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The Missing Convert

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

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

MODERN Americans pride themselves on being intelligent. Whether they are really intelligent or not, we shall not attempt to discuss in these articles. Perhaps, however, the articles will bear on that question indirectly. The point now is that modern Americans pride themselves on being intelligent. Now, we are interested in this intelligence because evangelism is generally considered beneath it. If you mention the word "evangelist" to the modern American, he does one of two things. Either he laughs loudly—or else he laughs to himself. The first laugh is extremely frank, the second appreciably more polite. In either case, he laughs because the word "evangelist" suggests to him—whether rightly or wrongly—someone rushing about a church platform, tearing his collar off in the procedure, and arousing considerably more emotion than thought. Consequently, if our modern American were to pick up this issue of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, we could hardly expect him to read this article.

While we sympathize with this attitude toward collar-tearing and platform gymnastics, we must point out that these things do not constitute evangelism. Evangelism, in a word, is the declaration of the message of salvation to a world that needs it. If this is evangelism, then there should be no laughter. A proper presentation of the message of salvation to a world that needs it should not, and does not, insult anyone's intelligence.

Strangely enough, however, even those evangelists who do not indulge in pulpit pyrotechnics are meeting with about as little success as those who do. Do you

want proof of this? You can prove it by asking yourself how many people were converted in your community last year. Having answered the question, you will hardly disagree with us when we say that the phrase, "the missing convert," is almost as appropriate for the paucity of converts as is "the missing link" for the total lack of links.

We are quite aware that there are certain religious magazines which fairly bubble over with optimism about the growing membership of our American churches. But, while we should like with all our hearts to share this optimism, we cannot. When we compare the success of modern evangelism with the great revival under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield about two hundred years ago, any optimism we may have mustered will fold its tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away. In the days of Edwards and Whitefield, people of all classes flocked to hear the Word of God preached, quaked in terror at the thundering precepts of the Bible, and were moved to tears by its tender entreaties to accept salvation. But since that day people have flocked less and less to churches, until today the term "flock" can be applied only to neighborhood theaters, to circuses, or to migratory fowl.

It is true, of course, that crowds still surge to hear certain men who are known as popular preachers. It must be noted, however, that the popularity lies either in a dynamic personality or in snappy news commenting delivered in a religious atmosphere that is

provided by stained glass windows, an expensive choir, and a well-played organ. It must be concluded that, whether crowds surge or not, the convert is still missing.

Now it is not enough to lament the passing glories of a previous abundance of successful evangelism and the pressing evils of a present lack of it, or feebly to cry, "Ichabod—the glory is departed." Nor is it enough to plunge immediately into the solution of the problem—one hardly prescribes medicine before diagnosing the disease. This latter observation can hardly be termed original, for the diagnosticians of this particular disease have been numerous. We claim a measure of originality, however, in now proceeding to differ somewhat from our fellow-diagnosticians.

First, there are those who say that few are being converted to Christianity because of the increasing laxity of American morality. The fault, they say, lies not with the church, but with the world. According to them, there are more sinners now than before and the sinner is more sinful than formerly. In short, the church is fighting against greater odds than ever before in its history.

Not for a moment would we deny that there is an increasing looseness in American morals. Every informed person must be aware of it. Sabbath observance is on the wane—in fact, it is practically non-existent. Lascivious literature clutters our street-corner news-stands. Divorces crowd our civil courts. Crime flourishes, and its punishment languishes. To expand this catalogue of American immorality would be but to blacken the already ebony pot. So we readily agree with those who say that there is an abundance of immorality in America.

We do not agree, however, that this is the cause of the Christian church's failure to win converts. This immorality is but a symptom of the disease, and a symptom can never be a cause. Let us put it this way. A man lies sick. Let us say that he has a fever. His temperature is abnormally high, and he tosses restlessly about. Would anyone acquainted with medicine say that the trouble with the man is simply that he has a fever? The fever certainly adds to the sick man's discomfort, but the cause of the whole sickness lies deeper—in some internal

infection. So with American immorality; it is but a symptom which shows the seriousness of the crisis in evangelism that faces the Christian church today, but it is not the cause of the crisis. True it is that the morality of Americans is lax, but that is not the reason why the Christian church is failing to win converts. It appears that the Corinthians were more immoral than the Athenians but evidently Paul won more converts in Corinth than he did in Athens.

Well, what then is the cause of the missing convert? Some would say, in the second place, that the mighty preachers of old are no longer with us. The terrifying voice of Jonathan Edwards has been silenced. Golden-tongued George Whitefield, the Chrysostom of the eighteenth century, finds no worthy successor in the twentieth. The earnest and dynamic sermons of Dwight L. Moody no longer resound in our mammoth halls, while the extremely athletic but equally earnest preaching of Billy Sunday no longer shakes the rafters of our sturdiest auditoriums. All of these things are true, and also very unfortunate. But because it is true that these mighty preachers are no longer with us, is it equally true that the crisis in evangelism has been caused by their passing? Is it not entirely possible that if Edwards and Whitefield were alive today, preaching with their once-famous clarity
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Charles Gallaudet Trumbull

CHARLES GALLAUDET TRUMBULL, Litt.D., editor of *The Sunday School Times*, since 1903, died in Pasadena, California, on January 13th. He was sixty-eight years old.

Dr. Trumbull's death brings to a close a long career of devotion to the spread of the gospel. One of the most prominent of Christian laymen in the twentieth century, he was active in a host of fundamentalist and undenominational agencies.

Dr. Trumbull is survived by his widow, the former Aline Van Orden, and four sisters, Mrs. Philip E. Howard, Mrs. Alice Sparhawk, Mrs. May Field and Mrs. Samuel Scoville, Jr. His death occurred as the result of a heart attack, just a few weeks after he and Mrs. Trumbull had journeyed to California to escape the rigors of winter on the Atlantic seaboard. A funeral service was held in South Pasadena on January 17th and in Philadelphia on January 22nd. Interment was in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York.

For years Dr. Trumbull was a staff writer on the *Toronto Globe* and was a weekly contributor to the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger*, *Sioux Falls (S. D.) Argus-Leader*, *Long Beach (Calif.) Morning Sun*, *Bradenton (Fla.) Herald*, *Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle*, and *Johnson City (Tenn.) Times*.

He was vice president of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association and the American Tract Society, a companion of the First Class Military Order of the Loyal Legion, a member of Victoria Institute, England, Palestine Exploration Fund, England, Archeological Institute of America, and a fellow of the American Geographic Society.

Dr. Trumbull was treasurer of the Belgian Gospel Mission, a director of the Pioneer Mission Agency, Keswick Colony of Mercy and Victorious Life Testimony. He was an elder of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

His books included "A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem," 1904; "Taking Men Alive," 1907; "Men Who Dared," 1907; "Genesis and Yourself," 1912 and 1926; "Anthony Comstock, Fighter," 1913; "What Is the Gospel?" 1918; "Life Story of C. I. Scofield," 1920, and "Prophecy's Light on Today," 1937.

Glasgow vs. Thompson

Heresy Charges in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S.

By THOMAS R. BIRCH

LAST May, at the closing sessions of the 80th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., commonly known as the Southern Presbyterian Church, Ruling Elder Tom Glasgow of Charlotte, North Carolina, requested the assembly to inquire into the apparent attitude toward the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible on the part of some of the denomination's seminaries and their professors. Mr. Glasgow's request was not well received, was piously frowned upon, and no action was taken on his proposal.

The Pamphlet

Convinced that Dr. Ernest Trice Thompson, Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, was promulgating a view of Biblical inspiration contrary to the standards of the church and the historic Christian position on this major doctrine, Mr. Glasgow attempted to confer with Dr. Thompson. When a conference was refused, he prepared a lengthy brief setting forth documentary evidence from the published statements of Dr. Thompson to prove his contention. The quotations were from comments upon the Sunday school lesson regularly written by Dr. Thompson in *The Presbyterian of the South*.

