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THE IDEA OF RACE SUPERIORITY.

By Robert E. Speer

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(The following article is an abbreviated section of the second chapter of the new volume, "Of One Blood," a short study of the race problem published as a general mission study textbook by the Missionary Education Movement and the Council of Women for Missions. The volume as a whole is a penetrating analysis of world-wide problems of race in the light of the Christian teaching, and merits the attention of Christians everywhere.)

There are many errors which lie back of our ideas of race superiority.

1. One is to assume the validity and supremacy of our own standards and condemn to inferiority all non-conformity with those standards. We regard with favor certain physical characteristics—white skin, fair hair, blue eyes, a certain type of features, our own odors. Another race will naturally have entirely different tastes. It is a matter not of superiority or inferiority but of variety. "Some men say that colored people are ugly." They should be reminded that beauty is very relative, and that our own idea of beauty is subject to changes of fashion. We know, too, that artists so refined as the Japanese find our large eyes and high noses horrid. In moral qualities we exalt energy, promptitude, exactness, veracity, ready progress, and so forth. These are good qualities, but, in the first place, are we sure that we individually possess them in sufficient measure to be entitled to racial self-satisfaction; and, in the second place, how shall we weigh them against the qualities of patience, long-suffering, considerateness, contentment, which are possessed by other races in a measure beyond us? If we were to judge each race by its possession of the qualities exalted by Jesus, especially in the Beatitudes, which races would rank highest?

2. A second error is the assumption that backwardness and inferiority are synonymous. "Backward," says Ratzel, "does not necessarily mean inferior." The conception of cold races is a familiar conception. But we have not accepted this conception in its full application. It is time that we should do so. A so-called inferior race is simply a race which has not yet enjoyed the education and felt the influences which would lift it to the level of its potential happiness and serviceableness. And in this sense all races are still inferior.

3. A third error is the idea that the apparent inferiority of a race is due to its race character and destiny and not, as is the fact, to its lack of motive and opportunity and inspiration. This lack, however, is an effect as well as a cause of race character, that is, inferiority of circumstances in a race's condition may be both cause and effect of inferiority of racial capacity. And it is of equal importance that the race which needs opportunity and inspiration should receive them and that the race which has them to give should impart them. A superior race that does not seek to share its superiority with an inferior will inevitably be dragged down to share the lower race's inferiority.

4. A more radical error is the idea of the fixedness of race character, of the flat of unalterable race status. On the other hand, the truth is that there is no static, inherent, abiding status of race superiority or inferiority. No race is assured of continued ascendancy. The alarmist school realizes this. Indeed this is the cry of terror it is sounding abroad. Having cherished the idea of white ascendancy, it now sees that ascendancy threatened, and, unconvinced of the right solution of the race problem, it is appealing for seg-

regation and race withdrawal and for the eugenic race breeding of the white peoples in the interest of the preservation of their superiority of race character. This truth of race growth and change is indeed a warning to all race vanity and privilege, but it is also the hope of all races, superior or inferior. None of them is doomed to a fixed status. A sound ethnological view is a confirmation of all the promises of Christianity to the races and to the men who comprise them.

5. It is an error also to identify races and civilizations and to condemn as inferior the peoples of inferior and backward culture. In the first place, our Western civilization is itself none too superior. To the extent that it embodies the truth which God has written upon nature and conforms to the mind of Christ it is true civilization. But in neither of these respects has it advanced far enough, and it is seamed with evils which are now so patent to the world that in condemning them there is danger that we may lose the essential values to which they are clinging. In the second place, so far as it is good, it is not ours. It is or is meant to be all men's possession. We ourselves have drawn heavily from others.

We need to remember our racial debt. It is too often assumed that our claimed racial superiority is our racial achievement. It is not so. "I am a part of all that I have met" is more true of a race than of a person. All generations and the races which preceded us, and the races which surround us have helped to make and endow us. To any race conscious of its privilege, St. Paul puts his ancient question, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

6. We err also in our sweeping race judgments when we fasten all individuals of a race within a racial inheritance as though the generalized character which we give to the race holds each member of the race to its determinism. Thank God, it does nothing of the kind. Men of the so-called inferior races, not in exceptional cases but by the thousand, can be excited who transcend in character, culture, power, influence, usefulness and humanity, members of the so-called superior races.

This examination of the idea of race superiority has not been made under a presupposition of theoretical race equality of any kind, nor has it touched the nature, characteristics and qualifications of the idea of racial equality which have emerged. Our review has had four things in mind: (1) the dissolution of that prejudice against any race which may become the cause of its racial discouragement and which implies the assumption that it or its members are barred from any of the achievements or possessions of humanity; (2) the affirmation of the truth of a general equality in racial gifts; one gift differeth from another, one race from another, yet all may contribute with equal faithfulness to human progress; (3) the emergence of the duty of service as the one real evidence and privilege of superiority; (4) the reassertion from a larger point of view of the truth of human unity.

