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The Everlasting Seal of Our Faith

An Easter Meditation by the REV. BURTON L. GODDARD

IN THE year 29 A.D. the state records of Pontius Pilate, Roman procurator of Judæa, perhaps contained some such notation as this: "A certain Jesus called the Nazarene was crucified with other malefactors on the hill of Golgotha". All contemporary records of the crucifixion, with the exception of those found in the Bible, have been lost, but you may be sure of one thing—*had the story of Jesus ended with the cross*, history would have contained no other information than that the carpenter's son was put to death at the request of a hostile element among his fellow Jews.

He had claimed to be the Son of God. He had ostensibly performed many wonderful miracles. He had pronounced forgiveness of sins. He had upbraided men as their Lord, not as a mere fellow-man. He had declared that He would leave this world to sit down at the right hand of the throne of the Father. He had promised to go and prepare a place for His people, that where He was they might be also. He had declared that, though men should kill Him, He would rise again from the dead on the third day.

Yet the hour of death had come, and gone. Passers-by, remembering His extravagant claims to be equal with God, mocked Him by inviting Him to come down from the cross, if He were indeed the Son of God. Instead of vindicating His claims, He hung helplessly between heaven and earth, and cried out in agony of soul as the end came. His own lips testified that He

had been forsaken by God. Messianic deceivers had risen before and would rise again. This Jesus quite fitted such a role. The centurion might cry out, "Truly, this was the Son of God", but history would not and could not agree with him. All it could say was that a man named Jesus had been put to death.

He had left behind Him a high moral teaching. He had lived a noble life. He had had a large following, though His band of disciples had rapidly diminished in number toward the last. The close circle of loyal followers had every one failed in the hour of crisis. There is no record that even one man or woman in all the world had any hope that he would see Jesus again alive or that His teaching would be perpetuated among men. He had founded no new religion. He had left no church or organization behind Him. He had not at all performed the expected work of the Messiah. He left no gospel, no faith. His enemies had triumphed over Him. His passing left His disciples in darkness and dismal hopelessness. He had failed. The confidence of His followers had been misplaced.

So it seemed. And so it must have remained, except for one thing. That one thing was the most wonderful event ever recorded among men, the mightiest of miracles. It was the resurrection on the morning of the third day. Little wonder that Bishop Westcott, the great English divine, is bold to declare that belief in the resurrection is essential to Christian faith and that

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EDITORIAL

The Hope of a Christian World Order

IT IS generally assumed that the present world conflict is sure to result in great changes in the political, social and economic order, and the hope is rather widespread that these changes will be in the direction of a Christian world order. William Temple, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, for example, has expressed that hope in his recent book, *The Hope of a New World*.

The question is pertinent whether the advocates of a Christian world order are employing the right means to that end. An answer to that query should give some idea of the prospects for a Christian world order in the near future.

Christianization by War

History tells of repeated attempts to Christianize society by means of the sword. To name but one instance, Charlemagne, who was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire on Christmas day of the year 800, is said to have forced whole tribes at the point of the sword to receive Christian baptism. One would think that by this time that method would be thoroughly discredited. It so obviously contravenes the very genius of Christianity, which is a religion, not of compulsion, but of persuasion.

Yet, strange to say, there are those who tell us that the present war is one of Christianity versus antichristianity, and that the reason why it is our solemn duty to aid with might and main the cause of the United Nations is that in so doing we will be making a positive contribution to the establishment of a Christian world order.

It is indeed true that German Nazism and Japanese National Shintoism are violently opposed to Christianity and that the war may well result in their being thwarted or even overthrown. If that should occur, Chris-

tian missions would likely find a wide-open door in the Far East and one serious hindrance to the Christianization of society in Europe, and elsewhere as well, would be removed. However, at this point a supremely important distinction must needs be made. The negative use of the sword by governments for the punishment of

evil-doers is thoroughly Biblical, but the use of the sword for the positive furtherance of the cause of Christ is emphatically condemned by Holy Scripture.

Then too, the possibility should not be overlooked that in the wake of the war may come a super-state and perhaps a super-church. Both have influential advocates. If these super-organizations should not be Christian—and the rapid dechristianization of society in recent decades, as well as the prevalence of liberalism in almost every church, renders it well-nigh unthinkable that they would be Christian—they would without doubt prove extremely detrimental to Christianity. It is more than likely that a pagan super-state would crush the Christian church to earth and that a liberal super-church would make the going extremely hard for non-cooperating orthodox denominations.

Whatever the war's consequences may be, God has given His people only one means for the spread of Christianity, and that means is the gospel. To substitute the sword of steel for the sword of the Spirit is a colossal blunder. It is sure to defeat its own purpose. And, however Christian the end, to employ this means to that end is antichristian.

Christianization by Law

Any number of politicians, sociologists and economists are busily engaged in the framing of laws to regulate the lives of men in the post-war era. At least a few of them are hoping that their proposals will help to establish a Christian world order. Leading churchmen too have suggested laws to that end. So have some of the idealists in our New Deal government.

Now Christianity does not render law superfluous. The contention, so often made in our day, that Christianity and law are mutually exclusive is false. In a Christian society, law, far from being superfluous, would still be necessary.

However, it may not be supposed that good laws will usher in a good world order. A good world order presupposes good men. Law does indeed serve the negative purpose of holding sin in check, but it is utterly unable to perform the positive function of making men good. Those who would create a Christian world order by law ascribe to law a power which it does not in the least possess. Our late eight-

Westminster Commencement

THE Fourteenth Annual Commencement Exercises of Westminster Theological Seminary will be held on Wednesday afternoon, May 12th, at three o'clock on the seminary campus at Willow Grove Avenue and Church Road near suburban Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia.