In the lengthy and often repetitious foreword to his pamphlet, Mr. Glasgow presents the reasons why he feels called upon to bring the question of Dr. Thompson's orthodoxy before the church. He disavows any intention of impugning Dr. Thompson's sincerity or honesty, but points to the vital issues at stake. He pleads for "just plain common honesty," holding, quite properly, that if the teaching in a seminary of the denomination is at variance with the teaching of the church's standards, one or the other of them must be changed. Mr. Glasgow proceeds to recount the background of the case and attempts to outline the historic position of the church on inspiration. He makes what will seem to many a grave mistake in appealing, not to the language of the Confession itself, which is clear

and unequivocal, but to Dr. B. B. Warfield as the interpreter of the church's historic position on the doctrine of inspiration. The opposition was not slow to take advantage of this, at best, tactical error in judgment, as will be seen a little later on.

Mr. Glasgow bases his conclusions on a number of quotations from Dr. Thompson, contrasting them with the clear declarations of Scripture and the subordinate standards of the church. The quotations are concerned with such matters as the authenticity of the passage in Matthew 18 dealing with disagreement between Christian brethren, Scriptural grounds for divorce, the Christian attitude toward war (Dr. Thompson subsequently disclaimed pacifism), the atonement, the authorship of the prophecy of Isaiah, the fall of man, the birth of Jesus, and the miracles of Jesus. The section dealing with the atonement seems to be the most convincing argument that Mr. Glasgow adduces. He quotes from Dr. Thompson's writings, in which the professor of church history stated, "To give His life meant not simply to lay it down but to devote it to the service of mankind, including if need be, as He foresaw it would in His case be needful, its surrender in death. His life, sealed by His death, would, He saw, tend to rescue or save humanity from the great danger with which it was faced." That is not at all the view of the substitutionary atonement taught in the Bible or in the Westminster Confession of Faith—it is the view of Modernism.

It is our belief that, while weak and unguarded at certain points, Mr. Glasgow's brief proved beyond doubt the validity of his accusation that Dr. Thompson's view of inspiration is not that of the Westminster Confession. The brief was published in pamphlet form, distributed throughout the ministerial membership of the denomination, and presented to the Synod of North Carolina for consideration.

The Synod's Response

The rest of the history of this case is tragically similar to the story of the treatment accorded all persons in

the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. who dared to speak out in criticism of the heretical teachings of boards, agencies and officers of that church. On September 4th the Synod of North Carolina, which supports Union Seminary, by resolution returned the pamphlet to Mr. Glasgow, admonished him to follow the provisions of the Book of Church Government, deplored "the tendency of individuals to attack the character or orthodoxy of ministers or agencies by pamphlets" and, to show its true estimate of Mr. Glasgow's criticism, reelected Dr. Thompson as moderator of the synod.

Not all courts of the church, however, shared the same attitude. It should be noted that the Synod of Appalachia voted to submit to the trustees of Union Seminary a copy of Mr. Glasgow's brief, with the request that an answer to its charges be made by the seminary. After heated debate, the Presbytery of Concord presented a similar request to the trustees of the institution, and several other bodies expressed concern over the charges. All of them, however, were united in denouncing Mr. Glasgow's method of attack—that is, by distributing his pamphlet to all ministers of the church. An action of the general assembly of 1934, of which Mr. Glasgow had been totally unaware, had expressed emphatic disapproval of the practice and instructed its ministers to bring charges against other ministers only in the regular way prescribed in the Book of Church Order. Mr. Glasgow has since admitted his unintentional violation of proper procedure, but has begged the church not to allow that consideration to becloud the infinitely more important issue of the peril of Modernism in the denomination's largest theological seminary.

Presbyterial Machine

Dr. Thompson's presbytery, East Hanover, debated for more than two hours and then appointed a special committee to study the matter and report back to a *pro re nata* meeting of presbytery on November 25th. That report is a typical product of ecclesi-

astical machine politics. Dr. Thompson met willingly with the committee, though he had refused to meet with his accuser, and the report was pure whitewash from beginning to end. Although Mr. Glasgow left himself wide open for just such an attack, we are struck with the similarity between the heretical Auburn Affirmation and the following paragraph from the committee's report:

There is the assumption that a professor in one of our theological seminaries must accept the interpretation that has been placed upon our standards by those who have preceded him in the church. Says Mr. Glasgow:

Since Dr. Lacy confirms that Drs. Strickler, Johnson and Smith—the three last professors to hold the Chair of Theology at Union—followed Warfield and taught his views to their students, I feel that it is fair to assume that Warfield sets forth “the historic position of our church” and “the historic interpretations” of those positions.

Your committee calls attention to the fact that neither in the ordination vow of a Presbyterian minister nor in the obligation assumed by a professor in Union Seminary is there a requirement that he shall accept anyone's interpretation of our doctrinal standards. The sole requirement is that he shall be loyal to the standards themselves. Our church has never recognized any individual as the official interpreter of our standards. Certainly, no professor in a seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States can reasonably be required to accept or to be bound by interpretations placed upon our standards by a member of another branch of the church. Dr. Warfield . . . was a member of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Again, what Mr. Glasgow charged, and, we believe, proved in his pamphlet was that Dr. Thompson held an unorthodox and unscriptural view of inspiration. But the Presbytery of East Hanover apparently considers the doctrine of inspiration as one of the unimportant details that is *not part of the system of doctrine* and may be believed or not by a minister, without in any way affecting his standing in the church or his right to affirm his ordination vows. The report declares:

There is the assumption that a seminary professor has no right to hold or disseminate views that deviate, even in details, from the official standards of our Church. Both in the ordination vow and in the obligation assumed by professors at Union Seminary, one professes to accept the standards of our church “as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.” One is not required to accept all of the detailed statements of

our standards. Furthermore, the standards themselves obviously contemplate the possibility of changes being made in them, because they make provision for amendment. If the individual minister is not to be allowed to call attention to desirable changes, it would be forever impossible to amend the standards.

Can it be that East Hanover Presbytery really believes that the founding fathers of the church made provision for amendments because they foresaw a time when the Confession would have to be so modified as to *exclude plenary inspiration*?

Presbytery's Report

The report is in three sections. First is “a consideration of some of the characteristics of the pamphlet,” which is apparently intended to discredit the ability, knowledge and sincerity of Mr. Glasgow and to present a modernist view of the question under discussion. This section of the report states, for example, that “there is the assumption that there is but one allowable theory of the inspiration of the Bible. Mr. Glasgow quotes from the writings of Dr. Warfield a definition of one theory of inspiration. He takes the position that no Presbyterian minister can hold any other theory of inspiration without being disloyal to the standards of the church.” And the section concludes by saying, “It is the judgment of your committee that the whole force of Mr. Glasgow's pamphlet is lost if these . . . questionable assumptions are not granted.”

The second section is an analysis of the charges in the pamphlet, and is whitewash in its purest form, though it leaves us unconvinced. And the concluding section is “A Confession of Faith” submitted by Dr. Thompson. That “Confession” is a disarming masterpiece. But our major objection to it is that it simply does not harmonize at all with the other published writings of Dr. Thompson as quoted by Mr. Glasgow. If, over a period of years, a man repeatedly affirms that two and two make five, and then, when pressed by opponents, says that he believes two and two make four, we are not inclined to be greatly cheered by the declaration made under pressure. We are likely to feel that he does not, by that statement, mean what we would mean by it. Rather, we shall probably think that the word “four” in his statement has for him some mystical and recondite significance that makes it really mean “five.”

Mr. Glasgow's Reply

Mr. Glasgow's reply to the report of the presbytery appeared in December. In its preamble it quoted from a letter written to Mr. Glasgow by a commissioner to the special meeting of presbytery at which the report was adopted. The letter was written to Mr. Glasgow three days prior to the presbytery meeting, and reveals the presence of an ecclesiastical machine that functions at least as smoothly as any we have encountered in the Northern Church. The letter says, in part:

The committee appointed to examine Thompson is composed of men who, I believe, without exception, spoke in favor of a resolution to “whitewash” the whole charges without even the formality of an investigation. The result of the investigation will, in my opinion, be a complete “whitewash.”

I personally think that you have proved your case, but you are going up against a “stacked deck” and there can only be one result in a presbytery that is dominated by the faculty of the seminary.

As an illustration of the present trend, a Thanksgiving Service was conducted jointly by one of our most prominent ministers and a Jewish rabbi, who denies the Sonship of our Lord. This occurred in Richmond Thursday. We no longer are a separated church, but are linked with unbelievers.

