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ALUMNI SECRETARY	<i>Edward H. Roberts</i>	3
SPLENDOR IN THE ABYSS	<i>John A. Mackay</i>	5
THE CHURCH IN CENTRAL EUROPE	<i>Martin Niemöller</i>	16
"BUTTONWOOD" AND A GREAT ABOLITIONIST	<i>Clarence Edward Macartney</i>	24
A SCHOLAR OF GOOD WILL GETS A HEARING	<i>Emile Cailliet</i>	29
THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE		33
THE NEW STUDENT CENTER	<i>James K. Quay</i>	36
PRINCETONIANA	<i>Lefferts A. Loetscher</i>	37
ALUMNI NOTES	<i>Edna Hatfield</i>	45
MEMORIAL MINUTES		49
KENNETH H. LANNING		49
WILLIAM BARROW PUGH		50, 53

BOOK REVIEWS

Your Bible and You, by Charles R. Erdman	<i>George H. Talbott</i>	56
The Christian Doctrine of God, by Emil Brunner	<i>Hugh Thomson Kerr, Jr.</i>	56
Orientation in Religious Education, edited by Philip Henry Lotz	<i>E. G. Homrighausen</i>	58
The Place of Religion in the Public Schools, by Virgil Henry		59
About Myself, by Nevin C. Harner		60
Leading a Sunday Church School, by Ralph D. Heim		60
Elmtown's Youth, by A. B. Hollingshead		61
The Lion and the Lamb, by Gerald Kennedy	<i>Donald Macleod</i>	61

SPLENDOR IN THE ABYSS¹

JOHN A. MACKAY

COLLEAGUES of the Faculty ; members of the student body ; our missionary guests ; ladies and gentlemen :

Seminary Light and Shadow

Let my introductory word be one of general welcome. I think first, of course, of the new students who are in our midst from diverse parts of this country and from many countries of the world. I trust that already you begin to feel at home, and that you will find this fellowship good and the year's work profitable.

It is natural that we should want to extend a very special welcome to the students from abroad. This year we have a quite exceptional number from many parts of the globe. I desire to say, in particular, how much it means to us to have a goodly number of Korean students in our midst. Two of them will be leaving us shortly to act as interpreters between their countrymen and our armed forces. After having discharged that service and seen the complete liberation and unity of their country, they will, I hope, be able, as they now intend, to return to the campus in order to finish their work.

It ought to be said in this connection that the links between this seminary and the beloved and afflicted land of Korea have been most close for many decades. President Syngman Rhee, during the two years that he studied in Princeton University, occupied a room in Hodge Hall on this campus. The present minister of Education, Dr. George Paik, is a graduate of Princeton Seminary in the Class of 1925. Before accepting this

portfolio on the eve of the invasion, he was president of Chosen Christian University. And there are many others in Korea, both pastors and missionaries, who are graduates of this Seminary. There is one Korean pastor in particular, the Reverend Kyung Chik Han of the Class of 1929, who is the minister of the leading Church in Korea, which is the second largest congregation in the Orient, with a membership of 4500. I had a letter from Pastor Han a few weeks ago and, happily, he is safe.

To our missionary guests in Payne Hall and in other parts of the Princeton community let me say how much it means to us to have you here. I trust you realize that you are full members of our community and that you are invited to all of our Seminary functions.

And then I would not forget my colleagues on the Faculty who have been far away and have just returned. This year was an exceptional year as regards travel for many members of the Faculty. Six in all were out of the country. Dr. Jurji was back again in the Middle and Near East after a long absence. Dr. Piper, Dr. Lehmann, and Dr. Metzger fulfilled very special missions in Europe from which they have just recently returned. Dr. Wevers traveled extensively in Europe and engaged in special study and research. Dr. Gehman is still on sabbatical leave but will be back with us, I understand, sometime in October.

But while I give this word of welcome I cannot forget that there must be

¹ Address delivered on September 26, 1950 at the opening of the Seminary.

sounded also a note of deep regret. In the course of this past year there was taken from our campus fellowship a very gracious and gifted lady in the person of Mrs. Barrois. Our Board of Trustees lost three of its most valued members: Mr. Kenneth H. Lanning of Trenton, Judge Adrian Lyon of Perth Amboy, and, the latest, Dr. William Barrow Pugh, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Pugh was a graduate, as well as a Trustee, of this Seminary, and was one of the foundations of the administrative structure of our Presbyterian Church. We mourn the loss of all these dear and valued friends, and extend our deep sympathy to the loved ones whom they have left behind.

