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## The Bible versus Conservatism

By the REV. ARTHUR W. KUSCHKE  
Field Representative of Westminster Theological Seminary

**C**ONSERVATISM has been the bane of the Christian church. Of course, by "conservatism" we do not mean just that theological position which is opposed to modern unbelief. Rather, we mean that tendency found among many Christians to be complacent toward things as they are and to oppose any change in what has come to us from the past just because it has traditionally been accepted. In this evil world, radical opposition to all sin rather than complacency ought to characterize the church. But during the greater part of its existence, sad to say, the church has been conservative in the bad sense, rather than vigorously radical. Especially in the last half century, the Christian movement has been so extremely conservative, in weak reaction from the Modernists, as to be a bulwark for all that is stationary—in literature, government, society, and economics. But it is the contention of this article that Christianity is essentially radical, and must continually be radical.

The whole world order is shot through with paganism and the effects of original sin, and it will stay that way unless a radical cure is applied. The cure for all evils is Christianity, which requires a revolutionary change—a change from the extreme of hating God to the extreme of glorifying God. For example, the missionary movement which began with the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was thoroughly radical. It challenged the whole existing religious, political and social order. It spread like wildfire in every place where

it continued to be truly radical; but, once established, it fell easily into conservatism.

Every challenge to the church, every heresy, has brought reaction and opposition to change among the majority of Christians. How easy it is today to react from Modernism or Dispensationalism, and then to remain reactionary! But if the truth of God is to spread, it must be spread by a radical program. Such a program is found in and derives from the Bible. The greater the emphasis on Scripture, the more revolutionary Christianity will be, for the Bible is a revolutionary book, advocating the overthrow of sin in all forms. If the church is not radical, it does not follow the Bible. Thus the conservatism afflicting the church is due to the failure to apply consistently the doctrine of the sole authority of Scripture.

#### The Origin of Conservatism

The Bible, our only rule for faith and life, is so radical that it has often been a forbidden book. It has been considered too dangerous for people to read. It has a great deal to say not only about religious matters but also about economic and social and political conditions. Christ, His apostles, and the Old Testament prophets did not confine their attention exclusively to religion, in the narrow sense. They were concerned with all aspects of life. Furthermore, the Bible, as God's completed revelation to men, gives us all the necessary principles to govern each field of interest in this world.

The church, which holds to the sole authority of Scripture, is duty bound to apply Scripture to all spheres of life. But it has failed to do so; and in that failure lies the cause and origin of conservatism.

If the church's duty is to apply Scripture to all spheres, and if it has instead restricted Scripture to the sphere of theology proper, then it has left a great part of the field to the enemy. Unbelievers have taken over the territory untouched by Christians; and these unbelievers, from their antitheistic viewpoint, have soon come to conclusions which seem to contradict the Bible. As these anti-Christian conclusions appear, the church takes up the defensive, and becomes conservative and reactionary.

No doubt this process has occurred frequently in history, but for illustration let us turn to the Reformation. Glorious as it was, the Reformation nevertheless failed to prevent the whole modern lapse into paganism. The fault lay not with the great reformers themselves, but with their second or third generation successors in the Protestant movement. Calvin had a great deal to say about the implications of Scripture in philosophy, politics, and in economic and social questions. But the investigations he started were soon abandoned. More and more his followers restricted their interests to theology proper.

It was their great mistake. Instead of applying Scriptural Calvinism to all areas of life and thus blocking off completely the pagan flood, they left so many philosophical, scientific, social and economic leaks in the dike that their dike was more leak than dike. The nonchristian scientists, philosophers, historians and theorists poured in. Since truth is, after all, one, their faulty conclusions in their various fields seemed to refute Christianity. In response, the Christian church, instead of attacking on enemy ground and claiming the ground as its own, retired on the defensive to the domain of theology and established its reputation for conservatism. It also fell into obscurantism toward the spheres of society, economics, science and so forth, which, having been left to unbelievers, appeared to produce nothing but error. To fall into obscurantism

toward such spheres was to make a present of them to the Modernists. The result of these failures and mistakes of the Christian church is the triumphant sweep of paganism today in all ranges of life.

Even in the best sense of the word, conservatism is the effort to preserve and uphold the truth that is already known. It has small enthusiasm for progress. And in the worst sense, conservatism is no more than opposition to change. Within the Christian church, such opposition to change has resulted in failure to apply Scripture thoroughly even in the department of theology. Whenever gaps have appeared in Christian teaching, leaving important areas of God's truth untouched, an open door for heresy has been the result. Thus the rise of mysticism is due to neglect of the doctrine of Scripture; and perfectionism has its opportunity when the Biblical doctrine of sanctification has been passed over by the church. But narrow conservatism gives rise not only to such heresies as these; it also produces the self-satisfaction, smug content and inertia which make the church an easy prey to Modernism. In the face of opposition, the real conservative will give in to the world and gain apparent peace. As long as the spirit of conservatism controls the church, the ranks of those who are devoted to the Bible will grow smaller.

### The Urgency of Our Movement

There is a need to redefine the movement to which the readers of

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN belong. Is its aim merely to preserve something now discarded by almost all others? Is it a movement of conservatism against liberalism, or of Fundamentalism against Modernism, or of Calvinism against the world—or is it something else? Perhaps the movement would grow faster if we knew what we were trying to do. Taking our position on Scripture, we desire to proclaim the whole counsel of God. But what are the proper methods of doing so? It appears that people today are not only more thoroughly opposed to the gospel than ever before, more firmly established in the garrisons of unbelief, but also that they fail to see any appeal in the Christian message, or any connection between it and the affairs of ordinary life.

How shall these people be reached? While they are not being reached, the world is changing fast. Opinions today shift very readily with the force of current events. The nations have tried deism, capitalism, socialism, communism, and now dictatorship. When this war ends, people may have reached the depths of despair and disillusionment, and be ready for true Christianity. At that time our movement may be God's instrument for a new reformation. But are we prepared for our opportunity? There is a real possibility that the forces to be unleashed, and the tremendous changes in life as we now know it which may either accompany or follow this war, will destroy reactionary and conservative forms of Christianity. What is needed is a positive radical program to take the world by storm. If our movement is regarded as no more than a last stand of the truth against surrounding enemies, then humanly speaking it is negative, has little appeal, and may not even survive. But if a positive program is at hand, derived from Scripture and worked out to all relations of life, leaving no gaps, then the average man of today can be shown how Christianity relates to his affairs. Such a Scriptural program for the whole of life is the only means whereby to revolutionize the world. Consequently, let us define our cause as a radical movement to carry Scriptural Calvinism into all spheres of life. (Please Turn to Page 61)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

September 10, 1941

The Bible versus Conservatism .....	49
Arthur W. Kuschke	
A Trip Through Westminster Seminary ..	51
Robert K. Churchill	
Barthianism Popularized .....	54
Edward Heerema	
Editorial .....	57
The Untrustworthy Heart .....	58
Burton L. Goddard	
The Boomerang of Neutrality .....	59
John C. Hills, Jr., and William E. Welmers	
Today in the Religious World .....	63
Thomas R. Birch	

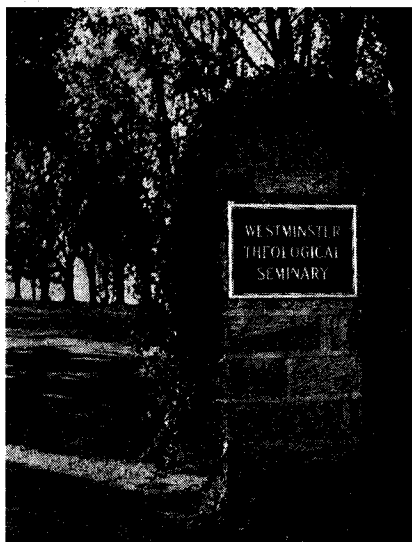
# A Trip Through Westminster Seminary

By the REV. ROBERT K. CHURCHILL

Pastor of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, California

**I**N 1933 I graduated from the University of Washington, traded my Model-T Ford for a later one and, with my wife, started east to Westminster Seminary. We traveled to Canada, down through Yellowstone Park, visited the Chicago World's Fair, dipped into Missouri, and then on to Philadelphia. After driving the wrong way on some of the one-way streets in that ancient city, we drew up to the address given for the great Westminster Theological Seminary. No words can express the disappointment we felt as we took our first look at the seminary. There, across a narrow one-way street, stood a dingy apartment building—part of a solid wall one block long. Beside the narrow door was a neat bronze tablet with the name of Westminster on it. In front of this door stretched the campus of the seminary, consisting of one tree reaching heavenward for a distance of seven feet and surrounded by an earth base three feet in diameter coming up through the pavement. The one thing which prevented us from turning back was an empty gas tank and a depleted pocket-book.