As an indication of what is to be expected: At the last meeting of the presbytery, when your request for a transcript of the record of the examination was read, it was decided that no transcript would be made and furnished you, as this would only give you ammunition for further “persecution.” . . .

Because of Modernism's love for investing traditional language with new, obscure and devitalizing significance, or with no significance at all, Mr. Glasgow's reply did not leave him undisputed victor on the field. Combating modernist double-talk is like boxing in the middle of a London blackout with “the little man who wasn't there.” At whatever point one attacks the trained Modernist, his heterodoxy seems to melt in a shower of pious words and phrases. To the Modernist none of those words and phrases mean what they do to the Christian—but they sound splendid when he says them fast.

What the result of the Glasgow-Thompson battle eventually will be we cannot dare to predict. Probably a number of presbyteries will overture the 1941 General Assembly for action on the matter, and no doubt it will drag on for several years, with no conclusive steps taken to satisfy

those who are convinced that all is not well with Dr. Thompson or Union Seminary. And, should the next assembly continue to model its platform technique along the lines of that of

the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., at the first mention of the names of Thompson and Glasgow the commissioners will arise and sing, "Blest be the tie that binds."

The Bible Doctrine of the Separated Life

PART IV

By the REV. JOHANNES G. VOS

(The first three installments of this series were published in the issues of March 25, April 25, and July 10, 1940.)

VI. The Separated Life and the Nature and Extent of the Authority of the Christian Church

IN THE formulation of creedal doctrine, the Christian church is strictly limited by Scripture. The church has the right to require of her officers and members assent to everything that can be shown to be taught or implied in Scripture, but the church does not have the right to add anything to what is contained in Scripture. The authority of the church is ministerial and declarative, not legislative; it is derived from Christ, not original in the church itself; it is not an absolute authority, but one limited and regulated by a definite revelation, the Scriptures. From these considerations it follows that the church has no right to go beyond Scripture and compile lists of specific things or acts, in themselves indifferent, which experience or science purport to show to be deleterious and which are therefore alleged to be wrong for the Christian to use or to do.

There are some Christian denominations which actually single out certain specific acts, in themselves indifferent, and require of church members abstinence from those things as a condition of membership. In some cases this requirement of abstinence is written into the denomination's creedal doctrine, and members are not merely required to abstain from the particular things involved, but are also required to express their assent to the rightfulness of this requirement of abstinence. This tendency, which assumes various forms in various circles, is a very unhealthy one, for it tends to give people the notion that the church can, by its

own authority, legislate for the lives of its members, and even go beyond Scripture in requiring of them abstinence from particular things which are in themselves indifferent.

Of course the church may and should require its members to abstain from everything that can be proved by Scripture to be sinful. The breach of such abstinence can be justly censured by ecclesiastical judicatories when the fact is proved. But the church has no authority to require abstinence from things indifferent. The church has no authority to usurp the functions of the individual Christian conscience and decide for her members concerning the use of things indifferent. For the church to censure her members for doing that which cannot be proved from Scripture, without the use of any additional authority, to be sinful, is to exceed the limits of legitimate church authority. At the point where a secondary authority becomes necessary, the matter automatically passes from the church to the court of the individual conscience, *precisely because God alone is Lord of the conscience, and human authority cannot bind the conscience*. Let all church courts beware of committing the sin which Spurgeon described as "violating the crown rights of God, who alone is Lord of the consciences of men."

Even though a church member may have committed an act which in the *opinion* of the members of a judicatory would be sinful if committed in like circumstances by themselves, still the judicatory has no right to censure such a person unless it can be proved from Scripture that the act was sinful; just as in criminal law a jury may be of the opinion that a defendant has committed a wrong, but has no right to convict him unless the evidence proves that he has violated the law of the land.

A church judicatory may not decide cases by opinion; but must decide according to the law and the evidence.

It will be seen to follow from the foregoing that just as the church has no authority to go beyond Scripture in legislating concerning particular things which are in themselves indifferent, so the church has no authority to censure her members for any use of things indifferent *unless that use can be proved to involve the violation of an express or implied command of Scripture*. It is not sufficient to show that a command of Scripture may have been violated, or that an act has been committed which might, under some circumstances, involve the violation of a command of Scripture. To be justly liable to ecclesiastical censure, a church member must be charged with a particular act, committed at a particular time and place, and concerning this act two things must be proved: (1) it must be proved that the act was actually committed by the person, and at the time and place specified in the charge; (2) it must be proved that the act, in the circumstances under which it was committed, involved the violation of a command of Scripture, that is, that it was sinful. Church discipline must always deal with *real offences*, not with the legitimate and conscientious use of things indifferent. Its function is to remedy actual wrongs already committed, not to prevent the commission of wrongs by enforcing abstinence from things which are in themselves not sinful but indifferent.

VII. The Work of the Holy Spirit vs. the Doctrines and Commandments of Men

Those who wish to add to what God has spoken in Scripture certain man-made regulations concerning things indifferent often take this position because they believe these rules necessary in order to prevent various evils. They assume that unless a rule is made, a particular evil will exist unchecked. So a church in China makes a rule against the use of opium by church members, and a church in Mexico a rule against the use of marijuana. In each case the motive is a laudable one, namely, to prevent church members from becoming addicted to certain dangerous drugs. Nevertheless, a careful study of the problem leads us to the conclusion that the enactment of such regulations proceeds from false assumptions,

is ineffectual for the intended purpose, and is very dishonoring to the Holy Spirit.

For a church judicatory to enact a rule prohibiting the use of opium by church members, for example, shows a presupposition that such a rule is necessary. Clearly the assumption is that, unless such a rule is made, some church members will use opium. And it seems to be assumed that some church members will abstain from the use of opium because of a church rule, who would not abstain if there were no such ecclesiastical regulation. Now those who advocate man-made regulations concerning things indifferent reason as though the Holy Spirit did not dwell in the hearts of the Lord's people, as though there were no such thing as sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and as though Christian people were the same as the children of the world. They fail to take the power of the Holy Spirit into their reckoning. How are the members of the church to be kept from using opium or marihuana? The only way they can think of is to make a rule prohibiting the use of these things by church members. What a confession! What ignorance concerning the nature and power of the Holy Spirit's work! What an admission concerning the spiritual state of the church members for whom the rule is made!

Church members are supposed to be Christian people. If they are not Christian people, they really have no right to be church members at all. This does not mean that church officers can examine people's hearts and admit to membership only those who are truly regenerate, for they cannot. It does mean, however, that in a church where the gospel of Jesus Christ is faithfully proclaimed, where a credible profession of faith is required of those admitted from the world, and where the discipline of the Lord's house is faithfully administered, the hypocrites will be very few. Such a church will be made up of regenerate Christian people. Now the Word of God teaches us that every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and that if any person does not possess the Holy Spirit, he is not a Christian at all (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit is God, He is omnipotent, and He carries on in each of God's children the work of sanctification until each is made perfect in the likeness of Christ. There-

fore, where the gospel is faithfully preached and taught there will be no need to go beyond Scripture and add the doctrines and commandments of men concerning things in themselves indifferent. The Spirit of God will work true holiness in the hearts and lives of the people, their consciences will be enlightened and their walk consistent.

Long ago the Apostle Paul warned the Colossians against all such man-made rules, as we read in Col. 2:20-23,

If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

From this we learn that man-made regulations about things indifferent are *ineffectual*: they are "not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." Whatever men may say about such rules and regulations, the Holy Spirit here tells us that they are useless as a means of restraining fleshly appetites. In another place the Holy Spirit has given us through the Apostle Paul the true secret of overcoming the fleshly lusts, as we see in Gal. 5:16,

But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

The whole passage, Gal. 5:16-24, is a radical antidote for the false belief that man-made rules and regulations can curb the sinful tendencies of the Christian's old nature. Many of those who today are so zealous for human ordinances about things indifferent fall into the error of the Galatians, who supposed that the Christian life is begun in the Spirit, but perfected in the flesh (Gal. 3:3), begun by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, but completed by human efforts, actions and abstinences.

