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EDITORIAL NOTES.

Many times we make mistakes in life by not distinguishing accurately between the permanent and the transient. We give more thought and attention to that which will not abide forever but will pass away in a brief time. We should rather give ourselves to the study and cultivation of that which is permanent, the things that make for the building up of character and the establishment of the heart in eternal truth.

If an evangelistic conference could be held in every Presbytery in our Church during the next three months, an added impetus would be given to the work of winning souls for Christ. The statistics published in this issue show that the number of persons received into our Church last year on profession of faith was smaller than the number received the year before. Dr. W. H. Miley, Superintendent of Evangelism, expresses the conviction that this is due to the fact that the thoughts of the people have been turned toward other things, probably on account of the war, and that we have neglected our opportunities for personal evangelism. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with earnest evangelistic efforts on the part of pastors and people.

The Sunday schools throughout the United States owe a definite duty to the young men who are being called to the colors and who will soon enter the war camps in various parts of the land. Even now groups of men from the National Guard are on duty in squads in lonely parts of the country. An effort is being made by the Kentucky Sunday School Association, and probably this will be followed by other state Associations, to conserve the interests of these young men in the Sunday schools which they have left.

In some schools it has been arranged that a weekly letter, and some little remembrance, shall be sent to every boy or man who has gone from the Sunday school to the war. An honor roll is made up in many schools of the names of those who have gone out from it. One Sunday school has covenanted with the boys who have gone that the entire school will engage in silent prayer every Sunday morning at ten o'clock for those who have entered the army or navy. There are many ways in which Sunday schools can remember and help the brave boys who have gone forth at their country's call.

Hundreds of young men throughout our land are now stationed as military guards over bridges, tunnels, at water reservoirs and other places where an alien enemy might destroy public utilities that are invaluable in time of war. These men are doing the hardest kind of work, which is to do nothing but stand guard. Their duty is to prevent possible trouble. This leaves much time on their hands. Christian people in communities where these soldier boys are stationed have great obligations and opportunities in reference to them. Many persons traveling in automobiles or living nearby could, during the week or on

Sundays, leave with these soldiers Testamental religious papers and other literature that would prove helpful to them. Many of these soldiers may soon be sent to the front in France or Flanders, and now is the time to implant in their minds the truth of God.

Christian people in cities where Officers Reserve Corps Training Camps are located have a splendid opportunity to influence the soldiers for righteousness through kindly courtesies and social attentions. Some churches near the camps are urging their members to invite the young men who are in training for officers to attend the church services and to go to their homes for dinner after the church service is ended. Such little attentions mean much to these young men and may turn them away from many hurtful temptations.

The Minutes of the General Assembly that met in Birmingham, Alabama, May 17-24, are issued from the press this week. The State Clerk of the Assembly, Rev. Thomas H. Law, D. D., has given to the Church the complete bound volume of the Minutes in less than four weeks after the date of the adjournment of the Assembly. The Minutes of the Assembly form an exceedingly valuable book for both ministers and officers of the Church. Every elder and every deacon should possess a copy and should study carefully the action taken by the Assembly and endeavor to familiarize himself with the varied and vital forms of work in which our Church is engaged.

A clarion call was sounded by the General Assembly in Birmingham to the entire Church in view of the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, which is being celebrated this year. This call lays urgently upon the Synods the imperative and pressing needs of our educational institutions, and earnestly entreats them to persevere in measures to provide for their necessities, especially to signalize the event by mighty forward strides in the equipment of our educational institutions. Following the suggestion of the Synods and the General Assembly, the colleges of our Church are seeking to secure endowment for the chair of the Bible and subjects of Applied Christianity. Members of our churches are urged to consider as a privilege this opportunity to endow such a chair as a memorial which shall bear perpetually the name of some loved one and which will add much to the training of the future leadership of the Church. Such a memorial is far better than a shaft of marble.