We pushed our way into the dark halls, lighted by large beveled glass mirrors (that is the way a lot of houses are lighted in Philadelphia) and were finally talking with the registrar, the Rev. Professor Paul Woolley. From that moment the place took on a different meaning. Before long we had met more professors and some students. The place was unpretentious indeed, but these men were standing for something which gave them courage and boundless happiness. This seminary had been recently founded by men who would not go with the popular modernist current at Princeton Seminary. I heard Dr. J. Gresham Machen tell of the time that a small group of men stood outside that same narrow door with the bronze tablet on the side—stood with bared heads while they prayed to Almighty God for the dedication of themselves and the semi-



nary to the superhuman task they had been given. I once asked one of the trustees what they had in mind when the seminary was formed. Very quickly he said, We had two things in mind. First to have a seminary second to none in its devotion and adherence to the sacred Scriptures, and secondly, to have this thoroughgoing Biblical theology supported by the ablest scholarship in the world. And make no mistake about it, that determination has been strengthened rather than diminished by the succeeding trials through which the seminary has passed. Let the Christian reader thank God for such a school standing today in the midst of a godless civilization fast plunging to ruin.

But I am to take you on a trip through the seminary. I can do this better if you will travel with me through my seminary days.

The first classes usher us into the study of the original languages of Hebrew and Greek. This is one of the distressing things about the whole Westminster course. I heard Dr. Machen once say that if the seminary ever taught theology on the basis of the English Bible only, he would have to go across the street to a parking lot and start another seminary. The American student is thoroughly

unprepared for such a seminary, since language study is quite unpopular in college and university. What good does it do to know a foreign language, reasons the modern college man as he steers his course away from the classics. Well, to make a long argument short, if a man wants to expound the Scriptures effectually, he must have a working knowledge of the tongues in which they were written. Surely this is reason enough for any Christian who does not wish to be a trifler with the Word of God and the sublime doctrines therein. There are too many ministers today who are mere hucksters of views and ideas which have no solid ground in Scripture.

The first year Hebrew class was discouraging. Progress for me was slow. I remember how ashamed I felt when, in the grading of the first few exercises, my marks were much lower than those of a woman who was sitting beside me. (Though no degrees are awarded women at Westminster Seminary, they are allowed to take work in the classes.) This lady showed remarkable knowledge of Hebrew and put us all to shame, until we learned that this was her second or third year in the class. The dear lady was studying the language of the Hebrews because it was her conviction that we would be speaking it in the millennium. But this failed utterly to inspire me for memorizing the yodh and the gimel.

The next department we step into is that of Apologetics. At this point going to Westminster is accompanied by a shock. The student who thinks of seminary fondly imagines that it will just polish up what he has already learned in college, and thus he will become a preacher of the gospel. All he needs, so he may think, is some additions to that which he has already acquired, and this is of course about all he gets in the ordinary seminary. But the most important thing one receives at Westminster is a thoroughgoing revolution in intellectual and emotional life. This is nowhere felt more strongly than in the study

of Apologetics under Dr. Cornelius Van Til. That is the place where the proud become humble, the superior become inferior, and the ones who "know it all" come to the place where they realize they know nothing. That is the place where the philosopher is beaten on his own ground, to the praise of the glory of God's grace. The Westminster Apologetic does not follow the mediating schools of the Modernists in their weak attempt to defend what little faith they have. Here is an essential apologetic—a "head-on collision" with all forms of nonchristian philosophies. Let no one think that such a study is easy on the modern student who, even in his church life, has been taught that pagan thinkers led the world up to the very door of heaven even though they could not quite open it. There is a very popular and pious trend in university and church circles which looks upon Christianity as a mere continuation of Platonic, Aristotelian or Idealistic philosophy. I can remember how hard the Westminster Apologetic was on all my preconceived ideas. Many a night I sat up searching my books of logic and philosophy, which I had brought with me from university, for the refutation of this impossible Calvinism advancing into the forbidden realm of philosophy. I fought hard against it, but I found that I was fighting against the Word of God extended to every realm of life. My mind hit the sawdust trail—I was converted intellectually. What an experience for a Fundamentalist; yes, for the Modernist, even for the agnostic!

Let no one say that such an experience is all baffling and unpleasant. I felt as if I had been taken up onto a high mountain and there given the view of all the thought systems of all ages. That mountain was the Reformed Faith, Biblical Christianity. And from that lofty vantage ground I saw for the first time what human philosophy really was. I had previously studied the different thought systems, but I had been submerged in them, first one and then another. Never before was I able to see them in perspective, and so I had been unable to know their source and destination.

We hasten into the departments of Old Testament and New Testament. The studies in Introduction are most important. Several years ago a fine young man came from the mission

field to attend a great seminary. While there the questions of the critical examination of the manuscripts, texts, canonicity of the Bible and so on, completely upset him. He could not think his way through these difficult problems; his faith was shaken and his despair knew no bounds. He was missed from his accustomed place and a few days later his body was found in the river. These are departments which must rest in capable and godly hands. How glad I am for the brilliant young professors, the Rev. Edward J. Young and the Rev. John H. Skilton who are in these respective departments now, and Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse who is on leave of absence this year! They have a deep sympathy for troubled minds and hearts, for they were nurtured under the special care of that great and sympathetic scholar, Dr. Machen. There are many schools of critics who direct their whole attack against the authority and truth of the Bible. What does Westminster do with these critical positions? Are they ignored or dismissed? No, they are not dismissed or ignored; they are answered! The answer is honest and scientific, which means that human ignorance and limitations are recognized. I can well recall how thoroughly Dr. Machen and Dr. Stonehouse dealt with the problems of introduction. One always had the feeling that the difficult questions were certainly dealt with. To follow their treatment was like following the trail of a master detective or watching a skillful surgeon at work. Dr. Machen would sometimes be lecturing on a problem of the New Testament text and at the close he would say: "The science of New Testament Introduction is a very reassuring science indeed." This is the conviction the student receives, especially if he is diligent in his studies of the whole curriculum of the seminary. "The easiest Christianity to defend is a whole Christianity"—this is the healthy atmosphere of Westminster.

I shall never forget my first class in Systematic Theology. The professor is the Rev. John Murray. I am trying to take notes on all he says, but he is not speaking in a loud voice and, when I give up in despair, I find that he has been quoting the fortieth chapter of Isaiah to tell us that Christian theology starts with the great Sovereign God. These are personal references, I know, but I am writing

from the heart, and to exalt the Creator, not the creature. Here is a man from another world, a Scotsman direct from the heather. His humility, scholarship and piety are of the glorious Scotland that is past. He does not seem to fit well in modern America—yet we go to him with our troubles for he walks with God. The theology he sets forth is also of another age. It breathes the air of the Scriptures, of the Reformation, of the great Augustine. The glorious thing about this theology is that it is systematic; there is a satisfying wholeness and order to it most inspiring to one who has been feeding on the husks of the disintegrated ideals of semi-paganism and of doctrines at variance with one another.

Now we enter the department of Church History. As he progresses here, the student realizes that each department of study is dovetailed into the others. I have never attended any institution where this was more marked than at Westminster. Each age of the church wrestles with a problem and moves on to the next. Through this conflict emerges, in clarified form, the great creeds of Christendom, together with the dissensions and heresies. When it is effectively handled, what a breadth and poise the study of history gives! Professor Woolley inspires confidence in the student. Above all he is accurate, but not with the dry minutiae with which many teachers of this subject are afflicted. Professor Woolley is a wide reader, with a deep understanding of significant events which make this fundamental subject vitally useful.

Finally, we come to the Department of Practical Theology. The Rev. Professor R. B. Kuiper has served as a minister and college president, and this gives a clue to the character of his work. His is a ripe scholarship wedded to the practical everyday work of the church—just what is needed in the Department of Practical Theology and Homiletics. Here students preach their "masterpieces" and then have them plucked asunder by professor and class. We used to smart under such treatment, and yet I wonder if we smarted enough! It is better to have our weaknesses analyzed there than, as pastors of churches, to watch congregations dwindle because we cannot put our message across. I can hear Professor Kuiper yet: "Show

your colors when you are called to preach." "Preach the Word." "In Homiletics we are stressing three things, (1) Content; (2) Content; (3) Content." Possibly you may not agree with this stress, but no one can say that a sermon with content is not a striking phenomenon in American pulpits. In this department men first use the tools developed in other classes, especially those of language study. The work must be based on the grand science of historico-grammatical exegesis. And for one thing in particular I shall always be indebted to Professor Kuiper. He taught us as prospective ministers a lesson which I have since come to value more and more. It was this: It is not only our duty to preach the whole counsel of God and to speak out where the Scriptures speak out, but it is just as important for the Christian herald to keep a reverent silence where the Scriptures are silent. What godly advice this is, in a day when the church is bidding high for "sensational" ministers who speak of the past, present and especially the future in a way that the Scripture does not warrant! We learned at Westminster the lesson of Calvinism, that God was our Instructor and when that Instructor ceased teaching we should cease wishing to be wise.

