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## Can a Christian Believe in Progress?

By W. STANFORD REID

**P**ROGRESS!" This is a word which, in this day of great advance, is on the lips of many. We are often told, however, that men never realized that they were progressing until the rise of deistic rationalism in the eighteenth century. In that era, so it is said, intelligent men, being freed from the intellectual blight of Christianity, at last saw that the history of man showed progress. Voltaire started the movement and, ever since, this idea has been the very corner-stone of all teaching of history.

Having been given this statement, we are often assured that no Christian can logically believe in progress. And above all, no Calvinist could ever contemplate that concept without having his whole theological edifice overthrown from its foundations.

To prove their point, these "historical progressives" assert that the Reformed view of God and His sovereignty kills all possibility of belief in progress. According to the universal witness of Reformed teachers, God knows all things. Nothing in the future can arise which is to Him new or unknown. This is so because God controls all things. Everything is thus run according to plan from the beginning to the end, so how can progress be taught, when the end was known before time began? To the Calvinist, our enlightened friends assure us, progress is impossible for according to Calvinistic views everything was determined from the beginning of the world.

The non-Christian view, "the progressive view of history," on the other hand, emphasizes progress—even

for God. The old idea of the sovereignty of God must go by the board. Therefore, those who would establish a philosophy of historical progress either separate their god completely from the universe and push him into a corner of eternity with a dunce's cap on his head, or they bring him into the universe and make him a part of it. God, we are informed, thus becomes a progressive too. For the first time he learns things that he never knew before. Thus we have true progress when the deity, like men, progresses in his knowledge of himself and of the world.

#### Evolution and "Progress"

This marvelous process of progress is brought about by evolution. One of the so-called "great discoveries" of the nineteenth century was that the world is evolving. Nobody knows exactly when or where this evolution started, but gradually vegetation appeared on this planet. Perhaps from this vegetation there evolved, through forces resident within it, a unicellular being. This being, during a period of millions of years, gradually evolved by self-adaptation to its environment, until it became an animal. Thence, after more millions of years, a monkey one day shed his tail, left his trees and decided to walk upright on the ground. In this way, man progressed beyond the animal stage.

This theory, we are told, gives so much more room for progress than the Biblical doctrine of creation. In Scripture we find an account of God creating matter and forming the world. There is no evolution even

then, for God created everything so that it was to reproduce "after its kind." There was to be no gradual shading of plant into fish, fish into animal, and animal into man. Everything was created as it was intended to remain. Then, after all this was done, God created man and, what is more, He created him without the need to evolve, for He made him perfectly. Where can progress enter here?

In contrast to the Christian idea of man's perfection, which to our evolutionary friends kills progress, these same friends maintain that man coming from the animals has gradually evolved to higher things. By choosing those things which would help him forward on the road of progress, man has in every way gone far beyond his grandfather, the anthropoid ape. He has improved in morals. His knowledge of the facts of the universe has increased immeasurably, even within the last five thousand years. Thus he is going on to greater things, for he is continually discovering that which is new both to himself and to his god. We are not told where man will end but, we are informed confidently, man is going forward to greater things than he can possibly imagine now. Thus the evolutionist and his god trip happily across the fields of poppies, for progress is taking place.

Such an optimistic view of the world and history, according to the sympathizing evolutionist, cannot be held by the Christian. According to the teaching of the Christian church, man, by sinning against God, fell from the estate wherein he was created. And what is more, he fell so badly that he is declared to be totally depraved and without true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Therefore, since man is dead in sin, how can Christians believe that the history of man has progress in it? Sinful man must wait for the sovereign God who created him to lift him out of the pit and miry clay in which he is bogged. Progress? No, certainly not! A Christian cannot possibly accept such a view of history!

When a member of the evolutionary or progressive school has delivered himself of such a statement

as this, he usually feels that by the mere statement he has won a complete victory. He will look pityingly upon the Christian, as though he were really sorry for the deep-seated ignorance which would make a man cling to his unprogressive theology, rather than receive "the proven and accepted facts of science." But his pity will turn to amazement and anger if he is informed that the Christian considers that he himself is the only one who can logically believe in progress. The non-Christian will not believe his ears when informed that evolution actually destroys this pet idea in which he places his trust. The non-Christian's only answer will be a question: "How can these things be?"

### The Christian's Answer

If the Christian is to answer this question, he must first make the evolutionist realize that the first blow is made at progress when the omniscience of God is denied. If neither God nor man knows beforehand which way they should go, how can either know what to do in order to progress? They are like two men lost in the woods, for the very fact that they are lost shows that they do not know what to do to escape from the woods. They may be, and probably are, going in circles. But if one man knows the way, he can lead in the right direction. Put two men in a boat, one a landsman and one an old sailor. If they sail out of sight of

land, who will be more likely to know the way back? Undoubtedly the seaman will be the pilot in this instance. But if both men were landsmen who had never been to sea before, they might die of thirst before they reached shore. In the same way, if God knows no more than man about the situation, how can either one choose that which helps them to progress. May they not rather choose that which causes them to revert to type and thus go down rather than up the hill.

Then again, when the evolutionist denies the omnipotence of God, he places a bomb under the corner-stone of his theory. He launches God and man in the stream of progress, and because of their powerlessness they are like two ships in a rushing torrent. According to the evolutionist, environment, heredity and innate disposition all control man and God. Thus how can they advance, if the currents should chance to pull in the other direction? Place two men in a canoe in the Niagara Gorge and see how much control they have of themselves and the canoe. Neither natural selection nor survival of the fittest is that which controls their destiny. They have no choice but to go with the stream, and if there is any survival at all they may count themselves fortunate. So are God and man in the stream of history, if we accept the modern evolutionist's position. The stream, turn or twist as it may, is the master of the situation—and progress can be nothing but a pious hope.

The result of all this is that for a non-Christian to talk of progress is not even remotely sensible. Neither God nor man knows what to do to advance himself, since they are both ignorant; nor would it do any good if they did know, for they are both powerless. They are babes in the woods, without any means of finding their way out. And what is more, the non-Christian never knows when a big bad wolf will come along and gobble up both himself and his God, for neither controls the situation. Anything may arise which will destroy the whole process—and even destroy God Himself. Thus the evolutionist must admit that it is quite

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# Is This Church Necessary?

An Address Delivered at the Third Anniversary of  
Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Middletown, Delaware

By the REV. ROBERT H. GRAHAM

IT WAS three years ago, on the last Lord's Day of January, 1938, that the congregation now known as the Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Middletown, Delaware, met for the first time in the local theatre building. It was a Sunday never to be forgotten by many who were present, for with steadfast determination and holy courage they surrendered a building which had become dear to them from childhood. I use the words "determination" and "courage" advisedly. This church is here because a people determined above all else to be true to the Scriptures and their consciences. This church is here because a people, with holy courage, the courage of an Abraham, went out not knowing whither they went. The history of this church is familiar to most of you. In the space of three years God has wrought marvelous things in Middletown. We hesitate to speak of them, for we would not give to man or to a church any of the praise which belongs to God alone. After three Sundays in the local theatre building, we secured the use of the New Century Club on north Broad Street, where we continued for eight more months.

On October 15, 1938, less than nine months after our exodus from our former building, we had the great joy and privilege of dedicating this beautiful building to the worship of the triune God and the preaching of this gospel which we love so well and for which we had suffered the loss of so many former treasures. Why did we do it? Why are we here? Many strangers and many of our neighbors and friends have wondered at the presence of two Presbyterian churches in such a small community, and some have not hesitated to condemn bitterly the founders of this particular church. What shall we say? Well, in the first place I must remind you that, regardless of what we say or do, there will still be criticism. There are those who have wilfully and belligerently shut their minds to the truth and *they* are very sure that

Grace Church should never have come into existence. But, on the other hand, there are those who are sincerely perplexed and who without any show of bitterness ask us why we left the old building, and why we organized this church now known as the Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Middletown, Delaware.

The question that I propose to answer this morning is a practical one. Indeed, I may go so far as to say that it is one for which *we must* have an answer, for if we are not able to give a reasonable and intelligent answer to this question, we have little excuse for existing as a church. The question is this: "Is Grace Church necessary in Middletown?" Most of us are firmly convinced that Grace Church is necessary. We are convinced that this church exists for a purpose, and that that purpose rises above any petty personal differences to a set of principles which are as vital and real as life itself. Is Grace Church necessary? Our answer is an emphatic "Yes!" After three years we are still very sure that this church is necessary and that its presence in this community is for the glory of God. There are at least three reasons for our answer to this question.

