

Liberalism Turns Back



R.V. De Long



Russell V. DeLong

LIBERALISM TURNS BACK

Printed in the United States of America
1942

LIBERALISM TURNS BACK

By Russell V. DeLong, Ph. D.



NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE
2923 Troost Avenue Kansas City, Mo.

DEDICATION

This sermon is dedicated to the 1941 graduating classes of Northwest Nazarene College with the sincere hope that each member may contribute his part to the apparent swing back to vital religion. It is the desire of the author that each of the nearly one hundred members may actively work and pray for a great tide of spiritual fervor to sweep our nation.

FOREWORD

The sermon, "Liberalism Turns Back," was delivered as the Baccalaureate Sermon to the graduating classes and approximately one thousand guests at the 1941 Commencement of Northwest Nazarene College. It was later presented to the Young People's Institute of the Northwest District at Twinlow and the Young People's Institute of the North Pacific District at Twin Rocks.

The purpose of the sermon is to point out trends in various fields indicating that the pendulum of religious interest has swung as far to the liberal extreme as it is going and that it is, in fact, receding to a more conservative, vital, religious position.

It is not the purpose of the author to create the impression that there is an overwhelming return to conservative religious beliefs. That would be optimism based upon insufficient evidence. However, there is ground to believe that we will not become more liberal as a nation and that there is a distinct recession from extreme heterodox beliefs. This gives the author ground for assuming that if hundreds of thousands of church people will work and pray, the hoped-for revival of religion may come. The tide is turning. Now is the moment for the redoubled efforts of the Church.

GRADUATES—1941

Master of Theology

J. Paul Alexander	Duane E. Muth
Eugene M. Culbertson	J. Fred Parker
David E. Figg	

Bachelor of Arts

Louise E. Andrus	Pauline Morrow
James C. Callaway	Earl E. Mosteller
Dorothea P. Carroll	Richard Donald Mottram
Zelda May Hadsall	Elizabeth Russell Nelson
Carl Elton Hanson	Gladys M. Parker
Eiffell Ann Huff	Louise Claire Peterson
Mildred Caroline Knouf	Virgil R. Rayborn
J. Henry Knowles	Ruby Roberta Rockwood
James L. Kribs	Virginia Louise Rockwood
James Burton Lisk	Joy Ida Russell
Lillian E. Locken	Jessie A. Scheithe
Donald Charles Lush	Esther A. Schwab
Adella Fern Martin	Lura Alice Scofield
I. Parker Maxey	Kenneth Alexander Stark
Robert Youart Moffat	John Sutherland

Bachelor of Theology

Robert H. Fleming	Harold C. Paul
Earl Dean Hunter	Nona L. Stagner
George Edgar Lindsay	Glenn T. Stout.
Earl E. Mosteller	

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Pauline A. Griffith	Lorraine Ogden Schultz
Linnea Elizabeth Henderson	Joan Mangum Swim
Mabel Irene Hunter	Mabel L. Tish
Zola R. Milbourne	Frances Louise Wise
Norma A. Petersen	

Normal School

Velma Bernard	Winifred Ellen Leffler
Clara P. Burtch	Anna Clara Macy
Joy Rapp Conn	Verna Viola Morehouse
Thelma Belle Crandell	Eleanor Grace Pease
Leila Mae Crisman	Edythe G. Peterson
Stella Jane Dakan	Estella Elizabeth Pruitt
Betty Jane Ednie	Katherine Louise Rodda
Dorothy Floretta Frohnhafner	Verna L. Scholten
Doris Marie Gossard	Audrey Mae Smith
Elizabeth Gunter	Bunah Mary Stutsman
Alice Loraine Herlocker	Hazel Ruth Tucker
Edna Mae Howard	Esli Frederick Young
Gertrude E. Irwin	

High School

Alene Blackwell	Gilbert Kincaid
Gladene F. Brown	Gladys Marie Lummus
Anne M. Cramer	Harvey I. Petersen
Roy M. Ecker, Jr.	Lynn H. Van Houten
Richard Frederick Foster	Ernest H. Siefarth
Margaret Ann Howard	Donna Lois Wilson
Jessie E. Johnson	Wesley Osborn Young

Grammar School

Kenneth Chittenden	Edith Margaret Sutherland
Olive Wilma Kincaid	Mary Willard Wesche

LIBERALISM TURNS BACK

THEME—"Liberalism Turns Back."

TEXT—*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* (Psalm 11:3).

There are three classes of people in the world:

1. The optimists, who believe that the world is so good nothing need be done to improve it, and therefore do nothing;

2. The pessimists, who believe that the world is so bad that nothing can improve it and so do nothing;

3. Those between these two extremes who believe the world is not so bad that it cannot be better and not so good that it cannot be improved.

On this glorious Baccalaureate Sunday the world appears to be in about as bad a condition as it ever has been. However, things could be worse. On the other hand, conditions most certainly can be improved. It is manifestly our task as educational and spiritual leaders to do everything within our power to keep things from growing worse, but it is also our duty positively to take steps, adopt policies, and sponsor activities to make it better.

Out of the despair of the moment, the blackness of war, the suffering of millions of people, there comes what I believe is a brilliant ray of sunlight. The cause of our world debacle is due to a philosophy of life based, on the side of the Axis, on the Hegelian philosophy of the supremacy of the State plus the Nietzschean philosophy of the Superman. On the side

of the democracies our condition is due, in no small part, to the materialistic, mechanistic, individualistic philosophy and psychology which have undermined the principles and destroyed the values which have made our peoples great.