There is still another note of regret, though of a somewhat different kind to which I must give expression. This year we come together without the presence of Dr. and Mrs. Blackwood, who were for twenty years honored figures in our Seminary family. After twenty years of outstanding service in the Chair of Homiletics, Dr. Blackwood has retired on pension. Like Dr. Frederick W. Loetscher, he is now engaged in teaching at Temple University. Dr. and Mrs. Blackwood will be greatly missed from our midst as the months go on.

Now let me address myself to a theme which has been much on my mind recently. I propose to interpret, if I can, our human situation in these days that are passing. Last year I tried to interpret the core of the Christian religion under the caption "Basic Christianity." This year I take a symbol, not unfamiliar nor unusual in the Christian tradition, light in the midst of darkness, or, as I like to put it, "splendor in the abyss." I want to say something

about a situation which is admittedly dark, which has about it certain features which might well be described in their murkiness and profundity as abysmal. I am not going to take up much time, however, in describing the horrors of our situation. I am not going to vie with the many who deal exclusively with our woes. I will look squarely at the abyss and into it, in order to describe to you what appear to me to be shafts of light in its murky depths, rays of divine splendor in the great void.

"Chaos and Ancient Night"

Whenever a gross aberration from righteousness calls for description no one offers us guidance with such vivid, dramatic perfection as John Milton. That we confront today a situation which is dark and abysmal there is little doubt. In re-reading *Paradise Lost*, I have been struck by the remarkable way in which Milton's description of Hell suggests and parallels the situation in our own time. The poet saw "a universe of death," "a vast vacuity," "a dark, unbounded, infinite abyss." Such was the "realm of Chaos and ancient Night." Two divinities were there enthroned: Chaos as the great Umpire, and as the governor of darkness, and supreme arbiter, Chance.

"Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him, high
 arbiter,
Chance governs all."

Into this realm were hurled the fallen angels, who from the "nethermost abyss" began to plot against another part of God's creation about which they had heard, where beauty and order still

remained. There they would erect the "standard of ancient Night." There they would bring about "confusion worse confounded," because "havoc and spoil and ruin" were the gain of their chief. In Milton's tremendous imagery we discern the prototypes of certain sinister forces in the world of our time which have brought havoc and spoil and ruin, and which would erect on earth the standard of ancient Night, in order to achieve their infernal desires.

But quite apart from these forces of a sinister nature which operate in the dark void of our time, we have got to recognize that in the abyss of the present there are other forces little less sinister, though of a very different kind. The most dismal factor in the abyss of today is the pessimism of those who maintain that human nature is so bad and that man has been unmasked so thoroughly that not even God can do anything about the human situation. The dialectic of history, they virtually say, is so inexorable that God himself is actually a prisoner of historical forces. Why should men, therefore, be challenged to a great adventure by giving their devotion to some one or something that is absolute? For in human behavior nothing is really possible but compromise. The time has come to indict this position as a betrayal of the Christian faith. God is no prisoner of historical forces or of logical necessity any more than He is a helpless captive behind the bars of the physical universe. God is free and almighty—therefore the supernatural, the unexpected, the Godlike can happen today as much as yesterday. When men take the living God into account as the forgotten factor, history shall once again fool logic. The ultimate standard of possibility for a Christian is the power of the Resur-

rection, the power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead and made Him Lord of all.

Much more important, however, than the demonic forces, more significant than the existing gloom, is a certain divine radiance, the splendor of God, in the great Void.

Judgment and Mercy in God's Springtime

The truth is, this is God's Springtime, one of His terrible Springtimes. Rays of a Spring dawn are shooting through the night; the soft refreshing of Spring breezes can be felt on wan and wearied cheeks. Twenty-five years ago, in South American days, I was gripped by that tremendous first vision of Jeremiah. On the Judean plateau the young prophet saw the shoot of an almond tree, a "wake" tree, the first tree in nature to sprout in the Springtime. It came home to Jeremiah that God was awake, and was about to do great things in Judah and among the nations of the earth. In the background of the sprouting almond stood a seething caldron whose fire was fanned by breezes from the North. The spray and the pot formed a composite symbol of God's judgment and mercy. Both portrayed God's awakenss, God's Springtime. I do not believe that the present time is late Fall, or early Winter in human affairs. I do look, in this Springtime, for the destruction and the passing of many things which we have revered with idolatrous devotion. For Spring in nature, let us not forget, is a time of devastating floods, as well as of fragrance and flowers, a time of tempestuous gales, as well as of gentle zephyrs.