## We Cannot Compromise

Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church is necessary, in the first place, because we as Christians cannot compromise with Modernism. We are living in a day when most church members have lost their interest in the fundamental facts of Christianity. They are members of a church and yet for some unexplainable reason they are content to leave the entire fate of Christianity and their own eternal salvation to the voice of the church. They seem to feel that whatever the church says or does must be all right. So widespread is this deadly complacency that few of the millions of church members in America care whether their pastors believe or preach the truth of this Book which we know and love as the Word

of God. Fifty years ago the enemies of the church were outside the church. They openly attacked the great doctrines of our holy faith. They ridiculed the gospel records and sought to undermine the Christian church by denying the truthfulness of every great Biblical doctrine. The Thomas Paines and the Robert Ingersolls were outside the church, and they would have nothing to do with the church because they did not believe what the Bible taught.

But where are the enemies of the church today—the Paines and the Ingersolls and all the other critics of the foundations of our holy faith? They are now within the church. They are no longer on the outside for they have captured the pulpits of the churches and the professorial chairs of the seminaries and colleges. For want of a better name, these modern Paines and Ingersolls have been called by the name of "Modernists." At this point some of you may be asking, "What is a Modernist?" I think I can answer that question in a few words. A Modernist is one who does not believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God; who does not believe that what this Book says about the Person, the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus is true. I am not exaggerating when I say that the major denominations of America are full of ministers who are believers in and preachers of Modernism. But we are primarily concerned this morning with one denomination, the large denomination from which we have separated ourselves. What shall we say of that denomination known as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.? Let me remind you again that our first reason for declaring that Grace Church is necessary is that we as Christians cannot compromise with Modernism.

In 1923 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. declared that there were five points which were among the most essential for Christian faith and that ministers

in the Presbyterian church should believe them and preach them. Those five points were: the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God; the virgin birth of Jesus Christ; the death of Christ as a substitutionary atonement to satisfy divine justice; the bodily resurrection of Christ from the tomb; and the supernaturalness of the miracles of Christ.

Now if the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had remained true to that deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923, there would be no Grace Church in Middletown today. But shortly after the 1923 assembly, there appeared the notorious "Auburn Affirmation." This is a document signed by 1283 ministers in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in which they declared that they did not believe it necessary for a minister in that denomination to believe those five points of the 1923 General Assembly. Not only did they declare such belief unnecessary, but also they referred to those five fundamental doctrines as "theories." In substance they said, "It is a theory and not necessary for a minister of the gospel to believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God. It is a theory and not necessary for a minister to believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. It is a theory and not necessary for a minister to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died as a substitutionary atonement to satisfy divine justice. It is a theory and not necessary for a minister of the gospel to believe that the same Jesus who was placed in the tomb came forth on the third day in a bodily form. It is a theory and not necessary for a minister to believe that the miracles of Jesus were supernatural acts of God. *And, above all, we believe that the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture impairs and weakens the authority of the Bible.*"

I will not take time this morning to tell you of the sincere efforts which were made by Bible believers to rid the church of this blight, nor of the treatment received by those who contended for the Word of God. You all know the result. Men were put out of the church for no greater offense than that they endeavored to keep the church true to its own doctrinal standards. In 1936 and in 1938 Grace Church was brought face to face with an issue. Should we as a

congregation stand with the Auburn Affirmationists who denied all that we held dear, or should we stand with the small minority who were fighting for the preservation of the gospel of supernatural salvation? We as a church made our choice. We stand today where we stood then. Grace Church is necessary because we cannot compromise with Modernism.

Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, the Spirit sent this message: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Indifference, compromise and lukewarmness toward the things which God has revealed in His Word is an abomination in the sight of God. If the Bible is true, if these precious doctrines are true, if the Lord Jesus is truly the Son of God, if He did die on the cross as our substitute and if He did rise again the third day, then let us have the courage of our convictions, let us stand for them regardless of the consequences. Grace Church is necessary because we cannot compromise with Modernism.

### **We Must Preach the Word**

In the second place, we believe that Grace Church is necessary because there is a need today for Biblical preaching. In his charge to the young man, Timothy, Paul solemnly declares that he is to "preach the word." What word? Why the Word of God—that great body of truth which had been given to the church by the Holy Spirit through the prophets and the apostles. Our Catechism very succinctly declares that "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." If the Bible is what it claims to be, then how important it is that we should attend to what it teaches! If the Bible is the *only rule* to direct man to God, then how important it is that that Word alone should be preached! The great need of the visible church everywhere today is a return to the Bible, a ministry devoted to the building up of the saints in the knowledge of the Word. I fear no contradiction when I say that if the ministers of America were all preaching the Word there would be no problem of Modernism, and Grace Church would not have become a necessity. Pick up your

newspaper any Saturday evening and glance at the subjects of the Sunday morning sermons. Most of them sound like radio's "Town Hall" debates. Current events, popular reviews and all manner of extra-Biblical topics make up the list. As interesting and as important as some of these may be, they are far from the original commissions given by our Lord and by the apostle Paul to "feed the flock" and "to preach the word." The pastor of Grace Church and the other ministers of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church are committed to the sacred task of preaching this Word. To a world of men that are lost in sin and without hope, we come, not with the panaceas of man-made theories nor the wisdom of this world, but with a "Thus saith the Lord," with "the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." What confidence it gives us to proclaim such a message! It is most certainly true that if the minister of the gospel is preaching this Word, he is vested with all of the authority of heaven. Listen to what Paul declared to the Corinthians: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." How important, how desperately important, it is that we preach this Word!

There is an aspect of this need to which we have not referred. The need for Biblical preaching is the more pressing because, in addition to those who are preaching upon current events and extra-Biblical subjects, there are those who are preaching from the Bible and yet, in a subtle way, are denying the Bible. They only use the Bible as a sounding-board for their own theories and opinions. Paul warned against those who handle the Word of God deceitfully and who corrupt the Word. We must be on our guard today against those who use and misuse the Bible for their own selfish ends and the destruction of the faith which is revealed in the Word. John writes to us as lovers of the truth and says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." It is not sufficient for a minister to take a text from the Bible. He is to take a text, study it, and explain from the text not what he would like it to

mean but what the Holy Spirit intended that it should mean. Preach the Word! Preach the Word!

We believe that Grace Church, and The Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a whole, is necessary because of the great need for true Biblical preaching. We rejoice because Westminster Seminary, by the grace of God, is sending into the pulpits of our churches men who are trained to do this one thing. Our denomination has a bright future because we have a seminary which is true to the Word of God.

### We Are Presbyterians

Our third reason for declaring that Grace Church is necessary in Middletown is one which should be real to all who are Presbyterians at heart. Grace Church is necessary because of our love for "the Faith of Our Fathers." By the faith of our fathers, I refer to that system of doctrine which has been for centuries the backbone of true Presbyterianism—the system expounded in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. We do insist, of course, that they are subordinate to the Word of God, and in themselves they are nothing more than an exposition of that Word. Many of us have come to have a deep love for the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms. We have found that they contain the most systematic and logical explanation of what the Bible teaches to be found anywhere, and we have found that the Bible itself has become a plainer and more precious Book because of our training in Presbyterian principles.

We repeat that we believe that Grace Church is necessary because of our love for the faith of our fathers. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has ceased to be a distinctively Presbyterian church. The word, "Presbyterian," in that denomination is now only a figurehead and a meaningless name. We love the great doctrines of the Reformed Faith as they are set forth in the Confession and Catechisms because we love the Bible and because we are anxious above all things to maintain the honor of the Christ of the Word who by His precious blood has forever satisfied divine justice and redeemed His people.

It has been said by some that Grace Church is a *new* church. But how

far from the truth that is! This building is new and this organization is new, but not the congregation. This congregation dates back to 1750, when the first Presbyterian church was built in Middletown. We are here in this building now, by the grace of God, endeavoring to carry on the line of orthodox Presbyterianism which was begun so long ago and which has been the heritage of our fathers and of their fathers before them.

