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Trends and Tendencies of the Times

(A Conference Essay Delivered in 1941)

Ours is a complex civilization. Indeed it may be said that the world has never been as complex as it is today. There are in almost every field of human endeavor so many trends and tendencies that we would have material for many conferences if each of them were treated even briefly. We shall, therefore, limit ourselves to a treatment of such matters as seem to be of peculiar interest and significance at this time.

There can be no doubt that it is quite in order for us to occupy ourselves with a discussion of this kind. We should study the vital issues of the day. The Lord Himself enjoins us: "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *redeeming the time, because the days are evil,*" Eph. 5:15, 16, and again, "Prove all things," 1 Thess. 5:21. If this be true at any time, it certainly applies to the present, for it is not too much to say we are living in an age of intellectual, moral, and religious confusion. Men are groping about, anxious to find something upon which they can lay hold with conviction. The old foundations are shaken. What has been held sacred for a thousand years seems to be undermined. Some face the future with misgivings; others adopt a nonchalant attitude and live by the maxim, "We don't know where we're going, but we're on our way."

Under the circumstances it is of the greatest importance that Christians be able "to discern the times," and this is doubly necessary for those who are ministers of Christ, interpreters of God's will to man, and shepherds of immortal souls.

In discussing this topic we shall try to evaluate the various trends in the light of God's Word. That is the touchstone by which everything is proved in the Christian experience. Upon closer scrutiny it will be found that almost any trend or tendency we

might mention has its roots in the ideology or the *Weltanschauung* of those concerned. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"; and as the leaders of any movement or tendency think, so it is. It seems, therefore, that it will be of benefit if first of all we make clear what the Christian ideology or world view is. Having done that, we have a vantage point from which we can interpret and properly evaluate the trends and tendencies which we observe in our present-day world. Accordingly we shall first of all set forth as briefly as possible the Christian's *Weltanschauung*. That will be followed by a discussion of the dominant trend in these three fields: the cultural, the social and economic, and the political.

The Christian *Weltanschauung*

The word *Weltanschauung* is being used so widely today, also in English texts, that it seems hardly necessary to translate it. Ideology, view of life, world view, philosophy of life, would be English equivalents. We prefer "philosophy of life" because it includes all the fundamental ideas and principles which form the basis of a person's thinking, acting, and willing. Everyone, if he is a thinking being at all, has some philosophy of life. Whatever he thinks about the great problems of the human soul, whatever are the ideas which motivate his actions, whatever are the maxims he consciously or unconsciously lives by, these things form his philosophy of life.

Now as to the Christian's philosophy of life. I believe we can rightly say that the Apostles' Creed, together with Luther's explanation of it, gives in brief compass the sum total of the Christian's *Weltanschauung*. Here we have an answer to all those great and profound questions which have been agitating the minds of men from time immemorial: Is there a God? What is His relation to the universe? Where do all things come from? What is the destiny of man? Is there a life after death?

Philosophers are wont to divide the field of thought into three main divisions: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Metaphysics deals with the ultimate reality, or the first cause and the final end of all things. A person's ethics are always based on his metaphysics, for if there is a God and He stands in some relation to me, that implies that I must act accordingly. That is really a command as to what my conduct should be. Ethics answers the question: What must I do? Immediately the question arises: How can I know that my metaphysics is right? And here enters epistemology.—What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?—those are the problems which knock at the door of the reflective human mind. Now, is it not true that the second chief part of our Catechism gives answers, and adequate answers, to all

these great questions? No doubt it is for this reason that someone remarked he could find more common sense with regard to these profoundest of human problems in any pastoral conference than in the meetings of philosophical societies.

Suppose we take up briefly some of these questions. Whence is the universe? Or, more philosophically, what is the first, the primal cause, of all things? The Christian answers: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." God has made heaven and earth, the world and all that is therein. And He made it out of nothing. Before that almighty fiat: "Let there be!" nothing of this universe existed. Matter is, therefore, not eternal. Neither is God immanent in the world. That is to say: God is not part of the world. He is not the soul of the universe as a person's soul is part of himself. If that were true, the universe itself would be eternal, and God would be the ordering principle in the universe. Some students of Plato contend that this is what the great Athenian taught; but that is not Christian doctrine. According to the Christian's *Weltanschauung* God is something separate, something over and above the world. He was before the world, for the world had a beginning, while God did not, though it is true that in Him we live, move, and have our being. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). "For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord" (Is. 66:2). These words also exclude the idea of a gradual evolution of all things from a primordial cell. The word "create" or "make" occurs no less than eleven times in the first chapter of the Bible, and it is clear beyond any doubt that God created the various animals and plants *after their kind*, that is, He called the separate creatures into existence, not only the germs or bits of matter from which they later developed.

