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VOL. VII

MAY, 1941

NO. 4

RELIGION AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE

DALE SPEARMAN



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CHAPEL HILL

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RELIGION AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE

THE ANCIENT FIRE BURNS ON

To approach the subject of religion in these baffling and critical days is to run a great risk. In all days and times religion has been a controversial matter, so much so in our own culture that it ranks with politics as a subject to be avoided if the tenor of conversation is to remain calm. Yet none of us can now escape the inexorable demand to consider certain vital questions of both politics and religion. Uncertainty over the future of the world has compelled us all to re-examine our basic ideas and our fundamental faith. We are all scrutinizing our "philosophy of life" and most of us are wondering what has become of our philosophy of history, if we ever cherished one.

This examination goes on every morning over the telephone, in the drug store, on the street corner, over the backyard fence, and alongside the rows of green vegetables in the neighborhood grocery store when the housewives of America go shopping. It does not stop at night when college boys and girls converse long and late at the coffee shop or when the business-man can not go to bed without hearing the news bulletins and puzzling again over what it all means for him. The man in the street is no longer ready to argue that the events of 1940 will have no profound effect upon him and his descendants.

In the current dilemma, confronted with the stark questions arising immediately from it, many persons want to run like a frightened child to its mother's skirts, instinctively seeking safety. The political world reflects this phenomenon in the slightly hysterical enthusiasm for "democracy" which is registered in every newspaper, many radio programs, movies, speeches, lectures, sermons, club programs, and other means of communication and influence. We are trying to find our way back to something vital and precious but nevertheless somewhat unfamiliar. Much of the crusading is done with a religious fervor and many of the definitions of democracy are given in essentially spiritual terms. It remains to be seen just how intelligent and critical, how wholesome and regenerating, this reaction will become. It may eventually rank with the Renaissance or the French Revolution.

Many English-speaking moderns and occasional voices in other countries are advocating in this same vein a "return to religion."

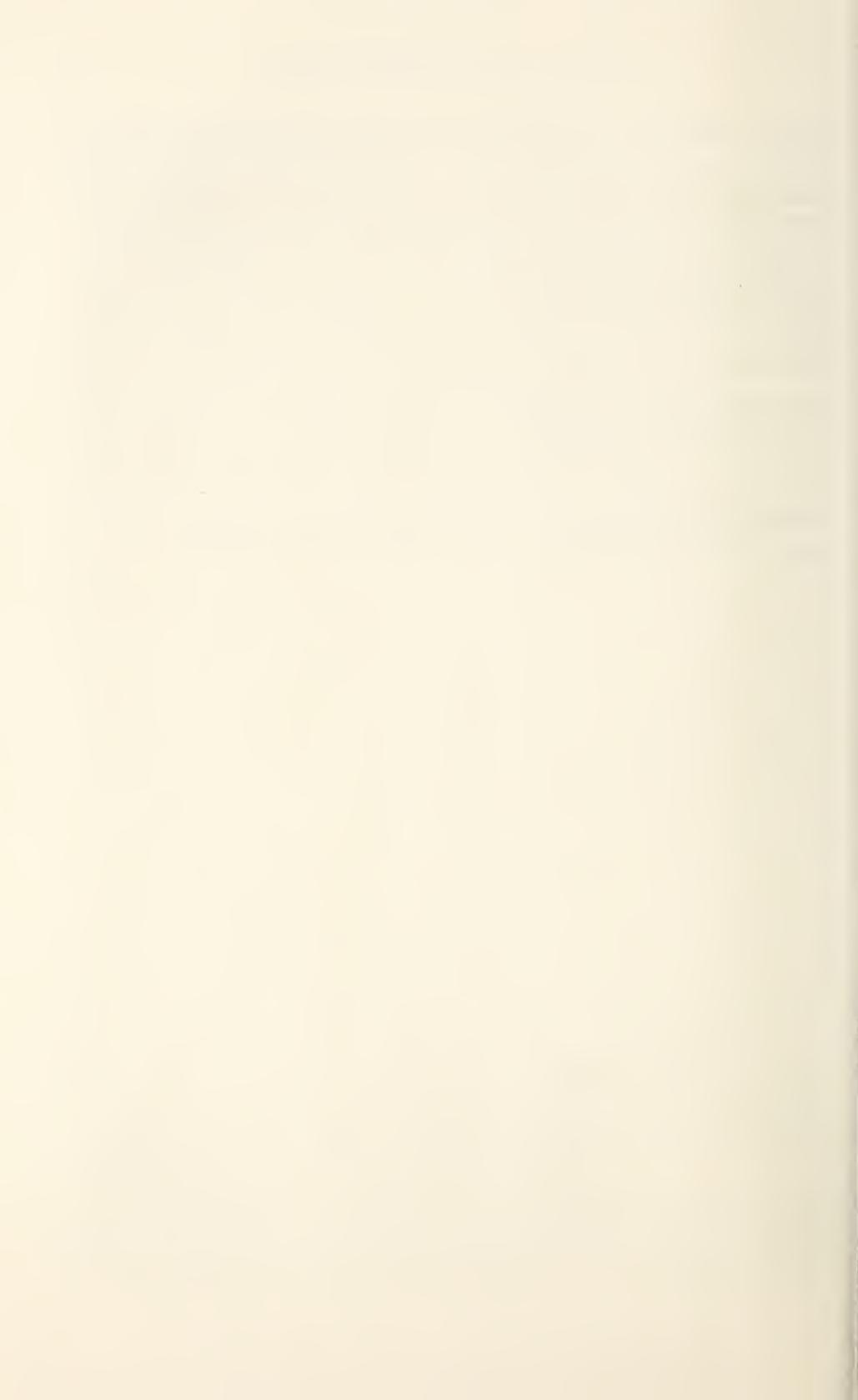
During periods of intense stress in human history, whatever the original cause of the upheaval, religion assumes an even greater than usual importance, concerned as it is under anyone's definition with the heights and depths and innermost secrets of human life. Such a renewal of interest in spiritual concerns is taking place now all over the world, under various names and symbols and widely differing interpretations of its meaning. Much of this interest seems to us basically different from what we have in mind when we speak of a spiritual rebirth or religious regeneration or a "return to religion." Almost everywhere the primary allegiances of men are involved, but the objects of their devotion vary widely under the systems of government under which they live.

Even in our own culture conflicting points of view are developing as to the nature and function of religion in times of crisis. Merely to beat the drum and march back toward the forms of religion observed at any given time in history is not enough. Modern man must discover and appropriate for himself and his society a religion adequate for his times. The peril in which civilization now consciously stands makes obligatory for us all a serious consideration of what religion is and what it must be for our generation, if time is forthcoming and not the deluge.

This search is already pointing toward certain fundamental but neglected truths, among them that religion is concerned with *the whole of life* and is not to be assigned a "place" or considered an ornament or a Sunday coat to be laid aside when the real issues of living appear. Nor will it be found only to consist of outward observances of form and ritual and inward cherishing of beliefs about God. Ethical and social principles will be essential aspects of religion, but not its entire extent. No earnest seeker will find it to have been a good thing for one day and age, unnecessary for another. He will certainly discover, as A. N. Whitehead puts it, that "religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, the greatest of present facts." Granting this, he will also find much more.

To their everlasting credit it may be said that many church leaders now realize, more fully than their most damning critics, the necessity for drastic readjustment in the program of the

church. They have for several years been definitely at work on the job. Evidence of their progress is a thrilling study and is suggested later in this bulletin. Here again, as in the political area, men and women alive today may witness a world-wide spiritual revival like that which resulted in the spread of Christianity under the Roman Empire, or another and more widespread Reformation. Most men of wisdom, however, feel that this will not come unless our generation is willing to discover God's will for our time in a more costly and personal—and simultaneously a more rewarding and social—sense than our fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers ever were compelled to do. It is largely to stimulate investigation into the sources and history of religion as we know it today, and to point out the possible future of the spiritual tide now coming in on the shores of the world, that we are offering this bulletin.



CHAPTER I
THE HOLY BOOKS

One must push through the limitations of organized dogmas and seek the sources themselves if one would find the heart of the world's religions.

—From the introduction to *The Bible of the World*

The literature of religion records man's long struggle to learn the truth about the central facts of life and death. Much of the teachings of priests and prophets and sages has disappeared in the long course of history and in that former stage of man's life on earth which must be left to the archaeologist, the zoologist, and the geologist. Fortunately for the race, however, much of the treasure has not been lost. It is this body of literature, representing chiefly eight world religions, which are examined in this chapter.

As Mr. Ballou points out in his introduction to *The Bible of the World*, the basic scriptures which have most profoundly influenced the world's thought were compiled during the great scriptural era between 2000 B. C. and 1000 A. D. A brief survey of the principal religious writings which have achieved canonical status as sacred literature reveals the following scriptures: the Vedas and Upanishads of Hinduism; the Tripitika of Buddhism; the Liki, the Shih King, Lun Yu, and other writings of Confucius; the Tao-Te-King and the works of Chuang Tze, which comprise the main literature of Taoism; the Gathas and the Zendavesta of the Zoroastrian faith; the Talmud, which is the sacred book of Judaism; the complete Bible with the Apocrypha, which is the scripture of the Christian Church; and the Koran of the Mohammedans. The ancient cultures of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria have left no comparable record. No single group of teachings similar to these has come down from the Graeco-Roman mythology, despite the epic quality of their literature and philosophy.

