

# THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

---

---

Vol. XXXIII

APRIL, 1922

No. 3

---

---

## "IN HIS IMAGE"—A REVIEW.

By REV. WALTER W. MOORE, D. D., LL.D.,

*President of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.*

This volume contains the tenth annual series of the James Sprunt Lectures at Union Theological Seminary,—the series for the session of 1921-1922. There has been a succession of richly gifted lecturers on this foundation, including such men as Dr. Stalker, Sir William Ramsay, Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan and others, and their lectures have been listened to by large audiences and have then been welcomed in book form by many readers. But in no case have such great audiences gathered as those that greeted Mr. Bryan, and in no case has the appearance of the lectures in book form been awaited with keener interest. Here they are, clearly printed and strongly bound in a handy volume, a volume well adapted in its makeup to the great circulation which awaits it.

There are many grounds on which one can predict for it with confidence an immense sale. One is the unequalled personal popularity of the author, not only among those who agree with his political views but also among those who are and always have been of a different political faith. An interesting example of this is Dr. Francis E. Clark, founder and president of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, who, though a lifelong Republican, has recently published an appreciation of Mr.

---

\*IN HIS IMAGE. The James Sprunt Lectures. Delivered at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. By William Jennings Bryan. Fleming H. Revell Company. New York. Pp. 266. Price \$1.75 net.

Bryan as a man, as an orator, as a statesman, and as a Christian gentleman, which could not have been warmer and stronger in its terms of admiration had it been written by the most enthusiastic of Bryan Democrats. He even grants what some Democrats still fail to realize, namely, that, while Mr. Bryan has been three times defeated for the presidency of the United States, he has influenced our national legislation more powerfully than any other public man of the age. Over and over measures that he proposed and which were at first scoffed at as visionary and impracticable, have been adopted. He stood for prohibition when it had few friends and seemed a forlorn hope, but the nation has adopted his views on this subject and has written them into the Constitution of the United States. He stood for an income tax and was abused right and left for doing so, but the income tax has been adopted by national and state governments. It was this that enabled us to stand the strain of the world war. When he was Secretary of State he concluded treaties of peace with thirty nations. treaties designed to prevent the declaration of war till months of delay and investigation had given passion time to cool and had given opportunity to remove by arbitration the cause of dispute. These treaties will avert much bloodshed in years to come. Dr. Clark, Republican though he is, says that "many of the policies which Mr. Bryan sponsored when in their most unpopular stage, have been adopted by the opposition party with loud acclaim. He himself says with wit and truth that the Republicans have stolen many of his old clothes."

Equally striking is the tribute of another eminent Republican, the Hon. James M. Beck, of Philadelphia, who, though radically disagreeing with most of Mr. Bryan's political views, says nevertheless that he has affected the public thought of America and the character of its institutions more than any other leader of our day and generation, with the single exception of Theodore Roosevelt. There are many who would not make even that exception. At any rate, Mr. Bryan is a prime favorite with millions of his contemporaries, and his new book is going to have an immense circulation.

It will be interesting to observe the extent to which his already nation-wide influence will be affected by his stout defense of old fashioned religion. For that is what this book is. And that is another thing that will make it popular. The people wanted just such a spokesman on these subjects at this time. He has expressed here the common sense view of the masses of our evangelical people in regard to some of the central articles of their religious faith and has done it with his customary simplicity and lucidity and with the unmistakable accent of conviction. This is the kind of writing that people like. He says what he means and he means what he says. That sort of writer will be read whether his readers agree with him throughout or not. A brilliant English editor and author, Mr. A. G. Gardiner, says that "there is about him the primal energy and directness of nature. . . . He comes right down to the bedrock of things and his hammer rings out blows that seem to have the universe for a scunding board. . . . His intellect is bold rather than subtle, masculine rather than meticulous. His eye ranges over great horizons and sees the landscape in the large. His weapon is not the rapier but the hammer of Thor." He is like John Bright who said, "I sail from headland to headland while Gladstone navigates every creek and inlet." This breadth of appeal, this large sculpture of his thought, is one of the reasons for his popularity as a speaker and a writer.