Now I want to sum up this very inadequate sketch with a few brief statements. The Christian people of our day should know that Westminster is not just another seminary or church institution. It represents, rather, the spear-head of a great movement which must spread rapidly if civilization as we know it is to be brought back to God and to sanity. I can express this better by quoting something which Dr. Machen once said: "Someday there will be a true revival of learning to take the place of the narrowness of our age. With that revival of learning, there may come as in the sixteenth century a rediscovery of the gospel of Christ."

Our Saviour is the Light of the world. The church today must return wholeheartedly to a comprehensive Biblical Christianity of which Christ is its flaming heart and center. As this banner is lifted again, the first fight will be waged against ignorance. Yes, in our boasted civilization, with its vast school systems and great universities, the barrier which thwarts the advance of the gospel of Christ

is not science but ignorance. I believe that Westminster Seminary, or rather the things for which she stands, represents a true revival of learning in which there will be a rediscovery of the gospel of our Lord. In this whole world- and life-view of the Reformed Faith, the great doctrines of the Bible are simply overpowering. If you have ever stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon, you have been overwhelmed by the impossibility of taking in even a part of the grandeur which stretched out before you. Such is the feeling I have had many times when coming from a class at the seminary. Westminster believes that Christianity flourishes, not in the darkness, but in the light. In this atmosphere Modernism in all its forms is examined and rejected. It is rejected for two reasons: first, Modernism is not an intellectual position; secondly, Modernism is not Christian, not even a Christian sect—it is another religion entirely.

Do I praise one institution too much? Perhaps so. But since graduation I have been thrown to some extent into the educational life of America. I have visited and studied in other seminaries and talked with many students, both graduates and undergraduates. My conviction is that Westminster is the most outstanding seminary in the world today. I cannot tell you how chaotic the mind of the average seminary student is. Where the student is not openly antagonistic and contemptuous of the Bible as the Word of God, his convictions are inconsequential and pitifully weak. My spirit is crushed within me as I consider not only the thousands of such students, but also as I think of the pulpits they will fill and the millions of lives they will lead to destruction. What about tomorrow? If my readers think I am playing up a favorite, I trust they will also investigate the conditions in church schools in the light of the unquenchable and eternal fires of Hell and then come back and tell me what to write.

Westminster, of course, has its faults as a human institution. I have in mind even now a minor criticism which I intend to submit to the faculty and trustees. But I am not afraid to give it, nor that it will not be well received. One of the healthy things about Westminster is its critical atmosphere, in the highest sense of that term. The spirit of constructive

criticism flourishes there much better than in a state university which is bound by its politics and scientific traditions.

And now just a word to prospective students. What are you taking in college to fit you for seminary? When I have talked with students about this, they did not seem to think it mattered much. Some have majored in psychology; others in sociology; still others in engineering, architecture, or English. What a pity! I should like to outline a college course for every prospective minister. By all means secure an education in the Liberal Arts. Stick close to the classics. Have a good grip on history, but especially on philosophy which is the handmaid of theology. You are not to take a course in theology at Westminster. What is given there comes closer to the German word *kultur*. Try to get a thorough education in college, rather than just to take courses.

When Westminster was first started, wise men said that it could not possibly last five years. Two years ago I was present when the tenth anniversary was celebrated in the spacious halls of a Westminster which is now situated on the ample and beautiful grounds of Laverock, near Chestnut Hill. The institution has gone through many vicissitudes. The Prince of Darkness has raised up many enemies, but it is my conviction that Westminster has actually prospered under these attacks. She has shown the church that she would not be turned aside from her God-given mission into by-paths which would please various groups who favored this or that view. Westminster Seminary does all that is humanly possible to equip a man to expound the Scriptures, to be the mouthpiece of the Lord God and an ambassador of Christ to lost men. Westminster puts into the soul of the minister the length, depth, breadth and height of the Christian gospel which gives him a passionate restlessness until the whole world shall bow at the feet of Jesus Christ. As such it is the real bombshell on the playground of modern theologians, and a promise of the long-awaited revival. May there be a mighty stirring of the Spirit of God among those whose hands are in this work, for this temple will be reared "not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord!"

# Barthianism Popularized

A Review by the REV. EDWARD HEEREMA

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LET THE CHURCH BE THE CHURCH, by Elmer George Homrighausen, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1940. 199 pp. \$2.

PROFESSOR E. G. Homrighausen of Princeton Theological Seminary can write well; this little book gives ample evidence of that. His style is vigorous. Here is a book with punch. It is the type of book which causes new sermons to course through the reading minister's mind. A layman on reading the book will feel that the sons of thunder are again commanding the public ear. And one also gets the distinct impression that the views here expressed, often with fervency and eloquence, are the transcript of genuine experience and reflection.

There is keen insight sprinkled upon these pages. Here is an example: "Life is so constituted that it must have a dominant loyalty. Men are like sheep in need of a shepherd. Laotse once compared man's thought to a wheel, the usefulness of which depended upon the hole in the center! Without a hole through which an axle is thrust to give the wheel direction, it is useless. So our thoughts need direction from beyond ourselves" (p. 27). That is a fine statement of the elemental need of the human soul.

In what kind of setting does this insight, with others, stand? Or, what is the theological framework of the book? First of all, it must be said that the work is not a treatise on the nature of the church, as the title might suggest. In the foreword the author explains the intent of the title. Here he asserts that the title of the book is a product of the Oxford Conference of 1937, where it was "agreed that the need of the hour was for a sincere and realistic demonstration of the power of the gospel. To that end, the greatest contribution which the churches could make in this hour was to reassert with life and lip the age-old realities of the faith. The Church must become Church again! It must be true to the God who called it into being" (pp. 11f).

A laudable declaration of intent indeed! The question follows, How does the author propose to realize this intent so impressively stated? Headings

of many of the chapters tell us along what lines Professor Homrighausen would realize the grand order of the foreword. Some of these captions are: "The God Men Worship," "Should We Look for Another Christ?," "The Eternal Cross," "My Church," and "Jesus Christ Is Our Religion." Such headings already assure us that we can here obtain a fair picture of this Princeton Seminary professor's attitude toward the "age-old realities of the faith."

## Repentance

One does not read far before he begins to wonder, and to reread so as to make sure he is reading aright. In the very first chapter we find this: "In worship we offer ourselves up to him in the spirit of obedience and love. In turn, God gives us his grace!" (p. 22) We are puzzled. That is putting the trailer before the car. It is by grace that we may enjoy the privilege of worship.

This same humanizing distortion is most clear in the discussion of repentance. In a chapter dealing with the words, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," we are told that to Jesus repentance was "the highest creative activity of the human personality" (p. 36). The meaning becomes clearer at a later point: "The King is at our gate! We did not put him there. Over his Sovereign Person we have nothing to say. But we do have a remarkable sovereign\* power: we can open the door. We can admit his rule into life, individual and corporate. And that is repentance" (p. 43). The confession to which Professor Homrighausen is sworn says quite the opposite. It states that "repentance unto life is an evangelical grace\*" (*Westminster Confession*, XV, 1).

Such humanizing, Arminian thinking appears again and again. At a later point he states that "the power of decision is left to us. It is a terrible power he leaves us, the power to believe or to disbelieve. He is just outside the gates of our lives, but unless

we open, all his divine power will not save us, but will pass us by to our condemnation" (p. 192). Professor Homrighausen should read and reread Ephesians 2:8. Allow just one more quotation to make plain this humanizing spirit. In the chapter on "Jesus Christ Is Our Religion," he speaks as follows: "And only in the measure with which we 'come unto' him does he come unto us. Only as we make our own his life, his mind, his love, his faith, his suffering care, his voluntary cross, his sin-bearing crucifixion and his desperate hope in God, can we know what it means to call Christ our religion" (p. 179).

## The Cross and the Resurrection

That last amazing quotation, asking us to throw overboard all that is unique about Christ and His work, drops us into the center of the argument. What is basically wrong with this book? The answer is clear: This is a Barthian book and, as such, it serves as an excellent manual by which we may be taught many things about that mode of thought.