And, indeed, does not a little reflection on the part of man, endowed with reason, lead to the conclusion that the universe is a result of an act of God? Do not the wonders of nature with its myriad of laws always point to design? And does not that imply a divine mind behind it all? As well believe (as Huxley did) that a monkey hammering haphazardly on a typewriter could eventually produce all the plays of Shakespeare as conceive that the whole universe should have come into being by chance. Is it not true that the tiniest flower says in unmistakable language: "I am a product of the almighty hand of God"?

And now we already have an answer to the next great question which belongs to a proper *Weltanschauung*: Whence is man? The Christian says: "I believe that God has made me." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen.

2:7). In the image of God, like God, entirely different from all other creatures, man never was an animal and never will be. He is a moral being; Adam was like God in complete holiness and righteousness. He was the most perfect, the most wonderful human that ever lived, save alone that second Adam.

But alas, man lost that concreated righteousness! He listened to the Tempter. And that explains the existence of evil in the world. There are people who claim that sin is due to the shortcomings in man as man. "Man is not God," say they. "He is finite as everything on earth. Nothing is perfect; in fact, imperfection belongs to the very constitution of things. Man, just because he is man, will make mistakes. What we therefore call evil is part of his being." But that is wrong. The angels also are finite, yet they are completely holy. Evil had a different source. There were "spirits who kept not their former habitation." Man heeded the word of the prince of these evil spirits rather than God and thus came under the curse. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). Now we must confess: "I am a lost and condemned creature."

But that is not the end of the story. God is not only an almighty Creator, just, holy, and full of majesty. He is also a God of love. He has sent His holy Child Jesus to win us back to God and open Paradise once more. And who is this Jesus Christ, who is called the Son of God? The Christian answers: He is "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary." For "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

But what has He done to bring us the adoption? Christ didn't accomplish this by telling us what to do. All our good works could not atone for our sin. Christ is not merely a great teacher who has proclaimed a new philosophy of ethics. "He is the Propitiation for our sins." He redeemed me, not by giving me commands, but by doing something for me. "He purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil" by paying a price. And this price was "not gold or silver, but His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death." Now all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). However, man cannot by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, His Lord, or come to Him. The Holy Ghost must call him by the Gospel, enlighten him, sanctify and keep him in the true faith. Those who become children of

God again are "born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

And that leads us to another of those profound problems about which all great philosophers have speculated: What is the ultimate destiny of man? Is man immortal? Is there an afterlife? Some try to solve this on rational grounds. They say: "Yes, man is immortal in the sense that Socrates, Shakespeare, and Lincoln are immortal, because they will never be forgotten." But that is not the Christian's view of the matter. He says: "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." "God will raise up me and all the dead and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life," for Christ says, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). That means that all will be raised, also the unbelievers. There is no annihilation as those deceivers, the self-styled Jehovah's Witnesses, or Russellites, claim. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," but not man. He has a beginning, but no end. He is powerless to bring himself into existence, and he is just as powerless to put himself out of existence. He is immortal, and therefore he will have to appear before that final judgment seat of the Lord, who will "come to judge the quick and the dead." There the Word which He has spoken will decide. Man's final destiny is heaven or hell, for "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

This final resurrection and judgment will take place on the Last Day, at the end of the world. When that Day will come, we do not know, for "of that Day and that hour knoweth no man." But we do know that the world is headed for destruction. It will not last forever, as some claim, for in God's appointed time "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).

All these truths are of such transcendent importance that one is overawed if one ponders them for only a moment. And yet we Christians can rise up and say, as we do at the end of each article of our Creed: "This is most certainly true." How do we know? Or to say it philosophically, What is our theory of knowledge? What is the Christian's epistemology?

