it safe for some denominations (that might be named) to ally themselves with some others (that might be named). Yet, on the other hand, this very multitude and excess of subdivisions may promote a more speedy and effective reac-

**The
Desirable
Unity**

THE TEACHER

"As are parents, so are schools and teachers."

WHAT SHOULD BE THE TRAINING OF PASTORS' ASSISTANTS? *

PROF. RICHARD MORSE HODGE, D.D., COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK.

PASTORS' assistants have not brought pastors the relief from excessive responsibilities that was desired. Church visitors are invaluable. They are generally women. But time is lost in training them after they have been engaged for their work. Other social workers who have the technical training necessary are more or less hard to secure. Assistant ministers are generally young men fresh from theological schools. But they are not trained as they should be in necessary work for which older ministers have not themselves received an adequate education.

Slow as ministers may have been to respond to many hitherto unrecognized claims of society upon the Church, the clergy nevertheless are outrunning the promoters of theological schools in practical endeavor to meet the demand of the times. And a church staff is left to undertake, as best it can, much which its members have not the technical training to do as it ought to be done.

If some churches are too complacent over the results of work undertaken, it must be attributed in the main at least to the want of object-lessons in how well such things can be done when directed by properly trained workers.

The problem is an educational problem. Educators can not assume, however, that the church work of to-day is the church work for which men and women must be trained for to-morrow. It is this assumption which has resulted in the present demand for trained workers outrunning the supply.

The whole question must be approached from the opposite end. We must raise the previous question of what work the Church should undertake.

The Church may be a sacred institution. So is motherhood. But we do not argue that the feeding, sanitation, educational and other home duties of a mother are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Traditional method is not precedent for means of meeting conditions or securing results which workers of a former time did not anticipate.

It is a fair question whether the divinity which shapes our institutions cast them into fixed molds or created them living organisms with the power of adaptation to environment and of growth.

Theological schools must have vision and anticipate the kind of workers which will be demanded for church enterprise a generation ahead. Only in the light of vision of this character can we determine how the church staff should be trained.

Religion is simply complete living. The church is an organized society of some members of a community which attempts the expression of life in forms of activity not adequately provided for by the family, school, trade, play, or civil and other institutions already established for its people. The church is essentially a new society, as new always as was the apostolate inaugurated by Jesus nineteen centuries ago. For its message is nothing if not good news—news of how to live and of opportunities to live more ideally.

A church is responsible to its adherents for opportunities for:

(a) Worship, (b) education in religion, (c) organized effort to promote complete living, within or beyond the bounds of the parish, whether involving a moral reform of individuals and their espousal of the cause of Christianity, or the improvement of the conditions of the health, wealth, morals, education, or amusement, (d) and a democratic intercourse of the members of the congregation.

A church must have experts to direct the four lines of effort enumerated. A church staff seems to call for the following specialists: (1) preacher, (2) director of religious education, (3) director of social work, (4) church visitor. A woman may fill either of the directorships mentioned, as well as a man. As a church visitor a woman excels.

The minister is already an expert in worship (including preaching) and in promoting a democratic intercourse in a congregation.

* Read before the Religious Education Association Convention, Washington, D. C., February 13, 1908.

He is trained in some measure to direct organized efforts of various kinds. But a highly organized church calls for several social workers of technical skill. The minister, moreover, can not qualify as an expert in the religious education of the young. For he has not been trained in his theological seminary in child psychology and the science and art of teaching.

Young ministers, from whose number assistant ministers are generally drawn, are receiving more instruction than older clergymen enjoyed in sociology and institutional-church work. But they are taught little or nothing of educational science. Too commonly divinity students who undertake Sunday-school work at local churches teach adult classes instead of children.

The training of teachers for the Sunday-school involves courses in genetic psychology and the social life of childhood and youth, in religion and its history and literature, in the principles and methods of teaching, in Sunday-school organization, and the management of juvenile societies. In addition to such courses there must be a model Sunday-school for the observation and practise of teaching.

Every theological seminary should have a department of religious education. A few seminaries offer some lectures in the subject. Not one, I think, has a model Sunday-school. A department of religious pedagogy without a model school can give instruction in name only in the methods of true educational science. For true teaching is through self-expression, and lecturing does not furnish more than theory. Lecturing, but for the study it stimulates students to undertake, is teaching by impression and illustrates by its own method the very way children can not be taught.