To come to grips with the problem we can do nothing better than to ask what Professor Homrighausen thinks of the cross of Christ. According to the Bible, and therefore according to orthodox thinking, on this all-important subject, a transaction took place at Calvary. At Calvary, Christ satisfied all the demands of the holy justice of God, demands which the holy Creator set upon sinful men. In that transaction Christ purchased our pardon, He redeemed the elect. That is the good news of the gospel. It comes to those bound in the prison of sin and declares unto them that their pardon has actually been obtained at great, sufficient price, and that therefore they can now go free as vessels of grace and children of the most high God. Furthermore, according to the Bible and orthodox thinking, the Holy Spirit brings to the hearts of God's elect the saving mercy which Christ purchased on the cross. Salvation, therefore, is utterly of the efficacious grace of God.

Of such a real transaction at Cal-

\* Italics by reviewer.

vary this book knows nothing. Professor Homrighausen looks upon redemption as a process intended to "reconcile man to God." The effects of the cross are active upon man first of all, and not upon God. The cross, portraying the divine suffering love as it does, makes such a tremendous impression upon the sinner that he turns from his ways of sin unto God. The student of these things detects the thinking of Abelard here, not that of Anselm. What is the meaning of the cross to Homrighausen? As far as can be gleaned from his rather indefinite utterances on this point, the meaning of the cross is that it enshrines and most effectively exemplifies certain great "religious truths." Calvary "is a living fact of history, when the innocent are asked to go through the fire that has been prepared in a righteous heaven for those who have violated his ways" (p. 162). Of the glorious fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, so prophetic of the death of Christ in its real significance, Homrighausen declares that "the revelation here proclaimed is that the voluntary suffering and pain of the innocent and the humble is the way to reconciliation, forgiveness, and cleansing" (pp. 94f).

Yes, for Professor Homrighausen the cross has something to do with sin. It exposes man's sin, and does this by showing what man's sin has done to Christ: it has nailed Him to the cruel tree. Also, the cross has power to put away sin. How? "By revealing its effect upon the Prince of Life, it results in a clear-cut decision on man's part to be done with it as a principle of life" (p. 111). Here again we see human appreciation substituted for what God has accomplished and is doing for the sinner. This is nothing else than the time-worn "moral influence" theory of the atonement.

Professor Homrighausen, however, will hardly permit himself to be wedded to just one theory of the atonement. He disowns any fancy for any one of the "seven" theories of the atonement, declaring in the spirit of up-to-date anti-intellectualism that they all have value, and that they all fall short of presenting the living Christ who confronts us. And it must be said that, although his view is very akin to the "moral influence" theory, it does go beyond that theory. He tells us that the cross presents to us "the way of life." And that way

### Westminster Opening

**A**LL friends of Westminster Theological Seminary are urged to attend the opening exercises to be held on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 24th, at the campus in Laverock, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. The address, "Historic Fact and Christian Faith," will be delivered by the Rev. Leonard Greenway, Th.D., pastor of the Eighth Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

of life is the way of bearing the Cross—the word "Cross" being written with a capital "C." We are told that "the Cross must be taken up 'daily' as we follow him." We must "share the Cross with him." Sometimes he uses the word "cross" with a small "c," but the intent is plain. Jesus took up His Cross, and we must take it up with Him. We are amazed when we read that "Paul made his physical disability into a Cross" (p. 115). (Note the capital "C.") But listen further: "Jesus refused to save himself, that thereby he might save others. This is the principle of the Cross. It is the law of brotherhood, of peace, of harmony, of reconciliation. It is the law of the Divine Embrace. . . . Whenever the courteous word is spoken instead of the discourteous, whenever the open hand is extended when we are prompted to show the fist, whenever the better way is accepted instead of the selfish way, there the Cross is 'set up in the heart'" (p. 116). We are dumfounded! Such utterance comes from a professor who teaches where the Hodges, Warfield and Machen taught! The cross of Christ loses all its significance and uniqueness. It is but the grand exemplar of a "way of life," and not the tremendous fact by which salvation is actually obtained. If we "share the Cross," bear it, we too can be like Christ. That must be the dark meaning of the following sentence: "We are forever being saved, and only in that spirit can we be saviours!" (p. 41).

As we leave our discussion of the cross as Professor Homrighausen sees it, we must quote some more startling words: "The Cross has power to make men drink the cup of bitterness to the dregs, for they know that even in death life may break forth, since life may spring even from a sealed tomb" (p. 112). Does not Homrighausen believe in an actual, physical resurrection of Christ? He leaves us in doubt, with our doubt much inclined toward the negative side. At one point he lists "the facts concerning Christ which are evident today." He mentions the death of Christ on the cross, His incarnation through the Holy Spirit in the lives of billions since that death, the creation of the church, the bringing of "life and immortality to light," and so forth. The resurrection is omitted as a "fact concerning Christ . . . evident today." That omission is significant—and censurable. Actually, Homrighausen does with the resurrection what he does with the cross—he reduces it to a dynamic, spiritual principle which can enliven and renew. Note the sinister implication of the following quotation. In driving home the fact that God uses insignificant things for glorious purposes, he says, "And babes born in lowly obscurity, having nowhere to lay their heads, surrounded by simple folks, die shamefully and are buried in borrowed tombs, rise gloriously to become the sons of the living God" (p. 43). We, humble and insignificant though we be, can be "Christs"—that is the plain import. And so it is in the following peroration on the need of repentance as earlier defined: "God wants to happen to men. . . . A Great Miracle wants to deny law. A Great Life wants forever to swallow up man's death. An Easter wants to shatter our Calvary-tombs\*" (p. 33).

### Christ and Creed

Now we are in a position to understand Homrighausen's insistence upon the theme: "Jesus Christ is our religion." Jesus Christ is not for him the unique Son of God, co-eternal with God, taking on human flesh so as to be truly God and truly man. He grants that God reveals himself most "fully and satisfyingly . . . through Jesus Christ" (pp. 70f). To stand in the presence of Christ is to stand in "the presence of Deity." That is all

\* Italics by reviewer.



vague language. At one point we do read that "He [Christ] is God for us, with us and in us!" but here the added prepositional phrases clearly indicate that for our hearts and needs Christ is God, *but not intrinsically* so. In discussing the Revelation of St. John, Homrighausen says that only one could open the seals and "He was as a Lamb—the symbol of the humble and the sacrificial life and spirit." We read that "Jesus was dominated by one authority—God!" After that we are not surprised to read: "How repentant Jesus was!"

If we have interpreted correctly so far, we have the following platform: In the cross of Christ and in the resurrection are gloriously enshrined and most perfectly exemplified certain great spiritual principles. In the cross rests the great "religious truth" that, by the suffering of the humble and innocent, much personal and communal good will come forth. The resurrection of Christ sets forth the principle that life can rise above death, and possibility above impossibility. Justification becomes the realization of the means by which one may "live with a sense of eternal worthwhileness." The incarnation of Christ is no longer a strictly unique event, but becomes something that "has taken place again and again where the 'dear Christ' has entered into the lives of the penitent and needy" (p. 178).

That all sounds surprisingly like the liberalism which Barthianism is reputed to have put out of business. True, but there is a difference. The older liberalism would have largely ignored Christ and the Bible and expounded glowingly these imperishable, spiritual principles—using Biblical material for illustration, perhaps. The Barthian liberal, like Homrighausen, gains an impression of greater devotion to Scripture by stressing with tireless emphasis the great "facts" connected with Christ. We have here an excellent illustration of the meeting ground between the older liberalism and Barthianism. A Barthian like Homrighausen preaches Christ, and with fervor, as being the perfect enshrinement and exemplification of great spiritual principles enunciated by the older rationalistic liberalism long ago. Instead of preaching those principles in a vague way, Homrighausen would preach Christ as the personality in whom these great principles are vibrantly alive and portrayed.

A rather crude illustration may make this distinction clear. A liberal of the old school might orate at great length about the value and necessity of using soap, for soap as a hygienic agent is most essential to cleanliness and health. Along comes the shrewder Barthian liberal with more punch and persuasion and declares that Lux Soap is the thing to use because in it are found *par excellence* the properties which make for cleanliness and health. The older liberal did not believe in a physical resurrection of Christ, and so he talked with exquisite vagueness about the Life that is ever renewed at Easter time. The Barthian liberal, like Homrighausen, seems also not to believe in an actual physical resurrection. But he preaches Christ because Christ did die and did live again most gloriously in the hearts and lives of His followers. The newer liberalism is shrewder and has more dynamic. It is not so vague as the older liberalism; it centralizes in Christ, in whom all the great spiritual principles inhere.