Someone may object that opium and marihuana, for example, are not indifferent, but sinful in themselves. We have already shown that no material thing can be sinful in itself. Now if opium, marihuana or any

other particular material substance is to be regarded as an exception to this principle, the problem is raised as to what authority is competent to decide which substances are exceptions to the principle that no material thing can be sinful in itself. There is, no doubt, general agreement among Christian people that such substances as opium and marihuana, for example, are so dangerous and harmful that they should not be used at all. This general agreement is, however, no proper ground for church judicatories authoritatively pronouncing such substances sinful in themselves, or declaring their use to be sinful *per se*. The Word of God, not the so-called Christian consciousness, is our only infallible rule of faith and conduct. What authority is competent to determine the *harmfulness* and on this basis to infer the inherent *sinfulness* of the use of a particular material substance, without making this inference binding on the consciences of the Lord's people? Are church judicatories qualified to issue authoritative pronouncements on such matters? By what right does a synod or assembly composed of ministers and elders decide questions concerning the physiological action and toxic properties of various narcotic drugs? If we grant to ecclesiastical bodies the right to decide concerning opium and marihuana, do we not thereby concede the entire principle that the church may legitimately decide for its members concerning the use of things indifferent? And if so, could we consistently object, for reasons of principle, if a church judicatory were to enact a rule prohibiting the use of tea or coffee? We are far from holding that it is legitimate for Christians to use dangerous drugs. What we are contending for is not license to use poisonous drugs, but freedom under God to decide for ourselves what material substances we ought to leave alone. We would keep the consciences of Christian people free from what Dr. Machen called "the tyranny of the experts." We maintain that the individual Christian, and not the church, must pass judgment on the pronouncements of experts concerning such things, so far as questions of *morality* are concerned. We are far from holding that it is "all right" to use opium, marihuana or a great many other material substances, but if the question as to the sinfulness of the use of these things

is to be decided for us by a synod or pope, then our freedom of conscience is destroyed and our soul reduced to bondage to the commandments of men. If the thing is indifferent in itself, whatever it may be, then the individual Christian, not the church, has the God-given right to decide ethical questions concerning its use. We fully agree with the general opinion of Christian people that such substances as opium and marihuana should not be used at all, except possibly by a physician's orders; but we claim the God-given right to make this decision ourselves, and not to have it made for us by an ecclesiastical judicatory. The conscience of each and every one of the Lord's people is enlightened by the Holy Spirit; to require Christian people to accept ecclesiastical regulations on such matters is akin to the "implicit faith, and absolute and blind obedience" which is required by the Church of Rome.

In a previous section of this discussion we made the statement that "Since things indifferent are not sinful in themselves, the Christian is free to use them *except when there is some special reason for abstinence from them.*" Lest this statement be misunderstood, we would add that the reference is to things indifferent as a class, not to every specific *adiaphoron* individually. We do not mean that the Christian is free to use every indifferent thing, except when there is some special reason for abstinence, but rather that, of the whole class of things indifferent, the Christian is free to use any specific things except those in the case of which there exists some special reason for abstinence. If a particular material substance is known to be a dangerous, habit-forming narcotic drug, that is certainly a valid special reason for abstinence from that particular substance, but the decision that a consistent Christian walk requires abstinence from that particular thing must be made by the individual Christian, not by the church. If it be alleged that this position fails to safeguard the members of the church against harmful and dangerous habits, we reply that the contrary position dishonors the Holy Spirit and minimizes His work. Regeneration of the heart, sanctification of the life and enlightenment of the mind and conscience of Christian people by the Holy Spirit are realities, and we for our part believe they are far more powerful and

effective than any man-made rules and regulations devised to supplement the Word of God.

Having stated and defended the foregoing principles, we wish to add three qualifying statements in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

1. Though it is not proper for ecclesiastical bodies to legislate concerning things indifferent, it is sometimes entirely legitimate for the civil government to do so. Civil legislation does not purport to bind the conscience, but only to control the conduct of citizens.

2. While it is not proper for church judicatories to make rules concerning opium or marihuana, for instance, it may be perfectly legitimate for a church session to reject an applicant for membership who uses one of these things, not because the use of these or any other material things is sinful in itself, but because,

in the particular case under consideration, the church session may decide that the degree, manner and circumstances of the use of a particular thing are such as to involve the actual commission of sin of such a nature as to render the applicant's profession incredible.

3. While it is not proper for church bodies to make rules concerning the use of things indifferent, it may be perfectly legitimate for a church judicatory to censure a church member for the use of something which is not sinful in itself, when it is proved that in the particular case in question the use really involved the commission of sin. It is one thing to administer church discipline if and when real scandal occurs, and quite another to attempt to prevent its occurring by binding a universal man-made rule upon the consciences of the Lord's people.

(To Be Concluded)

Missionary Heroes of the Past

By the REV. ROBERT S. MARSDEN

General Secretary of the Committees on Home and Foreign Missions of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

XX. Christian Schwartz

EVEN a very small list of Missionary Heroes of the Past would be incomplete without a mention of the missionaries sent out by the Danes during the eighteenth century. These men came under the influence of the University of Halle and most of them were not Danes, but Germans, like Christian Frederick Schwartz. Others of these bold and brave men might have been included in our list, such as Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, who preceded Schwartz in India, but Schwartz has been chosen as the representative because of the breadth and length of his labors.

Christian Frederick Schwartz was born in 1726 of godly parents. His mother died in his youth, and before her death she dedicated her eldest son to full-time Christian service. In due time Schwartz' father confirmed this dedication with his benediction, and in 1750 Schwartz departed for Tranquebar on the East Coast of India. The mission to which he went had been founded by the Danes dur-

ing the first decade of that century, and it was in this district that the first Protestant chapel in all of India was opened in 1707. Against terrific opposition, the mission had been founded and had acquired considerable prestige. The opposition came first from their own countrymen, the business men who opposed the preaching of the gospel to the Hindus, and then from the Romanists who did all in their power to prevent the introduction of Protestantism into India. When Schwartz arrived on the field there were already about 9000 converts gathered in this district.

Schwartz' missionary endeavors lack the sensational qualities of the rapidly moving careers of such men as David Brainerd, who was the subject of our last study. The first ten years of his missionary service did not produce unusual results. He did not display very great promise, and his associates would not have marked him as one who was very likely to attain to unusual success. However, he was a careful student and linguist, and he used much of his first years in

perfecting these qualities. He rapidly learned the Tamil language, and before many months he was prepared to preach in that tongue, using, as his text, Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—the same text as that upon which Luther had preached his last sermon in Eisleben two centuries before.

Schwartz' opportunity for spectacular service came as the result of the political unrest of the country. There was a constant struggle between the French and English for political ascendancy in India, and that struggle also necessarily involved the native princes of the country. Schwartz was chosen as the arbiter and, after the British had succeeded in overcoming the influence of the French, he became a liaison officer between the British and the natives. He had the confidence of both parties, and they had great assurance of his integrity. He was indifferent to wealth and worldly preferment, consistently refusing to receive gifts and emoluments from either party—a characteristic sufficiently rare to win him the confidence of both. Because of this he also gained tremendous influence as a diplomat, and thus had influence with the great in the land, both British and native.

Even in the midst of his diplomatic missions he did not forget his chief mission—the proclamation of the gospel to the heathen. Through his selfless devotion to the cause of the gospel, he won also the confidence of the lowest caste of people. In 1767 he had left the Danish mission in Tranquebar and joined the English Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. He remained unmarried, as a matter of principle, holding that missionaries in his circumstances should not have the responsibilities of a family. His needs were few, and he cared nothing for money, often going hungry in order that some low-caste native might have his rice to eat. During his nearly half a century in India he never returned to his native land, and regarded India as his home. In the days when almost all missionaries were on a term basis—a man usually enlisting for a five-year term, at the end of which he expected to be relieved of missionary service—this faithfulness to his duty did much to give stability to missionary endeavor which was likely, in that day, to be more or less sporadic.

This plain man—this man of no outstanding abilities—through his faithfulness and his devotion to duty acquired a success in missionary effort missed by many more able and more gifted people. His converts were numbered by the thousand—estimates run from three thousand converts to six or seven thousand, and his influence in India long outlived his generation.