It would really be presumptuous on our part if we were to stand before you here and say: This is the only correct answer to these great questions because we or some wise man or group of wise men have looked into the matter and found it so. What we

have set forth is not the product of man's intellect. In his essay on "*Die rechte Weltanschauung*," Dr. Pieper has called attention to a statement by Dr. Daniel, a world-famous geographer. After recounting a whole list of arguments in support of the Copernican theory, Dr. Daniel admits at the end that the whole system is but a "scientific hypothesis" and not a demonstrable fact. This must be so of necessity because man cannot answer these questions with finality, because he cannot take a stand outside the universe and make observations. To quote Dr. Daniel: "Alle aufgestellten Weltsysteme beruhen nicht auf Erfahrung — welche einen Standpunkt ausser der Erde erfordern wuerde — sondern auf Schlussfolgerungen und Kombinationen. Alle sind und bleiben deshalb Hypothesen." Since no man on earth can take up such a position, which might be called an *Ewigkeitsstandpunkt*, it goes without saying that we could never settle these great problems if we were dependent on ourselves and our experience. One man's guess or hypothesis would be as good as another's, and the theory of even the profoundest thinker would still be based upon the assumption that human reason is reliable. But, thank God, we do not have to depend upon our own resources! The Christian's world view is based upon the Word of one who *does* have a position also outside the universe, who is infinite, higher than the heavens, who has made heaven and earth, and who rules and upholds all things by the word of His power. Only because *He* has spoken and told us about these great mysteries, we can speak with finality. Our philosophy is not based upon man's wisdom, but upon God's revelation. Our epistemology therefore is very simple: We know, because God has told us. Having His Word, we can say without any kind of misgiving: "This is most certainly true."

However, that is not all that belongs to an adequate *Weltanschauung*. There remains the question of ethics: What am I here for? What ought I to do? It has already been noted that every philosophy implies an imperative; and this holds also with regard to the Christian philosophy. If those things we have set forth are true, then we must be guided accordingly in our conduct. If "God has made me and all creatures," if man is a sinner and God has sent His Son to redeem him, if eternity is a reality and every human being is destined to spend it either in heaven or hell, then surely the purpose of our life here in this world is definitely determined. And this too is confessed in our Creed: "That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness." Perhaps no passage of Holy Writ summarizes the whole purpose of our whole existence here upon earth more aptly than 2 Cor. 5:15: "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live

unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Our whole life must be a service unto Him. We belong to Him with all that we are and have, not only because He has created us but above all because He has redeemed us. We are to live unto Him because He died and rose again. Everything in life is to be judged in relation to God and His service. "How can I serve my Lord and Savior best? What tends to His glory?" That is the guiding principle for action in the life of him who has really accepted the Christian philosophy of life. His one big purpose is to extend God's kingdom, to help in spreading the Gospel so that more immortal souls might be saved. Yes, he realizes that the whole world exists for no other purpose than that the good news of the forgiveness of sin might be brought to the uttermost parts of the world, as Christ Himself says Matt. 24:14: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

This outlook on life is distinctly otherworldly, but this does not make a person unfit for this world, the opinion of modern men notwithstanding. Having his eye trained upon heaven and the eternal verities does not mean that a person therefore neglects his duties toward his fellow men. In fact, just because he properly evaluates the larger issues, he will have the proper conception of the right relationship towards others and society in general. Having been restored to fellowship with God through Christ, he serves his God and fellow man in humble gratitude and love.

Perhaps it will not be amiss to point out at this juncture that too many Christians fail to comprehend this third major part of the Christian's *Weltanschauung*. They have never come to an understanding of the far-reaching implications of their Christian confession. Let me illustrate. Suppose we were to ask the first ten voting members we meet this question: "What is your real purpose in life? What are you working for? What is your goal?" Would we not get answers such as these: "Well, a person must work to earn a living," or, "I'm working to give my children a better training than I had," or, "I'm trying to establish a home," or, "I'm trying to save up enough so that I don't have to be a burden to anyone when I'm old." Perhaps someone would answer, "I'm working because I know God wants me to work," but how many would say: "I am doing what I am because in this way I can serve my Lord the best. My main purpose in life is to live unto Him who died for me and rose again." If we ask our members about creation and redemption and conversion, nine out of ten will give us the correct answer; but when we ask them about the goal of life, perhaps nine out of ten would give us the wrong answer. Is this perhaps due to the fact that we pastors have made

ourselves clear with regard to the first two important phases of the Christian philosophy of life, but not the third? Of course, we shall never succeed in getting all our members to strive for the goal as they ought, but at least they should know what that goal is.

