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MARCH, 1933

EDITORIAL NOTES

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!—Matthew 6:23.

Here is part of a conversation which I had with one of these special missionaries (one of the men).

"For what reason did Christ die?"
Cut from the Loaf "To tell you the truth, I don't know myself."

"Has the Group any list of sins?"

"No, we have no list of sins."

"Would you call adultery and murder sins?"

"Only if God told you they were."

"What would you do if you had a strong desire to commit adultery with another man's wife, or to murder some one?"

"I would go to God and get guidance about it."

"You mean that you would pray to God and ask Him to show you whether it was right or wrong?"

"No, I should not pray about it. I would just wait for God to give me guidance about it."

"And how would God give you this guidance?"

"I should get a strong impression what I should do."

"And if this strong impression was that you should murder that man, would you do it?"

"I should!"

How true are Christ's words spoken when on earth: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6:23).—*The Oxford Group Movement (Buchmanism), Is It of God or of Satan?* by J. C. Brown, Pickering and Inglis, London, England.

This "ism," sometimes called the Oxford Group Movement, reminds one of Christian Science in two marked particulars.

One is its attraction for "society" people, the well-dressed and well-to-do, and the other is its aversion to the blood atonement. These two things if there were no others, were sufficient to show how far it is removed from "First Century Christian Fellowship," as a Presbyterian divine designated it at the last quadrennial of the Federal Council.

That stalwart defender of the faith, Dr. A. C. Gaebelein, writes us that he is making a careful study of the movement in order to expose it in *Our Hope*, but meanwhile we would recommend the book of J. C. Brown, Head Master at Oxford University, who is quoted in "Cut from the Loaf" in this issue. It is a paper covered volume, quite inexpensive, and obtainable for twenty-five cents from the Bible Institute Colportage Association, 843 North Wells Street, Chicago. We would also advise our readers to send one cent to Rev. Harold

T. Commons, 17 South Marion Avenue, Ventnor, Atlantic City, N. J., for a copy of his four-page leaflet entitled *Buchmanism*. This is "a frank statement by a former adherent who gives full first-hand information as to the character of the movement."

We cannot bring this editorial note to a better conclusion, however, than by quoting the following paragraph from a personal letter of Colonel E. N. Sanctuary, New York:

For some months I have been acquiring data on this cult, with the result that I am now speaking against it. They have four tenets of faith—guidance, loyalty, sharing and Christology. They claim their guidance is that of the Holy Spirit, but it is significant that unbelievers are welcomed to their fellowship. Loyalty is to Buchman or to the Group. But "sharing" is sin-sharing, and many writers speak of this as a "sex-obsession," for it deals with this subject in mixed groups. Brown asks this question: "Is it to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31) that a married man with a family should publicly confess to a mixed audience that, without his wife's knowledge, he had been unfaithful to her?" Brown knows whereof he writes for it was he who sponsored Buchman when he first introduced his work in England.

Some few weeks ago, we were inquired of by a pastor concerning that unhallowed book, *Re-Thinking Missions*, being the

Re-Thinking Missions

report of an unofficial committee of laymen. We were unable to say to the pastor all that was on our mind and heart, but perhaps the little that we did say might be useful to other pastors who may read this.

We said that, of course, there were certain values in the report. For example, the native churches, no doubt, should have more consideration than hitherto concerning the missionaries placed in charge of them, more co-operation should be fostered among them, and instead of attacking the native religions the missionaries might rather lay emphasis on the supremacy of the Christian faith. On the other hand, we emphasized, and now re-emphasize, that the personnel of the Laymen's Committee itself forecast a report out of harmony with the evangelical faith of the centuries. Out of harmony is the report in the most vital matters. It has a different objective from that of the evangelical faith, namely, the making of a social order instead of the salvation of souls, and a different method, secular education instead of gospel preaching. Furthermore, it relies upon a different energy or power, that is to say, a co-ordinated home base instead of the Holy Ghost.

We expressed our belief, and renew the expression, that the God of the Bible, the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will not use or bless such a plan and program as these laymen propose. Moreover, were that plan and program adopted by the denominations generally, it would mean, in our judgment, the end of foreign missions in the sense in which that work has always been conceived and carried out by the redeemed people of God.