Parish visitors need to be trained in canvassing and homemaking. They must be versed in ideals of home life and the arts of expressing them in conversation and putting them into practise with hand and heart.

Under a director of social work with executive skill are often needed workers of technical skill, such as kindergarteners, nurses, managers of employment bureaus, superintendents of recreation, executives for the organization of men, women, boys, and girls clubs, and missionaries to the needy.

The training of all of the members of a church staff devolves, I think, upon univer-

sities—universities with theological departments. Not a few special institutions have been established for the training of social workers of different kinds. But theological schools have endowed courses in religion. Other courses, in sociology, psychology, education, and hospital economics and domestic science, for instance, are furnished by other departments of a university. In the end the expense attached to the duplication of endowments for instructors and officers of administration must compel the consolidation of these special schools with universities, and theological seminaries with universities. The logic of the tendency of the times seems to argue it.

It is far from enough to plan ways and means of training experts for a church staff. They operate well on paper. But we can not expect anything to be done toward putting our plans into operation until their purpose is felt by the church and her institutions of learning to be of prime importance. Whatever is put first will be prosecuted in spite of difficulties. But what is considered of secondary importance is likely to meet with comparative failure. Work which is placed in the false position of insufficient emphasis is sure to suffer from unfair discrimination.

We may diagnose conditions to learn what are the responsibilities of the church to society, but we must ascertain in the process the relative importance of the responsibilities which we discover. A prescription implies a proportion of ingredients no less than their enumeration.

Our question is not so much what a church must do as how its activities shall be prosecuted. The solution in which a church's characteristics are held determines its real character. The question is one of church purpose.

The positions which I have so far taken are not of themselves worth while, for they are not seriously challenged. If the theory of the church has been correct all along, whence is our pious discontent with the results of our efforts? Christians have always been earnest. Obviously something must ail the Church. Churchmen are pretty well united in confessing that the trouble is bondage to tradition. But there is nothing better than loyalty to intelligent tradition.

My own answer to the question is that the unintelligent tradition is the primacy of preaching.

The apostolic church emphasized preaching. So did the Reformers of the seventeenth century. The Church puts preaching first to-day. We crowd Sunday with sermons and often several weeks of the year with daily sermons.

To vary the terms, the Church has emphasized work for adults over that for children. Preaching is a hortatory rather than an instructive form of address. It presupposes more knowledge on the part of listeners of the facts of religion than does teaching. Preaching would be more instructive than it happens to be if only a preacher were called upon to preach but once a week and could pack a week's study into every sermon. But preaching at best is more appropriately addressed to adults than to children. Teaching is the natural form of persuading children of the claims of religion. The Church exercises more energy in an effort to supply preaching for adults than teaching for children, and the preaching is much better done than the teaching.

If the Church put the really first thing first, what should come second would be better done than if it was put first, and as well done, in its way, as what might be given first place among its endeavors.

The apostolic church was concerned primarily with adults because the first generation of Christians expected the end of the world in their own time. The Reformers of the seventeenth century found preaching in Latin and then preached in the vernacular. Luther proclaimed the greater importance of teaching children, and his advice has been neglected, as has much else of the essence of early Protestantism.

Is doctrine perpetuated in obsolete forms? This can be done only if it is thus preached to adults. Grown people can be trained to think in a measure in historic and antiquated forms of speech. Children can learn the terms, but can not think in them, nor would they ever be able to if preaching did not continue to make them familiar to hearers after they grew up. If metaphysical theology be relied upon for the substance of Sunday-school instruction, religion will seem unreal to children and the Sunday-school will fail to excel as an institution. Is the Church ever too traditional to take up new methods of work? You can preach the sufficiency of effort along conventional lines, and busy or lazy persons will be more or less easily per-

sued. But you can not interest children in activities not immediately practical. Hence preaching to adults must be balanced by at least as vigorous a teaching of children.

The Church is not the only institution which has had to meet the question of the relative importance of teaching children and preaching to adults. The state relies, for the creation of intelligent and patriotic citizenship, far more upon the education of children at school than upon speeches addressed to voters. In the foreign work of the Church itself missionaries find their religious problem too acute not to rely principally upon the religious education of children for results. Even those who are prejudiced against missionary enterprise return from visits to foreign countries with distinct praise for the educational institutions established by missionaries for the young.