On the democratic side we have been so desirous of giving individual man his proper place we have well-nigh deified him and excluded his need for God. On the Axis side, the State is so supreme and the individual person so insignificant, Hitler has been deified and God almighty dethroned. Both sides need philosophical and theological adjustments before the basis of peace and happiness can be reached. Both sides need not only intellectual modifications, but, more important, they need personal, moral and spiritual regeneration wrought by the Holy Spirit.

In our country I see a ray of hope which can develop into a flood-light of redemption. Such is the theme of my Baccalaureate Sermon this morning, "Liberalism Turns Back."

On September 16, 1620, a band of 102 brave, hardy, determined souls set out from England on the good ship *Mayflower* to sail through an uncharted sea in search of freedom and religious liberty. There was no sight of land until daybreak of November 16, exactly two months later, when what is now known as Cape Cod came into view and these 102 rugged pioneers stepped out of the *Mayflower* onto Plymouth Rock and into a new, virgin territory.

The first few months this brave band faced starvation, savage Indians, and a scourge of what was called "general sickness." Death came to twenty of

the twenty-four households, taking a toll of fifty-one, exactly 50 per cent of the original band. Terrible as the suffering had been, heartbreaking was the bereavement experienced with mounds of the newly dug graves within sight. Not one of the Pilgrims returned with the *Mayflower* when it set sail for England in the spring of 1621. Longfellow has well written:

"All strong hearts and true—

Not one went back on the *Mayflower!*

No, not one looked back

Who had set his hand to this plowing."

They stayed because they had found that for which they had gone in quest. When the angry wind moaned in the sails of the old *Mayflower* and they left behind their native land with its history, its throne, its church, its gold, its worldly cheer and the green mounds where their brave sires slumbered, as Dr. Marsh puts it, "The foot of their ship had been set in a pathless sea."¹ They had groped their way through storms and fogs, mists and blinding rains—they had landed on the rock-bound, bleak New England shore. "But as they knelt in prayer, the very snows seemed warm and the snowflakes melted into tears of gratitude. Pioneers of true Americanism, they stayed, they conquered, they sowed their seed in the sacred soil of the rights of men and garnered a goodly harvest.

Aye, call it holy ground, the soil where first they trod,

They left unstained what there they found;

Freedom to worship God!"²

Our American civilization was begun by a group of men and women who believed in something firmly enough

¹ Marsh, Daniel L., *The American Canon*.

² *Ibid.*

to die for it if necessary. I think I might sum up their beliefs without inciting controversy, as follows:

1. They believed in a personal God.
2. They believed that man is immortal.
3. They believed that man is free and responsible for his acts.
4. They believed in prayer.
5. They believed that the Bible is the Holy Word of God.
6. They believed that religion should be taught in the schools; should permeate every phase of home life; and should be a vital factor in church worship.

They laid the foundation of the great American superstructure with three necessary institutions: the home, the school, and the church. With religion as the dynamic of each, the Pilgrims laid a foundation firm enough to uphold a great civilization.

The above-mentioned six principles were laid as foundation stones in the erection of our great nation. They were cemented together in the blood of those early Pilgrim martyrs. Upon this sound foundation our nation has grown to be the greatest, most prosperous nation in the world. Our standard of living economically, socially, culturally, scientifically, and educationally excels that of any other nation.

If the foundation of a building is solid and secure, the superstructure will stand the storms of opposition; but if the foundation has been poorly constructed, or if the building rests upon the sand, when the rains descend and the winds blow that house will fall. Also, it is true that no matter how good a foundation, if forces are permitted to undermine and bore through, the foundation will be-

come weakened and sooner or later the entire superstructure will come tumbling down. If termites are allowed to do their devastating work, although it may take years, little by little the foundation is weakened and eventually will crash with the weight of the superstructure.

The psalmist, in the words of my text, asks, "*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*" The inference here is that if the foundations have been undermined, what can the righteous do to preserve the superstructure? No matter how apparently beautiful that superstructure is, or how desirable or how attractive, unless the foundation upon which that building sits is secure and stable, sooner or later it will be a pile of wreckage.

Immanuel Kant, one of the greatest philosophers of all time, said, "All morality rests upon three postulates: God, freedom, and immortality." Upon these three sturdy shoulders the great structure of morality is erected, whether we refer to a collective or to an individual superstructure. A social ethics minus a belief in a personal God, in freedom, and in immortality, has no dynamic by which people are impelled to right action.

Hans Dreisch, one of the greatest living philosophers, says, "It is only upon a metaphysical basis that ethical studies become more than a game in aesthetics."¹ He further says, "For every day and unsophisticated life metaphysics is the theoretical and religion the practical foundation of everything."

With reference to immortality Dr. Dreisch adds, "In order that ethical rules shall be completely binding upon the individual, it seems as though in practice there must

¹ Dreisch, Hans, *Ethical Studies*.

always be a certain belief in immortality and genuine freedom," and continuing, "It is a fact for those that absolutely deny immortality, all things are at bottom ethically indifferent, such men as a rule will be Atheists and Materialists."¹

Dr. MacDougall, one of America's foremost psychologists, makes the following statements relative to the problem confronting us: "I believe that if science should continue to repudiate the belief in any form of life after death of the body, morality would continue rapidly to decline among civilized peoples and will, before many generations, have passed away."² Further, he says, "The belief in immortality must have a moralizing influence upon our thought and conduct that we can ill afford to dispense with," and still further, "I gravely doubt whether whole nations would arise to the level of an austere morality, or even maintain a decent and working standard of conduct after losing these beliefs." He concludes, "There can be no doubt that where a belief in a future life obtains, it tends to maintain and to raise the standards of thought of that people."³

Professor James H. Leuba, of Bryn Mawr University, wrote an article concerning the religious views of American scientists, based on the answers to a questionnaire, which reveals some very important and startling information relative to belief in the existence of God and in immortality.⁴ Professor Leuba pursued the following method in obtaining his information.