"A mounting distrust of liberal theology and a renewed interest in the central position for which the supernatural conception of the Christian religion stands, is seen by Professor Van Dusen, of Union

Is the Wanderer Returning?

Theological Seminary, New York, in the survey of recent theological trends which he has written for the Yearbook of the Federal Council of Churches." So we were recently informed by a "release" of the Federal Council.

Dr. Van Dusen further concludes that liberalism is now seen to have been "the characteristic theology of a romantic and illfounded pre-war optimism." Its premises are being subjected to devastating criticism, he tells us, and "the 'theology of crisis' commands a steadily increasing attention. It is saying something which has long been dimly felt."

This is very high-flown language of course, as becometh a professor of philosophy in a theological seminary of the liberal type. But what it means is that Modernism "backs water." The "central position" of the Christian faith is the sacrificial death and bodily resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We thank God if a renewed interest therein is being awakened in the liberal ranks, and if we have been permitted to do ever so little in the line of that "devastating criticism" of which Dr. Van Dusen speaks, then too are we thankful for that.

The "theology of crisis" that is commanding "steadily increasing attention," according to this witness, is nothing else, as we understand it, than the miraculous conversion of a sinner by faith. Glory in the highest if Jehovah is again pouring out His Spirit upon the Church, and men are thus inquiring the way of life.

Nevertheless we are not over-confident that Professor Van Dusen and the Federal Council will fully confirm our interpretation of this recent release.

Professor Paul Shorey (University of Chicago), who has made a lifetime study of Plato, tells us that the great philosopher anticipated the critics of the

Jazz Secular and Sacred

present day in saying that the corruption of music always brings in its train degeneracy in manners and morals and politics. The professor was thinking of jazz, which as most of us now believe, has a great deal

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

What Time Has Proved

Months have passed away since Mrs. N. took her stand upon the written Word of God and so passed from death unto life.

Her life manifests that she is indeed a new creature in Christ, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

Possessing a large type Testament and hymn book, she is praising God for the excellent memory she has, in which she is storing away scripture and hymns so that should her eyesight entirely fail, she will

have these unfailing treasures to draw upon.

"Never do I now know what it is to have a bad night," is her happy testimony.

"I repeat my verses and hymns over and over, and they also help me in my prayers and communion with my Lord."

With Job she can say, "Who giveth songs in the night."

What Is the League of Evangelical Students?

By Professor J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa.

THE League of Evangelical Students is a contribution to Christian testimony. But Christian testimony is sometimes comparatively easy and sometimes hard. It is comparatively easy when one is living in a Christian environment, but it is hard when it subjects a man to loneliness, ridicule and abuse. If that be so, then the League of Evangelical Students has chosen for its witness-bearing just the hardest place of all; for its field is the student world.

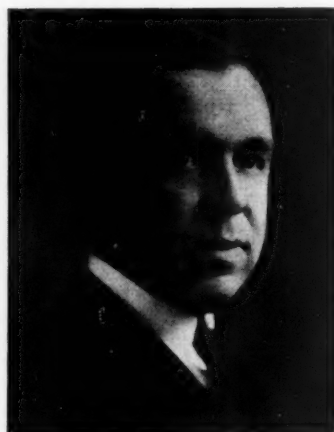
No one who observes the conditions of life in our day can help seeing that our colleges and universities have for the most part drifted away from the Christian faith. The great state universities and other secular institutions have certainly done so; but in many of the church colleges the conditions, from the Christian point of view, are even worse. In the state universities, while the whole atmosphere is hostile to Christianity and there are incidental attacks upon the Bible in many classrooms, yet actual courses in the Bible or in "religion" are optional. But in the church colleges these courses are often required, and they are made the means of a direct and systematic attack upon the Word of God.

This attitude of the institutions themselves is of course reflected in the student body. Student movements which formerly were Christian have drifted away from the faith, and are now too often agencies of unbelief. Individual Christian students now find themselves without Christian fellowship in the midst of a hostile environment.

A Message of Cheer

At such a time the League of Evangelical Students comes forward with a message of cheer. To lonely Christian students on many a college campus it says: "No, you are not, as you think you are, standing alone in the Christian faith. There are other students, who, like you, believe that the Bible is the Word of God and trust in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as their only hope. You are united with them in the study of God's Word, in prayer and in Christian testimony."