Mr. Bryan, though a life long politician, is not "playing out of his own alley" in dealing with the subject of religion. He is quite at home in it. No public man of modern times has ever spoken and written more constantly or more copiously on religious themes than he, not even Mr. Gladstone. Religion is the chief interest of life to him. In a recent address he says: "I make a great many speeches on many different subjects, but there is a sameness about them all. I try to use different illustrations, and possibly if one has not analyzed them he might think they were quite unlike. I have used this illustration: Every part of the rim of a wheel is supported by a spoke that leads down to the hub; the wheel would be nothing but for the hub. So with my speeches; though they have touched the cir-

cumference of the wheel at many points there has always been a spoke leading down to the hub; and that hub is the creed of Christ. Whether I speak on politics, on social questions or on religion, I find the foundation of my speech in the philosophy of Him who spake as never man spake; who gave us a philosophy that fits into every human need and furnishes the solution for every problem that can vex a human heart or perplex the world."

When the faculty of the Seminary invited Mr. Bryan to give these lectures they informed him that he was free to choose any subject connected with any phase of Christian thought or Christian work and to handle it in his own way, it being fully understood that the lecturers on this foundation were expressing their own views and not necessarily those of the institution in every particular. But they knew that he was deeply concerned over the aggressiveness of current scepticism and especially its inroads upon the faith of our college population. They believed that his unique command of the world's attention as the foremost living orator and his extraordinary power of effective popular statement marked him out as the right man to speak a reassuring word from the layman's point of view to those who have been confused by the clamorous unbelief of the times and especially to those of our young people who have been unsettled by the teaching given in their schools. The faculty's hope that he would render this service to the evangelical faith chimed in with a purpose which he had long entertained. In the preface of his book he says that their invitation provided the opportunity for the presentation of an argument he had had in mind for years, an argument to the heart and mind of the average man, especially to the young. He says that his desire is to aid those who are passing from youth to maturity and grappling with problems incident to this critical age. "Having spent eight years away from home in academy, college and law school, I have reason to know the conflicts through which each individual has to pass, especially those who have the experience incident to college life. I never can be thankful enough for the fact that I became a member of the church before I left home and therefore had the ben-

edit of the church, the Sunday school, and Christian friends during these trying days.

In these lectures I have had in mind two thoughts, first, the confirming of the faith of men and women, especially the young, in a Creator, all powerful, all wise and all loving, in the Bible as the very word of a Living God and in Christ as Son of God and Saviour of the world; second, the applying of the principles of our religion to every problem in life. My purpose is to prove, not only the fact of God but the need of God, the fact of the Bible and the need of the Bible, and the fact of Christ and the need of a Saviour.

Therefore I have chosen "In His Image" as the title of this series of lectures, because, in my judgment, all depends upon our conception of our place in God's plan. The Bible tells us that God made us in His image and placed us here to carry out a divine decree. He gave us the Scriptures as an authoritative guide and He gave us His Son to reveal the Father, to redeem man from sin, and to furnish in His life and teachings an inspired example by the following of which man may grow in grace and in the knowledge of God.

The titles of the several lectures in their order are as follows: I. "In the Beginning—God;" II. The Bible; III. What Think Ye of Christ? IV. The Origin of Man; V. The Larger Life; VI. The Value of the Soul; VII. Three Priceless Gifts; VIII. "His Government and Peace;" IX. The Spoken Word. From this it will be seen that the first three are concerned with the foundations of religion, the fourth with the hypothesis of evolution, and the others with applied Christianity and the oral method of propagating its truths.

In the first lecture, where he deals with the agnostic and the atheist, after citing Dr. Hodge's summary of the arguments in proof of the existence of God, he puts his first question to the Christian and the atheist, successively, viz—Where do you begin? To this the Christian answers, I begin with a Creative Cause that is sufficient for anything that can come thereafter. The atheist cannot begin that way; he cannot begin with God because he denies the existence of a God. So he usually begins by

