CHURCH TRAMP ARTICLES

Having To Do With a Real Revival Of Religion In Christian Homes By GENERATION AND REGENERATION

The Birth of Holy Children (I. Cor. 7:14) and Their Nurture By Christian Parents, in Christian Homes, Directed and Supported By The Christian Churches

(Editor's Note: This is one of a series of articles that appeared in the Detroit News-Tribune between the years 1900-1910. They were written by Henry Wood Booth, Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, under the nom-de-plume of "Lais." Although we, perhaps, may not agree with all that "Lais" has written, still we believe them of sufficient value and interest to our readers to reproduce them in The Eccentric.)

DECEMBER 27, 1903.

He Closes the Year With a Trenchant Article on the Expected Real Revival—Shows that all Power Comes from God and Not From Man—Therefore Rulers in Church and State Should be Rendered Due Honor and Respect. Warns Anti-Roosevelt ians of the Perils They Incur and Shows That Assimilation Brings Reversion to Type, While Separation and Exclusion Tend to Improvement.

Having thus, to some extent, shown the need of a revival of real religion at this time, I now finally shall endeavor to specify particularly some of the directions which a revival is likely to take.

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In the first place, I may say negatively that in my peregrinations I hae seen no indications of a coming revival on the old lines of rupture by conversion from the world. The real revival that is coming will be by nurture from within. Conversions from without will continue, of course, and evangelistic preaching will always be in order—in fact, that is of the very essence of christianity—the religion of Jesus Christ being above all others a missionary religion. But, the trouble is that revivals of that character of late years have not produced the permanent results that revivals used to produce. In my opinion the way has been made too easy; alleged converts have not been cautioned as our Lord used to caution them—(see Matt. 8:19-22; Luke, 14:25:33, etc.) Many lapse at once and do not outlive their probation, while large numbers who do join the church need to be converted again. So the coming religious awakening will be a re-vival among professing christians who have never known what spiritual life means, of Christians who, like John Bugyan's Pilgrim, have fallen asleep in the arbor and lost their roll.

I think the coming revival will first evidence itself by a returning deference to and reverence for authority, scriptural and parental. Obedience is a thing which in our day has become a lost art. If a parent tells a child to do a thing, the child at once asks, "Why?". The answer, oftener than not, should be, "Because I say so", or, "Meanwhile, because I say so—I will explain at some other time". It is so of the bible. Men no longer defer to the bible as a final court of appeal—they put the bible on the rack of their own unreasonable reasonings, and if it does not agree therewith reject it. This is the fruits of the inductive system of philosophy, of which Lord Bacon was the pioneer and Herbert Spencer, who spent a lifetime in finding out how much he didn't know, the last expounent. The new revival will be a revolt against the destructive negations of the higher criticism.

Rev. Dr. Josiah Strong claims that all previous religious awakenings "came in connection with the preaching of a neglected scriptural truth". I would say that the most neglected scriptural truth in our day is this: "All power is of God, in church and state". The establishment of republicanism in the state and of congregationalism in the church has given rise to the theory that all governmental power is inherent with and emanates from the people. That is a mistake and a most misleading assumption. "All power is of God, the powers that be are ordained of God". Power may come, and does come, through the people, but it does not originate with them and so cannot come absolutely from them. So that, while we may repudiate the doctrine of the hereditary divine right of kings and the tactual divine right of bishops—when asserted to the exclusion of all rulers who are not included within certain hereditary or tactual lines—the much neglected truth needs to be proclaimed from every pulpit, from every public rostrum, yes, from every housetop, that all legitimate rulers are ministers of God. (Rom. 13:1-4); that President Roosevelt governs this republic by divine right just as truly as does King Edward and Emperor William govern by divine right their respective realms; and that, as Archbishop Whatley said, the poorest and meanest primitive methodist preacher is just as truly in possession of the power of the keys as is the archbishop of Canterbury or the pope. That being the case, I hold that the time has come for a revival of the christian custom of giving honor to whom honor is due—to the chief magistrate of this nation, for example, and that he should not be spoken of and written of as "Teddy", and that christian ministers should not be dealt with as though they were merely the employes of a church committee, hired by them to do certain duties for so much money. Pastors and preachers are either ambassadors for Christ or they are interlopers; they should therefore magnify their office. There can be no real revival of religion until congregations realize that preachers speak with authority. A preacher to preach effectively must not be bound; he must be absolutely free to tell the truth, whether the people will hear or whether they will forbear.