¹ *Ibid*

² MacDougall, *Mind and Body*.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ Leuba, James H., "Religious Beliefs of American Scientists," *Harpers Magazine*, August, 1934.

Using Dr. Cattell's *American Men of Science*, in which are listed 23,000 scientists, he sent a questionnaire to every tenth person whose name appears in this volume. These scientists are divided into two major groups:

1. Physicists, dealing with the inanimate:
 - Chemists
 - Geologists
 - Astronomers
 - Engineers
2. Biologists, dealing with the animate:
 - Physiologists
 - Bacteriologists
 - Botanists
 - Horticulturists.

Of the 2,300 to whom the questionnaire was sent, 75 per cent responded.

The survey was based upon the following questions:

1. *On belief in God*
 - a. "I believe in a God to whom one may pray in the expectation of receiving an answer. By 'answer' I mean more than the natural subjective, psychological effect of prayer."
 - b. "I do not believe in a God as defined above."
 - c. "I have no definite belief regarding this question."
2. *On belief in Immortality*
 - a. "I believe in continuation of the person after death in another world."

The results were as follows concerning the existence of God:

	Believe	Disbelieve or doubt
Physicists	38	62
Biologists	27	73
Sociologists	24	76
Psychologists	10	90

Note: It is interesting to observe that those dealing with inanimate objects are more believing than those dealing with animate.

The results concerning Immortality were as follows:

	Believe	Disbelieve or Doubt
Physicists	41	59
Biologists	29	71
Sociologists	25	75
Psychologists	9	91

Dr. Leuba also conducted his investigation among college students, asking the same questions. Two colleges were selected: College "A" of high rank, moderate size, students from all Protestant denominations and as religious as the average college; College "B" radical in leanings and less representative. The results concerning belief in God were as follows:

	Believe	Disbelieve or Doubt
College A	31	69
College B	11	89

The results by classes concerning belief in God were as follows:

	Believe	Disbelieve or Doubt
Freshman College A	34	66
Freshman College B	20	80
Sophomore College A	37	63
Sophomore College B	14	86
Junior College A	30	70
Junior College B	6	94
Senior College A	20	80
Senior College B	5	95

Professor Leuba states, "*A decrease in the number of believers takes place in both colleges as the students pass from freshmen to Seniors.*"¹ In College "B" believers have almost disappeared by the time they are Seniors." He also adds, "When they entered college 39 per cent of the students of the C. L. A. of Syracuse University (1500) believed in a God 'to be supplicated through prayer' and only 21 per cent when done." And, still more significant, he points out, "of the students who entered believing in God, 47 per cent changed their beliefs during their college career."

The results concerning belief in immortality were as follows:

	Believe	Disbelieve or Doubt
College A Freshmen	42	58
College B Freshmen	29	71
College A Sophomore	50	50
College B Sophomore	20	80
College A Juniors	37	63

¹ Italics mine.

College B Juniors	14	86
College A Seniors	27	73
College B Seniors	5	95

Another startling revelation of Professor Leuba's survey is to be noted in the change of belief of college students during the past generation. He made a similar survey in 1914 which gave him a basis of comparison with the survey of 1933. The following shows the change concerning belief in Immortality in College "A":

1914		1933	
Believe	Disbelieve	Believe	Disbelieve
80	20	42	58
76	24	50	50
60	40	37	63
70	30	27	73

From the above statistics Professor Leuba draws the following conclusions:

1. The students in considerable numbers lose their beliefs as they pass from Freshmen to Seniors.
2. During the last twenty years a marked decline in belief has taken place, a decline similar to the one revealed by the statistics of the scientists.

His concluding observation is to be noted. In answer to his question, "What will become of churches?" he says, "Unless a reversal of the movement revealed by the statistics—and I do not know on what grounds that may be expected—should take place, the churches will continue to lose their already diminished influence."

The changes in belief cited by Professor Leuba have taken place since 1914. Speaking generally we

might say during the Twentieth Century. What effect has the change in belief had on the moral conduct of the American people? In 1935 the *Fortune Magazine* appointed a committee to interview personally 9,500 representative citizens. These included professional and business leaders of all walks of American life. They were asked two questions:

1. *Is religion gaining or losing? and*
- 2 *Are moral standards better or worse?*

In answer to the first question 24.8 per cent said that religion is gaining while 49.9 per cent said it is losing. The remainder expressed no opinion. In answer to the second question 17.1 per cent said that moral standards are better while 45 per cent said they are worse, the remainder having no opinion. The committee making the investigation made this conclusion: "Any thoughtful person must recognize a backward tendency or eddy in the onward movement of religious and moral forces." Everyone is familiar with the fact that during the past thirty years crime has increased in America at a speed that alarms all thoughtful persons in responsible positions.

In his addresses on "Crime" J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is constantly pointing out the danger. This increase in law breaking has been made at the very height of our educational program in America and also at a time when belief in God, freedom, and immortality have been steadily lessened as indicated by Professor Leuba's survey. In the light of the above I think it is a fair question to ask, "Is there a definite relationship between religious beliefs and moral conduct? Is it a fact that

when religious beliefs are decreased immoral conduct is increased? Does it follow that when the church loses its religious fervor that crime among youth increases? Is there a casual connection between the two sets of facts?"