There are two manifestations, it seems to me, of God's judgment in the

secular order of our time. God has taught, and is still teaching our generation, that it never pays to be vindictive, whether in personal affairs or in international relations. We and our rulers indulged in the luxury of being vengeful in Europe. In our dealings with the German people, for example, we went far beyond the necessities of justice and of reasonable security. We demanded unconditional submission which only the Almighty has a right to demand. We undertook to execute the vengeance which belongs to God alone. The moment any man or nation undertakes to mete out retribution, the whirlwind of God's judgment overtakes them. That is happening to us today. If we had been less vindictive and more merciful in our Central European policy we should be facing a quite different situation at this present time. How different is the situation we find in Japan as a result of MacArthur's policy towards the Japanese people! During an hour which I spent with the General, ten months ago, in Tokyo, he expounded to me his philosophy of the occupation of Japan. "It has been my great desire," he said, "in our relations with the Japanese people to embody and turn loose in the world of our time the idea of Jesus that men should love their enemies." The result is that in the friendship which has grown up between the Japanese and American peoples we have a situation unparalleled in human annals between a conquering nation and the nation which it vanquished.

But there is another note of judgment. There is a sizzling sound, a crackling flame, an eerie rumbling in the abyss. Communism as it has broken forth on the world of today is in a very real sense a manifestation of God's judgment. Now Communism cannot be

explained in terms of mere reaction against injustice. There are positive elements in Communism. There is a materialistic ideology at the core of it. There is a religious fanaticism in it. There is no regard whatever for human freedom or personality in its policy. But Marx, Lenin and Stalin would not have met the success they have had, were it not that the laws of God had been betrayed in the religious and political order in Russia, and in the economic and social order in many countries of Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Where no concern is manifest for the poor and the oppressed, where human exploitation takes place, the occasion is provided, and it is now being provided in many parts of the world, for Communism to move in. Unless we take seriously what the Bible says in the Old Testament and in the New about responsibility for the poor and the oppressed, God's judgments shall be in the earth and its inhabitants shall have to learn righteousness by a severe pedagogical process.

But in this Springtime of God there appears also the almond spray of mercy. I venture to say that in the political order it became manifest in Korea. The calm adventurous decision which led a group of nations under the leadership of this country to take a stand for such principles of international order as we have, in order to prevent the forces of "ancient Night" from treading ruthlessly over a beloved and afflicted people, is a positive manifestation of God's Springtime. While very different opinions may be held as to the international policy in the Orient which lay behind the Korean crisis, nations which had any regard for righteousness were obliged to take the stand which they did

in opposing aggression. But all this has been purely in the secular order.

I now turn to clear manifestations of God's sovereign action in the spiritual realm, where there is much to cause us hope and good cheer at the present time. God's Springtime can be, as I have already said, a tumultuous time, a time of hurricane and storm, but it is also the time when flowers bloom. When one evening last year I spoke in the city of Seoul to one thousand young people, all of whom were looking forward to some form of full-time Christian service, I saw before me the almond spray in blossom. In this hour of tragic gloom let us not forget that Korea is a land in which we witness one of the most signal triumphs of the Christian religion in a large, vital, and evangelistic Church.

Another shoot of almond blossom appeared in Germany quite recently. A few weeks ago there took place in that tragic land an event quite unprecedented in modern or ancient history. In the great stadium in Essen in the Ruhr one hundred and eighty thousand people gathered in the name of Christ to encourage one another to face life in His strength. Fritz Keienburg, one of our four German students of last year, sent me some days ago an article entitled, "Gospel and Guns," which I subsequently turned over to *Presbyterian Life* for publication. It is a marvelous description of the great event.