Concerned as all the writers were with the central problems of man's existence, these great religious writings of many races and peoples and tongues present fascinating parallels, and no one of them is left in altogether solitary grandeur. Yet for Christendom, the supreme scripture on morals and religion is the Bible. Already translated in whole or part into more than a thousand languages, it is the most widely circulated book in the world.

In studying this remarkable book interest is centered in three

phases of the enormous knowledge accumulated around it: first, a general historical account of how the Bible came into being, from what cultural roots it arose, and its relation to other sacred scriptures; second, the stages of development through which the text itself has passed, with an account of the various manuscripts and versions; and third, a comparison of familiar passages as presented in various versions to determine the value of the different translations and arrangements.

1. THE HOLY BOOKS

The Bible of the World, by Robert O. Ballou.

The Bible Through the Centuries, by Herbert L. Willett.

This Believing World, by Lewis Browne.

List the principal religions which have been left written records of their teachings and name the most important book or books of each. Describe the origin of these writings.

For a very brief account read Chapter XIII, "Other Sacred Books," in *The Bible Through the Centuries*. More detailed information can be obtained from the first few paragraphs in each section of the "Notes," beginning on page 1345 of *The Bible of the World*. Narrative information on the writings of the various religions may be found in the corresponding chapters of *This Believing World*.

Compare the different accounts of the great flood, as suggested on Pp. 1347-1348 of the "Notes." Observe also other parallels, especially those between the teachings of Buddha and those of Christ.

2. THE ENGLISH BIBLE

The Bible Through the Centuries, by Herbert L. Willett.

The Ancestry of Our English Bible, by Ira Maurice Price.

The Holy Bible—King James Version.

The Old and New Testament, translated by James Moffatt.

The Complete Bible with the Apocrypha, by J. M. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed.

How old is the Bible? By whom was it written? In what languages was it written? What is meant by the terms "Lower Criticism" and "Higher Criticism"? See Chapter XV in *The Bible Through the Centuries*.

What are the principal "versions" of the Bible in use today? From what sources does our English Bible come? See Chapters I and II of *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*. Who were St. Jerome, Wycliffe, Luther, Tyndale, and Coverdale? Discuss our "debt" to them. Note chronological table on pp. 335-339 of this same reference.

Compare your favorite passages in the three translations cited above. Genesis I, Psalm 23, Luke 2, and I Corinthians 13 are suggested for this purpose. Which do you like best? What are the values in each?

CHAPTER II

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

—From the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna

Close your eyes and hear the stillness broken by the bells of a Buddhist temple on far Kushan Mountain near Foochow, or hearken to the chantings of the Shinto priests at the sacred shrine of Ise in Japan. With no more effort you may catch the murmured conversation of two students at the great Mohammedan university, Al Azhar in Cairo, as under the Egyptian stars they conjecture on the restoration of the Caliphate. You may hear the rosary told over by a peasant in the distant fields of Chile, or the shoutings of a Georgia Negro with a new case of religion, or the strains of Handel's *Messiah* soaring above the spires of New York's Fifth Avenue. If you listen well, even the music of St. Paul's may come to you above the sound of the explosions rocking London. In all the "shifting phantasmagoria" one thing is plain: nowhere is man content to live as an animal on the earth; everywhere he struggles to fathom the world of the spirit.

The great religions which have grown up out of these struggles offer a deeply interesting study. Before we take off on our whirlwind flight, we can tune up our minds by reading the short Prologue to Lewis Browne's *This Believing World* and the section entitled "The Fitting Attitude Toward Other Faiths" from Chapter I of *The Religions of Mankind* by Soper.

The first group to consider are the primitive and ancient religions now extinct. Among these are the animistic faith of many early peoples, the religious practices of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria, and the mythology of Greece and Rome. The second group includes living religions of the Old World, chiefly Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Mohammedanism. The third portion constitutes a study of Judaism and a summary glance at Christianity.

No more fitting end to our survey of religions could be had than a look with the great modern philosopher, William Ernest Hocking, at his vision of the world-religion which may be in the making. Will the modern world begin to make such use of its religious heritage?

1. PRIMITIVE AND ANCIENT RELIGIONS NOW EXTINCT

This Believing World, by Lewis Browne.

The Golden Bough, by Sir James G. Frazer.

The Religions of Mankind, by Edmund Davison Soper.

The Story of Religion, by Charles Francis Potter.

As an introduction read Chapter XXIII of *The Golden Bough*.

How did the use of magic arise among primitive peoples? What is the relation of magic to religion? Note Chapters I and II of *This Believing World* and Chapter IV of *The Golden Bough*. What traces of ancient magic can you see in modern culture and religion? Refer to Chapters X, XXXVII, and LXII of *The Golden Bough*.

Summarize the religious systems of the Celts, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians. Name the principal gods and goddesses of Graeco-Roman mythology. Are these an improvement on the more ancient deities?

2. LIVING RELIGIONS OF THE OLD WORLD

Same references as above.

Living Religions and a World Faith, by William Ernest Hocking.

Comment briefly on the origin and beliefs of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Mohammedanism. What relations do Brahmanism, Shintoism, and Zoroastrianism bear to the former religions?

With the help of Mr. Browne's outline and illustrations, locate on a map the countries where the adherents of these faiths are most numerous. Information about what has happened to these religions in recent years may be found in *The Religions of Mankind*.

3. THE EAST AND THE WEST ARE ONE: JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Same references as above.

Give an account of the religion of the Hebrew nation. Excellent summaries are available in Chapter XI of *The Religions of Mankind* and Chapter I of *This Believing World*.

Try to describe the origin and growth of Christianity as though you had not heard of it before. Do you think of Christianity as an "Oriental" religion? What similarities can you find in the teachings of the New Testament and those of other religions?

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGIOUS MODERN

If I were to take a text for this lecture it would be the word of the Russian novelist Dostoevsky in a short story entitled *A Raw Youth*: "A man who bows down to nothing can never bear the burden of himself."

—Halford E. Luccock in *Christianity and the Individual*

One hundred years ago Thomas Carlyle lucidly spoke his mind about a man's religion, and this is part of what he said:

It is well said, in every sense, that a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. A man's, or a nation of men's. By religion I do not mean here the church-creed which he professes, the articles of faith which he will sign and, in words or otherwise, assert; not this wholly, in many cases not this at all. We see men of all kinds of professed creeds attain to almost all degrees of worth or worthlessness under each or any of them. This is not what I call religion. . . . But the thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough *without* asserting it even to himself, much less to others); the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. That is his *religion*; or, it may be, his mere scepticism and *no-religion*. . . .

Under such a definition we could take in the entire human race, from the Australian bushman to Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, but we shall try to be content with a much more usual sort of person, one's next-door neighbor or one's self. Scrutiny of such familiar flowers of the field, however, may reveal unsuspected roots. Not just from mother's knee or from the long-winded, faintly remembered sermons of our childhood did we get our understandings of what religion is, of the nature of man and God, of the meaning and purpose of life. Or perhaps we may extend our examination to the average church member. Maybe we shall even want to glance at the sophisticated modern, if we can agree on such a specimen.

The primary phase of our effort to understand the religious man of 1941 will include three areas where we shall seek information and opinion. First, what does religion involve? Can it truly be assigned a "place" in human existence or is it a basic interpretation of that existence? Second, what is man? Is he

“the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms,” as a distinguished expatriate philosopher now living among us has declared, or is he a creature of God made only “a little lower than the angels,” “crowned with glory and honor”? Or is he something of each? Our third inquiry is into the nature and character of God, involving man’s relation to Him. Doubtless we shall smile at the deacon’s definition of the Deity as “a kind of purplish oblong blur,” but the much more specific and humanized Lord of Mr. Deshee in *Green Pastures* may appear even farther from the truth.

From our examination of these basic concepts perhaps we can arrive at some conviction on the meaning and purpose of life. Is it, after all, “a tale told by an idiot” and all the other fantastically hopeless things which Macbeth calls it? Or can we say in ringing tones with the great Victorian poets that “it means intensely and means good” and “through the ages one increasing purpose runs”? Perhaps we have exchanged their telescope for a microscope and raise our eyes to see only the equipment in the laboratory.

How do these concepts of the nature of man and God and their relationship carry over into specific issues? What does the religious man believe today about the origin and nature of evil? Is it true, as a prominent churchman put it in 1930, that “our modern people hardly pray at all”? What scale of values do we measure by? Does man have a soul? Must it be “saved”? Does it exist after death? What of “heaven” and “hell”? And perhaps most important of all in these trying days, what about human freedom and responsibility, “free will,” if you please?

Most of these questions involve “theological” and “doctrinal” concepts, but it is not in the controversial sense that we wish to examine and discuss them. What we hope to discover is the essential core in these traditional beliefs; to find out whether for us and our contemporaries the “acids of modernity” have eaten off only the insulating encrustations of human error or, perhaps, have penetrated the vital touchstones whence they come.