We must seek to avoid giving the impression that being a Christian is nothing more than marching up to the altar, making a confession, and later on paying a certain amount for the support of the Church. "Those who have put on Christ are new creatures." A Christianity that is not lived becomes a dead thing. Faith and love are the two great words that must always go together. "The Kingdom of God is within you."

That is, in brief compass, the Christian's *Weltanschauung*. As leaders in the Church it is of the most vital importance that this view of life be a living thing within us and that we realize its far-reaching implications. Only then will we be able to inculcate it into the hearts of our people; and—what concerns us more immediately here—only then will we be in a position to see clearly and judge rightly in the confusion of the present-day world.

The Pagan Trend in Our Culture

In discussing some of the more important trends and tendencies of our times we propose to begin with what may be considered the dominant trend of thought in present-day culture. There can be no doubt that this is of the greatest importance, for it must be restated, that the ideas and ideals of a people are what determine its life. All the major problems with which the world is wrestling are in the last analysis moral problems. They arise out of the sense of values, the concepts of right and wrong, or in short, the life philosophy which people adopt.

Now, if there is one idea which is permeating the whole thinking of our civilization at the present time, it is the concept of evolution. This theory is considered a fact by most learned men today, and it lurks in the background of almost every outstanding system of thought and philosophy of education. "The basic underlying thought of science and philosophy in our age is the philosophy of evolution. The earth and universe are the product of evolution, so our generation has been taught, and hence all this will and must continue in its onward and upward process. This is a view generally accepted. It is taught as truth in many of our schools and, in much of the literature that enters our homes, is taken for granted by the press and is generally accepted by the people among whom we live." (*The World Today*, pp. 11, 12.)

It may be argued that evolution is not something new. Darwin wrote his famous book in 1859; in fact, the ancient Greeks already taught evolution; but the difference is just this, that

whereas formerly these ideas were discussed in learned circles, they have today filtered down to the masses. Now everybody goes to school, and thousands and thousands of teachers, not only in the high schools but also in the grade schools, are prating the teachings of Darwin. That they are thereby spreading an atmosphere hostile to an expression of the Christian faith goes without saying. For we must keep in mind that evolutionism is much more than merely having a theory as to the origin of the universe. If atheistic evolution is true, there is no Father in heaven. Matter is eternal. Man is but a higher animal. He did not fall into sin. In fact, he is better now than he was. Hence there is no Savior from sin. Christ is not the Virgin's Son, and He did not arise from the dead, for there are no miracles. Neither is there any resurrection from the dead nor an appearing before a judgment seat of Christ. The Holy Ghost is only a name and spirits are mere abstractions. And, of course, there is no revelation. The Bible is nothing but an account of the religious experiences of the Jews and the early Christians.

Thus evolutionism implies a sweeping denial of the entire structure of Christian doctrine and ideology. It is absolutely pagan. Not one element of the Christian faith remains inviolate. It is not difficult to see what all this means for the people and for the youth in particular. In the degree that they are influenced by it they are adversely affected in their Christianity. Their standard of values must change and attitudes at variance with the traditional Christian view must ensue. The danger is real, and we should recognize the true significance of the fact that today we are living and our children are growing in pagan environment.

Perhaps we can best show the pagan trend if we view the educational scene. The changes and revolutions in this field are not far behind those in any other field. What is more, as pastors we are particularly interested in education, for the Church is above all an educational institution.

Now, it is undoubtedly true that no one has had greater influence upon educational thought in the past thirty or forty years than John Dewey and his satellites, Wm. Kilpatrick and Harold Rugg. Dewey is professor emeritus of Columbia University, though he began his outstanding educational activities at Chicago around the turn of the century. He is a voluminous writer. His bibliography in *The Library of Living Philosophers* covers no less than 65 pages. His *Democracy and Education* is usually considered his most important work.

