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A FOREWORD.

The world will never again be what it was before the war. There have been vast social, political, commercial and geographical changes and the end is not yet. Has the war affected the Church and the progress of Christianity? Will the Church have to change some of her methods of work and some of her forms of organization? Are there any lessons which the Church can learn from the war? These and similar questions are to the fore at present and are insistent. It has therefore seemed wise to the editors to issue a special number of the Union Seminary Review on The Church and the War. In this number we have articles from men who have been thrown into the closest touch with our soldiers and men who are leaders in the Church.

Dr. Edward Mack was for a number of months director of religious work at Marines' Camp, Quantico, Va. Incidentally we may add that Dr. Mack studied at the University of Berlin and is familiar with European history.

Dr. Macfarland traveled all over France and had the most intimate conferences with the political, military and religious leaders of France and Belgium.

*Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman has preached all around the world and since the war has been thrown into the closest touch with our soldiers. At present he is one of the leading spirits in the New Era Movement of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.

* Since the above was written Dr. Chapman has been called to his reward. There will be many stars in his crown. The Southern Presbyterian Church will miss him greatly.

RELIGION FOR MEN.

BY THE REV. W. T. THOMPSON, JR.,

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It is both easy and dangerous to generalize from too few particulars. A man's experience may be limited, yet he will boldly make the broadest affirmations, confident of their truth, when, with more light, he will laugh at their absurdity

May I say at the outset, therefore, that I am not daring to dogmatize. My ministry has been short, and while I have had some opportunities to meet and know men, as pastor of a church that touches the student life of a State university, and as a Y. M. C. A. secretary in two army camps, I am sure that I shall fail to state some things that are vital, and say others that with maturer judgment I should modify or materially change.

This article is written because I feel the tremendous need of reaching, and holding, and firing with a passion for Christ, our young men. Those who have been in the army and will exercise an influence in our national life out of proportion to their number, and those who, while they have stayed at home, have been quickened by the greatness of these times. Yea, and those who, untouched by a world's travail, still frequent the pool rooms, crowd the movies and loiter on our streets.

The only way for us to understand the need of these men, and to prepare to satisfy it, is for us to speak frankly as we see the situation and not keep silent.

1. These men need a *reasonable religion*.

In a thought-provoking book, "God and the Soldier," by Drs. Slater and McLean, two Scotch chaplains, we soon meet this sentence: "A state of mind is engendered in the trenches which makes for sharp criticism of traditional positions. Chris-

tian teachers will be put on their mettle in days to come by men who want plain English on fundamental matters."

As a matter of fact Christian teachers have been facing for some time those who questioned "traditional positions" as an increasing number of our young men and women have attended our universities and studied there, in an atmosphere unfriendly often to Christian faith, psychology, philosophy, comparative literature, and the physical and biological sciences. Many of these students to begin with have had no predisposition in favor of the Bible. They know little of its contents, its influence upon the world's life, they have small reverence for it. Naturally they question. While those who came from Christian homes in many cases have only an inherited faith, which they accepted without any testing whatsoever. Naturally their experience in college is disturbing. For us to say to these young men and women dogmatically, belligerently, "the Bible says so, you must believe therefore," will not convince, for with them the Bible itself and the religion it presents are under suspicion.

Of course we can comfort ourselves by saying, "Not many wise men after the flesh are called," and let these men go without making any effort to reach them. But Paul went to Athens and dealt with the philosophers on Mars Hill. For us to make no attempt to touch them is to confess that with an increase of knowledge men discredit our religion, just as a child as his experience enlarges, outgrows his belief in Santa Claus and fairies. Would it not be better to make an honest endeavor to show these men, however they have been moved to question, that with a fuller knowledge, when both religion and science have been fairly examined and properly understood, there is no conflict? That as in the case of George J. Romanes, if they will be sincere and pursue their studies a little further, with "the will to believe," recognizing that reason is not the only faculty for discovering the truth, they will advance from doubt to a more certain, satisfying faith.

While there is this conscious need on the part of those outside of the Church for a religion that appears to be in harmony

with the facts of life, there is a semi-conscious need on the part of many in our churches. They have read, or heard echoes from books by authors like Winston Churchill and H. G. Wells, they have found in the current magazines articles dealing with religion, some frankly critical, others suggesting doubt, and they are somewhat shaken and uneasy in their faith. Affirmations help unquestionably, but distressed friends would be more quickly and thoroughly satisfied if our declarations were supported by facts.

There may be more of this than some of us realize. Several months ago I became very much interested in a book by David Smith, entitled, "The Historic Jesus." It moved me to prepare a sermon establishing the divine character of Jesus, against those who considered him the product of the idealizing tendency of his day and of the following years, by comparing the record we have of his life in the gospels with other accounts of him, and with lives of ideal men created to compete with him. After I had written it, I wondered if there was need for such a sermon, and if it would not be better to preach on some other subject. I had asked the Lord, however, for direction in the choice of a topic and its treatment, and concluded at length that I could trust Him for the result. After the sermon on Sunday, and during the week, some of my most thoughtful men came to me and thanked me for preaching along that particular line, as they had wondered again and again if the gospels pictured the real Jesus. Sermons of a similar nature have produced a similar expression from the people.