#### Conclusion

Homrighausen, therefore, is a Barthian who, like Barth, dislikes creeds—Homrighausen calls them "grave-clothes"—and who, like Barth, does not preach the cross as a transaction of once-for-all value, as the good news of a glorious redemption accomplished for sinners. But he preaches Christ with fervor, for in Christ "religious truth" is perfectly enshrined and exemplified. To know Christ is to experience the reality of these great spiritual principles, and so to know Christ is to know God. To know Christ thus is to have God "happen to men."

What, in simple terms, is wrong with such preaching of Christ, even though that preaching be fervent? Simply this: such preaching has no good news, no gospel. The first requirement of the good news that saves is that God be truly God—sovereign, transcendent, eternally self-sufficient. That cannot be said of Homrighausen's God. As far as can be gleaned from the pages of this book, God is the totality of these great spiritual principles which are enshrined and exemplified most perfectly in Christ. This is, therefore, the significance of the assertion that God reveals himself most "fully and satisfyingly . . . through Jesus Christ" (pp. 70f). And since God is but the

totality of these spiritual principles which are the product of human experience, Homrighausen dislikes the creeds of the church. To him they are often a sign of unbelief, unbelief which "is afraid of the sovereignty of God; afraid to let him be free" (p. 195). To one whose thinking implies a God who is the totality of fluid spiritual principles gleaned from the stream of human experience, the creeds of the church would naturally present a God who is "boxed in," who is not "free" to "happen to men." The God of the great creeds is the God of the Bible, a God not subject to the will or whim of man.

The second requirement of the good news that saves is that it must really be news telling of a redemption that actually redeems, a salvation accomplished that actually saves. The gospel that saves is not one in which the sinner is so deeply impressed by the Christ that confronts him, the Christ in whom all great spiritual principles are enshrined, that as a result of the confrontation God actually "happens" to the sinner—that is, the spiritual realities that are enshrined in Christ become enshrined in his own life and he follows a new "way of life," the way of the cross. The gospel that saves does not ask me to be saved by the reaction of my sin-seared consciousness to Christ. The gospel that saves declares that at Calvary Christ actually saved all those who truly believe on Him. The gospel that saves assures men that, in their very Spirit-wrought faith in that Christ and love for Him, they have the warrant that the most stupendous fact of all history was meant for them. The gospel that saves declares unto sinful men that by that great transaction at Calvary they may be just before a holy and righteous God, and so free from the dominion and dread consequences of sin and free to enjoy the communion and fellowship of the ever-living and true God forever. Then, and then only, will roses bloom in the desert of human life. Then, and then only, is human character impregnated with that true spring of life, so that it may burst forth with garlands of pure joy, peace and all the spiritual beauties. That is the good news that saves and that good news is not being taught in the Department of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary today, if Professor Homrighausen teaches as he so persuasively writes.



# The Presbyterian Guardian

## EDITORIAL

### Pagan Education

**T**HIS month millions of American boys and girls and young men and young women will return to schools and colleges to pursue knowledge and, we hope, the truth. Most of these young people will be studying in the tax-supported institutions which are the pride of democracy and where its spirit is fostered. On the other hand, thousands will be attending privately-owned and privately-financed schools, not a few of which are supported by various Protestant denominations or by the Roman Catholic church.

As these millions of children and young people leave the homes of America for most of five days each week and, in the case of college students, for three or four months, and often nine months, it is only reasonable for parents to inquire into the subjects taught and the principles enunciated by these schools which are to exert such a determining influence in the thinking and acting of their children. In fact, a parent who does not take time to make such inquiry is committing a fearful mistake and is shirking his proper responsibility. We exercise intelligence and care in the clothes we wear and the food we buy; why should we not be doubly perspicuous in the education we choose for our children? The school is more likely to shape the future of a boy or girl than any other single factor outside the home.

Perhaps we have never paused to analyze the tremendous amount of time the school occupies in the life of the young people. Most of the waking hours of every day and every week for nine months of each year are spent in the classroom or in the study of lessons for the next day. The students who attend colleges away from home are under the direction of the school authorities the entire academic year. And what makes this doubly important is the plain fact that the school has the children dur-

ing the formative years of life when ideals, opinions and thought forms are molded.

If the school is such a powerful influence upon the younger generation, it is imperative to know what the children are taught. But what they are learning each day is not half so important as the point of view from which the professor is teaching. In other words, the principles upon which the entire educational system rests are far more vital to the student than the factual content he is receiving. It is perfectly possible for a professor to tell the facts of a subject but at the same time to relate the data in such a light and from such a point of view that the whole picture is distorted and palpably false. An examination of two subjects will illustrate what we mean.

In the high schools and colleges particularly, from what point of view and in what light is history taught? The young people are led to believe that events in history occur because certain physical, social or economic forces produce inevitable events. For example, they will be taught that the present European war is due to economic and social forces which caused an explosion, and that this conflagration will continue until these forces have played themselves out and economic justice is restored. The moral wrongs and the spiritual apostasy are brushed aside. There is not the slightest hint that a personal God rules over this universe by His sovereign power, that He is working out His plan and purpose, and that events do not just happen. There is no mention made of sin against God, of lack of faith, and of the judgment of God. In other words, the basis of history in this instance is entirely secular and even pagan. If history is taught from a pagan point of view—and there is no doubt of that—how can we expect our children to accept the truth of Christianity that history is the unfolding of God's plan and purpose?

In the sciences the pagan and secular basis of the American educational system is even more apparent. This universe as we now observe it, and life on the planet as it now exists, are the result of the evolutionary process of force and matter, and blind force and matter at that. God, the Creator of the universe, the One from whom all life springs and upon which this planet and its life are dependent every

second, is never mentioned. The Creator is bowed off the stage of His creation as unnecessary and as scientifically untenable. The heavens do not declare the glory of God and the firmament does not show His handiwork. The world is here; how it started, where it is going and why we are here are never discussed.

In the light of these facts, is there any wonder that the Christian conception of the world finds little place in the thinking and acting of the present generation? In fact, the spiritual understanding of life is ruled out and the mechanistic view, which is unadulterated paganism, dominates the thoughts of too many in America.

Some may surmise that we have erected a straw man, so let us furnish some evidence for our contention. The following quotations are from the letter of a senior at Yale University written to the president of Yale and presented in Dorothy Thompson's column in the *Ladies Home Journal*, June, 1941.

"Have we not gleaned from your very own professors of natural science, philosophy and ancient history that religions are the product of myth and superstition and that men create gods in their own image; that if there is such a thing as the soul, no scientist has ever isolated it in the laboratory." . . . "Personally, I fail to understand how you, or any other college President, can expect us to become ardent Christians and democrats when the vital postulates on which these faiths are supposed to rest are daily undermined in the classroom. . . ."

What makes the situation worse is the fact that there is such centralization of education that every school follows the same theories and assumptions. When an "expert" delivers an opinion, professors in the same field have not the courage to disagree. There is too much goose-stepping in the intellectual world, and that goose-stepping has led the educators to a denial of the God of the Bible.

How different were the professors in our colleges during the early years of this country's history! There is hardly an outstanding college or university on the Atlantic seaboard that was not founded by true Christians, under the influence of the Christian church in order to foster true learning and Christian piety. At the very first meeting of the Board of Trustees of

Yale University a resolution was passed stating that the college had been founded to further the propagation of the Reformed Protestant religion. A leading historian of Harvard University states that not only was religion taught but that Christian convictions pervaded every course in the curriculum.

If this is the situation in education today, what is the conclusion of the matter? Many deductions can be made but one conclusion is inevitable:

we must have more Christian schools and colleges where every subject is taught from the theistic point of view and where the highest academic standards prevail. There are some Christian schools, like those under the auspices of the National Union of Christian Schools, and some Christian colleges, but many, many more are imperative. Christian parents must awaken to the perils within the educational system of America.

—E. H. R.

## The Untrustworthy Heart

A Meditation by the REV. BURTON L. GODDARD

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9)

**W**HO trusts the word of Germany's dictator? Who dares trust the changing policies of many of the world's nations? How far does labor trust capital, and capital labor? Do the various organizations of a community trust one another? Do you leave your house unlocked and trust passersby? What of your friends—do you fully trust them? And is your trust in the other members of your family as complete as it might be? Be honest! Is not your attitude toward other groups and individuals largely one of question, or suspicion, or distrust? Do you not reserve the fullest measure of trust and avoid placing it in those about you? Unhappy experience has led us to follow such a policy.