This man has rightly been called the father of modern educational theory, sometimes called "progressive education." Dr. Bickel says of him in the *Cresset*: "As far as American education is con-

cerned, one is almost tempted to say that Dewey is Allah and the rest are his prophets." (*Cresset*, Nov. 1940, p. 16.) Some believe that his influence is waning, but there is real doubt as to that. We have come into contact with not a few teachers and educators in this province in recent years and find them all to be either out-and-out Deweyites or at least deeply affected by his teachings. A widely used text in Normal schools at the present time is a publication of the Progressive Education Association, entitled *Reorganizing Secondary Education*, and this book is saturated with Deweyism from beginning to end.

Some claim that Dewey has exerted such great influence because he has given utterance to the prevailing thought and ideology of 20th century America. The emphasis upon material things, the ceaseless activity of the machine age, the worship of science, the consuming faith in ever greater progress—all these find expression in John Dewey. Admirers of Dewey are wont to say that he is the first distinctly American philosopher. No doubt there is much truth in this; but whether this is something good is another question. In fact, it may be said that Dewey's influence has been of a decidedly pernicious character.

But just what does this man stand for? Dewey is a thorough-going evolutionist, and therefore his philosophy is thoroughly naturalistic. To quote Dr. Bickel again: "Evolutionary and biological concepts are the basis of Dewey's philosophy of life. To him man is continuous with nature. Thinking is limited to experience, never transcending it. As far as Dewey is concerned, there is no transcendent world, no supernatural universe with which man is concerned. The true "stuff" of experience is held to arise out of the adaptive course of action, habits, active functions, connections of doing and undoing, sensorimotor co-ordinations.

"It is averred to be human destiny to reconstruct the individual and the social organism through the instrumentality of achieved intelligence under the aegis of the scientific method, to the end that social process *without fixed ends* may keep advancing in an evolutionary manner for the betterment of mankind. Dewey's point of view is a philosophy of struggle, survival, adaptation, and adjustment. [Notice the similarity to Darwinian terms. A. G.] The intelligent activity of man is not something brought to bear from without; rather it is nature realizing itself in its own potentialities. Knowledge, therefore, according to Dewey, is instrumental. It is the only means of regulating and directing experience.

"In Dewey's philosophy there is no room for such concepts as soul, mind, or reason, in the supernaturalistic sense of these words. The doctrine of organic development has eliminated the dualism

of soul and body. Henceforth the quest for certainty becomes a search for methods of control." (*Cresset*, Nov., 1940.)

How pagan this whole conception is need hardly be pointed out. There is a complete denial and renunciation of everything we call spiritual. Man is naturally good; and if he will just use his intelligence, if he will let science guide him in everything, he will climb the evolutionary ladder to ever higher stages of civilization.

But perhaps the most significant feature of the teachings of these modern philosophers is their approach to the problem of truth and right. They claim that there are *no fixed unchangeable principles, no abiding standards*. This, of course, is quite consistent with their evolutionism. If everything is evolving, then also truth and principles must be relative to the state of culture at which man finds himself at any time. Everything is in a state of flux. What held in 1800 need not necessarily hold in 1900, for man has made some progress in the meantime. Ideas, which are always only instruments for accomplishing certain ends, may become out of date like anything else. Therefore the pragmatist abhors "a priori reasons, fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins"; as Wm. James, another representative of this school of thought says (*Pragmatism*, p. 54), "Let the absolute bury the absolute." There is no such thing as an unchangeable law. Authoritarianism (and that includes the Bible) in morals dies. A better morality must survive. It should be noted that according to this view, morals are social, not fixed or eternal, but pragmatic, experimental, and relative. "The theory of change holds in the realm of morals as well as in all other phases of life and existence. Abiding principles do not exist, and even if they did, they would have to be abrogated in favor of an evolutionary and developmental basis of action involving the experimental approach and methodology." (*Cresset*, Dec., 1940, p. 19.)

If we ask these men just how they arrive at truth or knowledge, they reply: "Well, you must try it out." Dewey says: "The experimental method is the only method of 'getting knowledge and of making sure it is knowledge and not mere opinion.'" "It means," he continues, "that we have no right to call anything knowledge except where our activity has actually produced certain physical changes in things. . . . Short of such specific changes, our beliefs are only hypotheses, theories, suggestions, guesses, and are to be entertained tentatively." And James puts it this way: "You may say of it, then, either that it is useful because it is true or that it is true because it is useful." "Truth is made just as health and strength are made, in the course of experience." (*Pragmatism*, p. 218.) That is the pragmatic or instrumental view

of truth. A thing is true if it works. You must always look at the consequences.