In contempt some have pointed the finger of scorn at Grace Church, and said, "How small and insignificant!" It is true that we are small, but let us not judge greatness by numbers or by dollars. The Presbyterian

Church in the U.S.A. is great in numbers and dollars but it is not great in the sight of God. Greatness with God is reckoned by what a church *is*, not by what it possesses or by its numerical strength. We rejoice in the presence of Grace Church in this community, not because we take any selfish pride in this congregation or this building, but because we love the great truths for which this church stands. Let us, as members of this small but great church, be ever ready to give to any who ask, a reason for the hope that is in us. Let us unitedly testify to our faith in the principles which made this church necessary and upon which we stand.

## Modernism's Coffin

By the REV. ROBERT B. BROWN

Pastor of Jennings Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Omaha, Nebraska

**D**R. Henry Sloane Coffin first saw the light of this world in the year 1877. He tells us of his early childhood,

I early learned by heart the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster divines, which is an excellent mental discipline in its logical reasoning and rhythmical English. Many of its formulations are obsolete, and I am not passing it on to another generation, but its purpose to supply Christians with definite convictions and to make them think for themselves, is part of the inheritance worth striving to maintain.\*

In 1900 he received his degree of A.B. from Yale University. He then began to prepare for entrance into the gospel ministry.

When I came to prepare for the ministry, the Church in this country had been troubled by a heresy trial in which the less educated and more intolerant elements had attacked and driven out Dr. Briggs.

He started his theological training in Edinburgh, Scotland,

where Scotch Presbyterianism was, and still is, much more open-minded and modern than most of the theology taught in this country. The findings of science both in evolution and historical criticism were taken for granted. The views of the

\*Quotations are from, "Twelve Modern Apostles and Their Creeds" published by Duffield and Co., New York, 1926.

Bible now labeled "fundamentalist" were not held by any accredited leaders in the Scottish Kirk. It was assumed that, while religious experience was a continuous factor in human life, and generation after generation of men repeated their father's discoveries of God, their interpretations of them varied with changing views of the universe. The Westminster Confession of Faith, which is the standard of the Churches of Scotland as well as of the Presbyterian Church of this country, was viewed as an historic expression of the beliefs of Christians in the 17th century, which modern ministers were expected to subscribe only in the sense that they accorded with its main convictions and stood in the same devout succession.

He then came to this country and completed his course in Union Theological Seminary of New York City,

which I found certainly not one whit less orthodox than the Scottish halls of divinity, and where a similar view of the Church and her creeds was inculcated.

In the year 1900 he received his M.A. from Yale University and the degree of Bachelor of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary. In that year he presented himself for licensure in the Presbytery of New York

where the large majority impressed me as an open-minded and open-hearted company of Christian leaders, apparently sympathizing with the outlook on truth and life in which I had been trained.

For the next five years he served

the Bedford Park Presbyterian Church of New York City. Toward the end of that period he became a lecturer in Union Seminary. He still continued the lectureship after he became pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in the same city. In 1909 he became Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology in the seminary. He still remained pastor of the Madison Avenue Church until 1926, when he became Brown Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology at Union.

In this same year of 1926 Dr. Coffin contributed a very illuminating essay on "Why I Am a Presbyterian" to a book entitled "Twelve Modern Apostles and Their Creeds." This volume had an introductory essay by the Rev. William Ralph Inge. It was followed by G. K. Chesterton on "Why I Am a Catholic"; Charles L. Slattery told "Why I Am an Episcopalian"; Nathan Soderblom represented the Lutherans; Edgar Young Mullins, the Baptists; Rufus Jones, the Quakers; Frank Mason North championed the Methodists; Charles Edward Jefferson, the Congregationalists; the Unitarians spoke through Samuel McChord Crothers; the Mormons through Reed Smoot; the Christian Scientists through Clifford Smith; and last but not least of the twelve modern apostles was the Judas—Carl Van Doren, who spoke for the unbelievers.

Although Dr. Coffin entitled his article "Why I Am a Presbyterian," we are tempted to think a better title might have been, "Why Am I a Presbyterian?" Dr. Coffin indeed raises this query.

I remain a Presbyterian, not because I believe that the Presbyterian Church is better than any other, but because I owe to it whatever religious inspiration I possess, and because I believe that in it for the present I, with my ancestry, training, and temperament can most usefully serve the Kingdom of God.

He continues to throw logs on the fire of this doubt by saying,

Ministers and other office bearers are required (in the Presbyterian Church) to accept the Scriptures as the Supreme standard of faith and life, and the Westminster Confession "as containing the system of doctrine set forth in Holy Scripture." Such subscription was not originally intended by the Westminster divines, and I hope to see the day when it will no longer be required.

Strangely enough he believes that theological controversies are beneficial:

So long as these doctrinal discussions are not carried into Church courts, with the attempt to oust those whose views are not shared by the majority, they are praiseworthy efforts to ascertain truth and they enlighten the Church. When they turn into heresy trials, they cease to have any value as means of discovering truth, and become painful exhibitions of bigotry. Most heresy trials are hideous blunders.

This bizarre view can best be understood when we realize that Dr. Coffin looks on his Presbyterian church not as a denomination but as an attempt to bring together into one all of the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This he interprets to mean that every believer should be made to feel at home, and every restriction which impedes any minister of Christ from exercising his God-given calling within one of the churches should be removed. To quote his own words:

To acknowledge that a man possesses the Spirit of God and is equipped to serve the Kingdom, but to hold him unfit to minister in our select theological club because he does not wholly share the views of the majority, seems to me perilously like blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. I am a Presbyterian in the historic sense of that word,—one who believes in a Presbyterian Church polity inclusive enough to comprehend all followers and ministers of Christ, who are willing to work and worship in its fellowship.

Yet Dr. Coffin says that he remains a Presbyterian in spite of certain tendencies which are present in the denomination. Two of these disturbing tendencies are: (1) the trend toward sectarianism; and (2) the strict interpretation of the vow required of ministers and other office bearers in which they accept the Bible as "the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice," and receive the Westminster Confession of Faith "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture."

The first "disturbing tendency" has already been discussed; I quote Dr. Coffin's significant comments on the latter:

Those who are familiar with our history and know the various interpretations which have been given to this vow, can take it sincerely and yet be a modernly minded Christian; but the language is archaic, is not understood by the public, and acts as a barrier to many who would be valuable ministers and leaders in the Church. At the present moment a so-called "fundamentalist" group has been trying to place a literalistic construction upon this vow, and to insist that any statement to be found both in the Scriptures and in the Confession of Faith may be made obligatory by action of the Gen-

eral Assembly upon candidates for the ministry. Should this thoroughly un-Protestant view prevail, the Church will inevitably be broken into two sections, as it has unhappily been several times in the past, and few men of university education will be found entering the ministry of the reactionary section.

He brings the article to an anticipated climax by saying that he is a Presbyterian only temporarily.

Time was when it was thought that one might discover in the New Testament the creed, polity, and worship of the Church divinely prescribed for all ages. We now know that this is not the case. The New Testament contains various doctrinal interpretations of the faith,—half a dozen views of the atonement, and several explanations of the origin of the person of Christ. It contains various types of Church organization, which sprang up in accordance with the usage of different localities. There is no indication that Christ ever gave His Church either a creed or a constitution, and no hint that the forms of government adopted by Christians in the first century were meant to continue indefinitely. All that Christ was interested in giving His followers was His Spirit. The Spirit would guide them into truth, and would lead them in organizing to fulfil their task. . . . The Church of today and tomorrow may well try to combine the proved good of all three [Presbyterianism, Congregationalism and Episcopacy] in her organization.

One genuine difference within the church which may halt the onward march toward Unity is the existence of

the infallibilist type who believes in an inerrant book or an unerring pope.

But it encourages the heart of Dr. Coffin, no doubt, to see an ever-growing group within the Church of

the experiential type who believe in the progressive leadership of the Spirit within.

This rising tide of the "experiential" type will hasten the day when Dr. Coffin will join the World Church—which we believe he should have been forced to do long ago by a "heresy trial."

Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin is an honored minister of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In his department at Union Seminary are the notorious Harry Emerson Fosdick and Auburn Affirmationist George A. Buttrick. He is President of the Faculty and Chairman of the Executive Committee of liberal Union Seminary. You who are still members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., what are you going to do with this self-confessed Modernist?