It was not long after the death of Schwartz that Protestant missions in India began to decline. More specifically, the Tranquebar Mission, with which he had first been connected, completely died out. By 1793 a missionary wrote home from Tranquebar, "A new honest missionary would be a great help to us, but if no suitable man can be found, it is better for us to die out." Forty years later the effect of this great mission had been almost completely lost. What was the reason for this decline? From the errors of these early missionary societies we in our day should certainly profit. Of course a careful analysis of the reasons for their failure is not possible here, but it will be profitable for us to mention at least a few of the salient reasons for it.

The relationship which missionaries sustained to their home boards was vague and indefinite. No specific financial arrangements were made between the mission at home and the missionary on the field. Often the missionary, waiting hopefully for the next boat from home, expecting financial and material aid, was disappointed and he soon discovered himself stranded and at the mercy of unfriendly traders and government officials. Often the missionary's work was greatly harmed by the admission to the Christian sacraments of those who gave no evidence of regeneration. Natives were attracted to the mission through ulterior motives for some financial or social gain that they could expect from their attachment to the Christian community, and when supplies ceased from the homeland, they terminated their interest in the mission. Few native pastors were provided and educated; for many years, in fact, there were absolutely none. There was no attempt at church discipline, and the control of the church by the state made discipline almost impossible. Education was made a substitute for evangelism, and the worldliness of the missionaries brought the gospel into ill-repute. The

highly centralized and cleverly contrived machinations of the Romanists did much to frighten the natives into persecution of the Protestants, and these in turn, with no real Christian conviction, were unable to withstand the fires of persecution when it was visited upon the Protestant community. All of these weaknesses in missionary endeavor conspired to destroy the permanent effect of these early Protestant missions, so that now most of them are but a memory. They were a measure of blessing to their generation, and many souls are among the redeemed because of them, but had they been able to avoid these and other pitfalls their permanent effect on world history would have been immeasurable.

WINTER PLANS FOR CALVIN INSTITUTE ARE ANNOUNCED

DURING the second semester of the current school year, which began on January 13th, the Calvin Institute of the Bible will hold its sessions only on Monday evenings, instead of on Monday and Tuesday evenings as heretofore. All classes will meet in the Young Men's Hebrew Association, Broad and Pine Streets, Philadelphia. The school is open to all, whether young people or not, and visitors to the institute are always welcome. Members and friends of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church are urged thus to become acquainted with the work that the Calvin Institute of the Bible is doing.

Throughout the coming school term, four classes will be held each Monday evening. The courses offered are: The Epistle to the Hebrews, an Introduction to the Books of the Bible, Bible Doctrine and Apologetics.

On Monday evening, February 24th, a special public service will be held, and it is planned to have the Rev. Samuel J. Allen, pastor of Gethsemane Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, address the institute at that time.

The Calvin Institute needs about seventy-five dollars in order to complete the year without debt. The important work of training the laymen of the church must not be neglected. Contributions should be sent to Mr. Thomas R. Galbraith, 154 Greenwood Avenue, Wyncote, Pennsylvania.

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITORIAL

"Christ Is the Answer"

FOR a better America Christ is the "answer" is the slogan of the National Christian Mission which currently is touring twenty-two American cities in what the magazine *Time* has called "the best-organized drive in U. S. history to revive the nation's spiritual life." This streamlined movement for revival has just passed through Philadelphia, and the impact which it has made upon the city through its hundreds of meetings and well-planned publicity invites a consideration of its message.

It is indeed an impressive fact that, in a time when so much of the nation's attention is being centered upon the war, there should be mobilized a huge corps of men and women who have set as their aim to present Christ to the nation as the answer to its needs, and who further formulate as their purposes "to bring the gospel, in all its validity and vitality, to the people of the nation for their sincere consideration and their personal acceptance" and "to seek to recapture the fearless aggressiveness of the early Christian Church and to experience anew the thrill of creative change in individual and social life." There are Christians who are quite ready to take such statements at their face value, and who will even insist that not to do so is to betray a lack of Christian charity and of the "spirit of Christ," but both our Bibles and our experience compel us to inquire as to what gospel is being preached, and what Christ is being offered to men as the answer to their needs.

If an evangelistic campaign could be as carefully planned and as efficiently organized as this one, mustering as many eloquent speakers and energetic workers, and withal were committed cordially to the proclamation of the message of salvation in Christ as that is set forth in the Bible, there might indeed be a wonderful revival. Unfortunately, planning and organization, eloquence and energy, do not guarantee fidelity to revealed

truth. The National Christian Mission is as broadly inclusive as modern Protestantism. It comes under the auspices of the Federal Council, and the theological complexion of the speakers includes nearly every shade of theological orthodoxy and of heterodoxy, with the latter hues definitely predominating.

It would perhaps be unfair to say that the position of E. Stanley Jones, who delivered the opening "keynote" address in Philadelphia, is typical of the mission as a whole. At the same time it is not likely that anyone would contend that his position was the most radical; indeed, the claim is often made that Jones is distinctly evangelical. In any case a review of the views of this great missionary will throw some light upon the "gospel" that is being preached in the mission. The opening address of Dr. Jones was on the subject "Is the Kingdom of God Realism?", which is also the title of his recently published book, and the nature of his message may be most clearly learned from a perusal of the book. The tragic conclusion which must be drawn is that in it there is hardly a remnant of the message of the Christian gospel, the good news of what Christ has done for us sinners by His death and resurrection.

Although Jones acknowledges that sin is a fact—"a terrible and tragic fact"—sin nowhere appears as guilt, as hell-deserving guilt. The kingdom of God is within us, he says, "in all of us—good, bad, and indifferent. It is in the very laws of our being, for the laws of our being are the laws of the kingdom of God." It is up to us whether we will obey the laws of the kingdom. "Those who believe in and obey Christ, believe in and obey the laws of the Kingdom of God written in their own constitution—they therefore have eternal life, for they are indissolubly identified with an eternal fact. But those who do not obey the laws of their own being simply do what the verse [John 3:16] says—they 'perish,' eternally perish. They

have proved themselves unfit to survive." The man who as he is confronted by "the ultimate environment, the Kingdom of God" does not obey it and live by it, "deems himself unfit to live . . . God doesn't damn him, he damns himself." And on this view hell is "the fact of self-destruction, the place where people burn up the powers of life in the fires of impossible living—so they perish" (see pages 73-77).

We do need indeed a fundamental change in our lives, Dr. Jones insists, even the new birth, or self-surrender. But since sin does not involve either corruption or guilt, and merely involves our being out of harmony with the laws of the kingdom which are the laws of the universe, it is entirely possible for us to bring about our own new birth. "The Kingdom awaits our assent." In order to bring integration into our personalities, we must climb "the ladder of faith." To climb the ladder of faith is, briefly stated, to assert our will to believe, following the technique developed by the pragmatist philosopher William James (see pages 174ff., 206f., 281).

At times Dr. Jones does refer to the incarnation, cross and resurrection of Christ as integral parts of the Christian message. Whether he proclaims them with their New Testament meaning may be judged from the following quotations:*

Further, the Incarnation makes significant and upward movement through science and education and human uplift, for the Incarnation means, not only God coming down, it means man coming up. A human brain, a human body, a human soul was offered to the Divine to be the vehicle of the coming of the Divine into human life. The vehicle was not despised, but dedicated. This makes sacred all that is fine and noble in the upward urge of man. If God used the finest flower of human life to show Himself, shall He despise other human life as it flowers in lesser forms in science and art and religion? He stamped all this upward urge with the Divine approval when He used the finest of it for His incarnational purposes (p. 18).

But does the Cross fit in with the thesis of this book—the Kingdom of God within you? Is the Cross also within us? Yes, it is within our very blood stream. Let an infection come upon the arm—does Nature say, "there is nothing can be done—once infected, always infected"? On the contrary, the healing, forgiving, atoning processes set in at once. I say "atoning

* From "Is the Kingdom of God Realism?" by E. Stanley Jones. Copyright, 1940, Whitmore and Stone. By permission of Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, publishers.

Evangelism

A YEAR'S subscription will include the entire series on evangelism which begins in this issue.

ing," and I mean it, for the white corpuscles rush with reckless sacrifice and die by the millions, that the infection may be repelled and the rest of the body saved. The pus that comes off is the corpses of the white corpuscles which have sacrificed their lives for us. So the Atonement was not merely on a Hill two thousand years ago—it is in your very blood—therefore inescapable (p. 279).