1. DEFINITION OF TERMS: RELIGION, MAN, GOD

- First Chapters in Religious Philosophy*, by Vergilius Ferm.
The Meaning and Truth of Religion, by Eugene W. Lyman.
The Christian Understanding of Man, (Oxford Conference Symposium).
Christianity and the Individual, by Halford E. Luccock.
The Nature and Destiny of Man, Volume I, by Reinhold Niebuhr.
The Reason for Living, by Richard R. Wicks.
Religious Living, by Georgia Harkness.
What is Man? by Robert L. Calhoun.
Religion for Living, by Bernard Iddings Bell.
God, by Walter M. Horton.
The Return to Religion, by Henry C. Link.

What is religion?

State in your own words Ferm's definition of religion as given in Chapter III. Does this seem too general? Is the term confused in your mind as he describes it under the headings, "Entangled Religious Expressions" and "Mistaken Notions"?

What are the "vital characteristics of religion" as stated by Dr. Lyman in his third chapter? How does the religion you practise "stack up" by this standard? To help in this analysis read the first chapter of *Religious Living*.

What is man?

As an introduction to the problem read "Many Men, Many Answers," the preface to the Calhoun study. What is "the dilemma of humanitarian modernism," as stated by Calhoun in the Oxford volume? Is this of practical value to us as citizens?

List the four answers to our question as given in *What Is Man?*

Comment on Niebuhr's understanding of man.

Summarize briefly the view of man held by the physical sciences.

In addition to Calhoun's statement, see the Jessop chapter in the Oxford volume. Compare this with the Marxian view as presented by Alexeiev, Oxford volume p. 85 ff., reading sentences in italics and his conclusions.

What is the religious answer? Discuss the three essential points in "The Christian Doctrine of Man" as given by Emil Brunner, p. 153, and by Walter M. Horton, p. 225.

What is God?

Read the introduction to *God*. Summarize the ideas men have held about God as given in the chapter, "Gods Many and Lords Many." List the traditional and contemporary arguments for belief in God as presented by Ferm.

What is the Christian idea of God? Note the following references: Chapter II of Horton; Chapter II of Luccock; Chapter VII of Bell; "God in Personal Terms," p. 88 ff. in *The Reasons for Living*. What is the meaning of "The Theology of Crisis?" See Lyman p. 416 ff.

2. WHAT DOES THE MODERN MAN BELIEVE?

*References above.**About human suffering:*

Read the Ferm chapter on "Evil, Theodicy, and Pessimism." What is theodicy? Is this a new term for a familiar necessity?

About the origin of evil and sin:

In addition to the chapter just cited, read Luccock's lecture entitled "Salvation—Quest and Finding." See also pp. 234-236 in the Oxford volume. Also note Wicks chapter on "Adversity."

About right and wrong:

See Ferm chapter on "Current Theories of Value," Wicks chapter, "Finding the Right Life," and Lyman chapter on "Value and Validity."

About the soul, death, and immortality:

Note Chapter VIII in Ferm volume and his excellent closing chapter on "Human Immortality." Also read Lyman section on immortality, pp. 375-379.

About Prayer:

See Ferm chapter, "Reconsidering Prayer" and section on prayer in Harkness volume, p. 48 ff.

About human freedom and responsibility:

Read Section 6, Farrer chapter in the Oxford volume, "The Freedom of Man and the Image of God." Also study Ferm's chapter on "Human Freedom and the world of Reality."

An excellent reading to close the study is Luccock's chapter, "Today's Tensions in Personal Life."

CHAPTER IV

BELLS and the ALTAR:

The Christian Church and Its Offspring

Now we come to the church. Try as we may to isolate the essence of religion from its embodiment in an institution and to observe the effects of this religious essence on contemporary life, the inexorable facts of history bring us before long to the doors of the Christian church. By its very nature the church has two aspects, two meanings, two functions: that of the *priest*, who keeps the fire of the church burning from age to age and ministers to the spiritual needs of men; and that of the *prophet*, who proclaims the eternal but timely Word of God to an erring world. As George Stewart has put the same truth differently: "Sometimes the church must be a solace; at other times a goad."

As we approach the church we hear its bells ringing out the gospel of the Kingdom to the generations of men. Inscribed on the Great Bell of the Minster of Schaffhausen are the words: "I call the Living—I mourn the Dead—I break the Lightning." Less austere is Longfellow's description:

The bells themselves are the best of preachers,
Their brazen lips are learned teachers;
From their pulpits of stone, in the upper air,
Sounding aloft without crack or flaw,
Shriller than trumpets under the Law . . .

Heretofore in our century men have heard the bells and heeded them more often than they have knelt at the altar. But the sanctuary remains and men are seeking it again, for without its strength and vision and peace their life outside cannot be borne. They must find somewhere "a calm, a sure retreat" from "the swelling tide of woes" which threatens to engulf them. So the hearts of some of the desolate are trying to discover what virtue resides in "the mercy-seat," once lustily praised by the faithful, where God meets man. It may be that our generation shall witness a great multitude of kindreds and peoples and tongues called by the bells to the altar. In any event we can calculate better the possibilities for the survival of what we are accustomed to call our "Christian civilization" if we survey the development of the primary institution claiming authority from Christ.

Our main interest will be a study of the birth and growth of

the Christian church, emerging under the Roman Empire, becoming established in the Middle Ages among the peoples of northern and western Europe, undergoing profound changes in the great era of the Renaissance and the Reformation, then developing into a missionary enterprise of unparalleled proportions in the century and a half since 1800. The growth of the Christian church has doubtless been the subject of as much writing as any matter which has ever engrossed the interest of mankind. Hence we can make only the most superficial and skeletal summary. Even so, it is a deeply moving history.

The second portion of our study will be the story of religions in the United States. For this we hoped to have the Religious Census of 1936, but the final compilations will not be complete for some months yet. Some "facts and figures" are given by Arthur L. Swift, Jr. in *New Frontiers of Religion* and a partial account of the census findings may be found in *Time Magazine* for August 26, 1940, page 40.

After even such cursory attention as this, we marvel at the epic history of the church. Like the inquiring Bishop in Charles Rann Kennedy's play, *The Servant in the House*, we find it the "work of no ordinary builder":

. . . the terrible spans and arches of it are joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness: sometimes in blinding light: now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish: now to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. Sometimes, in the silence of the night-time, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead.

1. HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Anno Domini, by Kenneth Scott Latourette.

The Church Through the Centuries, by Cyril Charles Richardson.

Militant in Earth, by Edward Rochie Hardy, Jr.

The Religions of Mankind, by Edmund Davison Soper.

The Growing Church, Volume II of Madras Reports (International Missionary Council).

For introductory worship or opening exercises for this meeting, use

T. S. Eliot's *The Rock*, from which excerpts are given in *The Oxford Book of Christian Verse*.

Give an account of "the emergence of the Christian movement." See *Anno Domini*, Chapters I and II; *New Frontiers of Religion*, Chapter VI; *The Religions of Mankind*, Chapter XIII, pp. 318-331; Chapter I of *Militant in Earth*.

What effect did the Christian movement have on Graeco-Roman culture in respect to the following institutions: non-Christian religious cults, amusements, slavery, sex *mores* (including the family, womanhood, childhood), care for the underprivileged, language? See especially Chapter II of *Militant in Earth*.

Summarize the history of the Church in the Middle Ages (roughly 500-1500 A.D.). Discuss some of the abuses which arose out of the close relationship of church and state. See Richardson's Chapter IV, Latourette's Chapter III, and Chapters II and IV of *Militant in Earth*.

What were the "roots of the reformation of the Church"? Who were the leaders of the Reformation? What cultural changes were going on in the world during this period (1500-1800 A.D.)? See Richardson's Chapter VI and Latourette's Chapter IV, and discuss the relation of the church to the expanding world as presented in "Gold and Christians," Chapter V of Hardy's volume.

Discuss the life of the Church since 1800. Use Latourette's Chapters V and VI, Richardson's Chapters VII and VIII, Soper's Chapter XIII, and Hardy's Chapter VI and Epilogue.

Look over the amazing collection of statements from the churches of Africa, Madagascar, Asia, Iran, Brazil, and the Islands of the Sea given in the Madras volume, *The Growing Church*. Comment on Chapter VII, dealing with the nature and function of the church.

2. RELIGIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

The Story of Religions in America, by William Warren Sweet.

New Frontiers of Religion, by Arthur L. Swift, Jr.

Describe the European background out of which religions came to the United States.

Give an account of the principal sects in the colonies. Discuss "the series of great religious awakenings which swept over the American colonies in the middle of the eighteenth century" which were "in many respects the most far-reaching social movement of the whole colonial period."

Trace the relation of religion to the American frontier.

Comment on the church as affecting and affected by the Civil War.

What has been happening to the church since 1890? How did it adapt itself to the era of big business? What is your opinion of the spiritual life of the church today (i. e., is it strong, weak, confused, lacking, reviving, etc.)?

CHAPTER V

BELLS and the ALTAR:
The Social Function of the Church

But now the workshops have arisen,
The workshops full of youth!

They live in ardour.

Their smoke soars higher than the sound of bells.