# The Presbyterian Guardian

## EDITORIAL

### On Being a Christian in a Democracy

**A** CHRISTIAN, being in the world and yet not of the world, must constantly take stock of his distinctive privileges and responsibilities as a citizen. This duty is especially timely for a Christian living in a democracy. A Christian in a democracy, as he considers the trials of his brethren who suffer for conscience' sake under totalitarian governments, should above all be profoundly and humbly thankful to almighty God. Our democratic form of government guarantees the basic liberties without which we could not be free men—it guarantees freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and of petition for redress of grievances, as well as freedom of worship.

As we express our thanks because we live in a country where freedom of conscience and speech is guaranteed and guarded, we may also remember with gratitude that the service which our land legitimately requires of us may be performed in a spirit of sincere loyalty and patriotic devotion. Since these fundamental liberties are the greatest boons which men can enjoy as citizens of a commonwealth, it is possible for our service to be rendered in a spirit similar to that which has been prescribed for our stewardship in the kingdom of God—not grudgingly nor of necessity, but cheerfully and self-sacrificially.

In these days of world crisis, from which, in spite of our formal peace, we are by no means isolated, the question of our Christian duty to our country becomes one of great urgency. There are those who oversimplify the issues which are at stake in the present conflict. Some indeed represent the struggle simply as one between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, quite overlooking the complex historical factors of the decades that have gone before. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the

struggle regarding which Christians can hardly be divided. It would require a remarkable combination of blindness and cynicism to overlook the patent fact that German conquest introduces the most brutal suppression of liberty, and that, therefore, one of the greatest issues involved in the war is the preservation of liberty. Whatever developments may come in our own country with respect to further involvement, and regardless of the differences of judgment which may prevail among Christians as to certain political and economic aspects of the war, one cannot be indifferent to the fact that the liberty of millions of men is at stake. And we cannot be too grateful that we live under a form of government that is eminently worthy of preservation and defense.

At the same time our gratitude for national blessings must not be allowed to dull our critical faculties. As Christians we possess an absolute standard of righteousness, and as citizens of a democracy we have freedom of expression. Consequently, it is our duty to use every opportunity to influence our national policy to conform to righteousness.

Moreover, as we are aware of our sins as a nation, we must sound forth the call to repentance. We must seek to counteract the superficiality which identifies democracy with Christianity and confuses a feverish patriotism with Christian zeal. We must show that a liberty which is grounded in nothing more solid than the man-centered liberalism of the French Revolution cannot long survive, and that true liberty can be guaranteed only by way of a recognition of the sovereignty of the omnipotent and righteous Creator and Ruler of the universe and the sanctity of His law. Calling the nation to repentance, we must also proclaim with increasing boldness and effectiveness the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. Our liberties provide the open door for this proclamation; we must press through this door and seize the opportunities to confront the nation with the divine Christ of the Bible.

—N. B. S.

### The Christian Laborer

**T**HE violent strikes in the defense industries center attention upon a

problem which is of great moment for the Christian laborer, the problem of his relation to labor unions. Freely recognizing the right of labor to organize and its right to protection from exploitation, the fact remains that there is much in the present situation that places a heavy burden upon the consciences of many who work in the industrial plants.

A placard used by one of the big unions in connection with a recent strike calls attention to this problem in a striking way. The placard read: "TO A UNION MAN THE PICKET LINE IS BOTH FLAG AND BIBLE." This slogan advertises the fact that many unions in theory and practice demand a loyalty of their members that conflicts, or may easily conflict, with obedience to God. Some unions evidently deny liberty of conscience, and a Christian could hardly be a member and still remain true to the injunction that he must obey God rather than men. It is a matter of relative indifference whether such God-dishonoring loyalty to a union is dictated by Moscow or not. The fact is that such a demand is communistic in its essence and does violence to democratic principles as well as to the Christian conscience.

The government has a serious responsibility here because it has fostered the organization of labor with great vigor in recent years. If it has followed this policy with the purpose of protecting the rights of labor, its action is capable of defense; but as a democratic government it must also be zealous to protect the rights of minorities who do not choose to join, or cannot conscientiously join, the union which has obtained bargaining rights.

The failure of the government to protect minorities, however, may never excuse the individual Christian laborer from being true to the demands of the Word of God. One can sympathize fully with the laborer's desire to avail himself of the high wages now generally in force. But it must not be forgotten that there is no requirement that the laborer work in a shop controlled, so far as the voice of labor is concerned, by a union with an anti-Christian policy. It may therefore be necessary in many instances for Christians to forego rich material rewards in order to keep their consciences free.

—N. B. S.

## The Christian Soldier

THE situation of the Christian who has been inducted into the armed forces of the country is essentially different from that of the Christian laborer. The chief differences are that the Christian soldier is not free to withdraw from military service, whereas the laborer can, under existing law, work where he wills, and that the soldier is under a comprehensive discipline that does not apply to a laborer who is at his post only forty or fifty hours a week.

Having taken so much freedom from the individual soldier, the government thereby greatly increases its responsibility toward the men in arms. If the government policy respects the conscience of the man who insists that he cannot, without violating his moral judgment, enter into military service, it must surely respect the conscience of the man who is ready to serve his country even, if need

be, by laying down his life. Above all, the government must maintain the religious liberty of the individual soldier. This protection must be given not only by providing opportunities for participation in religious services of the soldier's own choice but also by providing an environment in the camps and their surroundings that will not make it virtually impossible for a Christian to remain true to his convictions.

If the government is negligent at this point, however, the individual responsibility of the Christian soldier remains. As a true soldier of Jesus Christ he must be strong to overcome temptation. The government may not be asked to preserve his Christian faith. Separated from the Christian influences of home and church, our young men will need to be diligent to confirm their faith by study of the Bible and prayer and through Christian activity and fellowship.

—N. B. S.

## Homrighausen's Heterodoxy

By the REV. JOHN PATTON GALBRAITH

Pastor of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Westfield, New Jersey

NEARLY two years ago Dr. E. G. Homrighausen was approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. as Professor of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary. That approval followed the publication of an article by Dr. Homrighausen, entitled "Convictions." The result of the article was to break down the opposition of the more conservative people in the church by retracting or modifying the liberal character of his former writings, and thus he won the approval of the assembly. But if the conservative element in the church was satisfied as to Dr. Homrighausen's conservatism, the wool was pulled over its eyes.

Dr. Homrighausen has recently completed a series of four lectures in a "School of Religion" held in The Presbyterian Church on the Park, Morristown, N. J. The lectures were revealing.

A forceful, enthusiastic speaker, Dr. Homrighausen also gave much

food for thought, particularly in pointing out some of the shortcomings of the Christian church. These things tended to prejudice the listener in his favor. Also, he used much orthodox Christian language, which led not a few to believe that he is an orthodox Christian. For example, an elderly Negro lady, seated behind me at one of the lectures, several times in old Methodist fashion exclaimed "Amen!" in an audible whisper as the speaker would make an impassioned reference to Christ or the Bible.

Nevertheless, one of the characteristics of the lecturer was that, after evoking those Amens with Christian-sounding language, he would promptly say something quite contrary to it. For example, he said that a man is saved by the "miracle of forgiveness," but shortly afterwards said that man is not saved by an individual relationship with God through Christ. He must live aright with his fellow men. This he called "corporate salvation." Thus on the one hand he

taught a form of salvation by grace; on the other he taught, at best, a synergistic salvation.

The theme of the four lectures was "Christianity Has the Answer to the Present Needs of the World." The first lecture, entitled "What Is Happening to Us and Our World Today?" was an attempt to analyze the reasons for our present world chaos—social, economic and religious. The disease, he said, is materialistic thinking; life is centered in *things*; the end of life is success and satisfaction, so that heaven fades out of sight. Whether or not this is a complete analysis is not now the point. But at least what he said is very true of humanity today. He also said that spiritual ideals have been lost and that we need something to give us moral balance and spiritual power; we need some strong word of truth to which to give assent. Again this sounds very good. But where is this word of truth to be found, according to Dr. Homrighausen? And what can the preachers do to help the people? In the question period which followed each lecture, someone asked a question similar to this, and his answer was that there are some great books which can be read. Among them he very charitably included the Bible, particularly the Old Testament minor prophets. In other words, to him the Bible is not *the* authority, but one of many.