On such a view the atonement ceases to be an act of God's free love and becomes an inescapable law of the universe. And the incarnation as described above is not a real incarnation, the Word become flesh, but merely describes the divine use of that which is human according to a universal law.

All of this is surely not the good news of what God did on Calvary for sinners. The message of Stanley Jones, reduced to its simplest terms,

calls upon us to achieve the integration of our personalities by exercising our wills to believe and to obey the laws of the universe as they affect our lives. This is not the gospel "in all of its validity and vitality," for it does not conform to the message of Jesus and of the New Testament, nor is there power in it to save. Lacking the note of divine authority, the intolerance of other ways of salvation, and acknowledgment of complete dependence for the new life upon the Spirit of God, which characterized the proclamation of the early Christian church, this preaching, however eloquent and moving, can hardly be said to be accompanied by the fearless aggressiveness of those great days—great in bringing glory to God and salvation to men.

—N. B. S.

Knox Church of Philadelphia

Of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

KNOX ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of Philadelphia had the honor of being the first church to apply for admission to the Presbytery of Philadelphia after the formation of the denomination and the establishment of its presbyteries in 1936. Prior to the Syracuse General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the then Beacon Presbyterian Church had withdrawn, with its pastor, Dr. John Burton Thwing, from that denomination because of its prevailing Modernism. Several of the members cooperated with Dr. Thwing in forming a chapter of the Presbyterian Constitutional Covenant Union and, on November 14, 1935, met at the home of one of the members for the purpose of forming a new church. Twenty-five people attended that historic meeting, three elder-trustees were elected, and a pastoral call was issued to Dr. Thwing. The first service was held in the home of Ruling Elder William L. Bernard and the speaker was the Rev. Professor R. B. Kuiper of Westminster Theological Seminary.

On Thanksgiving Day of that year, the congregation moved into a large three-story house at 2216 East Cumberland Street, which served as a church home until the spring of 1939,



Knox Church, Philadelphia

when the congregation was forced to vacate the premises. For several Sundays they met at St. Michael's Lutheran Church and later found shelter in the near-by Church of the Good Shepherd. In September, 1939, Dr.

Thwing severed his connection with the church, and two months later a call was extended to the Rev. George W. Marston of Kirkwood, Pa. Mr. Marston began his new duties on January 3, 1940, and is the present pastor of the church.

The building at 2216 East Cumberland Street, formerly occupied by the congregation, has recently been purchased for \$3,700. One thousand dollars was contributed for the down payment and the balance was secured by mortgages. The congregation moved into the building on the first of December, 1940, and has been encouraged by an increase in attendance since that time. At present, members of the congregation are busily engaged in remodeling the first floor of the building to serve as a church auditorium. When the work is completed, the auditorium will be approximately fifty feet long and fifteen feet wide.

There are now 109 communicant members on the roll of Knox Church. Seven of these have been added during the past year. The church is vitally interested in missions, both home and foreign, and has contributed to the support of the Rev. and Mrs. Henry W. Coray in the foreign field and the Rev. and Mrs. Leslie A. Dunn in the home mission field. Both the mission committees and Westminster Theological Seminary were included in the 1940 benevolence budget, and the church contributed more than \$500 to benevolences last year. The Sunday school has also given to the support of the Corays and Dunns and, in addition, has contributed to the work of the Rev. and Mrs. Otis Leal of Mexico.

Knox Church is following a practice that might well be adopted by many other churches. A serious effort has been and is being made to revive or discipline church members who have, without due cause, failed consistently to attend the Lord's Table or the regular services of the church. In recent months there has been a revival of interest and enthusiasm among the members, and attendance has increased.

The elders, Samuel H. Corliss, Allen R. Hood and LeRoy B. Oliver, join with Mr. Marston in the prayer and hope that the church may continue to grow in the grace of God, presenting a fearless and uncompromising testimony in the midst of an unbelieving city.

Spiritual Illiterates

A Meditation in the Book of Jeremiah

By the REV. BURTON L. GODDARD

Here now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest (Jer. 5: 21-24).

ALTHOUGH we have much sympathy for a man who cannot read because his eyes are sightless, our attitude is much different toward one who has never learned to read because of laziness or stubbornness. In a country where everyone has an opportunity to learn to read and write, illiteracy is regarded as an inexcusable tragedy. Spiritual illiteracy is little different. God is not sparing in His denunciation of those who have had a chance to know Him and His salvation but have despised the opportunity.

The book God has given us and which we know as the Bible is perhaps not quite so simple as some would have us believe. To know it as God originally gave it through men moved by the Holy Spirit, one must be a student of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. Few of us are thus qualified. Also, great scholars have been baffled to understand fully some portions of the book. Is God then justified in condemning those who do not seek with all their heart to come to a knowledge of Him by diligent reading of the Scriptures?

Answer is commonly given by Christian people that the essential saving truths of the Word are simple enough to be received into the heart of a child and embraced by his mind. True this is, yet now, for a few moments, I would invite you to consider the problem of spiritual illiteracy from a much different point of view.

Men have not always had alphabets of letters which they could put together to form words. The writing of ancient Egypt was at first nothing but a picture which suggested an action or situation, and so conveyed a message to the one who looked at it. From this simple beginning developed the hieroglyphs, picture-writing with which the many archeological discoveries of recent years have made us familiar. So it is that we become aware of the fact that the simplest book is not the one which is printed in words and letters.

The simplest book is a picture-book. Children read such books long before they are able to recognize and interpret words. They get the message, though not always in the same words. If only God had such a book, surely His condemnation of spiritual illiteracy would be manifestly justified.

He does! Unlike His other book, the Bible, this book does not need to be translated into many tongues. It speaks one language to all men. There are two major divisions in it. Both are pictorial, but one is more like a moving picture, while the other's pictures are for the most part still. The latter group of pictures is made up of the things God has made—the earth and all its physical wonders and the starry heavens above. The moving pictures are those of the hand of God at work in controlling and operating the forces of nature which He has established and which He makes subservient to the needs of men. The two parts of this book of God are known as "Creation" and "Providence."

The words of our meditation are concerned with the second part of God's picture-book, "Providence." Has not God spoken in the pictures of His providence? Powerful tides which man has never been able to harness mark the ebb and flow of ocean waters. Fierce storms rage at sea and billows rise like mountains with valleys between. Earthquakes shake the bed of the deep. But behold how God speaks in the picture of providence, for He has "placed the sand for the bound of the sea by

a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it." He who reads must assent that "with God all things are possible."

Have you taken thought as to the rain which drops from heaven? Should it be dispatched by a capricious hand, it might come in great floods or be withheld entirely in the growing season. One year might see a superabundance of moisture; the next might find the whole earth victim of a great drought. But God sends the sunshine and rain according to the measure of the earth's needs. He puts bridles upon the clouds, and each day marches the sun around its circuit. Yes, He "giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season." In the picture of providence, one reads of His wisdom and goodness and power.

"If winter come, can spring be far behind?" We know that the woodland violets and trilliums and the marshland cowslips follow the showers of April. With the July sun, the farmer is raking the hay in his meadow. Midsummer invariably witnesses the fields of grain turning to brown and gold. These are pictures of providence, for "he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of harvest." God's picture-book thus speaks to us of His sovereignty over all the earth, His faithfulness, and His unchanging love in making regular provision for the material needs of His people.

As we read this picture-book of God, it ought to keep us humble. As it teaches us of His mighty power, His excellent greatness, His perfect holiness, His unchanging decrees, and His great grace, we ought to be filled with awe. A holy fear should flood our souls. We should worship Him in all reverence. We should be aware of His eternal power and Godhead. We should cast all idols from us.

The tragedy is that many are unmoved by all these things. They ignore or misread the book. Some are like the early decipherers of Hittite inscriptions; each had a different interpretation of the book. Some are like the artist who is not concerned with understanding the message of the hieroglyph, but only desires to drink in the aesthetic perfume of the bird and animal forms which appear in the writing.

God's chosen people in the land of Judah had long been unmoved by the book's message. Their fathers had taught them to read it during the

period of their infancy. Prophet after prophet had reminded them of its message. They had chosen to forget. They had preferred not to listen. Now God points out their folly and gives them one last opportunity to hearken.