The result is that we reserve that complete trust for ourselves. We trust our own hearts. We rest assured that our own wills and minds are alone worthy of our fullest confidence. We feel most secure when our secrets are undivulged and our purposes locked deep within our hearts. We then fear no betrayal. We do not doubt but that our own best interests will be served.

### A Deceitful Companion

*We are wrong!*

Perhaps we cannot trust those about us; neither can we trust our own hearts! The God-given picture of those hearts is this: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It is a deceitful companion. You must not trust it. Since

the fall of our first parents, the human heart, left to itself, has manifested only corruption and depravity. The prophet has characterized it as "incurably sick." Moreover, he has described it as "treacherous." It were only folly to trust in such a heart.

Wherein lies its deceit? Our Lord Himself gave answer when He said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The natural heart gives birth to all these things, and they defile us. They constitute lawlessness in the sight of God. They reap for us civil punishment, social ostracism and physical suffering. The heart, desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, tempts man with the prospect of delight in evil deeds and denies that they will eventually bring unhappiness. Is not such a heart a deceitful and untrustworthy companion?

"Oh yes," replies the average unbeliever, "but my heart isn't like that. I don't do such things." But where does he find such an answer? His own deceitful heart gives it to him! The teaching of the Lord Jesus does not give one such assurance. It awakens him to the fact that the social sins He mentioned are only the beginning of sins, and that the universal traits of pride and self-righteousness betray the utter corruption of men's hearts. Therefore, if the non-Christian defends his own righteousness, he puts himself in the class of the Pharisee who made of public prayer an opportunity for boasting. And everyone knows Christ's judgment concerning the Pharisee's heart. It was no less

condemnatory than Jeremiah's words: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Another prophet once spoke words which are in point here. He said, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Likewise, a noted apostle declared, "All have sinned." But let me ask you a question. What made us all go astray? What made us all sin? There is only one answer — *man's untrustworthy heart.*

Furthermore, I venture to suggest that in all the world there is no sin of more disastrous consequences than the sin of wandering away from God, regardless of what form that sin may take. You do not have to become a thief or a drunkard in order to reject your Maker and turn from Him. Live unto yourself and withhold from Him the worship and honor which is His due, and you automatically exclude yourself from the kingdom of heaven. No greater tragedy can come to a human soul, and yet it is the heart of deceit which men are prone to trust that is responsible.

I wonder what you would do if you had a friend who led you into a life of drunkenness and the accompanying degradation, one who used his influence to teach you to gamble and to make you lose all your money, one who made you his companion in thievery until you were caught and punished. The heart of man is such a friend. It is surely a deceitful companion. Can you possibly trust it?

### The Divine Prescription

Perhaps we would be completely deceived by our hearts if God had not told us of their true character. But could words be plainer than these?—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." God says we need new hearts, regenerate hearts, hearts which will give birth to love for Him and our fellowmen, hearts which will be humble and prone to worship our wonderful King, hearts which will counsel us to flee from sin and all unrighteousness. The natural heart is a stony heart; we need hearts of flesh. The natural heart is a deceitful heart; we need honest, sincere hearts. The natural heart is desperately wicked; we need pure, holy hearts.

Only the divine Surgeon can perform the operation which will give us such hearts as are necessary. We cannot barter for them in the markets

of this world. We cannot make them. They are a creation of God.

Let no one be satisfied until he has a trustworthy heart. Do not rest until such a heart is yours. Rather, look upon your natural heart with suspicion

and distrust, and ever pray for God's gift of a holy heart.

When that gift becomes yours, ever pray that the God who gave it will give it dominion and mastery over your whole life. Ask Him daily to

cleanse it from any defilement of sin. Make it the object of special prayer from time to time. And never forget to give thanks to the eternal, loving God for taking away that corrupt heart of deceit and wickedness.

## The Boomerang of Neutrality

The Eighth in a Series of Articles on the Crisis in Evangelism

By JOHN C. HILLS, JR., and WILLIAM E. WELMERS

**W**HENEVER we think of an Australian native vigorously hurling a curved stick into space, it is always somewhat amusing to visualize the possibility of that same stick coming back and hitting him on the side of the head when he is looking the other way. We would probably not think it quite so entertaining, however, if such a thing happened to us. Yet, figuratively speaking, that is just about what is happening every day to the Christian church. The weapon which the most faithful, the most orthodox, the most conscientious Christians have ordinarily been using in the war against paganism has done very little damage to the modern fortifications of unbelief; in fact, it has done far more damage to the Christian church itself. When our best weapon boomerangs against us, the situation has become deadly serious.

Our picture of the crisis in evangelism has grown darker with each succeeding chapter, and now has become black indeed. Yet we do not want to be prophets of gloom. We are thankful that God has preserved a remnant which has not fallen into the slumber of dead orthodoxy, nor drugged itself with the artificial stimulants of pietism, nor succumbed to the disguised paganism of Modernism. There are many Christians and some churches which still believe and proclaim the doctrines of Scripture. In fact, this faithful remnant is the hope of the church today. The future of Christianity—a glorious future, by God's grace—lies, so to speak, with this Gideon's band. Yet, even so, we find that the method of evangelism most commonly used in these faithful churches is not the Biblical method;

and that if they continue to use the same method in the future, they will do more damage to the church itself than to paganism.

As we have repeatedly attempted to point out, the pagan or unbelieving world around us has encased itself in brand new armor plate, and this armor consists essentially in a new attitude with regard to supernatural Christianity. No longer does the unbeliever consider Christianity and its claims as something to be reckoned with, as a belief that must be destroyed before the unbeliever can rest comfortably in his unbelief; on the contrary, the unbeliever now has a closed mind on the subject—supernatural Christianity, he believes, is definitely passé. Many orthodox Christians, who have watched this new armor of the unbeliever being riveted into place, have wanted to make Christianity appear reasonable, logical and sensible to the unbeliever. In an attempt to accomplish this, it has been argued that the facts of the universe show that it is reasonable to believe in God, and also that the most reasonable belief in God is that which the Bible teaches. The purpose of these orthodox Christians—to make Christianity reasonable to those who think it unreasonable—is highly commendable; but the argument that has been used to accomplish this purpose has been well-nigh disastrous to the church.

It is not easy to summarize in a few paragraphs what has been the subject of not a few books and sermons, and even of many courses in theological seminaries. Some of the greatest Christian scholars have given their time and energy to studying and answering this great question: How can we make the gospel seem

reasonable to the unbeliever? Yet, with due regard for their careful and detailed work, we believe that the general principles of their typical argument against paganism may be set forth rather briefly and simply. The orthodox Christian usually—and unfortunately—approaches the unbeliever with an argument somewhat like this:

"Both you and I want to be reasonable and scientific. We don't want to believe anything unless there is good reason to believe it. Neither of us should be prejudiced in any way, so we shall merely investigate the evidence and see what is the most sensible conclusion to be drawn from it. Let us forget about theories, and face the facts with a neutral attitude.

"Here, then, are the facts which we both can see. We agree that the universe is an immense and intricate mechanism. How are we going to explain it? Certainly it is impossible that such a remarkable thing could merely have 'happened', with no reason for its happening. There is law and order in the universe—every day that is admitted when we add two and two to get four. All of our logic, all of our thinking, even this very discussion, is based on that universal law. What is behind it all? Men of all ages and all faiths give us the answer, for the belief in God is as old as history, and as universal as sunshine. Surely, when we look at the facts impartially, theism is reasonable; that is, it is reasonable to believe in God.

"But what kind of God is this that must somewhere exist? There is life in this world; there are also persons, individuals with logical minds thinking logical thoughts. Surely, therefore, God must be a living and a personal God. He is also infinite, for

He must be greater than we are; since even we finite beings can at least talk about infinity, we must have gotten the idea of infinity from somewhere. He must also be a sovereign God, for all of this that we see around and within us must have a master and lord. He is also a moral God, because we have within ourselves ideas of right and wrong that govern our lives. If God is all this, is it not reasonable to think that He is also our Creator, as the Bible says? Is it not also reasonable to suppose that He is a holy God, and that He has revealed to us somewhere what He wants us to do, and what He wants us to believe about Himself?

"The Bible claims to be just such a revelation from God. Is it not sensible to accept it, or at least to look at it carefully to see whether it is reasonable? The Bible says, for example, that we are sinners. Does not the daily growth of crime and war prove that sufficiently? Then again, man has never been satisfied with himself. Philosophers of all ages have hoped for a greater future. That is why so many of them have believed in the immortality of the soul. However, you will agree that man has never succeeded in lifting himself up by his own bootstraps. Is it not reasonable to believe that man needs outside help? The Bible suggests such help too, when it offers Jesus Christ as the substitute for us sinners, to satisfy the justice of God. Is not all of the Bible, even the gospel itself, in accord with what you see around you, what you believe, what you know, and what history and philosophy and science have told you? Is not Christianity the most reasonable form of theism, the most sensible kind of belief in God?"