To be sure, in the third lecture, "What Are the Christian's Resources [in solving the world problem]?" he said that the Bible is unique; that God speaks through it as He speaks nowhere else. But only a few minutes later in the same lecture he said that the Bible is *a* great resource. In view of this, when he says that the Bible is unique, he does not mean what the orthodox Christian means when he says that the Bible is *the only* infallible rule of faith and practice. He does not hold to the doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture, but says that there are no "major" errors in it.

The second lecture was entitled, "What Is Christianity's Solution?" Primarily, he said, it is belief in God—a God who is both Creator and Sustainer, a God of holiness, justice and love—all of which, as a partial description of the God of the Bible, sounds fine. But when questioned, Dr. Homrighausen reverted to a Jekyll and Hyde two-sidedness which was

obscured further by a skilful vagueness. For example, when asked, Did Jesus die to satisfy God's justice? he said, Yes, but added, "I don't know what happened on the cross." He said also that Christ suffered in our human flesh to show us He could suffer with us. Where, in such a statement, is there any substitutionary atonement and justice of God? Again, when asked how God can forgive sin when the Bible says, "the soul that sinneth it shall die," his answer was that God forgives by grace, that it is a miracle. But he made absolutely no mention of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, which of course is orthodox Christianity's answer to the whole problem.

Again, in the lecture on "What Can Christians Do?" he spoke very glibly of eternal life, but then defined it, not as everlasting living in heaven in the presence of God, but as "the sense of eternity"—whatever that may mean. Further, he said that "the real message" of the cross is that whatever our cross may be we can bring divinity to it by faith in Christ. Orthodox Christianity, however, has always read its Bible to mean that the glorious message of the cross is the reconciliation of sinful man to the holy God—yes, the reconciliation of *all things* to Himself by the cross.

In this same lecture Dr. Homrighausen listed the things which Christians can do to solve this present world condition. They must learn, he said, to live in the midst of the problems of an imperfect world. They must live neighborly, and with a sense of stewardship. They must set an example in the home. They must meet together for the solving of race and housing problems, and for fellowship. The emphasis is on man's relation to man. It is true that he says Christians must also witness to a transcendent God, they must worship together, and must partake of the Lord's Supper which proclaims the "sacrifice of love." By this means the church, he says, becomes the nucleus of a future world fellowship. But the God-man relationship, for Dr. Homrighausen, is thus merely a means to the end of improving the relationship of man to man.

Dr. Homrighausen has thus fallen into the same pit which he has analyzed as the cause of the trouble in the world today—materialistic thinking, concern with "things." His primary concern is man. God is only

an instrument to reconcile man to man.

The Bible teaches us that the primary concern of man should be God, that the disease which must be cured is not wrong human relationships but sin and a consequent wrong relationship of man to God. It teaches also that the proper relationship of man to man is but a by-product of

the proper God-man relationship.

Modernism can hardly be said to be changing its tactics. It is still trying to deceive by the use of orthodox language, and we have a sterling example of this in these lectures. From one more contact with Dr. Homrighausen's teaching, we can conclude only, as before, that his "Christianity" is not Biblical Christianity.

## The Authority of Scripture

By the REV. JOHN MURRAY

Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary

**T**HE authority of Scripture is that characteristic whereby there is required of us unquestioning faith and instant obedience. On what does this authority depend? The informed Christian will very readily reply that the authority of Scripture resides in the fact that it is God's Word. Other answers have, however, been given to the question, and so it is necessary to deal with some of these in order that the full meaning of the answer given above may be appreciated and its truth guarded against misapprehension and error.

The Romish Church formally acknowledges that the authority of Scripture resides in the fact that God is its author. But it is characteristic of Rome to give with one hand and take away with the other. One of the cardinal errors of the Romish communion is that it intrudes the church in the place that belongs

to God. The church, according to Romanists, is the infallible and living voice of God. And so Protestants have contended that the position of Rome is virtually that the church, called by Rome "holy mother Church," determines what reverence is due to the Scripture. When we remember that Rome pleads the authority of "tradition" and of the church, as well as the authority of Scripture, we can readily perceive how necessary it is that the church should determine the extent of the authority that is inherent in holy Scripture.

Now, it is true, as the Westminster Confession says, that "we may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture." We must appreciate the fact that the church, when properly conceived, is a divine institution, and that God has used it as His instrument for the preservation and vindication of His Word. It is a fact not to be minimized or despised that *we* do not have the Scriptures in our possession apart from the function the church has performed and the testimony it has borne. It is through the medium of this witness that the Scripture has been brought to us, and it is in the context of that testimony that our faith in Scripture as the Word of God received its birth.

But just as we fully accord to the church the place that God has given it in His wise ordination and providence, we must not allow the church to usurp a place that does not belong to it. The authority of Scripture does not proceed from any decision or

### Young People's Topics

**T**HE article on this page will be an aid in studying the young people's lessons published by the Committee on Christian Education of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which may be secured from the Rev. Burton L. Goddard, Box 73, Carlisle, Massachusetts. Topics now being studied are:

April 20th—THE NECESSITY OF SCRIPTURE.

April 27th—WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

May 4th—HOW MUCH OF THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED?

May 11th—HAS INSPIRATION CEASED?

proclamation of the church. It is the duty of the church to proclaim the authority that belongs to Scripture, but we must not ground the authority of Scripture in any prerogative that is vested in the church. Surely nothing should be more obvious than that the Word of God needs no intermediary to invest it with authority, nor any decision on the part of men to determine what reverence is due to it. To teach or insinuate that the Word of God needs human authentication before it can wield authority over us is to oust God from His place of supremacy, and it is to make man more absolute than God. God is truth itself, and there can be nothing addressed to us more absolute than His Word. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater" (I John 5:9).

There is another view held today with respect to the authority of Scripture that might appear at first to be eminently correct and honoring to the Holy Spirit. It is that the authority of Scripture proceeds from what we call the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, and so Scripture, it is said, is authoritative only as it is borne home to our hearts and minds by this inward work of the Holy Spirit.

This truth of the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts is, of course, a very important and precious one, for it is by this testimony alone that we can properly recognize the authority of Scripture and have that full persuasion of its infallible truth and divine authority. Yet it is a gross perversion of the truth to say that the inward work of the Holy Spirit makes Scripture authoritative. The function of the inward testimony of the Spirit is not by any means to invest Scripture with authority; it is rather to bring to our hearts conviction of that authority. The Holy Spirit when He operates in our hearts does not do anything to Scripture; rather, He does something in us.

When we are dealing with any fact, our conviction with respect to that fact does not cause that fact to be, nor does the testimony by which we are convinced of that fact cause that fact to be. The existence of the fact is one thing, the evidence by which it is evinced to be a fact is another, and the conviction we may have on

### Westminster Commencement

**D**R. Gordon H. Clark of the Department of Philosophy at Wheaton College, will address the twelfth annual commencement exercises of Westminster Theological Seminary on Tuesday, May 6th, at 3 P.M., at the campus in Laverock, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. The subject of Dr. Clark's address will be "A Protestant World-View."

Buses will leave Germantown and Willow Grove Avenues, and Wyndmoor Station of the Reading Railroad, at 1.50 and 2.50 P.M. A most cordial invitation to be present is extended to all friends of the seminary.

the basis of that evidence is still another. So is it with the authority of Scripture. The inward testimony of the Holy Spirit presupposes the authority of Scripture; it does not produce this authority. Our conviction on the basis of that testimony respects an authority that is inherent in the Scripture itself.

It is indeed true that the authority resident in Scripture owes its very existence to the operation of the Holy Spirit. But this operation of the Holy Spirit is not that of the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, as He bears witness by and with the Word, but that once-for-all completed operation which we know as *inspiration*. In a word, it is the fact of inspiration that makes Scripture authoritative and it is the inward testimony of the Spirit that brings home to us that authority.