I have a neighbor who is a lover of nature. He drinks in the beauty of flowers. He loves to make his way to unfrequented mountain summits. He watches with anticipation the unfolding of the plants in his garden. Exclamations of wonder escape his lips as he beholds nature's grandeur. Yet he does not honor God as the author of creation and the controller of providence. He has misread God's picture-book.

Moreover, he is under the con-

demnation of God, for as God pronounced the inhabitants of Judah "foolish," so He declares all who misread or ignore the book "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

If He thus judges those who have access only to this *simple* book, how much more severe must be His judgment on those who have the Bible as well, and who remain willfully blind to its teaching! May it not be that you who have *both* books of His revelation will remain spiritually illiterate and die in your sins. May you rather read in His picture-book of His eternal power and Godhead and in the Book of books of the gracious salvation to be found in His dear Son, and may you be saved by that faith!

Nineveh, that great city! Within thy walls was the city proper; without, thy suburbs knew no bounds, and men flocked to thee until more than half a million called Nineveh their home.

Wicked city, long the site of a temple of Ishtar! Cruel oppressor of thy smaller neighbors, enemy of the people of God! Will God be mocked forever? Not the incense of thy prayers but the stench of thy wickedness has reached to heaven. Divine anger hangs over thee. Thinkest thou that God has forgotten thy sins?

But stop! Is there no escape? Must judgment come so suddenly? Yes, oh Ninevites, except ye repent! Who is that stranger who walks thy streets today? What voice is echoing now within thy walls? "Yet forty days," cries Jonah, "and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Forty days! Forty days of grace! Is that enough? Repent, oh Nineveh. Too swiftly the days go by. Then—what is this? Who leaves his throne? None but the king himself. He lays aside his robe and covers himself with sackcloth, sitting in ashes. He publishes a decree: "But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (3:8, 9).

The fortieth day has come. Have ye repented, men of Nineveh? Are ye spared for a time? We read: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not" (3:10). God's wrath is stayed. He need no longer show His anger, and He may withhold His punishment. A greater than Jonah has said: "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Luke 11:32).

So for Nineveh in the days of Jonah there is deliverance. More than a century passes before Nahum's burden is poured out—a century of thy greatest glory, oh Nineveh! Sargon built his palace with its sculptured alabaster walls. Greater still were the works of Sennacherib, whose paneled walls portrayed the siege of Lachish and other of his conquests. The familiar winged bulls with human heads flanked the grand

Except Ye Repent

By the REV. ROBERT E. NICHOLAS

General Secretary of the League of Evangelical Students

(This article has been prepared to supplement and throw additional light upon the studies for young people 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. The lessons now being studied have been prepared by the Rev. Charles G. Schauffele on the subject of the Minor Prophets. Topics for the last two Sundays in February are:

February 16th — AMOS, THE PROPHET OF SOCIAL JUSTICE.

February 23rd — JONAH, THE PROPHET OF REPENTANCE.)

WARNINGS of judgment and promises of deliverance: such is the twofold message of the minor prophets. We hear, for example, the voice of Joel (2:1): "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Again and again Amos, the herdman of Tekoa, prophesies, "Thus saith the Lord," and for their transgressions punishment is pronounced against Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah and Israel. "You only have I known of all the families of the

earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:2, 3). A century or more later, Nahum cries the burden of Nineveh.

Is there, then, no deliverance? Will not God, for a time at least, restrain His terrible wrath? Is there no hope for even a remnant of Israel and Judah? Is Nineveh doomed, and at once?

There is hope; God has not forgotten His covenant promises; the Lord will stay His vengeance even against an ungodly city for a season, if—. If what? The answer is a single word: Repent! "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God," declares the Lord through Joel (2:13). "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live," he thunders by Amos (5:6). Repent!

No better illustration of the working out of this principle of repentance can be found than that of Nineveh, the city to which Jonah was sent and against which he was commanded to cry. Ancient city of Nineveh, already old when Abram journeyed forth from Ur! Proud capital of Assyrian might! How many monarchs walked thy streets, built thy palaces, returned from triumphant conquest to thy gates! The routes of trade and commerce crossed thee for centuries.

entrance. His Maginot line was an inner defensive wall, some fifty feet thick and one hundred feet in height, "whose glory overthrows the enemy" (his own description). In it were fifteen ornamental gates. He made the outer wall "high like a mountain," and laid its foundation upon stone blocks at the underground water-level. Later Ashurbanipal, a true lover of books, collected a remarkable library of clay tablets, which were the books of his day. Less than a century ago these library chambers were discovered, and thousands of clay tablets were found on the floors. They had fallen from the shelves upon which they had been carefully arranged and catalogued by number and subject. Among the branches of learning represented are philology, astronomy, religion, science, law, history, commerce, and literature—all apparently made available to whoever wished to make use of them. Nineveh, that great city!

But what is it that Nahum is saying? "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery" (3:1). Unrepentant art thou now. Mistress of witchcrafts! Seller of nations! Bloody city! Thy shame shall be shown. There is no repentance now. Too late! Too late! One can almost hear the chariots with flaming torches raging in thy streets, jostling one against another in thy broad ways, running like the lightnings (2:4). Nabopolassar is about to storm thy gates. Thy river shall suddenly rise, undermine thy walls, and drown thy hosts. Yet thou wilt not repent. "And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" (3:7).

Where art thou now, oh city? Where thy splendid palaces, thy vast library, thy protecting walls, thy pagan temples? The Lord has "set thee as a gazing stock!" Thou wast buried for as long as thou didst exist, only a mound on the horizon, a byword to passers by, a forgotten desolation. Yes, thy ruins have now been uncovered, and men have seen thy greatness and thy shame. Oh Nineveh, thy repentance brought thy greatness; thine impenitence thy shame! Thy tomb a monument to both!

Nineveh, wast thou more wicked than all other cities? Must thou only

perish? Jesus, answering a similar question, replied: "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:4, 5). Oh, alabaster cities of America—New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco—great cities, proud cities, cities of wickedness, shame, and blood, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Ye professing members of Christ's church, forgetting His Word, disobeying His law, going after another gospel, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Where are our prophets? Who knows whether we have yet forty days? Have we no Jonahs? Yea, a greater than Jonah speaketh to us: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The Missing Convert

(Concluded From Page 34)

and force, their preaching might not be so successful as it was in their own day? We grant that there were giants in those days, but is it not entirely possible that if those same giants were living today they might be somewhat less gigantic? We believe that this is not only quite possible, but also that it is actually the case. Why we believe this we hope to state somewhat later.

Hand in hand with the second explanation of the missing convert goes the third. In these days few would advance this explanation. It is simply that the church's message of salvation is ineffective today because the content of that message has become less and less doctrinal. Now, this explanation impresses us quite a bit. Either in the interests of "practical Christian living," or of "building a better world," or of producing "the more abundant life"; or in an attempt to "get back to the Bible," or to have "no creed but Christ," the Christian church has in large part deserted her doctrinal fortifications and has adopted a policy of guerrilla fighting with "practical" pietistic popguns. We would not at all underestimate the seriousness of this situation; but we do not for one moment believe that the doctrinal decline within the church can fully explain the missing convert.

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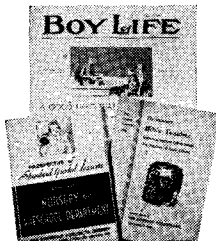
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With the fourth explanation of the missing convert we are not at all impressed. There are quite a few people today who say that we are in the midst of the last great apostasy. Not many converts can be expected, for the earthly scene is drawing rapidly to a close. The missing convert is the normal thing in this finale, for the Lord will soon return to find little faith upon the earth. In short, we are, they say, in "the last days."

The people who hold this popular misconception of what the Bible means by that phrase say "we are in the last days" in one of two ways. Either they say "we are in the last days" in such a way that we are given the idea that they must rush right off to be hastily about the business of evangelism ere the Lord's return; or else the words are spoken in a funereal tone, implying that it is almost too late to do anything about evangelism.

The former attitude makes for hasty evangelism, and hasty evangelism is almost always ineffectual evangelism. Please do not misunderstand us—we are certainly in favor of speedy evangelism. But haste is not speed. Speed is smooth swiftness of operation, but haste is like a man jumping onto his horse and riding

madly off in all directions at once. The attitude of haste in evangelism does nothing to decrease the number of missing converts. On the other hand, the funereal attitude makes for a do-nothing policy in evangelism, and likewise fails to decrease the number of missing converts.