assuming the existence of matter and force, without telling us how they came into existence, or where they came from, or why they came. The lecturer says, "I would rather begin with God and reason down, than begin with a piece of dirt and reason up. The difference between the Christian theory and the materialistic theory is that the Christian begins with God, while the materialist begins with dull, inanimate matter. I know of no theory suggested as a substitute for the Bible theory that is as rational and as easy to believe." Answering the question whether the Christian can understand God, he replies that it is no more necessary to understand God before believing that there is a God than it is necessary to understand the sun before one can believe that there is a sun. He then takes up a number of other mysteries and shows that life is a mystery, love a mystery, and food a mystery, and yet the atheist lives and loves and eats without being disturbed by the mystery about him. It is the mystery in the miracle that makes it a stumbling block in the way of many. Then he proceeds in a paragraph which I shall quote as an example of his power of felicitous illustration:

"If among my readers any one has been presumptuous enough to attempt to confine the power and purpose of God by man's puny understanding, let me persuade him to abandon this absurd position by the use of an illustration which I once found in a watermelon. I was passing through Columbus, Ohio, some years ago and stopped to eat in the restaurant in the depot. My attention was called to a slice of watermelon, and I ordered it and ate it. I was so pleased with the melon that I asked the waiter to dry some of the seeds that I might take them home and plant them in my garden. That night a thought came into my mind—I would use that watermelon as an illustration. So, the next morning when I reached Chicago, I had enough seeds weighed to learn that it would take about five thousand watermelon seeds to weigh a pound, and I estimated that the watermelon weighed about forty pounds. Then I applied mathematics to the watermelon. A few weeks before some one, I knew not who, had planted a little watermelon seed in the ground.

Under the influence of sunshine and shower that little seed had taken off its coat and gone to work; it had gathered from somewhere two hundred thousand times its own weight and forced that enormous weight through a tiny stem and built a watermelon. On the outside it had put a covering of green, within that a rind of white and within the white a core of red, and then it had scattered through the red core little seeds, each one capable of doing the same work over again. What architect drew the plan? Where did that little watermelon seed get its tremendous strength? Where did it find its flavoring extract and its coloring matter? How did it build a watermelon? Until you can explain a watermelon, do not be too sure that you can set limits to the power of the Almighty, or tell just what He would do, or how He would do it. The most learned man in the world cannot explain a watermelon, but the most ignorant man can eat a watermelon, and enjoy it. God has given us the things we need, and He has given us the knowledge necessary to use those things; the truth that He has revealed to us is infinitely more important for our welfare than it would be to understand the mysteries that He has seen fit to conceal from us. So it is with religion. If you ask me whether I understand everything in the Bible, I frankly answer, No. I understand some things to-day that I did not understand ten years ago and, if I live ten years longer, I trust that some things will be clear that are now obscure. But there is something more important than understanding everything in the Bible; it is this: If we will embody in our lives that which we do understand we will be kept so busy doing good that we will not have time to worry about the things that we do not understand."

After dwelling for a while on the manifestations of God's power and the evidences of His wisdom and love, Mr. Bryan concludes this lecture by pointing out some of the things that depend upon a belief in God, such as prayer, Christian confidence and courage, the spirit of brotherhood and belief in immortality, closing his presentation of the last topic with the well known extract from his address on the Prince of Peace—the passage so often inscribed on the phonograph records and

thus made familiar to thousands who have never heard him otherwise: "If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another spring time, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, He who, notwithstanding His apparent prodigality, created nothing without a purpose, and wasted not a single atom in all His creation, has made provision for a future life in which man's universal longing for immortality will find its realization. I am as sure that we shall live again as I am sure that we live to-day."

In his second lecture he defends the divine inspiration of the Scriptures and takes the destructive critics to task very sharply. In the third he presents in the same plain way proofs of the deity of Christ. The fourth lecture, in which he challenges some of the widely accepted hypotheses of modern scientists, is the longest in the book, about twice as long as the others. It attracted more attention than any of the others when delivered and it is evident from the press notices of the book that it is still regarded as the one of greatest interest to the general public. The very boldness with which he marches up and smites the shield of the evolutionist with the point of his spear is fascinating. Referring to Darwin's theory as to man's ancestry he declares it to be not only groundless, but absurd and harmful to society. "It is groundless because there is not a single fact in the universe that can be cited to prove that man is descended from the lower animals. Darwin does not use facts; he uses conclusions drawn from similarities. He builds upon presumptions, probabilities and inferences, and asks the acceptance of his hypothesis notwithstanding the fact that connecting links