This view with which we have now been dealing, the view that rests the authority of Scripture on the inward testimony, in reality denies the objective and intrinsic authority of Scripture. If it is the work of the Spirit in our hearts that accords Scripture its authority, then Scripture is not

authoritative in itself, and it is not authoritative for those who do not enjoy the inward testimony of the Spirit. It becomes apparent how devastating for the authority of Scripture this view becomes. Furthermore, it must be said that the resort to the inward testimony as the basis of authority, though it appears to do honor to the Holy Spirit, rests upon the abandonment of another activity of the Spirit, namely, the plenary inspiration of the Bible. We must, on the contrary, do honor to the whole work of the Spirit and realize that without the intrinsic authority of Scripture, resting upon its plenary inspiration, we cannot have even the inward testimony of the Spirit. For it is only to the Word that is intrinsically and in its own right divinely authoritative that the Holy Spirit can bear witness as the Word of God.

Finally, what does the authority of Scripture involve for us? The word "authority" always suggests binding force. It demands acquiescence and obedience. To the binding force of Scripture as the Word of God there attaches an ultimacy and finality that belongs to no other standard. And so the only attitude in us that is appropriate to the authority of Scripture is that of unreserved acceptance and wholehearted subjection. The authority of Scripture is the authority of God, for it is God who speaks in it. To God we are responsible, on Him we are dependent, and that not in one compartment of life but in all of life. As we can never move outside the sphere of responsibility to Him or of dependence upon Him, so we can never at any time or in any department of life pass beyond the bounds of subjection to His Word.

It is this principle of the supremacy of the Word of God that makes the authority of Scripture an intensely practical matter. We are prone to think that the Bible concerns merely the sphere of what is called "religion," and does not bear upon the "secular" activities. How dwarfed and warped is such a conception of the Word of God! It is worse than that; it is godless! The authority of the Bible releases its grip at no point, and if we think otherwise or conduct our life on the basis of another supposition, it is because we have excluded God from His domain. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?"

or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. . . . How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:7, 8, 17). "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Psalm 119:96).

The authority of Scripture is a binding force. But it is also the condition and guarantee of liberty. It is the perfect *law* of liberty. It was Jesus who said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Authority always relates itself very directly to conscience and it is God alone who is Lord of the conscience. Conscience never performs its function *truly* nor does it enjoy its liberty except as it

is the bondservant of an authority that is absolute, bondservant too in willing and intelligent subservience to judgment from which there is no appeal. The authority of Scripture is the very guarantor of liberty of conscience. In the eloquent words of the Westminster Confession, "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also" (Chapter XX, Section II).

lives abhorrent in the sight of God. They were idolaters, and neither recognized the Lord Jehovah as their God nor worshiped Him. They profaned the Sabbath. They hated God's chosen people and attacked them without mercy when occasion offered. Their lives were immoral, stained with diverse kinds of grievous sin.

Could they be acceptable unto God? Not unless they became like unto His people. It is sometimes forgotten that God's great requirement of men is that they become conformed to the image of His Son, yet that is God's aim in regeneration, the act whereby He makes us *new* creatures, renewing in us His image, true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, which was lost in the fall. It is also His purpose in sanctification, the process by which sin is lessened and holiness increased in the lives of those who have received the adoption of sonship.

Truly, God's people are a peculiar people, not because of odd mannerisms and eccentricities, but because of a fundamental difference which normally shows forth in every speech and action. It is for this reason that attention is called to the function served by Christians as epistles "known and read of all men."

Are you an enemy of God, and would you yet enjoy the blessings of His grace? Examine your ways. Check them with those of God's people, of the apostles, of Christ Himself. Know where you stand. You cannot live "just any old way" and be a Christian. And if you find little similarity between your life and the lives of God's children, ask of Him who is able to perform the mighty transformation necessary. He can take away the root of sin from within your soul; He can take away the fruit of sin from your life. He can make you like unto His people.

### A Necessary Confession

Hand in hand with a change in life goes a change of confession. The work of God in an enemy soul does two things: it removes the enmity, and it implants a firm heart belief in its place. This heart belief is like a fountain, and from it flow two streams of waters, holiness of life and humble confession of God's grace. There is no way of stopping up the fountain so that only one of the streams will issue forth.

Hence God attaches a second clause to the "if" of the text—"If they will

## Enemies and Grace

### A Meditation on Jeremiah 12:16

By the REV. BURTON L. GODDARD

IT IS common for men to think of an enemy only as an enemy. In southern mountain feuds there is no thought of reconciliation and no suggestion of love or compassion. Enmity passes down from generation to generation. To forget it or to give it up would be an unforgivable act of dishonor.

How different is God's attitude toward those who have constituted themselves enemies against Himself and His people! They are invited to taste of His grace and to share the blessings of His covenant. Divine love toward enemies of God is attested by such New Testament passages as Romans 5:10—"When we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Yet the Old Testament, also, is rich in offers of grace to the estranged sinner. Consider, for example, Jeremiah 12:16—"And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people."

God did not become a God of grace with the coming of Christ. His nature

did not differ from Abraham's time to that of Jeremiah. It has not changed from Jeremiah's day to the present. Our God is an unchanging God, the same in all ages, and His mercy endureth forever. As was wicked Cain at the very dawn of history, so the enemies of God have ever been urged to be reconciled to God, that they might partake of His blessings.

### A Necessary Change

Great as is God's compassion, however, no enemy of God can expect to receive and enjoy His blessings unless a radical change takes place in his life. There is an "if" in the words of Jeremiah and, unless it be taken into consideration, there is no guarantee whatsoever that the gifts of life enjoyed by God's covenant people will be visited upon those who have been strangers to the covenant. God hinges everything on whether the enemies become like unto His people, saying, "If they will diligently learn the ways of my people . . . then shall they be built in the midst of my people."

That "if" demands a fundamental change in our life. It was commonly known that Israel's neighbors lived

... swear by my name . . . then shall they be built up in the midst of my people." Israel's enemies must not only conform to the ways of God's people, but they must also confess His name.

They had not done so. It was not their custom. It did not fit with their worship—nor with their lives. They had invoked the name of Baal, sworn by his name, and taught Israel to do the same. Was there great sin in this practice? The worshiper swearing by Baal declared to men, "Baal is my god. I worship him. I serve him. I am not ashamed to own him." But he who swore by the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord liveth," boldly asserted his faith in Jehovah, the true and living God.

There had to be a reversal of practice, but the altered confession was not to be the mere recitation of vain words. Just as in the patterning of their ways after those of God's people, so here also a fundamental regenerating change in the heart itself was needed, that the confession might be a true confession.

### The Necessary Concomitant

The whole situation is somewhat like Paul's description of the olive tree and branches as set forth in the eleventh chapter of Romans. Branches grafted into a good olive tree and fed by it are dominated by the nature of the tree and bring forth good fruit. The old nature is conquered and largely disappears. The testimony of the change is seen in the fruit. As the years go by, the ingrafted branches are built up together with the natural branches, are fed and nourished from the same source, and become one and the same plant structure.

So enemies of God, changed in heart, are grafted into the Lord Jesus Christ. Their rebellious and sinful natures are conquered by the union, and their ways become God's ways, the ways of His people. Their confession embraces a true testimony. They are built up in spiritual life together with those who love and worship Him.

There is nothing said in the text about grace, but are we to infer that enemies become disciples in any other way than by grace? We know that God does the ingrafting, and surely that is an act of grace. We know that enmity remains enmity unless broken down by irresistible overtures

of love. We know that one's confession is profane unless God-given faith rules in the heart. So let us never be deceived and think that enemies of God can become one with God's people unless grace from on high works a mighty change within the soul. Outward conformity to the conduct of a Christian will never of itself guarantee sonship to God, either to a nation or to an individual. You must become a new creature in Christ!

If God's grace has never visited you, if your ways are not the ways of God's people, if you do not confess

the name of Christ, if you are not built up with God's people so that you enjoy the blessings in which they participate, yet remember that God's grace can take away old things and make all things new. Pray for that grace as it is found in the Lord Jesus, who "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Trust in that grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith." By grace, enemies of God become heirs of God and partake of every blessing of His covenant.

## Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

### Presbytery of the Dakotas

COTTAGE prayer meetings, a new venture for the churches at Manchester and Bancroft, South Dakota, have been well attended throughout the winter despite severe weather. The pastor of both congregations is the Rev. A. Culver Gordon. The young people's society at Yale, recently begun by Mrs. Glenn Foote, is using the material published by the Committee on Christian Education. . . . The Bancroft building is still involved in litigation, and the case will be heard by the state supreme court this spring. The building at Manchester was sold at public auction to satisfy a mortgage of \$861.35 and purchased by the Presbytery of Huron of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The Manchester congregation hopes to be able to buy it back at a lower figure, but if that fails there is another satisfactory building available.

