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The Christian Faith and Mental Health

The First Article in a New Series on This Subject

By the REV. EDWARD HEEREMA

Spiritual Advisor at the Christian Sanatorium, Midland Park, New Jersey

Encourage the fainthearted, support the weak (I Thess. 5:14).

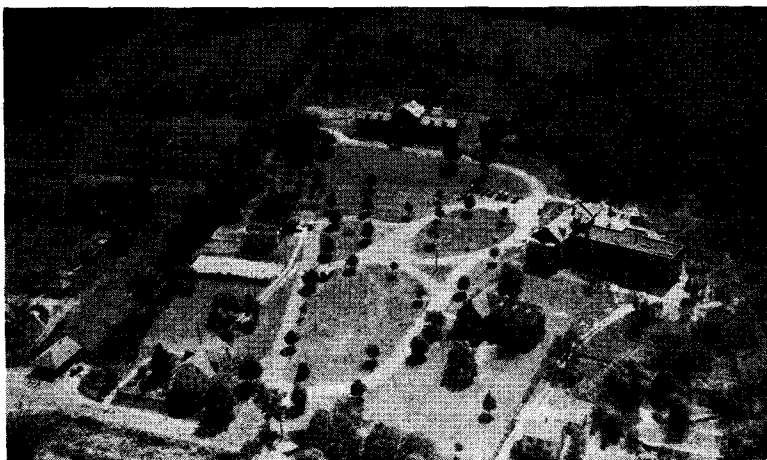
ON THE sloping side of one of the wooded hills of northern New Jersey is a compound of buildings dedicated to a unique and noble purpose. The restful sweeping lawns, the silver birches and the clear invigorating air of the hills all suggest the nature of that purpose. Here, aloof from the clatter of commerce and the trying tempo of industry, Christian men and women are seeking to bring rest and healing to sick minds and shaken nerves.

Hardly a visitor to the Christian Sanatorium of Midland Park, New Jersey, fails to experience the thrill afforded by the vista that unfolds before him as he stands on the steps of the building situated highest on the slope of Goffle Hill. In the summertime a luxuriant carpet of green stretches out before him over the valley floor and reaches to the Ramapo Mountains some ten miles

distant. Employees of years' service must pause a moment to feast their eyes on the far hills. Very clear comes the voice of the psalmist in the words of the well-known psalter, "Unto the hills around will I lift up my longing eyes".

This scene and its inspiration I mention because it illustrates aptly the foundation principle which governs the work at this place where troubled souls come for help. By God's grace the soul must be given a new direction and a new dynamic. Its eyes must be taken from self and from the maze of a garbled experience.

The soul must be directed to the enduring hills, to the God of the hills, to the ever-living God who formed and who keeps the hills, to the God of whom the psalmist also wrote: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting thou art God".



An Aerial View of the Christian Sanatorium, Midland Park, N. J.

A Substitute for Christianity

The Second in a Series of Articles on Princeton Theological Seminary

By the REV. CORNELIUS VAN TIL, Ph.D.

Professor of Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN has from time to time discussed the theological views of members of the Princeton Seminary faculty. This was but natural for a journal committed to the propagation and defense of the Reformed Faith. As has been shown again and again, several of the professors at Princeton, though pledged to defend the Reformed Faith, have departed far from it. For this situation Princeton Seminary as a whole is responsible. The present article, however, deals not with the broad policies of the seminary as a unit. It limits itself to the views of Professor Elmer George Homrighausen.

Before his election as Professor of Christian Education on October 12, 1937, Dr. Homrighausen was known to be very sympathetic to the views of Karl Barth and his school. Not to speak of his activity as a translator of Barth's writings, his book *Christianity in America*, 1936, proves this fact conclusively (see a review of this book in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, Feb., 1938). Now the issue between the Reformed Faith and Barthianism is not limited to the question of Biblical inspiration. It is far wider than that. Barthianism involves an entire reconstruction of all the doctrines of historic Christianity. Not merely Calvinism but also evangelical Christianity is reinterpreted according to the requirements of a nonchristian philosophy. Barthianism has no room for a self-existent God, or for His direct revelation in nature, history, and Scripture. It rejects the historicity of man's creation and fall; it reduces all the acts of Christ's redemption to cosmic events happening to all men alike.