—From *The Church* by Jules Romain as translated by Jethro Bithell

During the last decade something other than war has been brewing. The church has taken a hint from Nicodemus and has asked what it must do to be saved. Moved like him by the revolutionary changes taking place in its immediate environment, where it was a bystander of certain guilt, the church has been earnestly searching its life and works, its origin and destiny. What the church has discovered sounds very much like something which Jesus said to the seeking Pharisee: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

On the jacket of the volume presenting one of the historic reports of the great Oxford Conference on Life and Work, held in 1937, is the statement: "The church is a world of chaotic change finds itself today at the point where analysis and clarification of its rôle in society are imperative. All the fundamental problems confronting the church in the world must wait upon the resolution of this one." Capitalism has given us an apt phrase for such a demand; it is in deed and truth "a big order." Yet nothing less will suffice; even now it may come too late, if it is not too little, to save the church from the catacombs.

"Social" is one of those blanket words which may be stretched to include an infinite variety of peoples and times, classes and castes, problems and concepts. Therefore we shall first consider it in the broadest sense as applying to the life of all human beings and their relationships to each other. Proceeding further, we arrive at myriad forks of the road. Here we almost unconsciously take our cue from the materialism of the age (blame it on capitalism, communism, or the unclaimed hybrid, fascism, as you will) and enter the realm of economics. Perhaps it is a disguised tribute to the church that education, health, extreme poverty, insanity, and other areas where it once held important responsibility have now become the normal and accepted provinces of

government. The church no longer leads the crusades for hospitals, schools, and relief organizations. Looking back, the social ills thus overcome seem the tamest of beasts now that the dragon of the economic realm has at last to be encountered.

In our attempt to define and understand the social function of the church, we shall ask: (1) what is the place of the church in the world? (2) historically, what have been its conceptions of its function in society? (3) what ought to be the function of the church in society? and (4) what are the churches doing in or to the social order?

After what we hope will be an honest appraisal, perhaps we can answer the crucial question put by that great British Christian, J. H. Oldham: "Do the affirmations which have formed the core of Christian conviction through the centuries still have significance for the world today?"

1. WHAT IS THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD?

The Church and Its Function in Society, by W. A. Visser 't Hooft and J. H. Oldham.

The Oxford Conference: Official Report, edited by J. H. Oldham.

Social Religion, by Douglas C. Macintosh.

The Church, by George Stewart.

New Frontiers of Religion, by Arthur L. Swift, Jr.

Discuss the conceptions of the church as presented by Stewart in Chapter II. Cite briefly the interesting "doctrines" of their relation to the world which have been held by the following churches: (references are to 't Hooft, Chapter II): Roman Catholic (pp. 20-21), Eastern Orthodox (p. 25), Anglican (p. 28), Lutheran (p. 33), Reformed (p. 38), and later Protestant churches (pp. 42-45). Describe the modernist view (pp. 44-46).

2. HISTORICALLY, WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH'S FUNCTION IN SOCIETY?

References above.

State the primary characteristics of what Visser 't Hooft calls "the various forms of interaction between the churches and their historical environment." Especially interesting to us are his comments on the churches in Great Britain, on the continent of Europe, and in the United States.

Do you think he is fair to the church in the United States? See pp. 69-70.

From Oldham's Chapter VI point out the development of ideas held at various times in the past on what the church should do about the world.

3. WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY?

References above.

Describe the situation in which the church has to function, i.e., "the nature of the corporate life."

Why is it essential that the church have a "social function?" See Oldham's statement, p. 127, second paragraph.

What are the functions as seen by Oldham? These are first outlined in his Chapter VII and developed in Chapter IX and X.

Summarize Stewart's conception of "the Church's Task" (Chapter IV).

What did Jesus teach about the "social gospel"? See Macintosh's account of the "Principles of Social Religion," Chapters I-III.

Present the "problems for social religion" as outlined by Macintosh. Do all of these seem to you legitimate concerns of the church? Why or why not?

Discuss briefly the points at which the Christian understanding of life is challenged by the economic order. See Section 3 of Oxford report.

4. WHAT ARE THE CHURCHES DOING IN AND TO THE SOCIAL ORDER?

References above.

Do you feel the lack of unity between work and worship, considered an important failure in the modern church?

How does the Church operate to change the social order? In addition to the references previously cited, see Section 6 of the Oxford report; Chapter V of Stewart's *The Church*.

Discuss briefly the "new frontiers of religion" as noted by Mr. Swift (Part IV, p. 131).

Are the churches in your community interested in local labor problems? in poor housing conditions? in giving away food and clothes to the needy? in "character building" activity among boys and girls? Relate these interests to what you have been studying about the function of the church.

Additional Readings:

An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, by Reinhold Niebuhr. See Chapters V & VI, in which he criticizes the ways in which orthodoxy and liberalism apply the law of love to politics and economics.

Christianizing the Social Order (1921), by Walter Rauschenbusch. The swing of the pendulum toward social issues began early in the century. Where is it now?

The Idea of a Christian Society, by T. S. Eliot. What do you make of his ideas? Note his criticism of liberalism.

Christianity and Economics, by Sir Josiah Stamp. He holds there is no absolute Christian *scheme* of society. Stamp writes from intimate knowledge and sincere conviction. His presentation makes excellent reading.

BELLS and the ALTAR:

Church and State in the Modern World

In the two thousand years of its history the church has known no escape from the struggle to achieve in the light of its own message a right attitude toward the problems and tasks with which the existence of the state confronts it. At every period the same problem presents itself anew. . . . The church is forced to recognize that the present situation, with all its suffering and its distress, with all its despairing attempts to create in its own strength a world apart from God, is a judgment upon itself.—“Additional Report of the Section on Church and State,” Oxford Conference, 1937.

To many Christians the world around the Cross of Christ is at last and for the first time becoming real. We in America read about the new edicts in Japan which force upon a sincere and bewildered young church the emperor-worship of Shintoism. Though ever so subtly put forth as a political ceremony, it still appears to break in pieces the first Commandment. Even at the movies our righteous indignation is aroused at the Nazi persecution of Pastor Hall and the thousands of his contemporaries living behind the barbed-wire of concentration camps. Our hearts grieve for Pope Pius XII whose love for the Church and whose efforts toward peace are so intricately and painfully bound up with the tremendous struggle of the warring Fascists.

Ordinarily when we think of Turkey it is almost always in terms of her pact with Britain, yet in that nation may be found a uniquely effective limitation of the church. Russia's cardinal tenet of economic materialism, making for a utopian classless society, gave the churches of the West a powerful jolt some years ago. Now we are mindful only occasionally of what is happening to the great Eastern Orthodox Church, the Evangelicals and Catholics and Baptists, who did not long ago surrender their faith in a death-grip with militant atheism. The long struggle of Church and State in Mexico has claimed the attention of many citizens north of the border, especially when the same government which closed the monasteries was also confiscating private oil lands. Some of us may have heard of the Prayer Book controversy which roused such a stir in the British Parliament, and pat ourselves on the back for having left all that behind once and for all in 1620.

All this stimulates our minds, pricks our consciences, and increases our appreciation for the land over which the star-

spangled banner still waves. Very soon after our first thought on the matter we begin to congratulate ourselves on the success we in the United States have made of this historic and fundamental matter. The separation of Church and State seems thoroughly sound and good, just and true; from that point our Pharisaical platitudes begin. Yet are we sure?

Could there be any connection at all between the fact that the most powerful nation on earth has been able to exert so little moral influence on the rest of the world and our traditional separation of Church and State? Could it be possible that our arrangement is not ideal or final? To some thinking Americans there has come a time of repentance: has the church in our land of the free allowed the principle of religious tolerance—freedom of worship—to *secularize* the life of our people? Has the spiritual leadership of our country been rendered less effective by the fact that our political and business life is *not* Christian? The future may radically change our confidence in the way we have chosen, but it is probable that most of us will justly continue to uphold what we so glibly term "separation of Church and State." On the other hand the cataclysm in which we are already whirling compels us to re-examine our original premise.

If the Church is to be separate and free, it must also be vigorous and strong, or the life of the nation will degenerate into a secular, mechanized, and essentially pagan existence. It may be that the Church is even now exchanging the robes of freedom and irresponsibility for the sackcloth of bondage and repentance. Our popular American fallacy has been to assume that the solution to the problem was fixed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It is one of the purposes of this study to analyze the situation out of which our American adjustment grew, and to survey the possible re-interpretations necessary for the survival of the Church in the strange red light of this new day.

One of the major concerns of every inhabitant of the earth in 1941 A. D. must of necessity be his or her relationship to the wars now raging. This individual problem is also a central one for the church in its relationship to the State. Many earnest Christians are divided in their convictions about the right procedure. Supporting their governments in wars against aggression is to many a spiritual as well as a political crusade. To others it is a bitter,

if inescapable, compromise. Such participation seems to other sincere citizens a hideous mistake, entirely contrary to Christian principle. No study of church and state in the modern world can avoid this burning issue; hence we shall examine the positions held by two of the most earnest and influential Christians in the United States, Reinhold Niebuhr and Kirby Page.

Whether he be Japanese or German, Italian or American, Russian or British, the Christian of our day is already "faced with failure and a cross." Generations yet to come will witness whether or not the failure and the cross shall issue in the "victory that overcometh the world."

1. THE PRESENT SITUATION

Church and Community, Oxford Conference Symposium.