At Hamill, South Dakota, the annual congregational meeting was held on March 30th. One elder and two deacons, whose terms had expired, were reelected. The treasurer's report showed that contributions both to church support and to missions were greater this year than before. Under the direction of the pastor, the Rev. Melvin B. Nonhof, several persons are preparing to unite with the church. . . . On April 6th a Sunday school which has been meeting in a schoolhouse ten miles north of Hamill was formally organized.

Summer Bible schools are being planned for all the fields served by

the Rev. C. A. Balcom of Wilton, North Dakota, and other special services will be held not only among groups already meeting regularly for worship but also in at least one new area. Due to the fact that his fields are widely separated, and due also to the necessity of providing transportation for many of those who attend church and Sunday school, Mr. Balcom has been forced to drive more than sixty thousand miles in the past four years. The result is that a new car is needed, if the work is to continue with the same vigor. If any reader can be of assistance in arranging for a profitable exchange, he should communicate with Mr. Balcom.

Faith Church of Lincoln, Nebraska, has unanimously approved the installation of the Rev. Thomas M. Cooper as pastor. The installation will take place after the spring meeting of presbytery. . . . The new Sunday school at Belmont, under the leadership of Mr. Cooper, has grown to an attendance of twenty-one.

The Logan Fontenelle and Goff Terrace Missions in East Omaha, Nebraska, under the direction of the Rev. Jack Zandstra, are attracting visitors and increasing steadily in attendance. The Goff Terrace Mission, begun last October, now has more than seventy members on its roll. . . . With the permission of the local school board, Mr. Zandstra is conducting Bible classes at the East Omaha Public School each Friday from 3.30 to 4.30. One hundred and fourteen students attended the first session.

During March the Sunday school at Jennings Church, Omaha, had a consistent attendance of about ninety pupils. The pastor, the Rev. Robert B. Brown, reports several professions of faith among the young people.

The annual meeting of the church at Aurora, Nebraska, was held on April 3rd. The evening began with a fellowship dinner and a devotional program led by the pastor, the Rev. Calvin A. Busch. In spite of the removal of several families during the past year, and in spite also of heavy drought, the fiscal year closed with all bills paid. Attendance has been somewhat less in recent months, but most of those who are able to do so still attend with regularity and devotion.

### Presbytery of New York and New England

**C**ALVARY Church, Schenectady, N. Y.: Organized with ten members a little more than two years ago, the church now has twenty-seven communicant members and an average attendance of forty. On March 20th the first fellowship supper was held, in order that the congregation might become better acquainted with the many regular worshipers who are not yet members. The men and boys of the church have spent Saturday mornings in a vigorous house-to-house canvass of the neighborhood and have invited those who attend no church and those who have children who might be enrolled in the Sunday school to visit the church and to send their children to the school. The pastor, the Rev. Raymond M. Meiners, is active also in the work of the Peniel Bible Conference, held each summer at Lake Luzerne, New York.

Calvary Church, Worcester, N. Y.: The congregation is rejoicing in the return of its pastor, the Rev. John C. Rankin, who has now recovered his health sufficiently to be able to undertake his pastoral duties. Mr. Rankin spent much of his time in California while recuperating. He returned to Worcester last August, and has now resumed full charge of the work of the church. During his illness, Mr. Meiners supplied the pulpit at one service each Sunday and aided Mrs. Rankin in the work of visitation.

First Church, New Haven, Conn.: A "Men's Bible Forum" has recently been organized and meets every two weeks. A study of the Bible, at which

time one of the men reads a paper on some Biblical subject, is followed by a talk by the pastor, the Rev. Marvin L. Derby, on the Westminster Confession. The Rev. Professor Edward J. Young of Westminster Seminary preached at special services from March 7th to 9th, and delivered a popular lecture on Sunday afternoon on "Archæology and the Bible." . . . Each Saturday morning at 8.15 Mr. Derby conducts the "Saturday Morning Gospel Hour" over a local radio station. With the vast modernist population in mind, an attempt has been made to preach the gospel entirely from the words of Jesus. There has been an encouraging response.

Franklin Square Church, Franklin Square, N. Y.: Three young people united with the church at the Easter communion service. All had made profession of faith during the past year, and were members of the communicants' class. On Easter morning the Rev. John H. Skilton was the guest preacher and baptized the infant son of the pastor, the Rev. Bruce A. Coie, and Mrs. Coie.

Second Parish Church, Portland, Maine: The Rev. Edwin H. Rian of Westminster Seminary was the speaker at the Spring Bible Conference held on March 6th, 7th and 9th. . . . Guest preacher on March 16th was the Rev. Dean W. Adair. . . . The New England Rally of the Deerpawander Bible Conference was held in the Second Parish Church on April 17th.

The Rev. Daniel Van Houte, Ph.D., is a chaplain at the Pownal State Hospital, which has more than a thousand patients. He also teaches Bible for a half hour weekly in each of four rural schools.

The two churches in Rochester, the Covenant Church and the Memorial Church, were hosts to the presbytery at its spring meeting held on March 25th and 26th. The Rev. Burton L. Goddard of Carlisle, Massachusetts, was received by transfer from the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Two seniors at Westminster Seminary were taken under care of presbytery: Mr. Herman Petersen of the Calvary Church, Schenectady, and Mr. William Young of Trinity Church, New Haven. Mr. Young was also given his oral examination for licensure. Twelve ministers and four elder-commissioners attended the sessions. The first day's meetings were

held in the Memorial Church and the second in the Covenant Church. Speakers at the popular evening services were the Rev. Arthur O. Olson of Portland, Maine, and the Rev. John H. Skilton of Westminster Seminary.

### Presbytery of Wisconsin

**G**RACE Church, Milwaukee: The Rev. Oscar Holkeboer of Oostburg, Wisconsin, was a recent guest preacher, and a mixed quartet from his church furnished special music. Another guest has been the Rev. J. C. Jorgensen, father of the pastor, the Rev. Leland C. Jorgensen.

The Rev. John Davies, missionary to the Indians at Gresham, reports that attendance is now increasing at

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the services among the Menominee and Stockbridge Indians, due to the arrival of more favorable weather. . . . The young people's choir of the Stockbridge Church has been visiting various interested churches within a radius of 135 miles of Gresham, giving out the gospel in song and spoken word. They have as their objective the swelling of the building fund of the church, and all collections are placed in that fund.

### Presbytery of Philadelphia

**G**ETHSEMANE Church, Philadelphia: Special speakers during the week before Easter were: Mr. Donald Rigdon, the Rev. James W. Price, Mr. Jacob Eppinga and Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse.

*Calvary Church, Germantown, Philadelphia:* A pastoral call extended by the congregation to the Rev. Theodore J. Jansma, pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Baltimore, Maryland, has been accepted by Mr. Jansma. He hopes to begin his work in Germantown during the first week of June, and the congregation is looking forward with keen anticipation to his arrival.

*Calvary Church, Willow Grove:* At its annual business meeting it was revealed that the church has just completed its best year of all. Total gifts for the fiscal year were \$9,015, of which \$2,250 was sent to missions and other benevolences. Thirty-two communicant members have been received during the year, and six months of radio broadcasting sent the testimony of the church into seven states.

*Knox Church, Washington, D. C.:* There has been an increase in attendance and attention in each phase of the work, especially in the community services held by the pastor, the Rev. Henry D. Phillips, at the Fort Dupont Dwellings—a new and unchurched development.

*Bethany Church, Nottingham:* The Book of Discipline is being read in brief portions at the Sunday morning services so that all may be instructed in it. . . . The choir will render a cantata on Easter Sunday evening. . . . Preparations are being made for a Summer Bible School to be held in June. . . . A quiz held a few weeks ago as a review of the preceding six weeks' lessons proved useful in stimulating interest and in helping the pupils to retain what they had

learned. It is planned to hold such programs at regular intervals.