It was this type of theology, apparently, that the authorities at Princeton wanted taught. Yet Dr. Homrighausen's appointment was not confirmed at the 1938 General Assembly. Apparently, in view of certain opposition, the Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries voted to take no action. But Dr. Mackay, President of Princeton Seminary, and himself an ardent devotee of the new

theology, together with the Board of the Seminary, presented Dr. Homrighausen's name again at the 1939 assembly. This time they were prepared with new ammunition. Under date of May 11, 1939, there appeared in *The Presbyterian*, pp. 8f., a brief article from the hand of Dr. Homrighausen, entitled "Convictions", seemingly so orthodox in nature as to be able to silence every critic. And silence every critic it very nearly did. These critics had largely limited their opposition to Dr. Homrighausen's views of Scripture. And now Dr. Homrighausen asserted his view of Scripture in the following words: "As for the Scriptures, I believe they are the only and infallible rule of faith and practice". What more could anyone desire? And as for the other doctrines of Christianity, the following may serve as a sample: "I believe in God's self revelation in actual history, from the beginning and continuing in various and diverse manners throughout Israel's history, until in Jesus Christ He revealed Himself fully, personally, redemptively, finally. I want to emphasize the fact that I believe in historical revelation". After this the storm abated.

When asked what had caused him to change his views since the 1938 assembly, Dr. Homrighausen is said to have made the reply, "I just grew up" (THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, March 10, 1940, p. 78). In *The Christian Century* of April 12, 1939, he gives an account of the stages in his theological growth. There was first, he reports, the stage of orthodoxy, when God was to him an "all-seeing judge". Then came his entrance into the ministry with a "consistent theologic-philosophical intellectualism". There followed, third, a period of liberalism, a substitution of a theology of experience for a theology of intellectualism. After this, he says, he traveled the road to Damascus. "What struck me and my liberalism was the dialectical theology". This fourth stage itself had its stages, until at last the fifth or final stage was reached. It was the stage of inde-

pendence. This final stage was marked by certain criticism but not, he asserts, by a rejection of Barthianism. "To this day I agree with the main tenets of the dialectical theology, and regard them as essential to evangelicalism if it is to revive and meet the issues of the age".

In April, 1939, then, Dr. Homrighausen, as he says, was walking on his own theological legs, and as such was affirming his allegiance to the main tenets of Barthianism. These tenets include the complete rejection of Scripture and history as a direct revelation of God. Yet it was in May of the same year that he wrote his article entitled "Convictions", in which he affirmed his belief in Scripture as the infallible rule of faith and practice, and in which he stressed particularly the fact that God reveals Himself in history. The two positions are flatly contradictory one of another.

But, you say, a month intervened between the publication of these two articles. Perhaps, then, there was also a sixth stage. Perhaps Dr. Homrighausen only thought he was walking on his own theological legs in April, 1939, while in fact his real walking began in May. But quite apart from the strain this puts on our credulity, there is the fact that in the midsummer number of *Christendom* (vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 437ff.) of the same year, Dr. Homrighausen reviewed the book of Edwin Lewis, *The Faith We Declare*, and said of it, "I laid this book down with a sense of envy and gratification. I wish it had been given to me to write it." His entire review is one of enthusiastic approbation. Yet for Lewis the Bible is anything but the infallible rule of faith and practice. Lewis says, for example, "It seems unquestionable, even as the critics say, that the fourth gospel was never written as sober, scientific, objective history" (p. 81; see further the review of this book by John P. Clelland in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1940, pp. 153ff.). The tenets of Lewis' book are very similar to those of Barthianism.

Moreover, in *The Union Review*

under date of May, 1942, Dr. Homrighausen says of the Word of God in relation to Scripture, "This Word is not merely so much literature, static proof texts, or curriculum material. Liberalism has rightly emancipated us from a literal biblicism" (p. 12). If this be caricature, it is at any rate a rejection of the orthodox doctrine of the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Again in "Attend to Your Reading", a pamphlet published in 1942 under the auspices of the American Bible Society, Dr. Homrighausen expresses agreement with Dr. C. H. Dodd's conception of the authority of God's Word in Scripture. But Dodd's book on *The Authority of the Bible* is far as the poles removed from the idea of infallibility. No written word, Dodd argues, can be infallible. "The written word is the medium through which we reach the personality and its experience. It is never a perfect medium,

'For words, like nature, half reveal
And half conceal the soul within.'

But it is the best we have. In almost all parts of the Bible we can feel ourselves in touch with religious personalities, some of them displaying exceptional inspiration, all of them men of insight and sincerity" (p. 295). Or again, "Nowhere is the truth given in such purely 'objective' form that we can find a self-subsistent external authority" (p. 289).