have not hitherto been discovered' (*Descent of Man*, page 162). He advances an hypothesis which, if true, would find support on every foot of the earth's surface, but which, as a matter of fact, finds support nowhere." The *Expository Times* (Dec., 1921), edited by Dr. James Hastings, editor of the elaborate *Dictionary of the Bible* and other voluminous encyclopedias, who certainly does not belong to the conservative school, contains a paragraph entitled "The Collapse of Darwinism and the Chaos in Evolution." It gives the views of two eminent Englishmen, one a minister and one a scientist, in regard to evolution, quoting from their recently published books. The minister, Dr. W. E. Orchard, has this to say about evolution:

"There are still many difficulties against accepting it. If man has evolved from the animal we ought to be able to find not only some creature who can be called in popular phraseology 'the missing link,' but many missing links bridging what after all is a great gulf. The remains bearing on this issue which have been found are very few, and their significance is hotly disputed by scientists themselves—both their age, and whether they are human or animal, or mere abnormalities. When there are instanced whole races of men such as the cave-dwellers, or neolithic man, who are represented as very low in the scale of progress, because they knew nothing of the use of fire or metal, we come across two disturbing facts, one that they could draw very creditably, with accuracy and lifelike vigour, and secondly that they had quite strong beliefs in the existence of higher beings and in a life beyond the grave; in short, that they compare favorably with many modern men in artistic expression and religious sensibility."

The botanist, Dr. D. H. Scott, in his address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, repudiates the Darwinian hypothesis, and says, "the Darwinian period is past; we can no longer enjoy the comfortable assurance, which once satisfied so many of us, that the main problem has been solved—all is again in the melting pot. By now, in fact, a new generation has grown up that knows not Darwin." Yet he still holds to evolution. Darwinism and evolution are not convertible terms.

Darwinism is done for, but evolution remains. He says we cannot get away from it, not because it is a scientifically ascertained fact, for it is not, but because there is no alternative. We must hold it, he says, '*as an act of faith.*' He stresses "the present state of uncertainty in all that concerns the origin of species. But out of this chaos doubtless light will come."

To the same effect Dr. William Bateson, of England, "perhaps the most competent authority on this subject in the whole world," expresses himself in the notable address he made to the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Toronto last December: "It is impossible for scientists longer to agree with Darwin's theory of the origin of species. No explanation whatever, after forty years, no evidence, has been discovered to verify his genesis of species." At the same time Professor Bateson, like Dr. Scott, went on to say that he still believed in evolution "in dim outline," basing this faith in a general way on geology rather than biology. But some of the geologists are now saying that their science, so far from supporting the hypothesis, is in fact about to discredit it for good. One of them says: "The New Catastrophism is the theory of to-morrow in the science of geology; and under the teachings of this new view of geology the whole theory of Evolution will take its place with many other 'perishing dreams and the wrecks of forgotten deliriums'."

In short Mr. Bryan is by no means alone in believing the theory groundless.

In trying to show that it is also absurd he uses the weapon of ridicule. But his tone deepens to indignation when he comes to speak of its harmful effects. He devotes about thirty pages to a description of its baneful influence, showing how it is being taught in our schools and colleges and how it is destroying the Christian faith of our young people, how through the teaching of Nietzsche it laid the foundation for Prussianism and the World War, how it enthrones selfishness and how it embitters the relations of capital and labor.

The next four lectures are good specimens of Mr. Bryan's

skill in applying the principles of Christianity to the practical problems of life.

The lecture on *The Spoken Word* was addressed specially to the students of the Seminary and takes up in a direct, familiar way some of the things that contribute to the effectiveness of public speaking—a subject on which Mr. Bryan can speak with unequalled authority. It was said of Lord Bacon that whenever he spoke in public the fear of all who heard him was lest he should make an end. The same thing is true of Mr. Bryan. Any man who aspires to become a good speaker will therefore do well to study carefully what he says about the essentials of the art of which he is the acknowledged master in our time.