*Kirkwood Church, Kirkwood:* Despite the worst blizzard of the winter, twenty-five persons attended a special missionary service in March, addressed by the Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to Japan. . . . On March 20th, almost two hundred members and friends of the church attended the annual fellowship supper, which combined spiritual refreshment with a time of pleasant social entertainment.

### Presbytery of New Jersey

**F**AITH Church, Pittsgrove: At a congregational meeting it was decided to begin the actual construction of the new building immediately, completing the auditorium and leaving the basement unfinished. . . . At both worship services on March 23rd, the Rev. David Freeman spoke on his work among Jewish refugees. Letters were sent to all the Jews in the vicinity of the church, inviting them to the services, and two were present in the morning.

*Covenant Church, Vineland:* The annual congregational meeting was held on April 3rd and the reports, for the most part, were encouraging. The year was completed with all current expenses met, and a small balance on hand. Missionary and benevolent gifts amounted to more than \$1,260. Special gifts to the building fund and other projects amounted to \$2,000.

### Presbytery of Ohio

**T**HE presbytery met for its spring meeting on April 1st at Cincinnati. A devotional service in the afternoon was followed in the evening by a forum on the question: "Is Modernism Receding?" The Rev. J. Lyle Shaw, the Rev. Everett C. DeVelde and the Rev. Carl A. Ahlfeldt each spoke briefly, after which there was a general discussion of the question. The conclusion, needless to say, was in the negative.

### Presbytery of California

**B**EVERLY Church, Los Angeles: For the past eight months the Men's Fellowship Club has sponsored the purchase of copies of *The Home Evangel*, using it for distribution by the Sunday school in the new residential development near the church. The Women's Guild will carry on

this program during the next few months. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Dwight H. Poundstone, has begun a communicants' class for those uniting with the church on Easter Sunday.

Under the supervision of the Rev. Frank DeJong of Arcadia, ministers of the Christian Reformed, Reformed, Congregational, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and Orthodox Presbyterian Church, together with their families, met recently near Twenty-Nine Palms, California, for a three-day conference at that desert resort. Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary was the principal speaker, and the Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton delivered a missionary address.

## Can a Christian Believe in Progress?

(Concluded From Page 114)

possible that something may happen which will make man revert to his monkey stage, forgetting completely all that has gone before. He will then have to start the process all over again, with the *chance* of being thrown back even farther.

But, what is even more disastrous for the evolutionary point of view, when man is "progressing" he is really going nowhere. In other words, he can be sure of unending change but he will never arrive. To become "god" would be useless for his god is in the same process as himself. Where is he going? He does not know. He does not know his goal and he does not know the way to it. How, then, can he possibly say that he is progressing? To the Christian this position is incomprehensible. The evolutionist and his god are like the two men lost in the woods. They are lost and therefore cannot know if they are progressing to their goal. If they did know that they were progressing, they would not be lost. But, what is more, neither the evolutionist nor his god knows where they are going, just as they do not know the way. Nevertheless the evolutionist confidently affirms that everything is well under control and man is progressing toward his final goal.

### The Basis of Christian Belief

The Christian, however, is in no such illogical position as is the evolutionist. The Christian, and espe-

cially the Calvinist, can and must believe in progress, because of his belief in an absolute God. He believes that God has laid down a plan for the universe, and God knows everything that goes into that plan. He knows the end from the beginning and He knows every act which is going to bring that end to pass. There is no mystery for God. He does not learn about things as they happen, for He knew them from all eternity. He reigns above the process of progress and in Scripture reveals to us part of His plan, that we too may know that we are going forward. That progress is taking place, therefore, we may be sure, for we through God's revelation are thinking His thoughts after Him.

Not only do we know that God has a plan of progress in history, but we also know that the plan is being carried out, because of God's sovereignty. This sovereignty appears first in the creation of the world. Scripture teaches us that He created all things out of nothing in the space of six days, and all very good. Therefore, He created all things so that they fit in with His plans completely. But what is more, He so rules them that they all act to carry out His purposes as He desires. God's purpose in the world is thus fulfilled by "His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all his creatures, and all their actions." Thus we can be sure that His plan will be fulfilled just as He has planned—to the last detail and right on time.

What is this plan of which we have spoken? What will it accomplish? To this question we reply that God's plan is the plan of salvation. Thus God's purpose in all His actions of creation, providence and redemption center on the salvation of His chosen people.

We find that His revelation of His plan commences with the creation and fall of man. We are shown that man fell, and that man is totally depraved. But this does not kill progress; rather it guarantees it. Yet progress is not man's efforts to lift himself by his own boot-straps. In contrast to such an idea, the Christian view of progress is that God is gradually calling out His church, His elect people, to come to Himself. At times the progress seems to be much greater than at others. Yet it proceeds gradually and effectively to its destination, for God is governing the

process and accomplishing His purpose.

What is the end or goal of this progress? If you turn to the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation you will see the end: eternal glory. No longer is there change and turmoil, but rather rest for the people of God. Thus progress has some meaning for the Christian, for that progress finds its end in eternity. But there is no goal for the non-Christian evolutionary historian, only eternally unending change. The Christian's progress is toward something; the non-Christian's is objectless. Thus the Christian who accepts the full teaching of Scripture is alone the one who can believe in progress.

### A Pagan Protest

Immediately a cry of protest arises. It is all very well, says the evolutionary historian, to talk like this, but in so doing the Christian is avoiding the issue. Look back in history, he says, and try to explain the material, mental and moral progress even among those who are violently opposed to the gospel. If man is depraved, how do you explain the gradual elevation of moral standards? How do you explain the increased interest in the poor and the increased desire to alleviate pain and disease? Then, too, how does the Christian explain the great material advances in science?

This is an important problem and, although it may appear to be a knotty one to unravel, Christianity can answer even this question. But if we would understand this, we must remember that Christianity is not separate from history. Revelation of redemption was given progressively through historic characters, and revelation was accomplished by the action of the God-man, "God with us," in the world's history. Moreover, the plan of redemption is to call out men who are living in the world, in history, to be reconciled to God. Thus history forms the background for redemption. And this is possible because of the sovereignty of God. He gives what is known as "common grace" to all men that the gospel may go forward and His people be called out. He restrains the sinfulness of men, enables them to use gifts which He has given and gives them many good gifts in order that the work of calling sinners may be effectively accomplished.

This becomes clear, for instance, when we turn to the history of the Mediterranean world at the coming

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of Christ. At that time God supplied an almost universal language for the preaching of the gospel: Greek. He brought peace and means of communication to aid the spread of the gospel by the Roman Empire. Then, since that time, we have had, among other developments, the invention of the gasoline engine. By the use of this

in vehicles of one sort or another, the gospel has been spread even more widely and rapidly. Can the Christian believe in material progress? Certainly, for God supplies these material things to aid in the calling out of the members of His church.

### The Gospel and Progress

But what is more, the gospel often helps directly in the improvement of men morally and mentally, even though they deny the gospel. The Christians who live moral and upright lives are imitated by others, at least in outward show. This is due to the influence of the gospel. The same is true of the development of charitable works, poor and sick relief. The gospel even brings mental development. Robert Louis Stevenson in his essay, "The Foreigner at Home," has compared the mental attitude of the English farmer, little instructed in anything but the *Book of Common Prayer*, with that of his well-catechised Scottish neighbor. In doing so he points out that, due to the much deeper religious training of the Scot, he has a far greater mental activity than does his cousin to the south. The greater the progress in preaching of the pure Word of God, the greater the progress there will be even in the lives of those who reject and resist it with all their power.

Can a Christian believe in progress? Yes, certainly, for he alone has the logical right to do so. Unbelief, if it be logical, will admit that it is

simply floundering in a morass of verbiage when it tries to speak of progress. But Christians, even in trying times such as the present, can realize that God is leading them forward. They can feel sure that history is progressing spiritually, for God every day is adding to the number of His church until all His sheep shall be brought into the fold. With this advance spiritually there is a similar progress in the history of man, mentally, morally and materially, to form the background for redemption. Then, when the number of the elect is complete, Christ will return and "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

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**M**R. H. EVAN RUNNER, an alumnus of Westminster Theological Seminary and former Frank H. Stevenson Scholar at Kampen, the Netherlands, has been elected a junior fellow of Harvard University, where he is engaged in graduate study. The election is for a period of three years, during which he expects primarily to pursue researches in the field of early Christian literature.

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