But there are still more evidences of God's Springtime. On the fringe of what we call traditional, or ecclesiastical Christianity, some remarkable spiritual movements are taking place. We may not be able to give our approval to every phase of what is happening, or to sanction all that is involved. We are not asked to do that. But things are hap-

pening which constitute a part, a rough but buoyant part, of the great bursting forth of God's Springtime.

This past Summer I passed through Portland, Oregon, at a time when the evangelist Billy Graham was being listened to by crowds of over one hundred thousand. I learned that churches in the great Oregon city were getting behind that simple, non-college trained man, an intimate friend of our own Charles Templeton. The churches cannot ignore the phenomenon which this young man presents. And then there is the Youth for Christ Movement, the IntersVarsity Movement, the Pentecostals, all of whom are doing an amazing work in many parts of the world. These groups are oftentimes frowned at as Christianity's "lunatic fringe" because of certain objectional features which they manifest. Yet, according to the clear evidence of spiritual results, they are doing a great work in which God is present. As to the fruits that may be garnered from these movements into the storehouse of the Christian Church, that will depend upon the sympathy, the good judgment, and the statesmanship of Christian churchmen. Among the things which I have learned in my lifetime, both by experience and observation, is this: never to be afraid of a young fanatic or of what appears to be a fanatical movement, if Jesus Christ is the supreme object of devotion. On the other hand, I am terribly afraid of a cold, frigid, professionally-aired Christianity which is interested only in form. The young fanatic, if wisely dealt with, can be toned down and mellowed. However, nothing short of the sepulcher awaits those who identify conventional order and aesthetic devotion with spiritual life.

But happily we do not need to look

towards the fringes of the Christian Church today in order to discover manifestations of Christian reality. Things are happening in our organized Church life, and very dramatically in the life of our own Presbyterian Church, to which most of us here belong, that clearly announce the Springtime of God. Many of you will have read that remarkable recent article in *The Christian Century*, in the "Great Churches of America" series, on The First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. It was my privilege this past Summer to preach three times on one Sunday to that great congregation and to spend two weeks in the conference grounds which the church owns in the San Bernardino mountains. I am not going to repeat what the article in question says, but I feel justified in affirming that I know no church in the United States which is doing all that this church is doing for its five thousand members. Every relationship is personalized, and all activities are carried on in a multiplicity of small groups. Many churches with but a fraction of the membership of that Hollywood Church are not reaching their people in the personal way which is being done there! I am proud to think how very many students from the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood have come in recent years to Princeton Seminary. Their zeal does us much good on this campus. And I think we on our part do something to them for their good. A great deal of mutual learning takes place, and no small amount of spiritual cross fertilization.

And then there is the remarkable New Life Movement in our Presbyterian Church. This Movement which has adopted as its emblem the famous crest of John Calvin—a flaming heart

in an open hand, is exerting a potent influence. The words of Calvin's crest, "My heart I give thee, Lord, eagerly and sincerely," opens up the religious commitment which is at the heart of the Reformed tradition and which constitutes the very core of evangelical Christianity. There is evidence that the denomination to which most of us here belong sincerely desires a renewal of life and a spiritual awakening. That awakening is coming, I believe. It is on the way, not only here, but in Germany, and in Korea, and around the world. Despite appearances, regardless of the gloom, and the sizzling and the crackling, and the Hell brew, God's Springtime is upon us. It is coming even though between us and the full freshness of the Spring there may lie a veritable Valley of the Shadow of Death. But that valley, too, is embraced in God's Springtime.

The Rise of the Ecumenical Movement

Another evidence of God's Springtime in the world of today is the rise of the Ecumenical Movement. We come now to things more directly related to the formal structure which the work of the Spirit takes. In this term "ecumenical," and still more in the reality, two things are involved: world-wideness and unity. The word "ecumenical" comes from *oikoumenē* which in the Greek means "the inhabited earth." What is the Ecumenical Movement? It is the movement that aims to give world-wideness and unity to all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. There could be no ecumenical church, no church community co-extensive with the inhabited globe, had it not been for the missionary movement of the last one hundred and fifty years. The modern missionary movement has

been the most notable movement in history. It thrills one to think that in the history of the missionary movement, which made possible the recent organization of a World Council of Churches, Princeton Seminary has played no small or mean part. The founders of young churches in many parts of the world lived on this campus, roomed in these dormitories, and were graduates of this institution.