The constitution of the League, in its prologue, cites as the reason for the founding of the League the fact that "mutually exclusive conceptions of the nature of the Christian religion exist in the world to-



Professor J. Gresham Machen, D.D.

day." That means that this movement is not based, as so many movements are, upon ignorance of real conditions. It means, on the contrary, that its founders—who, by the way, were themselves students—detected the great issue of the day and decided, with full knowledge of the issue, to take sides. When things are "mutually exclusive," that means that if one is true the other is false. So it is with Modernism, on the one hand, and biblical Christianity on the other. They cannot both be true. A man must decide between them. The League of Evangelical Students has taken sides. It stands very clearly and definitely against Modernism, and it stands very clearly and definitely for the Word of God.

Importance of "No" and "Yes"

The prologue of the constitution further states that it is "the duty of those who share and cherish the evangelical faith to witness to it and to strive for its defense and propagation." That means that the League has no sympathy with the feeble notion that a man can propagate Christianity without defending it, or that he can make his testimony positive without making it negative. According to the plain teaching of the Bible, one of the first things that a Christian has to learn to do is to say "No." Unless a man can say "No" to error, he can never really say "Yes" to truth.

Moreover, that defense of Christianity which is so essential to its propagation includes clearly an intellectual defense. The League of Evangelical Students is a student organization; and it does not hold that a man has to cease to be a student in order to be a Christian. One of the purposes of the League, according to the constitution, is "to present to students evidences of the truths of evangelical Christianity." The League believes that rejection of the claims of Christ is at bottom a thoroughly unreasonable, a thoroughly unscientific, thing; and that the Christian religion flourishes not in the darkness but in the light.

On that solid basis of the truth contained in God's Word, the League of Evangelical Students seeks to promote a warm and joyous devotional life among its members, and to bring that warmth and that joy to the unsaved. There are two classes of member organizations in the League—in the first place, organizations consisting of the entire student body of truly Christian institutions, and, in the second place, chapters consisting of groups of Christian students in institutions where the general atmosphere is hostile to the Word of God.

The usefulness of the latter class of member organizations is surely quite plain. It seems obvious that where men and women are in an environment which in general is hostile to the Lord Jesus Christ they should come together for study of the Word of God, for mutual strengthening and for prayer. But how is it with truly Christian institutions? What need is there for the League of Evangelical Students in them?

Carrying the Gospel to Students

The question is often asked, "We have our devotional meetings already," say the students of such institutions; "We have our Christian activities here on our campus; what need is there, then, for another organization like the League?"

The answer to such objections is very simple. It is not found necessarily in any proposal for a change in the Christian activities within the Christian institution itself. But when students in a Christian institution say to me, "We are Christians in this institution; what need have we of the League?" I say simply: "Yes, my brothers, you are Christians; but do you think that you ought to keep your Christianity to

yourselves? Here is this vast student world of America—thousands upon thousands of students without a Saviour, hopeless in unbelief, perishing in sin. Do you care nothing whatever about them; has the thought of them brought no slightest bit of agony to your souls? Or will you who know Christ as your Saviour help carry the gospel to your fellow-students who now know Him not?"

It is just for that purpose that the League of Evangelical Students exists. It seeks to carry the gospel, through which students in Christian institutions know Christ as their Saviour, to those less fortunate students who are fighting a lonely battle against the forces of unbelief; it seeks

to go forth into that great student world with an uncompromising testimony to the truth of God's Word in order that through the proclamation of the Word precious souls may be saved.

Toiling in a Vacant Field

It is not claimed, of course, that the League is the only organization which might conceivably do this work. If some other organization can do it better, then well and good. But so far the League has a singularly vacant field. It deserves the support of every Christian man and woman, young or old. Under the leadership of its general secretary, Rev. William J. Jones, whose address is now Box 264, Huntington,

Ind., it has certainly had the rich blessing of God. Surely there are those who will bid it Godspeed!

The League is supported by voluntary contributions. It is in the most urgent possible need of funds. Those who help it with contributions large or small, which may be sent to the treasurer, I. H. Linton, Esq., Kellogg Building, Washington, D. C., may be assured that they are holding aloft the banner of the Cross in that place where more than in any other it has been treated with despite, and that they are giving untold comfort to brave young men and young women who, with the help of God, despite all the temptations of student life, have refused to be conformed to this world.