When we compare this argument with the arguments of pietism and Modernism, we are impressed with the fact that it does not confine itself, like the typical pietistic argument, to a few Bible verses, nor yet to a few scattered facts of archæology, science or experience; nor does the Christian who uses this argument swim around, like the Modernist, in a fog of lofty rhetoric. Rather, this argument attempts to show the unbeliever that the philosophy of Christianity, or the Christian view of the world, if you will, is reasonable. This attempt, as we have said, is highly commendable. Furthermore, the orthodox evangelist

shows by this argument that he is trying to apply his faith to every aspect of life; he seeks to see God's glory in every fact in the universe. That, too, is praiseworthy. In fact, the principle at stake here cannot be overemphasized—the sovereignty of God should be recognized in and applied to every thought and every fact, that all of the universe may display God's sovereignty and unite in His praise.

It is regrettable to the extreme, however, that the orthodox evangelist has hinged his whole presentation of the Christian world-view on that one word—*neutrality*. He desires to seek common ground with his opponent in their discussion but, in so doing, the evangelist has created a type of argument that boomerangs upon himself in a two-fold way.

First of all, it should be patent to almost everyone that there can be no such thing as neutrality with regard to the facts of this world. No one ever has approached these facts, or ever will, with his mind open on the subject of God and religion. Either one comes to the facts with an unbelieving mind, or he looks at these facts with Christian eyes. If he is in the latter condition, the heavens will immediately declare the glory of God to Him; but if he is in the former state, he is spiritually blind and the firmament cannot reveal to him the handiwork of God. How, then, can we in the slightest degree damage the foundations of the pagan's unbelief by asking him to assume the so-called unbiased and scientific frame of mind, and by then pointing out to him the facts which exist around us? He cannot assume an unbiased frame of mind, because he already possesses an unregenerate mind—he constantly views with antichristian eyes the facts which we point out to him. So long as he looks at the facts in that way, we can, of course, prove nothing to him about God. Thus the weapon of neutrality proves to be useless, because neither the Christian nor the unbeliever can be neutral.

Far worse than this, however, is this second consideration: that the "neutrality" weapon rebounds upon the church itself with devastating effect. Actually, in seeking to be unbiased with regard to facts, the orthodox evangelist *abandons his own Christian view of God and the world, and, instead, adopts his enemy's anti-*

*christian view*. His typical argument not only fails to prove what it seeks to prove; it also proves what it seeks to destroy, for it tacitly admits at the outset that Christianity is false and that the unbeliever is right! That seems to be a harsh accusation, but it is by no means an exaggeration. For, when we claim to be neutral with regard to the facts of the universe, we are already saying that we can explain these facts and eventually find God *without taking God into consideration at the very beginning*. This is precisely what the unbeliever says, and when we agree with him we admit that the one firm foundation we have is facts, and that God, if He exists at all, must depend on these facts. In other words, we thereby admit that the universe can get along very well without God, for we insist on talking about the facts of the universe without taking God into account. How can we prove that God is independent of the universe, and that the universe depends entirely on Him, when we have begun by granting that it is the universe which is independent, and that God, if he exists at all, is dependent?

This fatal fallacy of the "neutrality" argument, which is apparent enough in the very beginning of our discussion with the unbeliever, becomes even more obvious when we look at the conclusions which we shall reach by arguing from the facts to God. What kind of God are we going to find at the end of our search? Why, simply a finite or pagan God. The facts from which we argue are finite or limited, and we have agreed that they are, to begin with, *independent of an infinite God*; therefore the conclusions we shall draw from them must also be finite and limited. Instead of proving the existence of a God who created man in His own image, we shall at best prove a God who is in *man's* image. We have found God in our argument with the unbeliever, to be sure; but, to our horror, it is his god and not our God. Thus our neutrality acts as a boomerang on our own faith—we try to use it to show the unbeliever that Christianity is reasonable, but suddenly it flies back and knocks our supposedly supernatural Christianity into a cocked hat.

All of this is not some hypothetical and unusual case; it is the sad situation which exists in even the

most faithful groups in the Christian church today. Even in these groups, the evangelism that is most commonly used can prove absolutely nothing to the intelligent unbeliever, and may actually destroy Christianity itself if nothing is done about it.

It is therefore our firm conviction that this inconsistent defense of Christianity and attack upon paganism has been the cause of a great deal of the apostasy and indifference which is so manifest in the Christian church today. Why is it that so many ministers trained in the finest seminaries in the land are now, twenty or thirty years later, consorting with all sorts of unbelief in the church? Is it not because they have been using the boomerang of neutrality against the enemy, and have succeeded in stunning only themselves? We are convinced that exactly the same thing will happen in the future if the young ministers who are now so zealously and sacrificially fighting paganism and Modernism keep on using this boomerang of neutrality, foolishly believing that all men see the facts alike.

Of course, the results have not always been so serious as they might have been. By God's grace many Christians have failed to see the logical outcome of their own evangelism and have been untouched by the boomerang of neutrality. Again, many an unbeliever has been caught unawares by this argument and, seeing neither its weakness nor its fatal fallacy, has come to believe in the God of the Bible through such evangelism. However, that does not excuse us. Just because God has sometimes been pleased to strike a straight blow with a crooked stick, to overrule our errors and bless our work in spite of ourselves, we must not be content to keep on using this dangerous form of argument. For we shall finally succeed only in strengthening the cause of unbelief, and hurting our own cause.

Has no one, then, ever used the evangelism that God demands? Yes, we believe that some have. However, that method has not been used as commonly as it must be. Furthermore, those who sometimes use that method are often unaware that they are doing so, and hence they cannot use it to the best advantage. Consequently, it is tremendously important that we see just what that method is, for it is the only solution for the crisis

in evangelism. Just before we enter upon a discussion of truly Biblical evangelism, however, we shall review the ground we have covered so far, so that we may see again just what constitutes the crisis in evangelism, and how serious it actually is.

## The Bible versus Conservatism

(Concluded From Page 50)

### A Suggested Procedure

Since a reactionary movement will arrive nowhere, and since conservatism and inertia are but way-stations on the road to Modernism, let us put our grand emphasis on the Bible and be as radical as Scripture itself. It is certain that in the Bible we shall find solutions for all our ills and for all our problems.

Returning to the Bible, then, how can a revolutionary program for the entire range of life be worked out from Biblical principles? By this simple method: let us question everything until we are sure that it is Scriptural. To be sure, we are already convinced that the central doctrines of the Reformed Faith are the teaching of the Bible. Nevertheless we must continue to check these doctrines with Scripture itself. But what of many peripheral doctrines? And what of every known standard of activity in every sphere, including the political, economic, social and moral practices so commonly defended against the "radicals"? Christianity itself ought to be the radical movement, not the conservative! Let us question everything until we are sure that it is in accord with the Bible. That which we discover to be true to the Word of God we shall henceforth embrace with enthusiasm. But we may also find some things which will have to be discarded in favor of Scriptural practices.

It is too much to suppose, because of original sin and its influence on the mind, that the details of Reformed theology are perfect in every respect. Simply to accept any principle, doctrine, or conservative shibboleth because great men have held to it, or even because the great body of great men in the church have held to it, is blind conservatism. The only reason for believing anything to be absolutely

true is that it is taught in Scripture or is properly to be deduced from Scripture. However, because the church has been afflicted with such great conservatism, it has failed to re-examine its ideas continually to see if they are really Scriptural. It is even possible that in practice an emphasis on doctrine emphasizes doctrine to the detriment of Scripture. The theology of the past, including the "line of orthodoxy," serves simply as a strong guide to the meaning of Scripture, not as an end in itself. Therefore even the most cherished doctrines of the Reformed theology must be examined and tried for adherence to Scripture. Let nothing in itself be held sacred; let everything be squared with God's unbreakable Word.

At this point it is well to make a few observations to avoid any mis-

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understanding. It is not suggested that we should tear down everything but the doctrine of the sole authority of Scripture and build again upon that. No, within the great system of truth taught in the Bible and of which we are assured, let us examine individual doctrines to see whether they are in conformity with Scripture. Those great doctrines that are central to the system will be proved indubitably Scriptural, and thus the system itself will be revealed as Scriptural. There is no doubt in the mind of the writer of this article that these central doctrines are clearly taught in the Bible. However, let us be able to show, by an abundance of texts, where and how the Bible does teach them. If doctrine is brought into contact with the living Scriptures, then it will be shown that true doctrine is alive. For by no means is it the intention of this article to minimize Christian doctrine. Doctrine, the teaching of Scripture, is simply the truth of Scripture. It is the truth that makes men free from sin. That truth is the energizing force that gives us zeal for the gospel. It is the sanctifying force that the Spirit of God uses to enable us to live better lives. Doctrine is essential to Christianity. But if Scripture does not support our doctrines, then our doctrines are dead.