It was my privilege, this past Summer, to examine the autograph album of a student who graduated from Princeton Seminary in 1858, almost one hundred years ago. That student was Sheldon Jackson. You men of the Choir who went to Alaska this Summer will attach real significance to this name, for Sheldon Jackson was the great pioneer of home missions in the American Northwest and right up to Alaska. As I glanced through the pages of Jackson's album, two names in particular caught my eye. They were the names of Daniel McGilvary and Ashbel Green Simonton. They were seminary contemporaries of Jackson. Who were they? McGilvary was the founder of Christian missionary work in Thailand. He gave his life for Christ in that country where he worked for fifty years. Last December I stood beside McGilvary's grave in the cemetery of Chiang-mai, five hundred miles north of Bangkok. Facing me here in this audience are two young pastors of the Church of Christ in Thailand who are this year members of our Seminary family.

And who was Ashbel Green Simonton? He was a graduate of this Seminary and a member of the Presbytery of Carlisle in Pennsylvania, who became the pioneer of Presbyterian work in Brazil. Simonton went to Brazil in 1859 and died there eight years later.

Several members of the great Presbyterian Church which he founded are here with us tonight. The centennial of the churches founded by McGilvary and Simonton will be celebrated within the next decade. It has pleased God to honor this Seminary with sending more missionaries to the foreign field than has any other first-class Seminary in the United States. The missionaries I have mentioned are just three of a great company who were pioneers of Christ's Church Universal.

Ecumenical also involves unity. In Greek times the *oikoumenē* was that part of the inhabited earth which received its unity from Greek culture. For the Romans the *oikoumenē* was that great area of the globe whose unity was determined by Roman law. In our time the *oikoumenē* is constituted by all those people in every part of the world who acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and who strive to manifest their unity in him. Today loyalty to Jesus Christ provides the unifying principle which was once provided by Greek culture and by Roman law.

Many very erroneous ideas exist regarding the Ecumenical Movement. There are those who affirm that the central trend in the Ecumenical Movement is towards a watery, diluted, lavender-hued doctrinal basis. That is simply not true. Because the World Council of Churches is a council and not a church, it can have no elaborate creed. But it does have one article which is absolutely basic. The Council is a fellowship of those churches who acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. Moreover, not only does the World Council of Churches take the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ seriously, it also begins to take seriously the missionary responsibility of the

Christian Church. It is surely an important fact that the two great ecumenical bodies of our time, the International Missionary Council which represents the missionary movement and the World Council of Churches which represents the ecclesiastical movement, are now officially associated with one another. At a meeting held recently at Whitby, Canada, it was decided that the topic, "The Missionary Obligation of the Church," should be discussed next Summer at the meeting, in Switzerland, of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Thus, issues that relate, on the one hand, to the faith and order of the Christian Church, and to its missionary responsibility, on the other, are being blended together. This means a recognition of the fact that ecclesiastical harmony and theological understanding should become the occasion for an aggressive missionary policy to make Jesus Christ known, loved and obeyed among men.

But now let me rebut another false notion. It is said that an effort is on foot to create one giant, super church which would control all the member churches. That is utterly untrue. In the official declaration regarding the nature of the Council, which was adopted at the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, the following statement occurs: "While earnestly seeking fellowship in thought and action of all its members, the Council disavows any thought of becoming a single, unified church structure, independent of the churches which have joined in constituting the Council, or a structure dominated by a centralized administrative authority."

That means this. We who are close to the Ecumenical Movement do not propose to Romanize Protestantism. I have

detected no desire in any quarter for one single, great administrative unity. What is happening, rather, within the Ecumenical Movement is a resurgence of the denominational spirit, which might be called Ecumenical Denominationalism. While this resurgence of denominational interest could easily disrupt the Ecumenical Movement and betray Jesus Christ, it should be observed that the new denominationalism is not sectarian in the old sense. It is committed to the ecumenical unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. But a denominational emphasis may be the way in which Christian reality can be given to the Ecumenical Movement. This can happen if each denomination, in utter loyalty to Jesus Christ, examines itself in the light of Holy Scripture, and by sloughing off, through a rigid process of self-criticism, all that is purely human, selfish and conditioned by time, brings the unique thing which the Spirit of God said to it or did through it, as its contribution to the one Church of Jesus Christ.