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And here is where the next element of the revival will develop. In the first two centuries of the christian church all its ministers were preachers, missionary preachers. But when numbers increased and converts began to settle down into communities, pastors were needed, and for many hundred years the pastoral office and the preaching office were distinct. Preaching was confined to bishops, while the presbyters or elders were pastors. That is what must come soon now, especially in connection with large city churches. Very few good pastors are also good preachers, and very few preachers are also good pastors. Preaching always has and always will demand the higher degree of talent and scholarship; a man much less brilliant intellectually may make a most superior pastor. Moreover, a preacher should never mingle socially with the members of the congregation which he is called upon to preach to; when he mets them it should be alone as individuals. On the other hand, a pastor must be much among his people, always aiming to lead his flock in profitable pastures as well as into pleasant. But, more about pastors presently.

Further, in regard to preachers, a recent writer says: "The first important change needed is that those who attempt to proclaim or teach the gospel should know it fully themselves. A physician or lawyer or college professor who would try to do business with a knowledge of only about one-half of the necessary parts of their education would make sad failures, no matter how talented they might be, or how well informed in other ways. So men who are instruments of God in the salvation of men, who do not sound the depths of personal salvation for themselves, are in the ridiculous position of professing to teach men what they do not themselves know". So that, on the other hand, there must be a revival of the custom of "trying the spirits". "Beloved", says the Beloved Apostle, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world". (I. John 4:1) But, by what standard are the spirits to be tried if not by the word of God? How essential, then, that the word of God be kept intact. Our standard measures are placed in charge of an inspector, who keeps them under lock and key so that they may not get bruised, chipped or otherwise damaged. The bible is the religion of protestants, especially of evangelical protestants. With us it is the sole rule of faith and standard of right; and yet the new theology preachers bump the bottom of it in or out, or chip off a piece here or there in order that it may match their fanciful notions. The new revival will put a stop to such tactics by simply stopping the supplies on such "false prophets" and thus forcing them to go where they may be allowed to measure their productions by a standard of their own construction if they want to.

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Next, the new revival will bring about a more definite understanding as to the status of church members. There must also come sooner or later a revival of discipline. As I have been going my rounds I have been utterly astonished at the ease with which one can become a church member. I believe that one could easily become a member of half a dozen different Detroit churches and be in good standing in each one, all at the same time. I thought at one time of making the experiment just to show what laxity prevails. Only the baptists make any pretense of having a pure membership, and they fail in practice, for, as I showed when writing of them last summer, they have not the power of discerning spirits, so their theory of baptising only believers resolves itself into baptising professors, and as the majority of candidates are children from the Sunday school, baptism with them, in effect, does little more in insuring purity of membership than does confirmation in other churches. The great presbyterian church requires of candidates for membership only "a credible profession of faith in Christ", and it is practically so with all other evangelical churches. It is plain, then, that membership in any of these churches will give no one a passport to heaven. And, more than that, admission to membership does not even assure such candidate that the pastor and officers of the church regard him as necessarily being either a regenerated or a converted person, or even a true disciple of Christ at all. He may be or he may not be, time will tell—if he "brings forth fruit", if he "abides in the vine", if he "overcomes", all will be well; if he does not, all will be ill. He comes into the church to be nurtured, to grow, to develop, to go on to perfection. The new real revival will make this plainer than

(Continued from Page 4.)

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