The Oxford Conference: Official Report, edited by J. H. Oldham.

The Church and the State, Report from Madras Meeting.

Church and State in Contemporary America, by William Adams Brown.

The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day, by Karl Barth.

Religion and the Modern State, by Christopher Dawson.

Christianity and Power Politics, by Reinhold Niebuhr.

Living Prayerfully, by Kirby Page.

Comment on the rise of nationalism in the past two decades and discuss the social disintegration out of which it came. See especially pages 172-187, Official Report of the Oxford Conference.

What does this mean for the Christian Church?

2. HISTORY OF THE ISSUE

References above.

Discuss the main types of adjustment between Church and State which have existed during the past. See especially Brown's Chapter III.

Analyze the gains and losses under each arrangement.

3. THE NEW INQUISITION

Religion in the Reich, by Michael Power.

Russia Challenges Religion, by George Mecklenburg.

Religion under the Soviets, by Julius F. Hecker.

Also the references above.

What has happened to the church in Greater Germany since Hitler came to power? (A helpful factual account is contained in *Time Magazine*, December 23, 1940.) How could this have happened?

Give an account of the relations of the Soviet Union to the churches. Do you note any change in tone between the Hecker study cited above

(1927) and the report of Mecklenburg (1934) and the conclusions reached in *The Church and the State* (Madras report, 1939)?

4. THE ISSUE ELSEWHERE: GREAT BRITAIN, LATIN AMERICA, AND THE UNITED STATES

Select from references above.

Discuss the traditional relationship of the Anglican Church to the government of Great Britain. (For important recent information see *Time Magazine*, January 20, 1941.) Note what Christopher Dawson has to say on the subject.

What has been the main characteristic of relations between Church and State in Latin America?

Give an account of the relation between Church and State in the United States. What are the historic and cultural roots of this separation? Discuss the attitudes of the principal church bodies toward the issue.

5. THE HIGH STAKES

Select from references above.

What is the central contention in the current struggle between church and state? How important is this to the future of the church? To the future of men as persons? Discuss the effects of persecution on the church in other eras. Comment on: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of faith."

Is war a separate moral issue? Summarize the points of view held by Reinhold Niebuhr and Kirby Page.

REVELATION OF GOD:
Jesus After Two Thousand Years

Wherever Christianity has struck out a new path in her journey it has been because the personality of Jesus had again become living and a ray from its Being had once more illumined the world.

—Bousset as quoted by Kirby Page in *Living Prayerfully*

“Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” The question rings down the centuries and over and over again men make reply. Not one of them has been altogether satisfactory and so the great effort to discover and interpret Jesus continues. He remains the most tantalizing figure which has ever crossed the human scene, and no man in what we are pleased to call the civilized world has been able to escape His influence. Those who continue the arguments on the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the miracles, the atonement, His resurrection, and His ascension make no denial of His power. The more they minimize the divine aspect of His nature, the greater miracle He becomes.

Alfred Noyes, writing in *The Unknown God*, observes that “the modern world has grown used to the fact, and has ceased to wonder, that we number all our years and centuries backwards and forwards into the abyss of Time from the birth of one Child.” He then proceeds to recount “what the world would be like if that new light had never dawned upon the human mind.” The catalog is overwhelming; anyone familiar with the Christian inspiration of art and music needs no reminder. But the explanation still eludes us.

It is the purpose of this chapter to present a small portion of the best interpretations of Jesus which have been written in recent years. The single exception is the classic *Life of Jesus* by Ernest Renan, a devout Frenchman of the last century. Each writer has a different approach and each has something different to say. Not every one adheres strictly to the Gospel records, though the nature of such deviations will be obvious to the reader from the start. There are two striking examples of the indirect method. One is the magnificent account of the life of Jesus given by Sholem Asch through the eyes of three men living in Palestine in the first century: Cornelius, the military governor of Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate; the disciple, Judas Iscariot; and Joseph,

a young student of Nicodemus. The other volume is a classic of devotional literature published in 1919 by George H. Doran Company under the title, *By An Unknown Disciple*. These presentations have a ring of authenticity often lacking in more didactic treatments.

Papini's *Life of Christ* and *The Life of Jesus* by Conrad Noel furnish excellent combinations of the interpretive and narrative elements. The Barthian School is represented by Bultmann's *Jesus and the Word*. Singularly successful efforts to interpret Jesus in the light of the world in which we are trying to live have been made in three of the volumes, *The Contemporary Christ* by Richard Roberts, *Jesus* by Mary Ely Lyman, and *Living Prayerfully* by Kirby Page. Mr. Page makes an incisive study of Jesus and totalitarianism in the first century.

For obvious reasons it has been necessary to limit the extent of our study and the number of books suggested. Perhaps this beginning will stimulate further and continuous reading in the vital literature which has grown up around Jesus. The quest is always rewarded.

1. THE WORLD INTO WHICH JESUS CAME

The Nazarene, by Sholem Asch.

The Life of Jesus, by Conrad Noel.

Jesus, by Mary Ely Lyman.

Life of Christ, by Giovanni Papini.

By an Unknown Disciple.

The Son of Man, by Emil Ludwig.

The Drama of Our Religion, by A. Graham Baldwin.

The Contemporary Christ, by Richard Roberts.

Living Prayerfully, by Kirby Page.

The Life of Jesus, by Ernest Renan.

The Jesus of History, by T. R. Glover.

Jesus and the Word, by D. Rudolf Bultmann.

Describe the condition of the Roman Empire about the time Jesus was born. See especially Part I of Noel's *Life*, Baldwin's Chapter XIII, Part One of *The Nazarene*.

What place did the Jews occupy? See the section entitled "Jerusalem" in *The Son of Man*.

What was the "background" of Jesus in our current social sense?

2. HIS LIFE STORY

References above.

Tell as simply and as objectively as possible the main events in the life of Jesus. Chapter I of *Jesus*, by Mary Ely Lyman, Part II of Baldwin's volume, and the "Synopsis and Chronology of the Life and Times of Jesus" arranged by Noel will be helpful.

3. JESUS: SON OF MAN AND SON OF GOD

References above.

What kind of person was He? Recapture as best you can what specific ones of His contemporaries thought of Jesus. Discuss His relation to the church of His day. What was His attitude toward work? Toward nature (out-of-doors, etc.)? Toward interruptions?

State what you think was the secret of His power to live as He did. What did He think about Himself in relation to God? Tell all you can about His personal devotional life.

4. THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

References above.

What do you consider the "message" of Jesus? Discuss the Sermon on the Mount. Why does it occupy such a high place in Christian ethics? How did the subsequent life of Jesus strengthen these teachings? Describe Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of Heaven.

5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS FOR OUR DAY

References above.

Relate His estimate of human personality to one or more of the great social problems of our time, *e.g.*, racial discrimination, unemployment, war.

Does Jesus recommend definite programs or general principles for our guidance?

Compare the situation in which Jesus lived with the world we face. Discuss Mr. Page's section on "Totalitarianism in the First Century."

REVELATION OF GOD: Saints in Our Time

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. . . . but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.
—From the Gospel according to Matthew

In the current buffeting of social forces the individual has long since been overwhelmed. Whatever may be the hopes of statesmen and warriors for his eventual prominence, the star of man in the singular is very low in the western sky. Yet in our most sanguine appraisals of social planning, during our keenest appreciation of community and nation, even in our most exalted contemplation of the Kingdom of Heaven, we wistfully see ourselves as individuals—in relation to these inclusive loyalties but never only an identical unit among other component parts. So it will be to the end of our days. Therefore it is a heartening and exhilarating experience to witness the life of great *individuals* over against but apart from the life of society.

Our study of religion and contemporary life must include a vicarious acquaintance with certain sons of God who walk as living men this troubled earth we know. In all times there have been leaders—heroes, super-men, if you will—but primarily *persons* who have somehow laid hold on the secret of life, still unknown to most of their contemporaries. To other strong men, as well as to the weak and the blind, they have been truly a revelation of God. Indeed it was out of this necessity that the incarnation came about where man meets his Maker in another Man.

By 1941 habits of scepticism and criticism are so much a part of our mental and emotional processes that we recognize few saints. Indeed it would seem that canonization may even have extended beyond organizations to processes and tools! Nevertheless there are a few giants in the earth even in these days; perhaps museums of tomorrow will find more than we can discover. This chapter is concerned with "saints in action" from the American scene, not our contemporaries but men and women whose signal achievements we have inherited; it also includes "men of the outposts," heroes of the great missionary effort of the Church. Primarily, however, this section of our study will involve three men who, although their names are already familiar to millions,

are yet mysteries of the first order. Their "foolish" decisions about the most important issues of this world continually "confound the wise"; "the weak things" which they have chosen to use "confound the mighty" over and over again.

Kagawa, the son of a Samurai, turned early from a promising future to the slums of Kobe. Gandhi soon abandoned a lucrative law practise to devote himself to the down-trodden and outcast, first in South Africa and later in India, not foreseeing the empire-shaking effects of his commitment. Schweitzer, the cultivated European — musician, scholar, physician, theologian — left the civilization of which he was the flower and plunged into the primeval forests of Africa to find the life he seemed to be throwing away.