Last summer I attended a conference of nearly a hundred men, a third of whom were ministers. One of its most interesting courses was a fresh study of the Christian Life, showing its reasonableness as one approached it in a scientific way with the findings of philosophy and psychology in mind. It was too naturalistic in dealing with some truths of the Christian faith as I believed them, but it was very helpful to one's faith in other truths. The ministers, missing the old formulas, the words which to them interpreted the Christian life, were dis-

turbed no little. The laymen, hearing the truth in their own dialect, and seeing it supported by facts they could understand, were frankly delighted and more than one said to me with his face glowing, "I thought faith was a blind thing, that it put a premium on ignorance, and I have been afraid now and then that something would happen to make me lose my faith. I am so happy in a new certainty." We need a presentation of Christianity in terms the average man can understand, and such an interpretation will prove the very best apologetic we can have.

Dr. Burrell in the last number of *The Biblical Review* pleads for "a Bible in the vernacular." After reading his article one agrees with him that we need a version "couched in the language of our common life," so that the people may understand its meaning.

Do we not need as well a theology that interprets the truths of this Bible in such a way that they will be clear to the minds of people whose whole intellectual training differs from that of their fathers? Should we be bound by the forms of thought our fathers held any more than by the words of an old version of Scripture if in doing that we fail to make the truth plain? There is no virtue in ancient phrases if they be not understood. "The task of the theologian," of the preacher assuredly, "is to make real to his own generation the great abiding truths of Christianity."

Men tell us we must preach the simple gospel, and often mean by that the repetition of well known phrases. To preach a gospel that is simple indeed is for us to take these phrases and words which, by their familiarity and their distance from the every-day thought of the people, have lost their meaning, and make their content clear.

While at Camp Jackson I heard an evangelist, after telling some pathetic stories about the love of mother, appeal to the men to "come to Jesus," to "come forward and take me by the hand," to "believe on Jesus." Sixteen came to the front. We went into the inquiry room where he asked them to sign the war roll. I found that all of them had been members of some

church and that several had signed the war roll already. What those men needed was not exhortation to believe, but instruction in the meaning of faith.

These men, believing that their country was at war and that her honor was at stake, had been stirred to the depths of their hearts and had committed their lives to her cause. Would it have been hard to show them as Clark does in his "Philosophy of Christian Experience," that a complete faith in such a truth as Christ's love and death, and his desire to have them for his friends and co-workers, does not consist in intellectual assent nor in aroused emotions merely, but in the yielding of the will and life to him as well?

This would have been the simple gospel to them. The faith they were called on to exercise seemed to consist in a few steps, a few sobs, and a little handshaking, so that the next day they were ready to respond to another appeal.

How often did I meet men who had accepted Christ as best they knew how and were left without any instruction about Christian growth. An explanation of the Christian life in terms of friendship, and of the laws governing the deepening of such a relation, somewhat after the fashion of Henry Churchill King in "The Laws of Friendship," seemed to satisfy and help. It was a new gospel to some of them, but they felt it was the simple gospel.

One cannot expect to make all of the facts of our religion crystal clear. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" To have a religion that could be altogether fathomed by the mind would be to have a religion that would not be big enough to satisfy the heart.

We must not try to be too plain, too modern, to "cheapen into clarity" the great experiences of the soul. We must not reduce all of our great words and exquisite figures to too common a denominator. It will mean more to our people to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," than to say, "I believe in special providences."

We must also be careful lest we raise more doubts than we

settle—our preaching must be positive. But we must endeavor to make our religion as beautiful and plain to the every-day man as we can.

President Wilson, in presenting the terms of the armistice to Congress, said he desired the conquered nations to know that the allies have a heart as well as a mind; we want those who hear us preach to know that we have a mind as well as a heart. We must make our religion appear reasonable to the thoughtful man, and intelligible to the ignorant man, so that the one will believe and the other will grow.

It will take work to do this—patient, painstaking, humble, prayerful study of God's word, careful examination of great books, earnest, accurate thinking. But when we are dealing with the supreme issues of life; when we are facing men whose souls are in the balances, we should be willing to toil that we might interpret aright to them our gospel, which is their sole hope.

If "religion is the reality of which theology is the expression," and preaching the popular interpretation and personal application, we must be sure that our teaching and preaching reveal that reality. We must search our hearts with the questions—am I hiding Christ? Am I making it hard for men to know God? Am I preventing their spiritual growth by an inadequate presentation of the truth?

We must follow our Master, who challenged the reason of men, by his miracles, by his words, by claiming for them self-evidencing power if they were obeyed; who presented his body to Thomas; who strove to make the truth equally clear to Nicodemus and the woman by the well!

2. Men need an ethical and positive gospel.

An unmistakable emphasis is being placed by the world on character today. The men in the army have their own code, they see a distinction between right and wrong, and if a religion does not demand and produce righteousness, they will have none of it.

An old chaplain said in my hearing to a group of his fellows in a discussion of the chaplain's personal life, "Don't you men

think you can win these soldiers by letting down a bit. They know what is right and if you aren't true, they will despise you."

