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O.P. Kretzmann

Valparaiso University

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Dear Brother:

If and when you read this, you may possibly be as tired as a preacher usually is after the Lenten and Easter season. Sometimes we are inclined to forget that physical tiredness also has a very definite effect on the level of our mental, emotional, and spiritual life. Problems and perplexities which we can shake off ordinarily begin to loom out of all proportion to their real significance. If, therefore, you have some unusual anxiety or worry on your mind, you may ascribe it for the moment to the physical let down which comes after the stress and strain of the season of the church year in which our pastors are busier than at any other time.

Notes on the methods of instruction used in our confirmation classes continue to trickle in. A few days ago a thoughtful brother wrote that he felt that with all the towering strength of Luther's Small Catechism the order of the six chief parts should be changed somewhat. He said that the instruction of the children should begin with the second chief part, The Creed, and then move to an exposition of the Law in the Ten Commandments. Others have written that they are somewhat concerned about the age at which we are confirming our children. They feel that the age of 13 or 14 was somewhat arbitrarily established by the fact that most of our youngsters finish elementary school about that time. They feel that a postponement of the age of confirmation until 16 or 17 would break down the commonly accepted idea that formal religious instruction ends with the closing of the period of elementary education. Somehow it seems to me this idea has some merit. It would certainly change our entire youth work, particularly on the junior level, and might definitely increase the cooperation of parents during those difficult years between 14 and 16. It is, of course, true, on the other hand, that the 13 or 14 year old, after due instruction, is ready to receive the Sacrament. There are arguments on both sides. This seems to be one of the topics which might well be studied by a committee of pastors and educators.

During the past two months I have had an opportunity to sit in a pew more often than normally. There can be no doubt that every preacher ought to go to church as a member of the congregation in the pews just as often as he possibly can. It is, of course, very difficult for him to disassociate himself from his profession. The effort, however, is very much worth-while and definitely valuable for his own work. By the way, this reminds me that some brethren have asked about Lenten material. It is a curious fact that there is much on the market and very little that is worth-while. If you are still able to read German, I always like to point to Ziethe's "Das Lamm Gottes". Even though there are pietistic echoes in this volume, it contains a tremendous wealth of material. I imagine that you have also seen the favorable reviews of the reissue of Steinhauser's "The Man of Sorrows". This is a Lenten devotional manual that contains much material for sermonic use.

Now something altogether different. If you are anywhere in the Middle West, you may have noted from the public press that the Indiana colleges (at least at this writing) are still protesting vigorously against the drafting of 18 year olds. Personally I am deeply concerned over this development in our national life. General Marshall has pointed to the flexibility of 18 year olds and has said that they can be more easily trained to be good soldiers. This is true. It is, however, also true that their very flexibility makes them comparatively easy victims of the moral and spiritual temptations to which they will be exposed in the Armed Forces. In addition to this problem the colleges in the Middle West particularly are very dubious about the extension of federal aid to schools and colleges throughout the country. In fact the growing encroachment of the state on all areas of human life seems to be one of the most ominous signs on our horizon at the present moment. If you are interested in this question, the best volume on the entire subject which I know at the present moment is Hutchinson's "The New Leviathan". Mr. Hutchinson is the editor of THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY.

The most recent developments in the national and world situation point up the problems which are confronting the nation's colleges at the present moment. Our Lutheran University and some of our Concordia's are no exception. I would, therefore, like to repeat my appeal to you to send us the names of prospective students. My first appeal did not bring a very good response, and we hope that before many weeks pass we
shall have additional names. The easiest and best way in which our brethren in the ministry can help us at the present moment is by assisting us in maintaining a comparatively high level of enrollment. This is also good stewardship. The facilities and teaching staff at our Lutheran University have been provided by our good people at great expense to themselves and should be used to the fullest possible extent. It is not good stewardship to have any institution stand half empty when it could be filled with students who could receive the benefit of the investment which our people have made. I hope, therefore, you will send us the names of students who should be approached about coming to college. Perhaps you can turn over the compilation of the list to one of your young people.

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In this connection it may be well to point out again that the realization of the importance of Christian education seems to be growing all over the land. Our own emphasis on the necessity of an education which goes far beyond the merely intellectual is receiving support from strange and unexpected places. This morning I was reading HARPER'S magazine for March in which the noted journalist Gerald W. Johnson has a brief article on the exemption of exceptionally gifted boys from military service. Some of his remarks make excellent quotations for a speech on Christian education. In pointing out that the intellectual, in our usual sense of the word, cannot be trusted with moral and spiritual judgments, he writes, "Speak of intellectuals to the man in the street and you bring to his mind a group of symbols — Fuchs, Wadleigh, Hess, Chambers, Remington, and the atom bomb. All intellectuals except the bomb, which was the product of intellectuals. His response to this stimulus is not adoration." Later in the same article he points out that such men as Wadleigh and Fuchs acted without anything which the ordinary man can understand as a motive. They were neither bribed nor threatened. He continues, "Apparently they betrayed their trusts out of sheer mental arrogance. What was for the good of the country and the world they knew much better than the poor dumbbells who were acting as King and Prime Minister of England and President and Secretary of State of the United States. Neither fear nor greed but pride of intellect turned them into traitors." There is the entire story again. Unless we find ways and means to train and educate men and women morally and spiritually, the disasters of the modern world will multiply until our civilization is finally destroyed.

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In view of the foregoing I believe that we can honestly say to our people that the few dollars we invest in the education of our younger generation are the best investment in our troubled times. To bring it closer to home — a collection for our Lutheran University is an important contribution to the solution of this problem. I am very happy to report that first indications from congregations all over the country show that the response of our people to the appeal of our Lutheran University has been unusually good this year. I sincerely hope that all of the brethren will persuade their congregations to make a contribution to this work at this critical hour.

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All of which reminds me that we are now beginning to hear the first reports of Synod's ten million dollar drive. Apparently it is off to a good start. It seems to be well organized and enjoys good leadership. I have gathered the impression that it is not to be a high powered, high pressure campaign for funds but a quiet, educational process which will result in the free and happy giving of our people. All this means, of course, that in the final analysis the success of the campaign will be up to our pastors. I believe that many of us feel that this time we ought to go at it with joy and power. God alone knows what the next ten years will bring to our beloved Synod. We now have an opportunity to strengthen our Synodical house and to deepen the foundations of our educational institutions. This is our great opportunity at the turn of the half century to make the lights on our towers shine more strongly through more and better missions and a greater educational system. It is no secret among us that some of our formal synodical collections were viewed by some of our brethren with a jaundiced eye. Perhaps there were good reasons for that. This time, however, we have every reason to join our hearts and hands in an effort which will be of tremendous long-term value to our Synod. The Synodical Ten Million Dollar Drive is wise, timely, and exceedingly necessary.

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At Springfield many years ago a student came in on the morning of Ascension Day and, accustomed to cheery greetings on high festivals of the Church, wished me a "Froheliche Himmelfahrt". Because of the danger of misunderstanding that good wish, I will not repeat it. I do, however, wish you a happy Ascension Day and a thoughtful Day of Pentecost. Perhaps the Lord of the Church is again preparing for a great outpouring of His spirit upon our congregations and pastors which will enable us to go forward in His Word and work.

Very cordially yours,

O. P. Kretzmann
President