**Beneficial Results**

The suggested reexamination, on the basis of Scripture, of all ideas in every sphere should have at least six beneficial results:

(1) It will actually persuade people of the truth of Biblical doctrine. Doctrine does not take on its proper significance, or may not even be sincerely believed, unless there is the conviction that the doctrine is Scriptural, that is, that God tells us it is true. It is true not because it is so and so's doctrine—not my doctrine or your doctrine, and not the church's doctrine—but God's doctrine. And that is the only reason for believing any doctrine.

(2) It will afford progress in theology. It will make us redefine many dogmas, and the arguments for them, in the light of Scripture, and will perhaps get rid of some sacred cobwebs that have accumulated by the sheer weight of human authority.

(3) It will make us and keep us radical. In overhauling the vast body of authoritative ideas in every field, and in making it a practice to search the Scriptures, as did the Bereans, in

regard to each conservative opinion that presents itself, we shall be bound to have our attention drawn to those radical principles of the Bible that relate most especially to each subject. And by continued emphasis on Scripture it is possible to remain radical. It is an old saw that today's radicals are tomorrow's conservatives. But Christians cannot afford to lapse into conservatism. Christianity and radicalism are one and inseparable, now and until Christ returns.

(4) It will give us a positive program and a positive emphasis. It is easy to be negative and critical of everybody else. Negativism, however, is just a symptom of the disease of conservatism. Investigation of every kind of human activity will eventually produce a positive Scriptural program. Let us take, for example, the three-sided conflict of government, capital and labor. How simple it is to assume habitually that one of these three is always right! And yet, if we apply truly Scriptural principles—from the Sermon on the Mount, the Old Testament prophets and the Pauline epistles, for example—we may discover that all three are at fault, that what we need is not just reliance on one of the three bodies as it is at present constituted, but a whole new system for all, based on the Word of God. Thus our radical, positive program may cut across all temporary interests. Whatever may be the solution for any problem of this world, it can be worked out from the Bible. Of course, it will be necessary for experts in each sphere, trained in Scripture, to develop details of such a program.

(5) It will provide a most direct means of preaching the gospel. In bringing the Bible to bear upon the affairs of human life, the all-important character of Christianity can be revealed and an entrance for the gospel message effected. People will be impressed and interested by a positive program. It is not supposed that a Christian program for society should proceed apart from the preaching of the gospel itself.

(6) Finally, as all will agree, this reexamination on the basis of Scripture will take us to the Word of God as a means of grace. We shall be assured that the sovereign God is our refuge and strength, without whom we can do nothing. In that assurance, some work for the Kingdom of God may be accomplished.

## Today in the Religious World

By THOMAS R. BIRCH

### Northfield Goes South

WHEN D. L. Moody founded the Northfield Bible Conference in 1880, he dedicated it to the propagation of the Christianity of the Bible and to the strengthening of the faith of the saints. But the storms of more than half a century have toppled the towers of truth and laid waste the pleasant pastures of Christian blessing which once made Northfield great. Listen to a few echoes from the 1941 conference:

GAUS GLENN ATKINS (Auburn Seminary): "Nationalism may be the most mischievous thing which can be released in this world of ours, but somewhere, feeling through it all, is the touch of the everlasting God. . . . Wherever human help touches us, wherever love blesses and supports, wherever the great steadfast orders of our days and our tasks, there underneath are the everlasting arms."

WILLARD L. SPERRY (Harvard Divinity School): "It is fair to say the doctrine of one step at a time is about the only one by which men can hope to live today. It is as profound common sense and revealed religion as is available today."

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH (Drew Seminary): "Christianity has as much of a pattern as Nazism or Marxism."

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON: "Americans must consider themselves spiritually dead if they no longer feel it worth while to die for America."

And all of these statements were issued at a time when Mr. Ickes was pleading with Americans to save gas!

### What Won't They Think of Next?

Mail-order religion is the brain-child of the Rev. Allen W. Clark of Danvers, Massachusetts. For those who can't or won't go to church on Sundays, the plan calls for the mailman to deliver a complete service starting with the opening prayer and containing a Bible reading, a four hundred word sermon and a closing prayer. Even the plate is passed by mail. Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward have so far shown no interest in the scheme.

### The Archbishop Is Hopeful

The Archbishop of York may per-

haps be pardoned for indulging in a bit of wishful thinking. Faced with the necessity of choosing between two antichristian forces, he declared that "Bolshevism is preferable to Nazism" and expressed the hope that the collaboration of England and Russia may eventually lead the Soviet to "the repudiation of her official godlessness." A similar hope was recently voiced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said, "It may well be that Russia's defense of its own land and the new unity which this will bring may lead to a new tolerance of religion by the Soviet government, and a new resurgence of the interests of religion, always deep-seated in the heart of the Russian people."

We cannot agree with the archbishops in their wistful hopes that Russia may emerge from the conflict to repudiate her former godlessness. Christians may properly pray that God in the exercise of His sovereign will may overrule the forces of Satan that today dominate in Soviet Russia and may restore Christianity in that pagan land. But that is a very different matter from justifying present coöperation with atheist Russia on the basis of a highly doubtful cure to be effected in a nebulous future by the refining powers of suffering.

### Religious Education in Public Schools

Measures to provide public school children with some form of religious education met with defeat in six of the seven state legislatures before which the issue was introduced. The seventh state was Massachusetts, wherein the principles of the released time plan were incorporated. This brings the total number of states in which such education is permitted to nine: Illinois, New York, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, South Dakota, West Virginia and Massachusetts. The six states in which religious education bills failed to pass were California, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Colorado.

### A Million Minute Men

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in its approach to the present crisis and is a welcome relief from the prevailing modernist crusades.

#### The United Japanese Church

Dr. T. T. Brumbaugh, former Methodist missionary to Japan, gives a Modernist's picture of the newly-formed Japanese Christian Church. "Protestants in Japan," he declared, "are now committed to the establishment of a strong united church and to the gradual erasing of denominational differences." He reported that at the June meeting considerable debate took place over the issue of the creed of the new church, and the question has not yet been settled. The church informed the Ministry of Education that the basis of its belief was the Apostles' Creed. The Ministry of Education, however, rejected the creed's expression of the doctrines of the virgin birth, the resurrection and the final judgment, and no compromise has yet been agreed upon.

The new Japanese church brings together twenty-three named denominations, and these represent previous unions of almost fifty different groups. They have been formed into eleven "blocs," which follow roughly the lines of certain large denominational families. The whole church has, further, been divided into fifteen geographical dioceses which cover the entire empire.

Omitted from the union have been the Roman Catholics, the Greek

Catholics, the Episcopalians and the Seventh Day Adventists. The Catholics, both branches, have already received recognition by the government. The Episcopalians and Adventists have not yet been recognized and are awaiting decision as to their status under the law.

## MINISTERIAL INSTITUTE CONDUCTED AT WESTMINSTER

**T**HE Fourth Annual Ministerial Institute sponsored by the Alumni Association of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, held its first sessions on Monday afternoon, August 25th. The opening lectures were by the Rev. John H. Skilton and Dr. Robert Strong, and were part of a series of studies which each lecturer continued throughout the week. Mr. Skilton's course was on the subject of Christianity and culture, with special emphasis on the field of literature. Dr. Strong discussed the millennial question.

On Tuesday morning Mr. Richard B. Gaffin, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to China who has just returned to this country on furlough, lectured on the problems confronting missionary work in that land. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, the featured speaker was Dr. Gordon H. Clark, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. Dr. Clark summarized the important work of Frederick Robert Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, and delivered a criticism of it, utilizing much material from the critical volume of Delton Lewis Scudder, *Tennant's Philosophical Theology*, from the Yale studies in religious education.

Evening meetings were open to the public, and were held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Speakers were the Rev. Robert L. Atwell of San Francisco, the Rev. Calvin K. Cummings of Pittsburgh, and Mr. Gaffin. The institute ended its sessions on Friday noon, and those who had attended returned to their pastorates enriched by the five-day session.

About a dozen ministers were enrolled. Since a number of them attended with their families, there were about twenty persons staying in Machen Hall.

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