Men regard religion with the same critical eye—it is not enough therefore for us to emphasize the belief in certain honored creeds, nor the joy and rich emotion that our faith yields. Of course I do not discount dogma for a moment and no one with his eye on Germany could fail to see that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," that creed creates character. Nor would I belittle the place of emotion in religion, no one who has studied Dabney's *Moral Philosophy* could do that. I simply mean that today when psychology teaches that all thought tends to action, that that which is unexpressed dies, putting emphasis on will and action; when the thought of the world is concerned with life, when the social philosophy has replaced the individualistic, we must put the emphasis on man's life in his relation to his fellows that our religion does.

Jesus says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind,—this is the first and great commandment." Some men read that, this is the first and *only* commandment. It is unquestionably and inevitably the first commandment; it is just as inevitably not the only commandment—"on these *two* hang all the law and the prophets." The second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," has its place. How could we even love God unless we loved our fellowmen? "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Neither can we satisfy a Christ who speaks the beatitudes and utters the scathing "woes," if our life is unethical.

You notice that while the decalogue puts the emphasis on the negative life, "Thou shalt not" being the key word, Jesus puts the stress on the positive life. "Thou shalt" is his command. In innumerable ways he sets before us his desire that we be positively righteous. It is the barren fig tree that is cursed, the rich man who has no care for the beggar at his door that we see in Gehenna, the servant who did nothing with

his talent who is cast out, the people who went through a needy world with their hands in their pockets, indifferent to its pain, who are condemned to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

It is said of Christ himself not only that he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, but that he went about doing good. Paul presses this thought of the positive life when he summons us to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. James likewise follows in his Master's train when he says, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

How absurd for us therefore to magnify the negative side. To make our gospel's chief note, "Quit your meanness." To judge our members Christians indeed because they refrain from certain sins when they may be harsh, unkind, selfish, without a thought for the welfare of their fellows.

We do well to meditate upon a passage in Tiplady's "Cross at the Front," "I was in an officers' mess some time ago, and they were discussing a new arrival. One of them said, 'He is very quiet; he doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, doesn't play bridge, and doesn't swear.' 'He must be religious,' concluded another. That is it. The words were not spoken in malice. It is the conception of a Christian that we have given them. If the new officer had been described as cheerful, generous, hospitable, and brave, they would not have concluded that he must be religious."

If this is a just estimate of the judgment of men, isn't it a terrible criticism of our presentation of the great positive gospel of the generous, helpful, active Christ? How false and hurtful to the cause of Christ is the preaching that does not convince men that his gospel is ethical and positive.

This demands of his ministers a white life, a rich love for men, a service that takes no thought of self.

3. Men need a *comprehensive religion*.

By a comprehensive religion I mean first one that recognizes that man isn't simply an isolated spirit but that he has in addition a body, a mind and a social nature. The Y. M. C. A. con-

ception of man, which is thoroughly Biblical, should become ours.

We must therefore encourage learning, knowing that the larger a man's knowledge, if he keeps humble, the clearer will be his understanding of God, the profounder his love for Him, the more satisfying his faith in Him, the purer and happier his life. Jesus delights in Paul, whose genius makes him all the more happy in Christ.

To discredit the body is to miss the meaning of psychology which shows us the unity of man, mind and body. Jesus so well understood this. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile," he says, lest like Elijah in physical weariness you lose your grip on spiritual things. Our religion demands our bodies to be presented "a living sacrifice," 100 per cent. sound and efficient. It were a shame for us to discourage proper athletics and exercise and to put a premium on pallor and anemia.

The child Jesus "grew in favor with man" and the man Christ Jesus is one of the joyous party at the wedding feast. He sits again and again at a friendly board. He enjoys the company of congenial spirits. Should we not, therefore, instead of setting ourselves against the social life of our day, as though it were all evil, seek to direct it and make it as it should be, an influence for the deepening and broadening of character? Such a religion will appeal to our eager, active, wholesome men as altogether sane and will capitalize, control and develop their splendid energies for Christ.

As we want a religion that deals with the whole man, so we want one that deals with the whole of mankind. That feels its responsibility for the last man in the world and for setting him right in all his relationships. A religion that knows that upon the salvation of the individual man, his pardon by Christ, his new life in Christ, his adjustment to others by Christ—his *full* salvation, depends the solution of all of our problems, industrial, social, political, international. Such a religion, the religion of the Christ who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and of Paul, who said,

“I am a debtor to all men” is a *big* religion. It will appeal to the heroic spirit which has already been aroused in men by the tasks and perils of this war. It will attract men who have become devoted to great leaders, and who have felt loyalty for causes that would minister to our suffering humanity.

To be the minister of such a gospel one must himself be a man, a well rounded man as far as in him lies, a man with a world vision and passion, and a complete devotion to his great Saviour.

Such is my conception of the religion needed just now by men, the religion that will prove attractive to men and effective in their lives. A religion reasonable, positive, comprehensive. It is not a new religion they need, but ministers who will give them, under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit, in loyalty to their Saviour and to the supreme opportunity of this hour, a fresh, vigorous, satisfying, convincing interpretation of the old gospel.