In the February, 1941, issue of *The Reader's Digest*, one finds a most amazing account of the experiments made with the lie detector, the invention of Mr. Keeler, called the "Keeler Polygraph." One large chain store organization, which had lost \$1,400,000 worth of money in merchandise in one year, found after the use of this instrument that 76 per cent of all its employees had been guilty of stealing. Mr. Keeler makes the statement that only 3 per cent of all chain store employees and only 5 per cent of all bank employees can be depended upon never to steal.

After testing some 25,000 men and women over a period of many years, Mr. Keeler makes a startling concluding observation when he says, "*Most people are honest only because they are afraid of getting caught.*"

In *The Reader's Digest* for July, 1941, an article appears entitled, "The Repair Man Will Gyp You if You Don't Watch Out." Two investigators were selected to visit several hundred automobile repair shops, asking that a comparatively new car, in which a small wire had been disconnected, be repaired. The results of this investigation revealed that three out of five American automobile repair men would lie or swindle, taking advantage of the ignorance of a driver and charge him for work or for parts not needed. This means that 60 per cent of all garage repair men were dishonest. In other words, they had

no compunction of conscience about manufacturing a story concerning a repair job that was not needed and in charging an unsuspecting driver an exorbitant and unnecessary price.

Following this same method *The Reader's Digest* sent other investigators across the nation and in the August issue of 1941 presented an article entitled, "The Radio Repair Man Will Gyp You If You Don't Watch Out." These investigators visited 304 radio repair shops. To these repair shops they brought a new radio with a wire detached, which any repair man could see immediately was the cause of the trouble. One hundred and nine were honest, while one hundred ninety-five were dishonest, making charges for repairs that the radio did not need. These dishonest repair men reported various troubles, such as "singing tube," "tube paralyzed," "microphonic tube," "three tubes gone," "condenser popped," "shorted condenser," "repair loud speaker," "overhaul radio," "switch parts dirty," "remove partial short," "aerial lead kinked," "wire broken on antennae coil," "solder loud speaker," "solder oscillation coil," "solder transformer." Nearly 70 per cent of these reputable American repair men had consciences that could justify dishonest fleecing of American tourists.

What does this all mean? I think it means this: People do right not because it is right, but because of external restraint or social coercion. *It appears that we are broken down inside.* Moral standards are no longer binding. The internal foundation and the innermost life of the average individual has been destroyed so that stealing carries no condemnation and there are no regrets

unless one is apprehended. Honestly, if there is no personal God, and if I am nothing more than a machine, lacking freedom of direction, and if I am to die like an animal and be buried and there is no future life, why should I do right when it is not to my advantage? Again, I refer to the text, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

During the past thirty years America has pretty much made it alone without God. The church has been relegated to the past. This period has witnessed great economic and educational changes. There has been quite a successful attempt to throw off the yoke of authority. Extreme individualism has been the result. The reign of liberty has been felt in all fields and particularly has spread over morals. Dr. Will Durant has pointed out that "The authority of the old over the young was relinquished; the family ceased to be a long hazing of one generation by the next; the pedagogue laid aside his lash and tried to make education a lifelong holiday. The sexes frolicked in a new ease and naturalism of association at home, in school, in college, and on the streets."¹ In the field of education the teachers surrendered to the student. For the most part he chose his teacher, enrolled in cinch courses, rebelled against discipline, and developed the philosophy that the world owes him a living whether he works or not.

Dr. Will Durant, in the *Saturday Evening Post*, January 18, 1941, says, "Whatever the newly emancipated intellect could not understand was rejected as false, and ideas were venerated in inverse propor-

¹ Durant, Will, *Saturday Evening Post*, January 18, 1941.

tion 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." At this point Dr. Durant inserts a footnote as follows: "*See the present writer's first book as a perfect example of this foolishness.*"¹ He continues, "A thousand brave experiments were made in the relations of the sexes, a million lives were ruined, a million marriages and families were broken up."

The point we would emphasize here is that there is a *swing back* to a more conservative viewpoint by such extreme liberals as Dr. Durant and others. This is to be noted in the field of literature, in the field of art, as well as the field of music. Dr. Durant points out that a sterner education must come. This education must include the "education of the soul" and he rightfully suggests "an ounce of character is worth a ton of intellect."²

¹ Italics mine.

² Ibid.

Dr. Henry C. Link, *Saturday Evening Post*, May 7, 1938, observes that "In September, 1936, a great tragedy occurred at Harvard University—a tragedy far more profound than the World War. . . . It happened in connection with Harvard's celebration of its three-hundredth year. The outstanding scholars of the world had been invited to present the contributions of their studies to mankind in a Tercentenary Conference of Arts and Sciences.

"After two weeks of learned papers and discussion, the net conclusion, both stated and implied, was that the physical sciences had made tremendous contributions to man's physical progress—the automobile, the X-Ray, insulin, and thousands of other things—but that the social studies . . . had contributed little or nothing to man's understanding of himself or his society. While physics, chemistry and biology had given man a miraculous control over his physical environment, they had added practically nothing to his control of his personal and social behavior. . . . Individuals were, if anything, weaker and less happy than before. Though men were destined by medicine and sanitation for a longer life, the frequency of mental illness was growing at an alarming rate. *Individuals were at war with themselves, nations more liable to internal strife, and the world farther from international peace than before.*"¹ This last statement is prophetic, having been written before war began.