The summer conferences conducted by the various agencies of the Southern Presbyterian Church at Montreat, North Carolina, are now in full swing. The Young People's Conference begins this week and will continue through July 8. The Woman's Summer School of Missions will be held July 8-15; the Conference on Christian Life and Doctrine, July 15-22; the Bible and Christian Stewardship Conference, July 22-29; the Sunday School Conference, July 29-August 5; Conference on Christian Education and Ministerial Relief, August 5-8; Conference on Home Missions, August 8-12; Evangelistic Conference, August 12-19; Conference on Foreign Missions, August 19-26. In this delightful mountain

If I live as if there were no God—no God to protect, no God to console, no God to punish—what am I but the fool that said in his heart, "There is no God?" What is the atheism of the lips compared with the atheism of the life?—Amos R. Wells.

Prayer is an attitude; it is an attitude of the spirit and of the soul. It is not merely the repetition of our petitions. Christian prayer is asking God for things agreeable to His will.

For the Christian Observer.

Erasmus and the Reformation.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY E. DOSKER, D. D., LL.D.

No great stir ever comes over the valley of dead men's bones unless the reviving spirit blows from the four quarters of the heavens. And this reviving spirit comes under many forms, as God pleases. In the instance of the Reformation, its chief underlying cause, as we have seen, was the Renaissance. Originally it stood, in the main, for the revival of ancient Letters and it restored the Classics to their true and long forgotten place. And thus it banished forever from the circles of the educated classes that horrible travesty of ancient Latin for which especially the Monastic world of the late middle ages was notorious.

Everywhere among the leaders of this movement, in all Europe, individuals arose of outstanding ability and power, who set the pace to those about them, and thus accentuated the thirst for knowledge which pervaded life in all its strata. Men began to know, to penetrate, to criticize, to weigh evidence, to lay aside, as unworthy of serious consideration, the apodictic decisions of the scholastic mind, to choose a path of their own finding, and thus the entire fabric of Catholic Mediaevalism was undermined and threatened with complete collapse. But strange to say, as we have seen, practically none of its leaders joined the movement, which they had made inevitable and for which they had blazed the way.

Erasmus.

And of all this army of Humanists, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Desiderius Erasmus, of Rotterdam, was the uncrowned king. In treating Erasmus, I confine myself to that period of his life, which lies between the years 1517 and 1536. Vondel called him "St. Erasmus," and such a man had actually existed, the bishop of Formeae, who died as a martyr under Diocletian in 304 A. D., and whose name was corrupted into Ersmo, Ermo and finally into St. Elmo, the patron saint of the Mediterranean fishermen. But our Erasmus was no saint. Rotterdam prides itself, till this day, on the imposing statue of the man by Hendrick de Keyser, the best sample of Dutch sculpture in the seventeenth century.

We have all presumably read Reade's great novel, "The Cloister and the Hearth." It is at least in part historical. Dutch historians have established the fact that his father was an ordained priest at Gouda, that he had an older brother, and that his mother, the priest's "housekeeper," was the daughter of a leech at Zevenbergen.

Now glance at his life. Born out of wedlock October 28, 1466, or 1467 (he himself did not know and did not care), with a dreary childhood; schooled by the "Brethren of the Common Life," whom he detested, and finally forced to enter the monastic life, which he abhorred; weak in body, originally without promise of great intellectuality, but making giant strides after his mind was aroused; a man self-centered, self-inverted, keen as a stiletto, not overscrupulous, a man of iron determination in his line of study and of marvelous industry, a man self-pitying, self-indulging, vain of his learning and devoid of true modesty, fond of adulation and receiving it to an unwonted degree; a man without a country and claimed by several; a man who drove the steel to the haft into the body ecclesiastic of his day and who was apparently amazed when that body contorted under the ordeal; a man who opened the door of the Reformation and would have shut it when it was too late; a man who played a double part all his life, trying to ride two horses at once; a man who protested his love for the old Church till his last day and yet died practically without her communion, without absolution or the viaticum, and all of whose works were indexed by the Council of Trent as the works "of an arch heretic"—such was Erasmus.

His "Adagia" of 1500, his "Enchiridion Militis Christiani" of 1503, his inimitable "Praise of Folly" of 1509, of which forty-three editions appeared during the author's life; these and other works had made him deservedly famous before the date of the Reformation. His new rendering of the New Testament of 1516 has well been called "the first gun in the age-long battle of biblical criticism," and it had touched Rome in her most vulnerable spot, her faith in the Vulgate. When this book came out the sale of Indulgences was in full swing, the cataclysm of the Reformation was about to burst on the Church, and it is right here that we desire to study Erasmus for a little while.