Not to all men and women, even to those of great sincerity and real ability, is it given to serve the world so spectacularly. Yet in such times as ours even the most insignificant one among us would do well to examine the inner springs of these men of God who have found not only a *reason* but a *power* for living.

1. THREE TRUMPETS SOUND

Three Trumpets Sound, by Allan A. Hunter.

Out of My Life and Thought, by Albert Schweitzer.

Kagawa, by William Axling.

Songs from the Slums, by Toyohiko Kagawa.

Kagawa: What incidents in his early life seem to have been important in shaping his development? Describe Kagawa's life in the slums of Kobe. State his chief avenues for social betterment and give specific instances of his work in each (e. g., coöperatives, organized labor movement, etc.). How does he differ from many reformers? What is the secret of his sacrifice? Of his power?

Gandhi: Is Gandhi a "Christian"? Give an account of his background, his boyhood, his education in London. What happened to him in South Africa? Does this remind you of our treatment of the American Negro? Trace his relationship to the British Government. What are the sources of his strength? What are some of his so-called weaknesses? Do you believe in *satyagraha*?

Schweitzer: Describe him at the age of twenty-nine, as to nationality, parents, education, talents, future. What has he done and what is he doing in Africa? Does this seem, comparatively speaking, a waste of time and talent to you? Why does he do it? Summarize what seem to you his essential ideas.

2. A GOODLY COMPANY

Their virtues shall be testified not only by the inscription on stone at home but in all lands wheresoever in the unwritten record of the mind, which far beyond any monument will remain with all men everlastingly.

—Thucydides

Men of the Outposts, by Herbert Welch.

Saints in Action, by Dumas Malone.

Are the names of any of these men and women familiar to you? Do you think that the good men do is "oft interred with their bones"? In what areas of life can you trace the definite influence of these persons?

Contribute to the discussion what you may know of the great work of Sir Wilfred Grenfell in Labrador and the service of Father Damien among the lepers.

REVELATION OF GOD: Worship

If religion is a part of life instead of being apart from life, if religion is to provide illumination as to values and dynamic for action for the kind of living that is demanded of us today, then worship must be set in the midst of those areas of life which are beset with problems. —Oolooah Burner

Worship is the oldest form of religious expression. Long before altars were built or temples erected, centuries before hymns and liturgies came into existence or priest or prophet came onto the scene, æons prior to the men's Bible class, the young people's society, and the ladies' aid, primitive man did homage to a Spirit he could not locate, identify, or name. And this statement seems new and fresh to nobody. The shocking truth comes out when we recognize our ghastly failure in this central religious practice. Why should we now—as individuals, as a nation, as a world—be in the desperately impoverished spiritual state which has resulted in the present holocaust?

To recognize this and note at the same time the almost interminable membership rolls of our Christian churches is indeed to be astonished and ashamed. What can be to blame for the failure in this fundamental and primary relationship of those who call themselves Christian? Why have men not discovered and appropriated the power of God to transform themselves and their world? Such is the function of worship and as such it has fallen far short of success.

To many persons who ever have any thoughts on the subject, worship may mean almost anything from revelling in a beautiful sunset to doing a first-class job of washing the dishes; for others it may be restricted to the vague and vain repetitions of the minister on Sunday morning. But in what sort of living can these practises issue? Manifestly the performances labelled as worship will make little difference in the life of the persons involved.

Our first interest is in recognizing what worship is or what it ought to be. Does it consist primarily of exaltation of soul or is it a more involved process of adoration, confession, forgiveness, commitment, intercession, and dedication issuing in action?

Our second concern is to discover where our modern worship fails and why. Are we trying to reach God from a twentieth cen-

ture world with seventeenth century apparatus? This is not to infer that the central truths of man and God have changed in this passage of time, but the language which perfectly expressed the desires of a Pilgrim Father or the intentions of a loyal subject of King James may not serve a similar purpose for us. Do our church buildings reflect not merely the reaction toward simplicity which came during the Reformation, but also the impoverished or secular substitutes for Catholic symbols and imagery added by modern architects, decorators, and building committees? Has the Lord's Prayer sunk to the level of a conditioned reflex, so that we can say it through without missing a word while our minds are planning menus or performing a post-mortem on last night's hand of bridge?

If we are living on these low levels of devotional life, how can we improve our pitiful condition? These techniques will be the third element in our consideration of worship. What is suitable and meaningful material for worship? How may the manifest difficulties be overcome? In this area we shall investigate the rich field of devotional literature, not content with discovering a set of 365 pious pronouncements to be slipped into the back of our Bibles and left for posterity. Several excellent volumes of prayers are available, three of these included in our bibliography. *The World's Great Religious Poetry* and *The Oxford Book of Christian Verse* provide a wide range of source material, chosen not only for its religious content but conforming to high literary standards. Invaluable suggestions for the modern worshipper will be found in Kirby Page's new volume, *Living Prayerfully*, which also contains a great number of useful selections from both prose and poetry.

It is unfortunate that our present study is too limited to include a fuller consideration of the use of music in worship. Fortunately this art is coming to hold a much more prominent place in devotional activity. Suffice it to say that for worship periods other than the main church service on Sunday morning, the wide variety of phonograph records now available affords great encouragement to lovers of good music. When a local musician cannot be found, what could be more inspiring to "set the tone" for almost any kind of devotional exercise than the recording of

Bach's justly famous chorale prelude, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," made by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra?

One word more: almost any intelligent effort to improve the quality of worship in club meetings, church organizations, and similar groups will be immensely rewarding if not immediately successful.

1. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship, by Evelyn Underhill.

Prayer and Worship, by Douglas Steere.

The Art of Conducting Public Worship, by Albert W. Palmer.

Living Prayerfully, by Kirby Page.

Planning Services of Worship, by Ruth Perkins.

How to Prepare Services of Worship for Use in Clubs, by Helen McCandless.

How to Make Group Devotions Vital, by Oolooah Burner.

Christian Symbols in a World Community, by Daniel Johnson Fleming.

The Contemporary Christ, Part III, by Richard Roberts.

This Nation Under God, Chapter on "Worship as Basic Self-Direction," by Arthur E. Holt.

Describe the act of worship. Through what stages or steps does it go? Should all of these be experienced in every service of worship?

State and discuss Steere's account of the values in corporate worship.

Give a brief account of the function of symbols in worship. What is the present situation regarding them in most Protestant churches? Do you consider the present trend wholesome or not?

2. WHERE AND WHY HAS OUR MODERN WORSHIP FAILED?

References above.

Do you think it has failed? What do you consider the chief reasons for the small quantity and low quality of most private devotional activity today? Discuss means of overcoming these difficulties.

Analyze and criticize the corporate or public worship prevalent in most churches. Do any of these faults apply to your church? What is being done to overcome them? Do you ever really worship outside the church? Refer again to the idea discussed in previous chapters that *work* and *worship* are very far apart in our modern world.

3. HOW CAN I PLAN AN EFFECTIVE WORSHIP SERVICE?

References above.

Read carefully and discuss fully suggestions made by Ruth Perkins and Oolooah Burner. Do their proposals "strike fire" with you? Can you apply them to your own needs in "getting up the devotional" for your next auxiliary, club, or PTA meeting?

Outline a service on the season of the year in which you are following

this study course, using the source books suggested below. Arrange: a devotional program for Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, or Mother's Day; a service on the most urgent social need in your community; a worship program on democracy and the United States.

Source Books:

The World's Great Religious Poetry, compiled by Caroline Miles Hill.

The Oxford Book of Christian Verse, edited by Lord David Cecil.

Living Prayerfully, by Kirby Page.

Prayers for Services, by Morgan Phelps Noyes.

Lift Up Your Hearts, by W. Russell Bowie.

Prayers of the Social Awakening, by Walter Rauschenbusch.

We Plan Our Own Worship, by Winifred Wygal.

CHAPTER X

RELIGION AND MODERN LITERATURE:

Baffling Reflections in a Mirror

I go
Lost in a landscape of the mind,
A country where the lights are low
And where the ways are hard to find.

—From Geoffrey Scott as quoted in *American Mirror*

A panoramic look backward at the lives we have led during the past two decades helps us to understand the great confusion evident in the literary expression of these years. Life and love, economics and geography, cannot really be those distortions we behold in the mirror which memory holds in front of us. Yet perhaps they are. In our search for a religious interpretation of this baffling scene, we are even more bewildered.

On the other hand, we may do well to realize the difficulty faced by the writers of the period in pleading before the bar of our judgment. In Halford E. Luccock's brilliant book, *American Mirror*, he points out: "To demand of the writers of such a time that they see life steadily and see it whole when from lack of such an accepted body of conviction they saw life in flickers and in disjointed pieces, would be to expect the impossible." From even a cursory survey we must conclude that religion *per se* has held little place in recent twentieth century literature. But let us look at the other side of the coin. Strange as it seems, the books which have rolled in increasing numbers off the presses of the world since 1900 deal in greater volume, and perhaps in greater proportion, than the books of any comparable period of time with the central concerns of human life as represented in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

If this is not a contradiction in terms, how can it be true? Here again we find help from Mr. Luccock: "Indeed, we may well ask, where are the ethical and religious elements in all this varied expression? . . . The answer, of course, is that the ethical qualities of experience and the transcript of it are inherent in the thing itself . . . There is no such thing as literature divorced from moral or religious implications."