Here let me pause a moment. There are two great foes of the Ecumenical Movement which I must mention. One of these is Romanism. Romanism represents the tendency to deify a single church. The Roman Catholic Church is regarded as the one and only Church of Jesus Christ. When a Church, however, makes such a claim, it ceases to be a Church and becomes a sect. And the truth is that the Roman Communion is the greatest of all the sects. But it is more than a pretentious sect. It takes the place of Deity. By a process of inexorable logic applied to its particularly exalted view of its own nature, and in its arrogance going beyond Holy Scripture and the earliest Christian tradition, it has proclaimed its latest doctrine, that

of the Assumption of the Virgin. Communism rejects God. Let me say, with calm deliberateness and with no tinge of bigotry, that the Roman Church *becomes* God. It arrogates to itself the attributes of Deity. The assumption of absolute spiritual authority by the religious hierarchy, headed by one who regards himself in the most absolute sense as the vicegerent of Jesus Christ, represents history's greatest aberration from the Christian faith. Over against the Roman claim, the Ecumenical Movement proclaims "Where Christ is, there is the Church." It denies the Roman dictum: "Where the Church is, there is Christ."

The other foe of the Ecumenical Movement is a group in the Protestant camp. From the pronouncements and actions of this group their slogan might be defined as, "Schism be thou my good." This movement is led by individuals who believe that we are living in an era when the Church is predestined to be apostate. According to the particular view, commonly called "dispensationalist," which they impose upon Holy Scripture, nothing good can be expected in our time. Believing on a priori grounds that there can be no movements of the Spirit in this generation, such movements as presume to be inspired by the Spirit are denounced as anti-Christ and apostate. What is required of true Christians is to abandon the traditional Christian churches, just as Paul desired the Christians in Corinth to leave the company of pagans when he said, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate."

According to the view of this particular group, the surest mark of Christian insight and of the working of grace in a Christian, is his capacity to discern error in other Christians and his re-

solve to have nothing whatever to do with them. Maintaining that the whole secular order is doomed, that God has no interest in it, and that the sooner evil reaches its climax the better, Christians should feel no responsibility whatever for this world. Here is the projection into the Christian realm of that nihilism which has been rampant in the world of our time. What true Christians, according to this view, should do is to declaim, denounce, disrupt, holding aloft the banner of division. And so men whose chief bond of unity is their opposition to unity, proclaim "Schism be thou my good." This they do in much the same strain and spirit as the lost Archangel in Milton's *Paradise Lost* who, filled with hate and plotting against God's handwork in Eden shouted "Evil be thou my good."

Romanist monism on the one hand, and this Protestant nihilism, on the other, are both a betrayal of the Scriptures, of Jesus Christ, and of the Christian Church.

The Resurgence of the Laity

But I now come, finally, to the third manifestation of God's Springtime, the resurgence of the laity in the Church of today. It is clear from the New Testament that all church functionaries will ultimately be judged by the success or failure which they have had in "equipping the saints for the work of ministering." All Christians, whether clerical or lay, are required by the New Testament to be "ministers," in the sense that they must take with equal seriousness their membership in the Body of Christ and discharge their full Christian responsibility. What the Reformers meant by "the priesthood of all believers" has been interpreted too frequently in a very unilateral way. A

Christian has been regarded as a "priest" in that it is his privilege to approach Deity through Jesus Christ. But to be a priest means something much more than this. It means to accept full Christian responsibility to bear witness to Jesus Christ in one's personal life and lay vocation as much as any professional minister of religion.

It is a very terrible fact that in many Christian communions, in the Roman Communion, of course, to an extreme degree, but in many Protestant communions to some degree, there has been a chasm between the clergy and the laity. The practice has grown up in many American churches of giving to the laity only those tasks which have to do with material needs, with organization, finance and buildings. The laity have not been prepared for the discharge of spiritual tasks, nor expected seriously to engage in vocal witness to their Christian faith. Very many members of the laity are in consequence no more than alumni of the churches to which they belong. Now to be an alumnus is, in academic circles, to be something very reputable, but for church members to regard themselves as alumni is positively disastrous. Yet this is precisely what is happening. Christian churches in the United States have thousands and tens of thousands of loyal alumni who feel kindly disposed towards the Church, who would, when called upon, stand up for the Church and fight for its interests, who support the Church and come back to it on great festive occasions such as the installation of a new minister, or at Advent or Easter time. But when they come to church at Christmas it is not because Christ has been born within them, and when they throng the sanctuary at Easter time it is not because they have been risen, or desire to be risen