The above was the gist of Harvard's celebration of its three-hundredth year. Harvard was founded like most of our historically great institutions by the re-

¹ Italics mine.

ligious leaders of the time, and yet this great institution paid no tribute to the religious leaders of the time, and yet this great institution paid no tribute to the religious beliefs of its founders. Such is the trend of education, to liberate science from religion, in most cases to eliminate religion altogether.

Psychologists have undermined the belief in freedom of the will and with it the idea that man has the power to transcend his limitations and external environment. Personality is something you either have or do not have. If you don't have it you might as well surrender. Your I.Q. is fixed from time to eternity. Your personality is the combination of a magnetism, a sort of chemistry of appeal, a physiology of the glands, and an inexplicable glamor. A child is thought to have no head for figures, and therefore it is useless to study arithmetic or mathematics. A child has a nervous disposition, and therefore must be coddled. Pupils are tested for aptitudes. If they have them, fine; if they have not, they might just as well commit intellectual suicide. Dr. Link has aptly said, "The old-fashioned fortune teller and the confidence man, by adopting a few of the devices of psychology and assuming a new respectability, have won a tremendous following of the machine-minded public, looking for short cuts to success."

In the field of marriage it has been taught that biology is more important than morals. A happy marriage depends upon finding an individual who is chemically compatible, irrespective of either moral or religious qualifications.

Another theoretical phrase that has stunted the growth and achievement of individuals is "the inferiority complex." Whenever a person believes he has this complex, it is just the same as the old-fashioned expression, "I can't do it." Persons are taught that they are victims of circumstances either internally or externally and therefore are determined, predestined, biological machines.

Endocrinology, the study of the glands, has come to the fore more recently with an ambitious program of completely explaining personality in its terms. In England a psychiatrist was knighted for his extensive writings. He had stated that drunkenness, phobias, hysterias, and the common mental ailments were sicknesses brought about by the pressures and tensions of modern civilization. Dr. Link quotes him as saying, "Such ailments were not the results of a person's sins against himself and society; they were phenomena for which the individual himself was not responsible."

The answer to the question, "Why do I do as I do?" has been answered in mechanistic terms, answered by Freudian psychologists, by endocrinologists, by neurologists, and psychologists, the conclusion seeming to be that *man is a victim not a victor*. The psychology of failure and defeat makes failure and defeat inevitable, even with a person who is richly endowed; while on the other hand a person who is poorly endowed but who has that indomitable will to succeed will outdistance the more richly endowed person.

Having noted their failures, psychologists and other educators are beginning to *turn back to the good, old-*

fashioned doctrine of the primacy of will in achievement and accomplishment.

In the March 24, 1941 issue of *Time*, under the heading "Religion," there is an interesting analysis of Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr's most recent book, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. For many years Dr. Niebuhr has been the high priest of Christian Socialism. He has been an ultra-modernistic liberal. He has been welcomed with wide-open arms by those who would attack the more conservative position regarding religion. The reviewer of his book says, "Its significance: *that America's most influential theologian is reversing the optimistic and rationalistic trend of Christian liberalism to lead his legions back to an almost medieval emphasis on the basic sinfulness of man.*"¹ The reviewer further observes that the book is doubly interesting because fifteen years ago Dr. Niebuhr was himself an outstanding exponent of the liberal credo he now seeks to discredit as opportunism, calling it "a religious accommodation to the prejudices of bourgeois culture." Dr. Niebuhr says, in the *Christian Century*, "I confess that between Versailles and Munich I underwent a conversion which involved rejection of almost all the liberal theological ideals and ideas with which I first ventured forth. My first book *contains all the windmills against which today I tilt.*" In the light of history, especially from 1920 to 1940, Dr. Niebuhr finds liberal optimism about the goodness of man untenable. Therefore he has set out to formulate a firmer faith in God based on much less faith in his fellow men.

¹ Italics mine.

Dr. Niebuhr says, "Modern man has an essentially easy conscience; and nothing gives the diverse and discordant notes of modern culture so much harmony as the unanimous opposition of modern man to Christian conceptions of the sinfulness of man. The idea that man is sinful at the very center of his personality . . . is universally rejected. It is this rejection which has seemed to make the Christian gospel simply irrelevant to modern man." *The reviewer of Dr. Niebuhr's book says that Dr. Niebuhr's conversion is a sign of the times.* "In these chaotic '40s Dr. Niebuhr is not alone in doubting the goodness of man and the certainty of progress. To him sin is not ignorance, but pride and self-righteousness." Convinced that modern civilization is bad and "careening at the present moment to almost certain destruction," he terms the assumption that evolution is tending ever upward superficial and unwarranted, and calls a halt to theology's capitulation to science. Dr. Niebuhr also makes out a vigorous case against Catholicism, denounces Marxism as the false religion of the lower classes, Freudianism as the false religion of the upper crust, and Nietzschean fascism as the false religion of the lower middle classes.

H. I. Phillips, the popular columnist, recently headed an article, "What the United States Needs Besides Planes." He begins with this statement: "A spiritual awakening, and one deep enough to remove the notion that a man is doing okay spiritually when he manages to listen to a sermon over the radio once a month." Here are some of Phillips' observations concerning the need of the day:

"A little more respect for the *ancient truths*, the lessons of history and the *Word of God*.

"A return to the old-time standards of character that make it easy for a man to become indignant over corruption, come to a boil over injustice and get fighting mad over a wrong.