The history of the relationship between Erasmus and the Reformation may be divided into three parts: 1517-1519, A Friendly Relation; 1519-1523, A Retiring Relation; 1523-1536, An Openly Hostile Relation.

Knight, Froude and Drummond, among the English biographers of Erasmus; Emerson in America; Fruin and Busken Huet in Holland; Jansen, Richter and Staehelin, in Germany, one and all have seen that the key to the understanding of the strange life of Erasmus lies in his correspondence.

And as early as 1519 he combatted unauthorized editions of his letters and himself edited a corrected and expurgated text, which was later expanded. To these letters then we may turn, with some degree of assurance, to obtain a view of his attitude to the Reformation.

In 1517 he was fifty years old. Several popes had been patrons of Humanism, gross abuses had been corrected, all seemed serene, when suddenly like a bolt from the blue, the Reformation burst upon the Church. It appeared startling to Erasmus. He was now at Louvain, as happy as one of his querulous temperament could ever be, when the incredible thing happened. Luther and Erasmus were wholly different in temperament, they saw things differently, they felt things differently, they differed widely in their theological views, they looked with different eyes at the Church and at the world; in fact they belonged to wholly different spheres and, what they had in common was accidental rather than elemental.

But in the first period, of which I spoke, their approachment was closer than ever later on. In a letter to Volzcius of 1518, Erasmus exculpates Luther, telling his correspondent: "So if one teaches that it is safer to trust in good works than in papal pardons, he is not condemning those pardons, but is giving the preference to what is more certainly in accord with the teachings of Christ."

In March, 1519, Luther humbly approaches Erasmus. He evidently stands in awe of his great learning and looks up to him. He desires, if not the aid, at least the neutrality of Erasmus in his great struggle. The answer of the great Humanist betrays his innate vanity. He claims that he is accused of being the author of Luther's book and of being the standard-bearer "of this faction;" he urges Luther to keep on, and has decided to remain neutral. But he sang a different tune when he wrote to the great ecclesiastic of his day. To Cardinal Wolsey, in May, 1518, he avows his absolute loyalty to Rome and to Leo X. In the same year he writes to Campeggio that he does not know Luther at all and is not acquainted with his works. And that whilst he corresponded with him! But even in this correspondence with the prelates of the Church, he cannot wholly hide his sympathy with the Reformers. Especially bold and outspoken is his tone in the celebrated letter to Archbishop Albert, of Brandenburg, and one does not wonder that the reformers, in this period, claimed Erasmus as one of their own party.

In the second period, 1519-1523, the hesitancy and vacillating policy of the great Humanist become more apparent. The Leipsic disputation of 1519 had cleared the atmosphere and all men knew exactly what to think of Luther. The time for hesitation was gone and the simple question was—"for" or "against." In 1521 Worms had spoken and Luther had dissembled. It is then that we hear the cry of Albert Duerer, "O, Erasmus, of Rotterdam, where art thou? Hear, thou champion of Christ! Ride forth by the side of the Lord Christ! Defend the truth! Gain the martyr's crown." And Erasmus was painfully silent!

The tone of his letters now changes. He had left Louvain, and began to affiliate himself more closely with the Catholic party. His picture in this period, as reflected in his correspondence, is all but imposing. In the last period, 1523-1536, he has taken a definite stand. He lives at Basel, with Frebonius, his publisher. By degrees he severed all ties with old Humanistic friends, who favored the Reformation. It is in this period that Erasmus fell into the snare of the bitter controversy with his old friend and correspondent, Von Huetten. The latter's "Expostulatio" is perhaps the bitterest personal indictment of the reformer in this period, and the weak reply of Erasmus in his "Spongia" made his case worse rather than better.

His struggle with Luther, into which he was dragged by his patron, Henry VIII, was, to say the least, inconclusive. So labored and apparently insincere was his defense of the Roman Catholic dogmas, that they began to call him in Rome "Errasmus" instead of Erasmus. In his defense of the Catholic doctrine of the Supper he fell back on the tract of Algerus on "the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord," which had been written four centuries before. But, alas, his former writings gave the lie to his present striving after orthodoxy.