This, of course, implies a categorical denial of all religious teaching, and particularly of revelation, for there can be no authoritative Word, which has come to us from God. But more, it negates *any* real religious conviction, for according to this viewpoint, also one's religious views are to be constantly reinterpreted and reconstructed. If that is true, there can be no moral code which is imperative because it is the will of God and therefore final. It is axiomatic that where there is doubt, there can be no conviction, and to theorize and to test is to doubt. Hocking, another philosopher of the present day, but one who disagrees with Dewey, says quite rightly: "It is particularly in religion that the *objective* truth is the only thing that can set us free. For religion is the orientation of the human self to what it regards as the most real thing in the world. God is nothing if not that on which we depend. But every chosen belief, every man-made idea of God, too palpably depends on us. We cannot swing up a rope which is attached to our own belt." (*Types of Philosophy*, p. 170.)

But not only is this pragmatic conception of truth the opposite of the Biblical approach, it even lacks logical consistency. To say that all acts and ideas must be judged by their consequences is to say absolutely nothing, for immediately the question arises: How do I judge the consequences? How do I know whether the result was good or bad? Unless I have first adopted some standard of value I cannot pass judgment on any consequence. And particularly in the field of ethics or morals my scale of value must be fixed. A standard must stand, or it is no standard. Just as a yardstick that is always changing is absolutely valueless, so also any moral law that is always changing. In fact, it is no moral law at all.

There can be no doubt that Dewey and other so-called "Progressives" have done irreparable harm with their continued emphasis on the *instability of all things*. They have actually robbed untold numbers of every criterion of value or moral basis. The end result must be the old Protagorean heresy that "man is the measure of all things," i. e., everything depends upon what man thinks. A thing is good if man thinks it is good. That means that there is no Law of God, there are no Ten Commandments, no, not even a set of human fundamental attitudes and appreciations which have stood the test of time and may be regarded as *constant*. In a notable volume entitled *The Revolt of the Masses* Jose Ortega Gasset writes: "It is no use speaking of ideas where there is no acceptance of a higher authority to regulate them, a series of standards to which it is possible to appeal in a dis-

cussion. These standards are the principles on which culture rests. I am not concerned with the form they take. What I affirm is that there is no culture where there are no standards to which our fellow men can have recourse. There is no culture where there are no principles of legality to which to appeal. There is no culture where there is no acceptance of certain final intellectual positions to which a dispute may be referred." (Quoted from *American Lutheran*, June, 1939, p. 9.)

Thus not only churchmen but also others, non-Christians, are pointing out the danger of the current opinion of truth. In a ringing article in the *Saturday Evening Post* (Jan. 18, 1941) the well-known philosopher Will Durant, writing under the title *Self-discipline or Slavery*, has this to say: "Education, above all in America, surrendered to the student. Whatever the newly emancipated intellect could not understand was rejected as false, and ideas were venerated in inverse proportion to their age. Ancient faiths began to lose their hold on the mind and their moral influence on urban life. Every lad of eighteen sat in judgment upon institutions of society and codes of conduct that represented the experience of a thousand generations of men; if he could not understand in one adolescence what had been learned in a millennium, he was free to trust his powerful eighteen-year-old reason and to reject the family as tyranny, marriage as bondage, religion as opium, government as exploitation, and property as theft. Every restraint aroused resentment; standards faded from conduct, even, here and there, from memory. *Individualism flourished in morals, especially among those who denounced it in industry.*" All this is merely another way of saying that our age has become pagan — materialistic, naturalistic, hedonistic, skeptic, nihilistic. It is the natural result of evolutionism with its concomitant rejection of the revelation of God and all stable criteria of value. It's the worship of change, of the here and now. It means that men have lost the vision of the "good," the "true." This cannot but lead to disaster, as it has done in previous civilizations. Listen to the lament of a college youth writing to the president of one of our great Eastern universities: "You, sir, were brought up from earliest childhood in an atmosphere of traditional Christianity and democracy. You read, learned, and inwardly digested the Bible. Nearly every Sunday you went to church, and there you heard and believed sermons which postulated the divinity of Christ, eternal principles of right and wrong, the existence of the human soul, a personal God, and a life after death. Thanks to your early training, your life as you have led it derives its meaning largely from the teachings of Jesus.