A decision to give the hotfoot to sophistication, the rabbit punch to smart-aleckism, and the bum's rush to the belittlers of idealism, religion, and patriotism.

"Elimination of 'gimme-gimme' as the two most important words in English.

"A return to the faith of our fathers, to the teachings of Holy Writ and the impulse in all crises to turn to God in humility instead of to politicians in anxiety.

"The reconstruction of moral fiber and personal courage to a point where it does not smell like something the cat dragged in as compared to the acts and works of the pioneers.

"A return to the conviction that personal independence and integrity of character are better to be desired than a direct Washington phone connection, a password or tie-up with the right political boss.

"Restoration of the church to its place of first importance, even if it interferes with golf, baseball, and the week-end auto trip or the boating trip.

"The capacity to sit through a good sermon in a church with as much eagerness as to sit around an insipid Hollywood movie, a broadcast of current scandal or the trial of a notorious gun moll.

*"The immediate restoration of the Ten Commandments as a guide to living, and the return of the Bible to top place on all lists for 'preferred reading.'"*¹

In accord with the above expressed sentiments, Calvin Coolidge said, "The strength of a nation is the strength of its religious convictions."

Roger Babson, one of the great statisticians, made the significant observation that "There can be no permanent recovery in America until there comes a spiritual awakening."

As recently as the special letter of January 20, 1941, from Babson's reports, comes this heading:

"WANTED—NEEDED—ESSENTIAL NOW!

The Spiritual Revival of our Nation"

Mr. Babson concludes the letter with this significant statement: "With this revival, America will march on to a still bigger and a greater future."

President Roosevelt, in one of his addresses, caught the attention of David Lawrence when he said in one of his columns, "Mr. Roosevelt's address may be set down as a truly great utterance—one of the best expositions of American thought and principle that has been made by any Chief Executive of the American people. Long after the hotly contested policies of his administration have been forgotten, the words of tolerance in Franklin Roosevelt's appeal for faith and religious freedom will be remembered." He follows this up with a climactic paragraph of the President's address as follows:

¹ Italics mine.

"No greater thing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of religion—a revival that would sweep through the homes of the nation and stir the hearts of men and women of all faiths to a reassertion of their belief in God and their dedication to His will for themselves and for their world. I doubt if there is any problem—social, political or economic—that would not melt away before the fire of such a spiritual awakening."¹

Dr. E. Stanley Jones in his book, *The Christ of Every Road*, opens with this statement: "The world ground is being prepared, I am persuaded, for a spiritual awakening on a very extensive scale." The last statement in the book is a repetition of the above plus, "*We are on the verge of something big.* But we cannot capture these latest yearnings for Christ unless Christ captures us more completely. Materialism and inertia will close in on these spiritual yearnings and smother them, unless we can meet them with a gospel adequate in breadth and in depth."

As long ago as January 15, 1930, Dr. Daniel A. Poling and Dr. Stanley High in a joint editorial in the *Christian Herald* on the subject, "On the Eve of a Revival," made these significant statements: "Day after day the evidence accumulates of a great and unsatisfied hunger among church people—preacher and laymen—for the rediscovery, in their lives, of a vital religion.

"Professing Christians, in these very modern, very liberal times, have tried all manner of things as a substitute for religion—and found them wanting. And

¹ Italics mine.

now, disillusioned with substitutes and weary of cynicism, they are saying to the church:

“‘Sirs, we would see Jesus.’ A simple request, that. But it sums up the deepest and most ancient of man’s yearnings. And it can be granted! We can show men Jesus when we, ourselves, have seen Him.

“We are told from many places that our country is on the eve of a great religious awakening. We believe that. We believe, moreover, that that religious awakening waits, at this moment, for men and women who are dedicated to bring it to pass. The beginning of that dedication is not a public matter. It is a personal transaction between the individual and his God. But it will become a public matter—simply because surrendered and dedicated lives are, and always will be, contagious. A genuine religious experience—and that, precisely, is what we are talking about—is and always has been, too good to keep. It is likely to be epidemic.

“Finally, we desire that the readers of *Christian Herald* shall share in this dedication. There are a million of us. We come from every section of the land, from every church. Joined, in the fellowship of such a task as this, the revival of religion that men look and hope for will come, with certainty, to destroy our spiritual lethargy, to cleanse our lives, revitalize our faith, make us contagious Christians to whom these will come who wish to meet our Lord.”

Dr. Hutchens, President of Chicago University, in commenting upon the hopeless condition to which education has brought us during the last generation says, “We

do not know where we are going or why, and we have almost given up the attempt to find out. We are in despair because those keys which were to open the gates of heaven have let us into a larger prison house. We thought those keys were science and the free intelligence of man. They have failed us. We have been flinging piles of green wood on the fire and have almost succeeded in putting it out. Now we can hardly see through the smoke. *Our bewilderment has resulted from our notion that salvation depended on information.*"¹

Dr. Will Durant in the *Saturday Evening Post* of April 3, 1936, commenting on education, says, "But our conscientious educators perceive that, after a generation of scholastic effort, they are failing to produce either educated men or gentlemen; that the lavish equipment of our schools has not availed to diminish political corruption, sexual irregularity, or violent crime, that certain virtues once prominent in our forebears seem to have lost standing with a generation skilled beyond precedent in unmoral cleverness; and that *the emphasis on science has brought no visible rise in the intelligence of the people, no fruitfulness of leisure or dignity or peace to the soul.*"¹

Former President Angell of Yale made a statement in accord with other statements presented above when he said, "I share with many others far wiser, the feeling that our world has today no greater need than *a vigorous revival of religion*; one which every class and every community should share. This is my considered conviction. You cannot really cure the ills of

¹ Italics mine.

the social order without also healing the moral and spiritual ailments of the individual."