If Dr. Homrighausen in 1942 finds himself in substantial agreement with such sentiments, there must have been in his theological growth a seventh as well as a sixth stage, and the seventh would seem to be virtually identical with the fifth.

Yet it is not the "saga of a soul" but the welfare of souls with which we are concerned. This discussion of dates and growth is by the way. We are taking for granted that Dr. Homrighausen was consistent with himself. The natural answer to this puzzle of dates is that he meant his "orthodox" statement of May, 1939, (in *The Presbyterian*) to be taken as consistent with the main tenets of Barthianism which he held at about the same time and later. That such is the case finds adequate corroboration in his book, *Let the Church Be the Church*, published by the Abingdon-Cokesbury Press in 1940. This book has been reviewed in *THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN* by the Rev. Edward Heerema (Sept. 10,

1941, pp. 54ff). We can say only a few words here.

As is to be expected, this later book is less outspoken in its rejection of orthodoxy than was his earlier one. But the principles on which both books are built are the same. In both a form of nonchristian philosophy is substituted for evangelical Christianity.

The latter book presents an eloquent argument for "God's primacy and contemporary relevancy", but the God actually presented is not primary at all and wholly irrelevant. For He is not the Creator God of Scripture through whom and unto whom are all things. The facts of the world are assumed to be self-existent. To be sure, the term "creation" is used, but as in the case of Barth and Brunner, it is used figuratively. It is used so as to avoid any possible conflict with what evolutionary scientists may wish to say about the origin of this world or of man. The whole domain of nature and history is virtually given over to the non-believing scientist to do with as he pleases. To read the Bible truly, says Dr. Homrighausen in his pamphlet "Attend to Your Reading", we must not look for a Biblical "philosophy of life". If we do we shall not hear the sovereign Word of God (p. 7). The "sovereign Word of God" therefore, according to Dr. Homrighausen, points to a God who has not actually created the universe and has no control over it. But such a God, we reply, is wholly irrelevant and meaningless to man.

With a figurative or metaphorical notion of creation goes a figurative or metaphorical notion of the fall. For Dr. Homrighausen the fall does not refer, any more than the creation, to an historical event. To be sure, he does not go out of his way in this book to attack the doctrine of an original pair called Adam and Eve. Yet his whole argument would fall to the ground if he should give place to them. Adam's creation stands simply for the idea that man has great capacities within him (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 148), and Adam's fall for the idea that man is yet far from having reached the goal he has set for himself. "Man is a 'fallen' creature, a sinner. He falls below his ideal" (*idem*, p. 150). With Barth and Brunner, Dr. Homrighausen might just as well say that we are all Adam. The story of Adam and Eve, we are

told, speaks to us of "man's perennial biography and that of his race" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 8). What happens to Adam—that is, the mythical Adam—happens to all of us in actual life again and again.

Here, according to Dr. Homrighausen, Christ comes into the picture. He brings the ideal we have set for ourselves near to us. Through Him the ideal becomes real; through Him revelation becomes historical. But even so, not directly historical. To say so would be to bury Jesus in the grave-clothes of a theological system. Ordinary calendar history cannot at any point bear the direct revelation of God. Nothing very definite can therefore be said about Jesus and His work. "The cross preaches a personal message" (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 104), and personality is always beyond anything that can be said about it. If then there are those who say that the Cross is unjust, we reply that they are right. But we must also say that they are wrong. "True, from a legal standpoint, it is unjust. But from the personal viewpoint, such 'injustice' is being practised every day, and especially in the highest reaches of personal character" (*idem*, p. 107). In either case, if we are to accept Dr. Homrighausen's presentation, the natural man need take no offence at the Cross. The Cross does not say anything about the realm of science, and in that of personality it merely exemplifies a general principle. The Cross may still be mysterious, but that is because personality, wherever found, is mysterious.

Let us then, the argument virtually continues, contemplate as best we can, with all our mutually contradictory systems of atonement helping us as so many pointers, this marvelous incarnation of personality. "He brought with him a new realm of reality. That is an inescapable fact. In him and through him a new humanity began. He injected a serum of superhuman vitality into the hardening arteries of humanity" (*idem*, p. 175). Here our ideals seem largely to be realized. "According to our best moral judgment, another Jesus has not appeared since or before" (*ibid.*). "How repentant Jesus was! Though dogmatic, yet his dogmatism never rested in himself or in his ideas about God, but in the reality of God!" (*idem*, pp. 36f.). "He came disclosing the real world within ours, which we never

could have found for ourselves. He came telling men—exegiting to them—about their real selves that lie buried and unrecognized within them" (*idem*, p. 32).