Obviously, an attempt to analyze the moral and religious implications of modern literature, beginning perhaps with Marcel

Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* and finishing off with Mr. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (or whatever may have displaced it on the current list of best-sellers) would be destined to stupid and pathetic failure. And it should fail. Perhaps we can do better by limiting our study to English and American literature, chiefly American; principally to the literary products of the last decade; and almost entirely restricting our survey to the fields of fiction, drama, and poetry. The losses in such limitation are great, but we thus set for ourselves a less impossible task.

We shall not find God in every volume. Nevertheless, an objective study will reveal, as John Rothwell Slater succinctly observes: "Religion cannot be kept out of literature . . . It has been growing so deeply and so long that after men try to cut it down, it springs up again freshly from the roots. Religion is not only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is also the tree of life."

1. THE BACKGROUND OF MODERN LITERATURE

Recent Literature and Religion, by John Rothwell Slater.

American Mirror, by Halford E. Luccock.

Spiritual Aspects of the New Poetry, by Amos N. Wilder.

Discuss the kind of world out of which modern literature has come. See pp. 1-56 in Slater's volume, Chapter I, "The Valley of the Shadow" and Chapter V, "The Impact of the Depression" in *American Mirror*.

2. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN LITERATURE

References above.

Read Chapter 2, *American Mirror*. What are the principal trends evident in the literature of the 1930's?

Compare the characteristics Mr. Slater attributes to the literature of the preceding decades. Is it more or less "religious"?

How do you feel about "rental libraries" as discussed by Mr. Luccock on pp. 29-30?

3. WHERE DOES RELIGION COME IN?

References above.

Note Slater's excellent comment on what religion is, pp. 15-18. Read carefully Chapter 10, "Religion—Implicit and Explicit," in *American Mirror* and Chapter XVIII, "The Pit from Which We Were Dugged," in *Spiritual Aspects of the New Poetry*.

List points of relationship between religion and modern literature as given by Luccock. Do these seem valid to you, *i.e.*, evidence of *religious* interest?

4. RETURN TO THE RECORD

References above.

What novels of the past few years impressed you most? Criticize these for their religious implications. (Suggested examples: *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Folks*, *This Body the Earth*, *Wickford Point*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Call Home the Heart*, *Of Time and the River*.)

Do you read any poetry other than magazine verse and the grade school classics? Does the problem of religious poetry (Chapter IV, Wilder) seem real to you? (Suggested examples: *Burning City*, Benét; *Public Speech*, MacLeish; *Wine from these Grapes*, Millay.) Comment on *The Testament of Beauty*, by Robert Bridges, as mentioned by Slater and Wilder.

What is the function of drama? To inspire, entertain, educate, criticize, or a mixture of these and more? Note Chapter 8, "The Drama and Social Issues," in *American Mirror*. (Suggested examples: *Winterset*, *Our Town*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *In Abraham's Bosom*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Green Pastures*.)

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION IN THE WORLD CRISIS: Have All the Lights Gone Out?

Over all the sky — the sky! far, far out of reach, studded, breaking out,
the eternal stars. —Walt Whitman in *Bivouac on a Mountain Side*

Almost every paragraph written since the fall of France has suffered the tentative character of headlines composed at 2 P. M. for the evening edition. Necessary as it may be for men to qualify opinion and comment on the passing scene, knowing as we do the hour's terrible intensity and fearing this moment to be catastrophically fraught with meaning for the long future, yet surely some truth eternally valid can be spoken. It is on this premise and in this faith that religion dares to raise its standard in the midst of the tempest. It is under the inescapable conviction of our awful hour that Christianity begins to confess its sins and proclaim that Word which was in the beginning, that Life which was the light of men. Indeed our situation would be hopeless had we only chariots and horses in which to put our panicky trust. Therefore, if with no greater confidence than the desperation which makes toward any port in a storm, let us examine what religion, specifically Christianity, can offer in the present crisis.

Many wise people have had much to say about the remark reported to have been made by Sir Edward Grey in the early hours of the gloomy morning in 1914 when he learned that his last effort to stave off war had failed. As he looked out the window into the gray dawn and watched the lamps of London going out one by one he said: "The lights are going out all over Europe. They will not be relit in our time." Perhaps one more observation in this darker hour may be permitted.

Is it facetious to notice that unconsciously Sir Edward, like many others of his day and of ours, spoke in large part of *man-made* lights? Some of these lamps manufactured and tended during the great humanitarian and industrial eras following the Renaissance served well to push back the wall of the outer barbarian darkness. For several years now civilization has stumbled and groped where it might have walked steadily had man been able to right them and light them again after the first World War. But he was not and now the people again walk in darkness.

Yet there is light and the planets' promise of greater light to come when their sun rides into view. Not without profound parallel for their spiritual dilemma is the experience of many a civilian belligerent who during the black-out has for the first time discovered the stars. To us on our planet many millions of light years away the illumination they can give seems pitiful indeed. But ask a mariner the difference between a starry night and one in which no gleam comes through the cloud bank overhead.

With no wish to carry the analogy farther than it can soundly go, we may stop here and inquire what sense this can make in our mortal struggle to find a way. Surely this much shines through the dark: that certain eternal realities about the existence and character of God, the nature of man and his universe, and the moral and natural order on which these depend can still be known by men. It is realities of this order which have been lost sight of in the glamour of our humanitarian hopes and the glitter of our secular society. Yet these certainties can be verified out of our best knowledge of what has happened in history. They can indeed be appropriated by man for his deliverance. These can become the talisman by which the evil spirit will be stayed, the Rock against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail.

After what seems an able and just analysis of the historic instances where religion has rescued a culture from decay, Walter Marshall Horton, brilliant American theologian, in his recent book, *Can Christianity Save Civilization?*, concludes: "Through the cycles of civilization, there runs a continuous line of divine guidance and divine working. It weaves in and out, often invisible for centuries beneath the pomp and prestige of human achievements and pretension. But in the great crises of culture it comes out clearly and visibly once more, offering a way of escape from the impending collapse and ruin, through religious transfiguration and renewal. It was never more manifest than it is at this decisive hour of doom and promise. Our *proximate* goal of Christian hope for this generation and for some time to come, lies in following this line of divine guidance through the midnight of social disintegration that is immediately ahead of us, until it leads us out into the dawn of a new Christian World Civilization."

Though not a floodlight on the turbulent waters, this is a star to steer by.

1. WHERE ARE WE AND HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The Church Faces the World, by Samuel McCrea Cavert.

Christians in a World at War, by Edwyn Bevan.

The Fate of Man in the Modern World, by Nicholas Berdyaev.

Christianity—and our World, by John C. Bennett.

The Church, by George Stewart.

Faith for Living, by Lewis Mumford.

Can Christianity Save Civilization? by Walter Marshall Horton.

The Universal Church and the World of Nations, Oxford Conference Symposium.

The World Mission of the Church, Official Report of the Madras Conference.

The Faith by Which the Church Lives, by Georgia Harkness.

The Christian Alternative to World Chaos, by Luman J. Shafer.

Read and discuss Parts I-IV of the Mumford volume. Comment on this sentence from the chapter on "The Illusion of Security": "To regard all this violence as primarily the symptom of economic maladjustment is a perversion of good sense."

State what is meant by "the tragic fate of man in the modern world" (Stewart, Chapter I). What is secularism? What is meant by "dehumanization"? Do these seem real evils to you? (See Bennett and Berdyaev).

2. THE PLIGHT AND PROMISE OF CHRISTIANITY

References above.

As an introduction to this study read the Introduction to the Horton volume.

What is the condition of Christianity in the modern world? See "Culture and Christianity", p. 110, Berdyaev; "Temptations of the Churches", p. 158, Mumford; "Christianity and the New Tyranny", p. 49, Bennett; "Protestantism and Modern Civilization", p. 89, Horton; Chapter I (Lord Lothian) in *The Universal Church*, etc.

Can religion (Christianity or some other or some combination) rescue civilization from the impending catastrophe? Cite instances of such "rescues" in other historic situations. For this section use the entire Horton volume. His summarized "arguments" for each chapter will prove helpful.

How can Christianity effect the rescue of civilization? Discuss this in relation to specific areas (moral stability, economic justice, nationalism, etc.), making use of the following references: Chapter IV, Horton; concluding portions of the several chapters in the Oxford Symposium; Chapters I, XIII, and XIV of the Madras Report; the Bennett volume; and the Shafer volume.

What headway is the Church making in these directions? See Chapter I, Harkness, and Chapter V, Horton.

What prospect do you see for a world religion as referred to by Horton? By Hocking?

Additional Reading:

The Oxford Conference: Official Report.

See Report of the Section on Church and Community and Report of the Section on the Universal Church and the World of Nations.

The Christian Faith in a Day of Crisis, by Charles S. MacFarland.

This is an excellent compact summary of the most important writing done in the major areas of the Christian faith and life during the past few years. It is conveniently arranged by subjects, given in the Table of Contents.

The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, by Hendrik Kraemer.

CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY: "The American Way"

Democracy, child of a religious, heroically devoted vision of man, can part from that religious vision only at mortal peril.