—Federal Council Bulletin.

MINISTERS, FARMERS MEET AT HAMPTON.

The eleventh annual meeting of the Ministers' Conference at Hampton Institute will be held in Memorial Church, June 23 to 27, under the direction of the Rev. Laurence Pennington, chaplain of Hampton Institute. The Conference lecturers will include Dr. James Hardy Dillard; Prof. Kemper Fullerton, professor of Old Testament in the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio; the Rt. Rev. Lynwood W. Kyles, D. D., Bishop of the A. M. E. Zion church, Winston-Salem, N. C.; the Rev. Dr. Pezavia O'Connell,

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THE STUDY OF LITERATURE IN PULPIT CULTURE.

By Rev. J. R. T. Lathrop, D. D.

The function of the pulpit is not defined by saying that it stands for the propagation of the gospel. It is essential that it shall comprehend proper approach, style of utterance, purity of motive, breadth of vision, dignity of purpose. So comprehensive a function is sufficient to awaken profound concern both on the part of the pulpit and of the pew. That such a concern has been awakened is evident by the exceptional care exercised by the laity in the call of ministers, and the intelligence with which ministers are considering calls.

Aside from the press, the pulpit has the most conspicuous place in the molding of public opinion. The problems of the day are large, vital, sensitive, weighty and the public never appreciated more keenly a well equipped ministry capable of philosophic and sympathetic interpretation. There has just come to a great church near the writer a young man thoroughly prepared to deal with outstanding questions. Accomplished, incisive, winsome, with an impressive diction, he enters into an exceptional opportunity.

How may the pulpit be made more effective? By thorough intellectual preparation, closer contact with the classes and masses, a deeper spiritual experience and vision, a bolder commitment to the ethics of Jesus in all social questions by a positive message clothed in the language of the imagination.

By intellectual preparation is not meant college training, that is taken for granted, but subsequent study, discriminative, judicial, adaptive. We only win when we achieve. We are sent to capture, not to quiet the enemy. As we are constantly dealing with those who are penetrative, scholarly, trained in debate, but those who at the same time are obsessed with error, entrenched in social complications at times very questionable and many times positively odious, it is essential to the highest efficiency that the message shall appeal to the imagination as well as to the conscience.

In the average congregation are the following types: The thoughtful, the speculative, the fastidious, the radical, the bigot, the latitudinarian, the epicure, the stoic, and now and then, let us hope, a sincere soul who longs for the truth. The young are there, the aesthetic, and if there be any other type he is there also. That is, the intellectual and moral disharmony really existent in the average congregation is enough to appeal any minister.

Let us fancy that the minister is now in his pulpit. The congregation is present. He is aware of this dissimilar social condition. What now is his actual task? In the language of the industrial agent it is to sell the gospel to that assembly. I say to the assembly—not only to one here and there. He must correct prejudice, silence opposition, create an atmosphere for the business of the King. He is to do this in a manly, upstanding way, no compromise, no apology, without fear, in assertive confidence. He is to make the unpleasant truth to appear at least not repellent. That is to say, this minister is given the stupendous task of weaving his messages into an art which preserves the power of his message. In the museums of art it has been observed how multitudes stand in awe before the paintings which portray the terrors of life—they do so because of the matchless art in which they are clothed. Congregations do not leave ministers who portray the terrors of the lost if it is done true to the laws of the very constitution of things and in language impelling and pure. The writer now has in mind a minister

of whom it is said that he preaches each week to the largest congregations that gather in any one church in this country, and it is to his honor and the glory of his calling that he drives home with overwhelming might the judgments of God time and again, but he does this with the choicest and tenderest words which can be chosen, and with figures of speech so illuminating that men return again and again.

Now in this attainment of this art of expression few things help as does the study of literature, for the following reasons:

1. Literature is the product of the cultured mind, wrought out by those noble souls to express the deepest and truest undercurrents of our being. It is the symphony of language, the divine harmony of ideas, poetically expressed. It is the work of the masters. Dante as truly lives in letters as does Michael Angelo in sculpture.

Literature knocks at our chamber door and blessed is he who gives it entrance. Its messages are world-wide and age-long and thoroughly human, which is the same thing as saying it approaches the divine.