with Christ. There are European churches, especially those which have a state connection, where church members are alumni to an extent much greater than is true in our American churches. It was the recognition of this devastating fact, the lack of seriousness with which the vast majority of church members took the affairs of the Christian Church, that led Karl Barth to speak against the doctrine of infant baptism. He saw that no one was taking his baptism seriously. Infant baptism did not seem to do anything for the people who had been baptized, so why have it at all?

Happily, however, there is today in Christian churches throughout the world a great resurgence of Christian interest on the part of the laity. Lay men and women have an intense desire to know more perfectly what the Christian religion is. They desire to be used by the Christian Church to serve Jesus Christ their Lord. This resurgence of the laity is one of the most thrilling things in contemporary Christian history. In literary circles today the people who are making the most decisive contribution to Christian thought are members of the laity. Among the poets there are T. E. Eliot and W. H. Auden. No members of the clergy in Great Britain have recently exerted a greater Christian influence than Dorothy Sayers and C. S. Lewis. Here in the United States we have such outstanding laymen as Francis Sayre and John Foster Dulles, and Charles Taft. During my visit to Thailand last year I found that, after Abraham Lincoln, no foreigner is so revered by the people of Thailand as Francis B. Sayre. It was while Mr. Sayre was American minister in Bangkok that through his influence the last vestige of foreign imperialism disappeared from Thailand. One can thank

God that our State Department has as an official advisor a man so utterly devoted to Jesus Christ and the great principles of the Christian religion as is John Foster Dulles.

In most churches today there is a layman's movement. The men are following the women in organizing themselves for Christian action. Most important in this connection is the desire expressed by an increasing number of the laity to represent Jesus Christ worthily in their secular calling, not only to bear witness to him, but also to introduce His Spirit and principles into their secular vocation, whether commerce or industry, medicine or law, education or politics. In this highly secularized, sophisticated generation of ours no one is so strategically situated as a layman to make a Christian impact on his environment. But the laity must be prepared for this service and they look to the clergy to prepare them. But if we members of the clergy are to give our lay people the preparation they need, we must begin by recognizing the fact that many of them are much better educated and far more enthusiastic than we are. It means that a "parson" must become a "person," one who can be looked up to by every man and woman in his congregation as a true leader in the great cause of Jesus Christ. Otherwise only failure awaits us. But what a thrill it should give us to feel that the laity are now ready, as scarcely ever before in the religious history of this country, to enter into spiritual comradeship with us ministers to bear witness to Jesus Christ on every frontier of our time. I repeat: this resurgence of Christian interest among the laity is a clear manifestation of God's Springtime.

So all is not dark. The Abyss becomes a valley. Milton shut in Hell with

gates of adamantine stone, but John Bunyan made the region of the Shadow of Death not an abyss but a valley. After the Pilgrim's terrible experiences in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, dawn at last greeted his weary steps. Just as the sun was rising, Christian exclaimed in the words of Job, "His candle shineth on my head and by His light I go through darkness." (Job 29:3) And Bunyan adds: "In this light he came to the end of the valley."

Colleagues, fellow students, and friends, this is the great hope set before us, that the abyss of our time shall become a valley through which we may pass to a better time. Let us play our part valiantly in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, as God leads us on through its dark recesses and its tortuous and dangerous paths. Shafts of light flush the horizon. Let us not cast away our confidence which has great recompense of reward. As sojourners and pilgrims in the comradeship of the Risen Lord himself, the Lord of Death and of Life, who formed the King's Highway for the use of pilgrims, let us march towards the far end of the valley, our faces lit with the streaks of the dawn.

"Compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," with Jackson and McGilvary and Simonton, not to speak of a host of others, let us too "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us and look unto Jesus, the Author and the Perfecter of our faith." In His light let us see light, in His love let us walk.

And so may we look forward together to one of the greatest years in our personal and seminary history for the sake of Christ's Church which is His Body, and for His Kingdom's coming.