Busken Huet claims him as one of the precursors of rationalism. Perhaps he is right, but in that case the following words of Erasmus need to be explained. Said he: "I could agree with Arians and Pelagians, if the Church should approve what they taught." That would make him an indifferentist rather than a rationalist.

He died July 12, 1536, estranged from Rome, and unmourned by the Reformers—he was not the wood from which martyrs are cut. He left no school, he lived and died an Ishmael. Posterity laments the fact that, whilst he accomplished so

much, he left so much more undone. He rests in the cathedral of Basel, close by the chapel of the Blessed Virgin. His last words were: "O Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." That last cry we trust was his last confession of faith, an anchor which never leaves a storm-tossed vessel to the mercies of the waves. "Requiescat in pace."

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For the Christian Observer.

DOUBLING IN AFRICA AND THE CALL TO DOUBLE.

BY REV. ROBERT D. BEDINGER.

We have been deeply impressed with the noble resolve of the consecrated women of the Virginia Synodical Auxiliary to double their gifts to Christ during this year. It may be encouraging to them, as well as to others, to learn that even before their lofty aspiration became known a similar resolve began to burn in the bosoms of the native Christians of the Lusambo field in Africa.

We recall having heard the statement that nothing appeals to the home Church, especially to its business men, like facts showing that converts in heathen countries are doing something for the evangelization of their people. If this be true, the facts we are about to relate should make a tremendous appeal throughout the Church.

Let it be understood, however, that the average native in the Congo is desperately poor. Most of them live from hand to mouth. Very few have steady employment. One dollar and twenty cents per month is the salary drawn by the average workman. Some of our evangelists receive less than that. Bearing in mind the poverty of the people, we are ready to present the facts.

Fact 1. The native Christians of the Lusambo field, numbering 187 in good and regular standing, undertaken about 800 catechumens, have definitely undertaken to double their gifts during the present fiscal year. Last year they gave, out of their poverty and meager incomes, \$105.05. The cost of the evangelistic work was \$500.

Fact 2. To attain this goal the evangelists, to a man, led the way by voluntarily adopting the tithe as the minimum of their giving. They resolved also to hold up this standard to their several congregations. Some of them, we have good reason to believe, give as much as one-fifth of their salaries. We believe, too, that many other Christians give in like proportion.

Fact 3. At the end of the second month of the fiscal year the total contributions amounted to \$63.75, with the December contributions from five out-stations not yet reported. This is an increase of 63 per cent. over the same two months of the preceding year! Does not that appeal to you? Is there not something soul stirring about that brand of giving?

Fact 4. This "abounding grace," as Paul terms it, is being accompanied by deeds of heroic self-denial and great sacrifice. For example, on the first Sabbath of December we announced that we would celebrate the Lord's Birthday by bringing gifts to Him, just as the Wise Men of old did. Although the announcement was repeated each succeeding Sabbath, no special pressure was brought to bear upon the people. It was to be a "free-will" offering, "over and above" regular contributions. The collection on this one day was \$30.40! That it was "over and above" was fully demonstrated when the last Sabbath's collection showed that the "regular" contributions for December were \$2.20 more than those for November! We believe that every penny given on Christmas day meant genuine self-denial.

We know of one evangelist who, in addition to his tithe, gave one month's salary; of another who gave two-thirds of his salary for the month. We heard of a group of widows who gave in the spirit of the widow who evoked such favorable comment from the Master as He sat over against the treasury. We know of a fifteen year old lad who worked as a common laborer for two weeks and then walked sixteen miles to attend the service and hand over his wage of sixty cents! Suppose you were to consecrate to the Lord, in addition to your tithe, one month's entire income? Suppose each member of the Southern Church were to give likewise? We do not hesitate to answer that every call of our Assembly would be adequately met. And why not? Does God expect less of you than of a semi-civilized savage in Africa?

Fact 5. When we allow our gaze to sweep beyond the confines of one section to view our great field as a whole, another interesting fact is revealed. The accessions to the Church were more than double those of the preceding year. In 1915 there were 1,204 accessions; in 1916, 2,675. We know that without the operation of the Holy Spirit none of these could say, "Whereas I was blind now I see." But, although God gives the increase, it is equally necessary in the divine economy for Paul to plant and for Apollos to water.

Do you think that it is the missionary who, under God's guiding touch, is most responsible for the winning of these souls? Then learn your mis-