Westminster Seminary is extremely fortunate this year in having as its speaker at the commencement exercises the Rev. William Crowe, D.D., Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Talladega, Alabama, and a former moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. Tall, thin, genially disposed, Dr. Crowe was formerly pastor of one of the largest Southern Presbyterian churches in St. Louis and now, although supposedly retired, preaches in one of the old historic churches of the South. The subject of his Westminster address is tentatively announced as "When Evangelism Becomes Central".

The baccalaureate service is also open to the public and everyone is invited. It will be held Sunday afternoon, May 9th, at three-thirty, in the library auditorium. The preacher will be the Rev. John H. Skilton, Assistant Professor of New Testament.

eenth amendment, however noble an experiment it may have represented, could not turn drunkards into Nazirites. The best law ever made by the wisest of human legislators never made a single man—to say nothing of a nation—one whit better.

Christianization by law does not differ essentially from Christianization by war. The advocates of either would Christianize men by force.

Instead of producing a Christian society, good laws are its products. To write the name of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords into the constitution of these United States would, of course, not convert a single American to Christianity. The proponents of this reform, no doubt, are aware of that. But if and when the citizenry of this nation is thoroughly Christianized, the basic law of the land might well be thus amended.

Let it be said again, God has given His people but one means for the spread of Christianity, and that means is the gospel. To substitute law for the gospel is to put the cart before the horse. It spells utter futility.

Christianization by the Social Gospel

For some scores of years the social gospel has been proclaimed from liberal pulpits. It has combated social evils and recommended social uplift. The regeneration of society is its central theme. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has labored to put this message into practice. Dr. Hocking of Harvard and others have applied it to missions. Preachers of the social gospel promised us a Christian world order.

Was this promise kept? Did the social gospel prove effective? The world is shouting out the answer. No sooner had the social gospel recommended a cure for poverty when the great depression came along. Hardly had the preachers of the social gospel finished denouncing all war as sin and vowing that they would never again lend support to any war whatever, when the present holocaust broke in all its fury. For a while only subdued voices issued from the liberal camp and occasionally even an apologetic note was heard. But let no one think that the liberal preacher will admit that his message is exploded. Now that post-war plans are in the making, his former boldness is returning. He confesses to past mistakes but confidently affirms that he has learned

his lesson and this time knows precisely how a Christian world order must be ushered in.

What ails the social gospel? Much in every way. But its most serious defect is that it substitutes the regeneration of society by natural means for the regeneration of the individual by the supernatural power of the gospel of Christ. Only by the latter are Christians made. And Christian men and women are the indispensable prerequisite of a Christian world order.

Let it be said once more, God has given His people just one means for the spread of Christianity, and that means is the gospel. Liberalism has substituted for the true gospel another gospel which really is no gospel at all. Therefore its contribution to a Christian world order cannot but be nil. Worse than that, pagan itself, it can produce only a pagan world order.

Christianization by the Supernatural Gospel

A church can be Christian only if its members are. A nation can be Christian only if its people are. And the world can be Christian only if its inhabitants are. These are truisms. It follows that without a preponderance of Christians a Christian world order is out of the question.

But what is a Christian? On that there is a wide difference of opinion. Few words are wont to be used as loosely as the term *Christian*. And yet the answer of the Bible to this question is perfectly clear.

He is a Christian, and only he, who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. And to believe in Christ is to despair utterly of saving oneself from sin and death, whether by works or by character, and to abandon oneself for salvation wholly to the Son of God, who, though He knew no sin, yet became sin for His own and paid for them the penalty of sin by dying in their stead on the accursed cross.

A sure concomitant of faith in Christ is obedience to Him. What fruit is to the fruit-tree, that obedience is to faith. It is impossible to receive Christ as Saviour without at once accepting Him as Lord. Not only must the believer keep Christ's commandments, in principle he does.

This faith and obedience, which are of the essence of Christianity, are wrought by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes Christians. And in doing that He employs but one means. His

one and only means is the gospel, the gospel of salvation from sin and unto holiness, the gospel of full and free salvation with its ethical implications.

Would we have a Christian world order? Then let us proclaim the gospel to a lost world. Our work will not be in vain in the Lord. God the Holy Spirit will apply His Word to the hearts of many. In consequence they will believe in Christ as Redeemer and Saviour and honor Him in their lives as Lord and King.

No one makes a more direct contribution to the establishment of a Christian world order than the preacher—no matter how obscure he may be—who proclaims the gospel of Christ in its Scriptural purity and fullness. Christian educators of the rising generation also make an extremely valuable contribution to this end.

Do we disparage the efforts of the statesman, the economist, the sociologist? Yes and No. If their statesmanship, their economics, their sociology be pagan, they cannot contribute to a Christian world order. But there is Christian statesmanship, Christian economics, Christian sociology. They are rooted in the gospel. Their exponents are specialists in the social implications of the gospel. They can contribute much. Today they are few in number. May God raise up many more. The world needs them.

The conclusion of the whole matter lies at hand. The one hope of a Christian world order lies in the supernatural gospel. Scripture tells us that a perfect Christian world order will be realized only on the new earth of the future. But any approximation in this age to a Christian world order is wholly dependent on the proclamation of the gospel of Christ crucified, risen, and enthroned at the right hand of God as Head over all things.

—R. B. K.

CHURCH GIFTS TO MISSIONS INCREASED IN PAST YEAR

THE Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension and the Committee on Foreign Missions, both of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, have announced that contributions to the work of the committees have been greater than in any previous year. Of particular note is the increase in con-