—Waldo Frank in *Chart for Rough Water*

What is democracy? And what is "the American way"? At this point in our study we must have a fair idea of what Christianity is, what it has been, and what it may become. But we have not yet submitted these other familiar terms to such close scrutiny.

America is a democracy, or as nearly so as any nation in the world. And what do we see when we set out to discover America? On the road we find filling stations and "juke joints," factories and farms, open quarries and cut-over timber land; cities and towns and villages with their homes and stores, banks and theatres. We pass great public buildings and see here and there a "poor farm" or "county home" or orphanage; sometimes a prison or a new Government project or a national park. Before us stretches mile after mile of as fair a land as can be found in all the world—flowing stream and wooded hillside; fresh plowed field and grassy meadow, orchard slope and clean-chopped garden; cotton and tobacco, wheat and corn, cattle and poultry, silo and haystack, big house and tenant house, barns and toolshed. Now a town again, then once more into open country, on and on from ocean to ocean the great land goes.

But where is America, "the people, yes"? Not till we know *them* can we know these United States. They are not to be counted and measured and cataloged by what we have seen, all census efforts to the contrary notwithstanding. What kind of people live in these houses, work at these mills, trade in these stores? How do they live? Where did they come from? What do they love? What truths do they hold to be self-evident? It is such things as these we must know if we hope to discover "the American way."

The Fourth of July orator, that almost extinct specimen of American political history, might have been able to help us. Or we could gain something from the casual conversations surrounding the momentous act of exercising the franchise on election day.

We would be much the wiser for a few hours visit in any one of the homes along the way: a "mill house" or a new FHA cottage, a cabin or a Georgian Colonial structure on the boulevard.

One bent on discovering "the American way" would surely follow the people into the church on Sunday morning—a white New England meeting house with its steeple reaching into the sky, a great city church on a crowded corner where stained-glass windows transfigure the meager sunlight, or a rude country chapel where the planks and wooden horses are arranged for "dinner on the grounds." But not yet can we be certain of knowing we have found what we are looking for.

More than an accepted procedure for dealing with whatever comes along, "the American way" at its best is a way of life, the way of freedom under God. It has a long history, longer than we ordinarily remember, reaching far back into what has been thought and done before us on all the continents and the seven seas. It is very closely allied to what Waldo Frank calls "The Great Tradition," which he defines as:

The knowledge that individual man partakes of the divine, which is his way of naming the universal and of naming it good and of naming it his. It is the knowledge that his life has purpose and direction because God is in him.

This belief "in the essential dignity of all men," straight from the heart of the Christian religion, has become the primary assumption of democracy. Every student of the Old Testament prophets and the teachings of Jesus is familiar with this idea. The important corollaries of freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, "consent of the governed," and all the others follow from this central conception of man. The philosophic and political theories of "natural rights" and "social contract," which were such important elements in the early development of American democracy, are very closely kin to it. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick says that the *right of the minority* rather than the *rule of the majority* is the peculiar quality of the democratic idea, and that such a doctrine of the right of the minority infers the existence of a higher loyalty. Thus the State as constituted is not always supreme and man may live in obedience to the first great Commandment, which enjoins supreme devotion to "the Lord thy God." The strength of democracy is patently inherent

in the second Commandment which Jesus said was like unto the first, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," your neighbor being like yourself a son of God and worthy of your unselfish service in the common life.

So our interest in "the American way" has led us into the dynamic center of the Christian ethic, and in this ideal sense it is indeed a far cry from the selfish individualism which it is often used to defend. "The American way" in ideal and essence is active. It cannot rest in our imperfect present, for it belongs also to the future. Compelled now as in other years by urgent necessity, we find it not only something won and cherished, to be defended at all costs. It now becomes, as it has always been though we did not know it, "the patriot dream that sees beyond the years." And at this hour we may take heart from an old and obscured document which exerted a tremendous influence on the founding of the American republic, *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, published in 1776:

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or a kingdom; but of a Continent, of at least one-eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time, by the proceedings now.

1. THE COMMON ROOT

This Nation Under God, by Arthur E. Holt.

Chart for Rough Water, by Waldo Frank.

Christian Faith and Democracy, by Gregory Vlastos.

American Faith, by Ernest Sutherland Bates.

The Kingdom of God in America, by H. R. Niebuhr.

The Church, by George Stewart.

Society in Transition, by Harry Elmer Barnes.

The American Mirror, by H. E. Luccock.

Christianity in America, by E. G. Homrighausen.

Comment on the basic concept of the individual which is central to both Christianity and modern democracy. Where did this idea come from? See Stewart's Chapter II and Sections II and IV of *Chart for Rough Water*.

Discuss the requisite "soil" and citizens for a successful democracy. What are the fundamental assumptions of democracy in regard to religion? See Holt, pp. 57 ff.

2. YOUNG DEMOCRACY

References above.

Amplify the following statement from Bates's excellent account of *American Faith*: "The great American myth that the colonies were founded for the sake of religious liberty—a myth that came into existence at about the time of the Revolution when men had forgotten the facts—has been thoroughly discredited by modern historians." (Page 83)

What were the main sects or denominations in America during the colonial period and the early years of the Republic? Comment on the contribution made by each to the evolving democracy (e.g., the Baptist concept of religious freedom). Valuable information may be found in *American Faith* and *The Kingdom of God in America*.

3. THE PROMISE UNFULFILLED

References above.

State and discuss some of the areas in which democracy has not fulfilled its promise to the common man. See Mumford's section on "The Betrayal of Man," *American Mirror*, and social problems analyzed in *Society in Transition*.

What is the religious interpretation of the causes of these failures? See Holt's chapters on "Responsible Living in a Democracy" and "How the American People Became Irresponsible"; Stewart's Chapter I, and Niebuhr's Chapter V.

4. "THE DESPERATE REMEDIES"

References above.

Discuss the solutions offered today by rival political systems. How do these differ from democracy in their essential principles? See especially Holt's chapter on "Democracy's Competitors," Frank's Section III, and Stewart's Chapter IV.

5. A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM

References above.

Comment on the urgent need of a regeneration of democracy. See Frank's Sections III and V, Stewart's Chapter V, and Mumford's Sections V, VI, and VII.

How can the church function in this regeneration? See especially the last five chapters in *This Nation Under God*.

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Lyman, M. E.	<i>Jesus.</i> 1937. (7)	Ass'n	.50
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Rauschenbusch, Walter	<i>Prayers of the Social Awakening.</i> 1910. (9)	Pilgrim Press	o. p.
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Sheed & Ward, 63 Fifth Ave., New York.
Vanguard Press, Inc., 424 Madison Ave., New York.
Viking Press, Inc., 18 E. 48th St., New York.
Willett, Clark & Co., 440 S. Dearborn St., Chicago.
Woman's Press, 600 Lexington Ave., New York.

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First Meeting: THE HOLY BOOKS

1. The Holy Books
2. The English Bible

Second Meeting: RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

1. Primitive and Ancient Religions Now Extinct
2. Living Religions of the Old World
3. The East and the West Are One; Judaism and Christianity

Third Meeting: THE RELIGIOUS MODERN

1. Definition of Terms: Religion, Man, God
2. What Does the Modern Man Believe?

Fourth Meeting: BELLS AND THE ALTAR: THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND ITS OFFSPRING

1. History of the Christian Church
2. Religions in the United States

Fifth Meeting: BELLS AND THE ALTAR: THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

1. What Is the Place of the Church in the World?
2. Historically, What Have Been the Conceptions of the Church's Function in Society?
3. What Ought to be the Function of the Church in Society?
4. What Are the Churches Doing in and to the Social Order?

Sixth Meeting: BELLS AND THE ALTAR: CHURCH AND STATE IN THE MODERN WORLD

1. The Present Situation
2. History of the Issue
3. The New Inquisition
4. The Issue Elsewhere: Great Britain, Latin America, and the United States
5. The High Stakes

Seventh Meeting: REVELATION OF GOD: JESUS AFTER TWO THOUSAND YEARS

1. The World into which Jesus Came
2. His Life Story
3. Jesus: Son of Man and Son of God
4. The Teachings of Jesus
5. The Significance of Jesus for Our Day

Eighth Meeting: REVELATION OF GOD: SAINTS IN OUR TIME

1. Three Trumpets Sound
2. A Goodly Company

Ninth Meeting: REVELATION OF GOD: WORSHIP

1. What Is Worship?
2. Where and Why Has Our Modern Worship Failed?
3. How Can I Plan an Effective Worship Service?

Tenth Meeting: RELIGION AND MODERN LITERATURE: BAFFLING REFLECTIONS
IN A MIRROR

1. The Background of Modern Literature
2. General Characteristics of Modern Literature
3. Where Does Religion Come In?
4. Return to the Record

Eleventh Meeting: RELIGION AND THE WORLD CRISIS: HAVE ALL THE LIGHTS
GONE OUT?

1. Where Are We and How Did We Get Here?
2. The Plight and Promise of Christianity

Twelfth Meeting: CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY: "THE AMERICAN WAY"

1. The Common Root
2. Young Democracy
3. The Promise Unfulfilled
4. "The Desperate Remedies"
5. A New Birth of Freedom

NOTE: If some of these topics cover too much ground for one meeting, they may be divided.

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