With such an impelling exemplification of personality brought comparatively near to us, we cannot help but follow. The church must then be born. "The church is both witness and incarnation; it is God's and man's necessity" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 9). Leaving the Flatlands "where men know but two dimensions" (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 51), we reach out unto God who "is the assurance that the universe is not capricious" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 7). We are now in "the house of personality" with Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick (*Let the Church Be the Church*, p. 54). Into it all may come. The "Divine Embrace" is in its nature all-comprehensive. The "epochal event" that took place in Jesus may take place anywhere and everywhere (*idem*, p. 179). For as we see the "looming mystery of God", we also see, as involved in it, the church as the "looming personal household" (*idem*, p. 135). In its bosom the church has "preserved the dream of an earth redeemed and renovated" (*idem*, p. 139).

To keep this dream ever before us, we must attend to our reading of Scripture. "Through the centuries, the reading of its words have brought to mind the story upon which Christianity rests" ("Attend to Your Reading", p. 4). Through constant reading, the "strange new world of the Bible", the dimension of personality, is made "continuously contemporaneous" to us. And in response we are taken up into that world. "For those who 'read' the Scriptures, there is a restoration of the timeless and eternal element in their thinking and living" (*idem*, p. 8). Thus through contemplation of Christ as pictured in the Bible we can see how God is made human and man is made divine by means of indefinite personal growth.

It is this gospel of personal growth that Dr. Homrighausen would propagate in the church through the influence of his chair in Christian Education at Princeton (see his address on "The Task of Christian Education in a Theological Seminary", *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, July, 1940). It is this purely naturalistic philosophy of personalism that he would use also as

a banner by which to effect church union. Together with Dr. Mackay he has been busily engaged in extending the current ecumenical movement. It is, in short, this personalist philosophy as a substitute for the Reformed Faith, even for historic Christianity, which Princeton Seminary is doing its best to propagate through Dr. Homrighausen's work. It is perfectly plain that for Dr. Homrighausen Scriptures do not tell on their own authority and directly of certain events that have taken place on certain calendar dates in the past; for him there is nothing unique in the past. The past is for him, as for Barth, a dead past. The revelation in history of which he speaks is a revelation in some other history, that merely touches ordinary history as a tangent touches a circle. When he speaks about the Bible as

the infallible rule of faith and practice, and when he speaks of revelation as historical, he, together with the Modernist and the Barthian, merely uses a figure of speech. He is then thinking and speaking "existentially", and to think existentially means in practice to think allegorically, figuratively, and unrealistically about the story of redemption told in the Scripture. By embracing and propagating this sort of theology Princeton Seminary is now undermining and attacking—and in fifth-column fashion—all that for which the Hodges, Warfield and Machen stood.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The first article in this series appeared in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN of January 25th. The third will be published in the February 25th issue.)

Korean Covenanters

By the REV. BRUCE F. HUNT

Orthodox Presbyterian Missionary to Manchuria

PART II

4. THERE IS BUT ONE GOD,

"we know . . . that there is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4).

"yet to us there is one God . . . of whom are all things" (I Cor. 8:6).

"Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6).

AND A CHRISTIAN SHALL NOT HAVE,

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

SERVE,

"nor serve them" (II Kings 17:35).

"and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

NOR SERVE TOGETHER WITH GOD,

"They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away. Unto this day they do after the former manner: they fear not Jehovah, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law or after the commandment which Jehovah commanded the children of Jacob" (II Kings 17:33, 34; cf. II Kings 17:33-40).

WORSHIP,

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy

God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

FEAR,

"Ye shall not fear other gods" (II Kings 17:35).

TRAFFIC WITH,

"or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard or a necromancer" (Deut. 18:10, 11).

BOW TO,

"Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them" (II Kings 17:35).

PRAY TO,

"they have no knowledge that . . . pray unto a god that cannot save" (Isa. 45:20).

"They shall be put to shame together . . . worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god" (Isa. 44:11, 17).

SACRIFICE TO,

"Nor sacrifice to them" (II Kings 17:35; cf. Ex. 22:20 ("destroyed")).

PLACE OFFERINGS IN FRONT OF, OR

PREPARE A TABLE FOR,

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger" (Jer. 7:18).