Bruce Barton, famous author, and more recently Congressman, in his column of July 9, 1935, commented on a question which came to him from the pastor of a city church, addressing him as follows: "Dear Friend: I want to preach a brief sermon Sunday evening on 'Is the World Growing Worse?'" Mr. Barton says on the reverse side were these questions:

"Is the world growing worse? In what respects? How can we bring in better conditions? Does the world need a revival of religion? What kind of program should the church follow?"

Mr. Barton attempted to answer this series of questions and admitted that "*The world is spiritually sick. It has lost its sense of security, its conviction of progress, much of its hope and faith. All its political leaders talk in terms of economic ailments, but the economic ailments have their roots in temporary spiritual paralysis.*" He then concludes his column with a classic utterance, "*Its Master's recorded utterances were non-economic. He did not discuss rents, tariffs, industrial codes, income taxes or purchasing power. He did not promise His followers that they would become presidents or general managers. He found them in humble circumstances and He left them in humble circumstances. But they were men transformed. And a handful of them, fired by His spirit, transformed the world.*"¹

Damon Runyon, in one of his last columns, discussed at length the place of religion in the United

¹ Italics mine.

States, making a plea for a *turn back* to the old-fashioned beliefs in religion and character.

Dorothy Thompson, a much-read newspaper and magazine writer, headed an article, "Moral Regeneration Need but Must Begin with Privileged." "If the purpose of America is to create a society in which men and women can live together on a higher moral, political, economic and social standard, than they have ever yet done in any society—how shall we set about making it?"

Miss Thompson says, "*I put the moral standard first.*¹ Twenty years of observing the wars, popular uprisings, miseries and savageries of the Twentieth Century have convinced me that what is happening to us is *essentially a moral collapse.*"¹ She points out that in the Eighteenth Century the leadership of this country was in the hands of preachers, scholars and soldiers, and adds that "whatever their limitations, they had a *strict moral sense* of individual and social responsibility." They did not worship the goddess success. They led austere lives, set standards of culture and behavior, and established the morals of American life. "Nineteenth Century America saw the rise of a plutocracy and the transfer of leadership to an oligarchy of wealth. *The degeneration of moral standards began at once.*"

Note this striking statement so much in accord with Dr. Niebuhr when Miss Thompson says, "The intellectual leaders of the American Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries *had a conception of sin. They read the Bible, believed in the Ten Commandments,*

¹ Italics mine.

taught their progeny that hell fire awaited those who should lie, steal, break up families and murder." She adds, "In the old days it used to be God and remorse that were the retribution. Nowadays God is J. Edgar Hoover, and he is an inadequate substitute. The facts of life are that if lying, thieving, cowardice, cruelty, avarice and greed do not make a human being thoroughly disgusting to himself and his contemporaries, they often do pay—in terms of worldly success.

"In the Twentieth Century moral sanctions began to give way to scientific explanations. 'Science' confirmed the 'laws' of the survival of the fittest, biological selection, historic relativism, psychological determinism. Religion became superstition and morals wholly relative."

Miss Thompson adds, "If we go on thinking that way, democracy is on the rocks. Because if this is so Hitler is more right than Lincoln or Jesus." She concludes her important article by saying, "No democratic society has ever been broken up by sullen and rebellious masses as long as the leadership was held by men who led austere lives and behaved with justice, kindness, intelligence and courage. The moral sense of the masses is intuitive and responsive. . . . *The moral regeneration of society cannot begin at the bottom . . . it has to begin among the privileged who voluntarily relinquish luxury for the sake of setting a standard. . . . An extreme sense of duty and responsibility accomplishes this.*"

The great need of today is a social cleansing brought about through individual regeneration. A country is

only as righteous as the sum total of the individuals which make up its citizenry. A church is as spiritual as the sum total of its individual members. There is no such thing as collective righteousness or collective spirituality. For the past quarter of a century there has been not only a definite and uncontrolled swing toward modernism and liberalism, but a centering of the message of the church on the social gospel. They have preached peace and the world has prepared for war. They have preached civic righteousness and crime has reached its highest peak. They have preached social justice and unemployment has been unequalled. At the time of World War I we had two slogans as a nation: one, "Let's make the world safe for Democracy," and the other, "Let's have one big war to end all wars." After less than a quarter of a century scarcely a democracy remains and we are now embroiled in a greater conflict than World War I. During the past two decades we have had the League of Nations, World Court, Hague Tribunal, and many other agencies for the promotion of peace. Countless thousands of sermons have been preached on the betterment of society by the abolition of war; but to what avail ?

While we were endeavoring to deal with the world from a collective viewpoint, we neglected the needs of individual man. We have tried to cure the moral disease of the universe by setting up a better environment rather than going to the source of the difficulty. It is just as though nurses in the hospital should place a man with smallpox between clean sheets in a clean hospital room and expect the man to

get well. By giving him a good, clean environment we have not cured his sickness. Thus it is with the human race. It is not enough to work for a good, clean society, even a well-nigh perfect environment. The disease is moral and must be cured at the heart. A society will be only as righteous, pure, just, and good as the members of that society are righteous, pure, just, and good.