2. It is the message of the heart. All the passion of life of the race is delineated, defined—from love to hate. The heart of humanity is fathomless, terrible, expansive, and as the minister is constantly dealing with it, in order to interpret its terrors, its possibilities, its longings, he needs just that which the study of literature can furnish. For language exalted, pathetic, tragic, soothing, pitiful, such masterpieces as Browning's "The Ring and The Book" can bring him. There is no language of the heart not portrayed in literature. The great poem to which I have referred is like the mighty surging of the Pacific. It gathers within itself everything glorious and terrible. Heaven and hell are there. God and the Pope, the Priest, the Church and the State, and the wreckage of life. Tenderness, forgiveness, judgment, remorse—for Browning intended that infinite symbolized by the ring, and power and art symbolized by the book, should all be there. Browning is the preacher's poet. But Shakespeare waits to add power to the message of the pulpit. Suppose one wishes to show how brilliancy trained under the most favorable circumstances can come to helplessness and to banter, where can we find so apt an example as in Hamlet? Shakespeare wishes to tell us that here is an example of impotency of will and of evil unrequited. Or, if one wishes to portray the struggle of the human soul with environment, where is there in all literature so powerful an instance as Jean Valjean in Hugo's masterpiece? But if one should wish the sweeter truth of the Eternal Love of God, let him read the rich words in "Eternal Goodness," by Whittier.

Whether the minister turns to the mythologies, especially of the Greeks, or the powerful literatures of many nations he will discover they will teach him the art of embellishing his messages. These masters administer to the imagination and play upon the emotions. And if it be true that men are moved to action more by feeling than by reason, more by delineation of motive than by argumentation of principles, then the place of literary art in the clothing of pulpit messages is vital.

I have purposely kept myself without the folds of the Scriptures, as that is the one book it is assumed a minister should know. He who brings to his message the enriching figures and illustrations of Scripture, its adornments, whether from the historical settings or the romantic or poetic, will find himself a master of happy expression. But my purpose has been to direct anew attention to the treasures of literature written not to support Biblical doctrine or dogmatic truth, but to set forth the deepest realities with which we have to deal—all of which confirm the pro-

THE END OF THE AMUSEMENT BAN.

Going back to the simple rules of Wesley, Paul and Christ, the Methodist Episcopal General Conference has lifted the historic ban against certain forms of amusement, and, instead, counsels its members against all amusements "which can not be used in the name of the Lord Jesus"—a phrase which came from the lips of John Wesley himself. Thus it is left to the individual conscience to decide what diversion a Methodist may enjoy and at the same time feel him not derelict in his religious duties. There was no debate on the question. The action had been recommended by the Board of Bishops, and a favorable report was adopted by the standing committee on the state of the church by a vote of 69 to 30. A minority report, forbidding theater attendance on Sundays and specifying dancing and immoral theater performances as taboo, was tabled by 460 votes to 285. In presenting the report, W. M. Short, of Fort Worth, Texas, said that the majority report would bring a man up on charges if he "indulges in sinful temper of words" when a tire goes flat on his car, but would permit him to indulge in dances to the limit. "The majority report," he went on, "will lift the ban on dances and theaters. If you adopt the majority report it will serve notice that the Methodist Church has retreated from its advanced position in the fight against social evils."

But the change in discipline, said Dr. George Elliott of Detroit, is not a retreat; it is an advance. "Preachers will now stand in their pulpits not with a policeman's club, but with the shepherd's crook in their hands. They will go along on a new program for the saving of souls." He insists that:

"We are going from Mt. Sinai to the place where the sermon on the Mount was preached; we are going from the law to the gospel. We are applying the scriptural principle. In the name of the Lord Jesus will cover all. It will raise a sufficient barrier against prize fighting, bull-fighting and cock-fighting and other amusements that are bad. What we need in this amusement question is more religion."

"We are troubled with an immense amount of social wickedness in this country. Dancing is indecent; it has ceased to be esthetic and has become acrobatic and athletic. The theaters are full of vile things that make a sex appeal. I say that the man who does not go anywhere that he can not take the Lord Jesus can be trusted in any place. We appeal to the conscience and cover the ground necessary in the special advices."

Before this action, "indulgence in dancing, playing at games of chance, attending theaters, horse-races, circuses, dancing parties, patronizing dancing-schools or taking such amusements as are obviously misleading or of questionable moral tendency" were specifically catalogued in the Discipline as offenses against church law for which a member could be expelled. Now "case of neglect of duties of any kind, imprudent conduct indulging in sinful temper of words, taking such diversions as can not be used in the name of the Lord Jesus, or disobedience to the order and discipline of the church" defer the disciplinary law, and the special advice in paragraph sixty-nine of the Discipline is altered and strengthened to read:

"Improper amusements and excessive indulgence in innocent amusements are serious barriers to the beginning of religious life and fruitful causes of spiritual decline. Some amusements, in common use are positively demoralizing and furnish the first easy steps to the total loss of character."

(Continued to next Week.)

found facts of human life and responsibility and reveal the futility of truth.—Expositor.