"During your youth you also were educated to think that man is superior to animals, that he is a free agent, capable of choosing between good and evil. Loyalty to country was an ideal you came to cherish, and your schooling never caused you to doubt that man possesses certain inalienable rights. Your position is typical of your generation.

"But what about us, the youth of America? What have we been taught to revere in the university you direct and in other similar institutions throughout the land?

"In the modern college it is probably fair to say that Christianity has progressively lost its grip on your minds. You may have noticed that, unlike you, most of us have scarcely ever glanced at the Bible. When our elders refer to eternal verities, absolutist ethics, we are likely to recall the lesson your instructors in sociology have driven home—that *morals are relative* to time and place, that what is good in one society is bad in another. Such teaching is separated only by a hair's breath from the view that there can be no such thing as sin. Have we not gleaned from your very own professors of natural science, philosophy, and ancient history that religions are the product of myth and superstition and that men create gods in their own image; that if there is such a thing as the soul, no scientist has ever isolated it in the laboratory?

"If men are but animals, why not treat them as such? An animal has no rights. The law among animals is the law of the strong. If there is no natural law in the universe, how do you justify those inalienable rights which the Declaration of Independence asserts men to possess? If patriotic fervor is just a manifestation of an 'enlarged tribalism,' why do you think America is worth defending?

"Personally, I fail to understand how you, or any other college president, can expect us to become ardent Christians and democrats when the vital postulates on which these faiths are supposed to rest are daily undermined in the classroom."

This youth has done some sound thinking. He is calling for guidance, and he isn't finding any. And yet these same apostles of doubt and instability of all standards in our educational institutions are insisting that the schools must help the students develop a *wholesome and consistent personal philosophy*. They say the school must not be satisfied with teaching mathematics and history and language; it must do more. "It stands in need of a conception of learning adequate for the making and remaking of a human being—a human being who can deal creatively with the condition of his times. Such a psychology of the development of the whole person is in the making; it stands as a resource for fulfilling the task before the schools." (*Reorganizing Secondary Education*, p. 20.)

Further we read statements such as these: "It is the primary thesis of this book that the supreme mission of secondary education at this time is to help young people realize upon the significant possibilities implicit in their changing status — to help them find themselves anew in their personal, social, and economic relationships and to develop a *working philosophy* of values which will give meaning, zest, and purpose to their living. This is in large part the *responsibility of the school*; life outside provides too little opportunity for participation and affords too little direction toward establishing young people in a rightful place of their own." (*Op. cit.*, p. 6.)

We rightly ask: What about the church and the home? "Oh," say these educators, "the youth must find help in merging his own distinctive code and ideals of conduct with those of others. Only so may he arrive at new standards more appropriate to meeting the common needs. And for the most part this help must come from the school, an agency outside the home. The home is always too interested a party. It wants to protect its own set of ideals and standards, its own code governing the relationship of the child to his family, his future mate, his friends and associates. Few indeed are the parents who are willing to see these jeopardized." (*Op. cit.*, p. 170.)

Now it may be argued that this has been going on all the time, for a teacher always teaches according to his own views, but it seems that in recent years a special effort is made to bring home to high school teachers particularly that they must help the adolescent in developing what they call a "sound, democratic, and integrated personal philosophy." Just how that can be done is another question. In many schools there is an elaborate *guidance* program through which the teachers should help the student solve the intimate problems of personal living. One educator likened this to the confessional in the Church.

It stands to reason, of course, that with evolutionistic paganism rampant among educators the only kind of *Weltanschauung* taught will be one based on the relativity of all truth. These educators fail to see the contradiction in their own statements and demands. "A well-integrated personal philosophy" can be developed only if we can point to some stable criterion of values. In denying this, then, educators are planting the seeds of doubt into the hearts of their students, and conviction about any view of life is impossible.

Do we realize the seriousness of the situation for the Church? Our youth, more than ever, is exposed to a secular and pagan influence which must tend to undermine the faith if countermeasures are not taken. How important Christian education becomes in view of this, and how zealous we ought to be in carrying out an adequate youth program!