Prohibition Experiments Abroad

By O. Eklund, Toholampi, Finland

IN Europe some earnest experiments in prohibition have been made. Russia, Iceland, Norway and Finland have had their prohibition laws, more or less strict, and have given them up, realizing that they were unable, or unwilling, to enforce them. The last country to withdraw from the prohibition line was my country, Finland.

Perhaps a short review of our experiences might just now be of interest to American readers.

In 1907 our diet voted by a strong majority for a prohibition law. But it never received the needed ratification of the Russian emperor. When Finland became an independent and free country however, the law was renewed by a strong majority again, and went into force in 1919. Then, from that time until about a year ago, there went on an intensive fight for and against the law. Several times it was improved and made more drastic, but all in vain. It became clear to every unprejudiced man that the prohibition idea had no strong public opinion in its favor to build upon.

Therefore, at the end of 1931 we had a referendum at which the prohibitionists did not gather more than 30 per cent of all the votes. Even the most determined enemies could scarcely guess beforehand that their victory would be so thorough.

A Failure in Finland

The prohibition experiment has proved itself to be a failure in Finland and everywhere in Europe where it has been tried.

This sad fact is of course explained in different ways. The four countries we mentioned are now standing as witnesses against the prohibition idea. Radical differences there are between these countries, but they are one in that they had to cancel their prohibition laws and to yield to the general demand for alcohol.

After unhappy experiences we now admit that the whole thing was a mistake. We ought to have realized beforehand that the scheme would not work. The intentions

were good and laudable, but all kinds of "buts" blocked the way.

Perhaps the present writer may quote some lines he wrote to a magazine in Sweden December, 1908:

To adopt a law is one thing, but to enforce it quite another and a much more complicated task. . . . I have to confess that I fear the prohibition law has aimed too high, so high indeed, that a reaction to the detriment of the temperance cause may be the result.

This was written ten years before we had any experiences of how the law would work. It was a theory only, but now some thirteen years of sad experience have proved that the misgivings had hit the mark.

What about America?

The experiments in prohibition did not succeed in Europe. But prohibition according to the Eighteenth Amendment has come to stay in the United States, we have been told. It does not belong to a foreigner to pronounce on American affairs, but if we are not misinformed there are clear signs that the days of prohibition are counted also in America.

Over there as well as here the temperance people have to face the prospect of fighting against drunkenness with much less support from the state than hitherto. We should not like to hurt the feelings of those who expected great things from the prohibition law, but such expectations have always seemed to us to be quite vain.

The disappointment may be less keenly felt if we realize that the modern prohibition laws never were God's way nor His intention for us. We cannot take short cuts to Paradise.

Prohibition is on the same line as pacifism. The curses of war are awful. The pacifists know it and are ready to show a clear way out of this curse, that is, simply to forbid or avoid the wars. How glorious it would be to get a perfect peace in the world hereby!

The Fact of Sin

But that good remedy does not work with the material available. The fact of sin is spoiling the peaceful settlements. The case for prohibition is just the same. We have seen the curses of drink, therefore we should forbid drinking. But sinful propensities are spoiling the good intentions also here. Therefore we ought to forbid and expel selfishness and other sins. Then prohibition could be finely enforced—if it then were needed any more.

Several years ago we were going to a Christian conference, and a dozen men or so got places in a compartment for smokers. None among us was a smoker. Therefore one gentleman asked the guard whether "one *must* smoke here," and got the answer, "No," which was a great relief to us all.

Now if there would be provided a legal right to buy liquor, it does not mean that I must avail myself of this permission. We may keep our temperance course independently of all prohibition laws. We may have our own private law.

Perhaps some reader will think I am writing just as the wets used to. The information is therefore due that I have had my own dry law since 1894, and there has not yet been any question of repealing it.



IN THE CHAMBER OF THINE IMAGERY

Never, for a moment, look at any picture that taints your imagination with evil suggestion. Avoid, as you would poison, every painting, every engraving, every etching, every photograph that leaves a spot of impurity on your mind; but feast your soul upon pictures that make you holier, kinder, more sympathetic, more tender, more like your Lord.—R. A. Torrey.