It may very well be true that our Lord will soon return. On the other hand, He may not return for some time. Very frankly, we do not know when He will return. In any case, we must make the most careful plans for our evangelism. We must adopt the best method of evangelism so that our evangelism will be as effective as possible right up to the last trump. What the best method of evangelism is, and whether that method is now being used, we hope to consider presently. The point now is simply that the phrase "we are in the last days" can never be used as an excuse for hasty evangelism, nor as a reason for no evangelism.

The fifth explanation which is advanced for the ineffectualness of modern evangelism is one with which we must deal very gently, lest we be misunderstood. When offered as a statement of fact, we agree with it wholeheartedly; but when it is made an excuse for the failure of evangelism, we disagree with it just as wholeheartedly. This explanation is that God the Holy Spirit is not pleased to work effectively today, and therefore there are few converts. Now, with all of the emphasis that can be packed into an English sentence, we say that this is true as a *statement of fact*—there are few converts today simply because God does not choose to make many converts, and that is all there is to it. No man is converted except God convert him; no man ever believes in Christ unto salvation except God the Holy Spirit first regenerate him; and if God so chose He could convert as many as He pleased, and that in a twinkling of an eye. There are few converts today simply because God is not making converts. If we did not believe this, we would not be writing in the pages of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN. So we agree wholeheartedly with this explanation of the missing convert when it is offered to us as a simple statement of the fact that God is sovereign.

But we *disagree* just as wholeheartedly with this explanation when it is advanced as an excuse for the poor results of the evangelism of the

Christian church. It is a patent fact of the Bible and of history that when evangelism has been top-notch, God has converted many. Who would dare to deny that God carries out His sovereign purpose through human means? God is ordinarily pleased to save sinners "through the foolishness of preaching" in just so far as His evangelists are faithful in proclaiming the gospel. God saves more through good evangelism, fewer through poor evangelism.

In other words, we must not blame God for the church's failure to win converts. Rather, we must seek to use the best, the most effective evangelism possible. That sort of evangelism is now being used only to a small extent. If we use the very best possible evangelism, and employ this evangelism to the limit of human ability and strength, *then* if there are few converts we may say that God is not pleased to work. When converts are missing, let us look first to the quality of our evangelism; if that quality is faultless, the *reason* for the missing convert lies in the sovereignty of God, the *blame* for the missing convert in the hardness of men's hearts.

After reviewing those explanations of today's missing convert which merit serious consideration, we cannot help but feel that the missing convert is still unexplained. We have agreed with some of the explanations in part; with others we have disagreed entirely. We have thus far postponed what we consider to be the real explanation of the missing convert in order that the worth of other explanations might be weighed and their merits measured. In the brief scope of this article, we cannot hope to prove that the explanation of the missing convert which we are about to offer is the only satisfactory one. What we are now going to state as our conviction in this matter we hope to support with evidence in following articles.

We submit, then, that the crisis in evangelism which is reflected in the missing convert is simply this: Unbelievers have, through the past two centuries or more, become more and more firmly entrenched in their unbelief. Unbelief, of course, is always unbelief; but the unbeliever today not only knows *what* he disbelieves but, as never before, knows also *why* he disbelieves it. Modern unbelief is to the unbelief of two centuries ago as the Maginot line is to an eighteenth

century log fort. Consequently, the task of the evangelistic church is first to dislodge the unbeliever from this fortified position. We submit also that the methods of evangelism commonly used by the Christian church, while relatively successful in dislodging the unbeliever from his log fort, make little impression upon the unbeliever

in his Maginot line. It is our conclusion that, while the church has in the past only occasionally used a better method of evangelism, a method that is more consistent, it must now begin to use this better and more consistent method everywhere and always to meet the unprecedented consistency of unbelief.

Today in the Religious World

By THOMAS R. BIRCH

Modernism's New Journal

ANNOUNCEMENT of a new magazine is always news. When that magazine has, as chairman of its editorial board, such an outstanding Modernist as Reinhold Niebuhr we are more than mildly interested. But when we learn that, among the members of its editorial board, are John A. Mackay, Barthian President of Princeton Seminary, and Henry P. Van Dusen, who not long ago refused to affirm belief in the virgin birth of Christ, we know that things are about to happen. Such a magazine is the recently announced *Christianity and Crisis*, scheduled to make its debut on February 7th and appear bi-weekly thereafter. Aiding and abetting these stanch opponents of Biblical Christianity is Dr. Robert E. Speer, President of the Board of Trustees of Princeton Seminary, the man whose "conservatism" was so loudly defended by "middle-of-the-roaders" and by Dr. Speer in the pre-Syracuse era of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Dr. Speer is listed as a "sponsor" of the new journal, along with such men as Henry Sloane Coffin, Sherwood Eddy, Ivan Lee Holt and John R. Mott.

The magazine is expected to deal largely with the problems of the present world conflict, applying broad Christian idealism and combating popular extreme pacifism. This is a welcome note, but we regret that Modernism and not Christianity will characterize its message.

By Book and by Candle

The Presbytery of Philadelphia North of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., at its meeting on January 14th, removed from the roll of presbytery the name of Dr. Robert Strong, pastor of the Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Willow Grove,

Pa., which should have been removed long ago. For four and a half years Dr. Strong has been a minister of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, having withdrawn from his former denomination immediately after the Syracuse assembly in 1936. Not only was Dr. Strong's name removed from the roll of presbytery, but also he was "deposed" and condemned as "unfaithful to Jesus Christ." Three other ministers, we are told, were accorded similar treatment. We suppose that the presbytery believes it accomplished some obscure purpose by taking such an action at this late date, but we confess that it is beyond our comprehension. The ridiculous picture of a presbytery deposing a minister who withdrew from it nearly half a decade ago seems comparable only to the "off-with-his-head" sequences of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Church of England

Approximately two hundred clergymen of the Church of England attended a conference at Malvern, Worcestershire, called by the Archbishop of York "to consider from the Anglican point of view what are the fundamental facts which are directly relevant to the ordering of a new society that is quite evidently emerging, and how Christian thought can be shaped to play a leading part in the reconstruction when the war is over." *Time* describes the program adopted by the conference as "little short of revolutionary." Highlights of the resolution follow:

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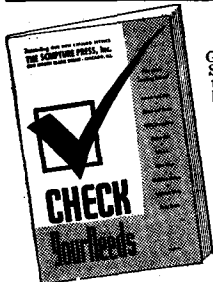
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matins and evensong, presupposing as they do, acceptance of the traditions of the church and unflinching regularity of use, are largely unsuitable. They must in most places be supplemented by services of another type . . . designed to bring before un instructed people the truth concerning God."

Seventh Day Adventists

The general world conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church has issued a plea to all its members to "redouble their efforts to awaken the public conscience in these perilous times by teaching the principles of civil and religious liberty." It is regrettable that Bible-believing Christians in churches founded upon the Word of God are less zealous to defend these principles than are sects such as the Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

The proselytizing energies and abilities of the Adventists are evident in the statistical report presented to the conference. That report showed an average daily enrollment of 109 new members and a total membership of approximately 500,000. The sect also is represented by 29,000 evangelistic and institutional workers in 404 geographical divisions using 820 languages.

Unity by Compulsion

A 36-year-old Methodist pastor of Forrest City, Arkansas, has just proposed a solution for the disunity of American Protestantism. In a press interview, the Rev. Paul V. Galloway has suggested that all Protestant churches be "forcibly dissolved" and that the government form a national Protestant church as a cure for disunity. Declaring that he had made the proposal before his congregation of more than 650 persons without "extreme" reaction (apparently no one tried to have him committed to an asylum), Mr. Galloway asserted that "American churches will never come together in a unified manner for a great world-wide effort without being forced to do it."

"Religious freedom has been the most devastating force of church work," he declared darkly. "Instead of bringing church people together, it has separated us into hundreds of sects and denominations. I believe that the church and state will not in the end be separated. Separation has caused a lot of . . . religious antagonisms. Separation of church and state"—and here he drew himself up to his full height—"must go!"

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