And Jesus? What of the founder of Christianity? Jesus relied little upon preaching to crowds, but essentially upon teaching a few young men in order to establish a Christian society. The Sermon on the Mount was for His immediate friends. To the crowds He told stories.

Every one admits that it is better to develop Christianity in a person during his childhood and youth than later in his life. But we are confronted with the primacy of preaching, perpetuated through the momentum of tradition and by the fact that ministers are trained almost entirely how to prepare sermons.

The church practise is to pour children into the Sunday-school at infancy and allow them to divide into two streams at about twelve years of age, the smaller stream flowing on in the Sunday-school and the larger stream parting from Sunday-school. Some years later a portion of this larger stream is deflected again into special meetings of preaching. Psychology meanwhile teaches us that adolescence is the period of greatest religious susceptibility, and experience demonstrates that with really good teaching in a Sunday-school boys and girls are later more easily interested in religious instruction during adolescence than when they are younger.

Why should not the present practise of a comparatively few churches with excellent Sunday-schools become general, of educating people to be religious during childhood and youth and to engage from the beginning of adult life in constructive institutional work

for the redemption of society? It is the most thorough and easiest way and the most economical, because the most natural.

This will be done if the training of children in religion becomes the chief purpose of the Church. Otherwise the success of the Church in religious education will remain doubtful.

Theological seminaries must educate a ministry for society as it is constituted and not for a fictitious world of a purely adult population. It is only Protestant theological schools that have overlooked the existence of children.

At present so many hours on Sunday are appropriated to services of preaching that not time enough is left for a Sunday-school session which will allow for the teaching required.

When preaching is put in second place it will be practised to more advantage than at present.

It is not too much to say that preaching can be overdone. A preacher will prove more effective if he has to prepare one sermon a week than two or three. As it is his ideas are so quickly learned by his listeners by means of some one hundred and fifty addresses a year that in a few years he is apt to find that further remarks from him are superfluous and he is forced to seek another pulpit. Congregations are in more or less danger of becoming gospel-hardened from a surfeit of preaching. Religious activity itself comes to mean, to many, little more than a preaching of one Christian to another. None of the time which most members of a congregation can devote to church attendance is left to them for church work, after they have gone to all the meetings of worship.

Worse than all, congregations are too easily schooled in a habit of entertaining religious emotions without immediate expression in activity. They can be trained imperceptibly to feel for the man whom they see beaten by robbers and lying in his blood on the road, and, like the priest and Levite of old, to pass him by nevertheless. And it is the Samaritan still, the outsider, whose heart and hand retain nature's habit of acting in unison, on whom it too often devolves to minister to human need, through the numer-

ous institutions, which the church is half-surprized to see spring up beyond the bounds of its own organization. This picture does not present the whole truth about the church or do justice to the work of numerous noble churches, but neither was the parable of the Good Samaritan itself intended to be an exhaustive portraiture of the Judaism of the first century.

Theorizing should be proportioned in some degree to practise, the amount of talk indulged in to work undertaken, and the number of occasions for arousing emotion to opportunities for action.

Jesus delighted in the unsophisticated minds of children and the illiterate, just as He enjoyed the well-educated, but for the half-educated scribes and other legalists he had only scorn. For they had abandoned common sense for sophistry and surrendered their intellectual freedom to the authority of tradition. All their knowledge was predigested. He called them "hypocrites." By this He meant, not that they preached one thing and practised another, but that they both preached and practised tradition, without thinking enough to see how often tradition contradicts common sense and is inconsistent with singleness of purpose.

The intelligence demanded of the Church I take it is a habit of open-mindedness, with its inevitable vision. No plan, however wise, of specializing or training a church staff, nor suggestion concerning what is most worth while in church effort, can hope to secure the indorsement of all progressive church workers, to say nothing of other churchmen. But is it too much to hope that the vast majority of those who hold, with the writer of this paper, that the Church remains the best organization for advancing the kingdom of God, will unite upon a *method* of attacking the problem of how a church staff should be trained? And is it not obvious that the method required is to raise the previous question of just what the Church is called upon to undertake, tradition aside?

If so, this is a special problem for every local church. For the theological schools it is always a question of providing the peculiar leaders which will be demanded for a generation to come.