In stressing the paganism in educational circles we do not mean to say that its influence is from that source alone. Our whole culture is permeated with it, and therefore our civilization is becoming more and more Epicurean or sensate, that is to say, dominated by sense impression and sense satisfaction, hence materialistic. Prof. Pitirim A. Sorokin of Harvard, one of the really outstanding sociologists of the present day, tells us in his monumental work on *Social and Cultural Dynamics* that he was forced to reach conclusions which were displeasing to himself. He says that he enjoys our Epicurean or sensate civilization, but that his survey of its development has forced upon him the conclusion that it is essentially unstable and destined to disintegrate, that only a *spiritual* or ideational culture is capable of realizing stability. No doubt he is right. The present disorganization and conflict in human relations, which has been increasing for more than a generation and is practically world-wide, has its roots in this trend away from things spiritual, away from the true God. In fact, it may be said that other pernicious tendencies such as totalitarianism, communism, and other radical isms are but manifestations of this one, for when men lose the vision of the true, they become a prey to the false. The prophets of these other isms have also substituted something else for the doctrines of the eternal verities of God. Their whole thinking is likewise centered upon things in this world, upon the here and now. A recent writer has said, "Paganism, streamlined and arrogant, has reconquered more of Europe [and he might have added America] than it held in a thousand years."

It is not without significance that Prof J. M. Barzun of Columbia University in a recent 420-page study of the dominant ideas of the late 19th and early 20th centuries points out that the intellectual revolution of the present began in 1859, when Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. Barzun maintains that the intellectual forebears of nearly everyone in Western civilization are Darwin, Marx, and Richard Wagner. "To understand how these three men have dominated our thinking," says Author Barzun, "try to imagine our speech without terms like survival of the fittest, struggle for existence, natural selection, exploitation of labor, dialectic materialism, scientific socialism, social significance, Nordic culture, music dramas, leitmotiv, the twilight of the gods.

"It is thus no accident that Germany's West Front should have been named the Siegfried Line; that the new regimes of force should have taken the title of socialist; or that the most powerful myth of today should be a mixture of biological, economic, and cultural dogmas. The 20th century . . . belongs to Darwin, Marx, and Wagner. . . . So true is this that the ordinary educated man of today sees no third choice between the 'scientific ideas' of the late

19th century and the 'obscurantism and superstition of the Middle Ages.'

"Tell such a man that you are not a Darwinian, and he will usually conclude that you must be a Fundamentalist. If you do not believe in the economic interpretation of history, you must be a 'mystical Tory.' If you are not a materialist, you must be an idealist. Ours is a scientific world, a literate world, saturated with—I will not say, the precise ideas of the three materialists—but surely with their deeper spirit, their faith in matter, their love of system, their abstract scientism, and their one-sided interpretation of Nature."

What gave these men such a powerful hold upon all subsequent thought? Says Author Barzun: they "made final the separation between man and his soul. Man was no longer a cherished creature of the gods. . . . Things were the only reality—indestructible matter in motion." Result of this apotheosis of matter: "A premium was put on fact, brute force, valueless existence, and bare survival."

Can anyone deny that Barzun is right? What does it mean? For one thing we venture to say that our democratic civilization, our freedom, cannot survive if there is not a turning away from this godless approach to life and education. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). Liberty can be maintained and be a blessing only where the people have the spiritual marrow to discipline themselves.

But what is far more important, this almost world-wide trend toward evolutionistic paganism means a titanic struggle for the Church; and we who have the pure Word, have the greater responsibility. We must be alive to the magnitude of the task. "The more insidious the approach of the enemy, the clearer must be the sound of the trumpet. From pulpits, meeting rooms, classrooms, publications, and every other high place the voice of the Church must speak in reproof and warning. The issues are clear. Over against man's inhumanity to man, God's love; over against moral decay, the living, healthful waters of the Gospel; over against the blind appeal to the masses, the divine emphasis on the dignity of the individual human soul; over against the philosophy of power and blood, the tenderness of the Christ of the mountainside; over against sin, the forgiveness of the Cross." (O. P. K., in *American Lutheran*, June 1939, p. 10.)

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(To be concluded)