Our greatest need in America is

Not for better legislation, *but for better legislators.*

Not for better business, *but for better business men.*

Not for better banking, *but for better bankers.*

Not for better farming, *but for better farmers.*

Not for better teaching, *but for better teachers.*

Not for better jurisprudence, *but for better judges.*

Not for better laws, *but for better lawyers.*

Not for better preaching, *but for better preachers.*

Not for better art, *but for better artists.*

Not for better music, *but for better musicians.*

There is a *turn back* toward vital religion and sounder morals. An article appearing recently in the July, 1941, issue of the *Cosmopolitan* carried the following heading: "Heralding the *Turn of the Tide* Away from Yesterday's License in Manners and Morals." The November 1, 1941, issue of *Liberty* carries a very important editorial entitled, "The Fool Hath Said in His Heart." The opening statement is a significant quotation from the Bureau of Census in Washington, D. C.: "Within two years the production of fiction stories in the United States dropped 50 per cent. *During the same period the sale of the Holy Bible increased by two million, five hundred thousand*

copies."¹ What do these significant facts indicate? I think it is safe to conclude that there is a *turn back* from light reading. Human beings are beginning to realize more and more the need for a philosophy of life revealed in God's Word, the Holy Bible. *Liberty's* editor, Fulton Oursler, concludes his editorial by saying, "Once it looked as if rationalism would empty the churches under those spires—as if the faithful would forsake the altars of mercy to bow before the golden calf, but the people have seen what comes from paying tribute to the idol in the market place. They watch with horror the march of the Philistines. No more than the materialist can they see God, but in blood and death they can feel His presence; in agony they find that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

*"So we are not reading so many frivolous novels and we are buying more Holy Bibles. We are turning back to the white spires."*¹

Education turns back from an irresponsible tutelage of youth, free from restraint, to a more conservative disciplined guidance.

Psychology turns back from a program explaining human actions in terms of fixed aptitudes, inferiority complexes, physiology of the glands and the like, to the importance of the *will* in conduct.

Sociology turns back from the program of humanitarianism and social ethics to the need of a substantial foundation which will give society and ethics strength, vitality, and dynamic.

¹ Italics mine.

¹ Italics mine.

Science itself turns back from a mechanistic theory minus any metaphysical groundwork, to view the purpose and infers that astronomy, biology, chemistry, paleontology, archaeology, and physics are in need of a cosmic purposer. Note: Millihan, Eddington, and Jeans.

Theology turns back from a liberal, noneffective program of social service to the need of a redemptive power to cleanse from man's conscience the sense of sin. Note: Reinhold, Niebuhr, Dorothy Thompson, and others.

Political writers and columnists turn back to the need of a moral regeneration, a restoration of the Ten Commandments, the belief in moral standards, and the need of God. Note: H. I. Phillips, Damon Runyon, Dorothy Thompson, and others.

Educators turn back to admit the need of something more than the skillful improvement of the mind alone. Note: Angell of Yale.

Statisticians turn back to the recognition of the need for moral recovery.

The tide is turning. The pendulum has begun to recede from the extreme end of the arc and has *turned back* to the old beliefs and the true faith.

With the brief and rather superficial scanning of the various fields in this sermon, one may conclude, I think, without serious controversy, that the pendulum of religious fervor will not go to the liberal extreme any farther. It seems quite conclusive that there is a definite *turning* back toward more vital positions. With the present condition of the world

and the apparent desire of men to find spiritual certainty, it appears that the duty and task of every Christian and church member is clear. By prayer and work and faith let us together propagate a gracious, far-reaching revival of religion and push the old pendulum of religious fervor back to the point which brought about the great revivals of the Wesleys, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, Charles G. Finney, and other leaders of great revivals of religion.

Back to what? Permit me to suggest the following platform:

1. *Back* to the belief in a personal God.
2. *Back* to the belief that that God has a purpose for this universe.
3. *Back* to the belief that man is the crowning point of His creation and is not a superevolved animal, free from personal responsibility for his conduct.
4. *Back* to the belief that man is sovereign; that his will is more significant in determining his conduct than either heredity or environment.
5. *Back* to the belief that a purposeful, personal God would transmit His will for the crowning triumph of His creative genius, man.
6. *Back* to the belief that this will of God is revealed and recorded in the holy, sacred Book the Bible.
7. *Back* to the belief that when man transgresses the law of God he sins.
8. *Back* to the belief that an atonement is necessary for this sin.

9. *Back* to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and on the cross of Calvary such an atonement was made.

10. *Back* to the belief that no matter how bound by sinful habits nor how polluted the personality may have become, the blood of Christ can go deeper than the stain of sin has gone.

11. *Back* to the belief that the Holy Spirit can transform the individual, rejuvenate his spirit, and give him a dynamic that will make him a victor over, and not a victim of, his environment.

12. *Back* to the belief that in the end the right will triumph.

13. *Back* to the belief that there is an eternal fitness of things in the universe that the man that does wrong will suffer for his wrongdoings, while the man who aligns himself on the side of righteousness will be rewarded by the Ruler of a righteous universe.

Our task, then, is to promote the movement

Back to the Bible;

Back to Christ;

Back to salvation;

Back to God.

"If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" All that the righteous can do is to repair the foundation and rebuild the three great shoulders upon which morality and religion rest—God, freedom, and immortality.

A ray of sunshine in the midst of the blackness? Yes. The darkest hour is just before daybreak.

The Bishop of London, A. F. Winington-Ingram, reports that he once received an unconventional Christmas card which gave him much comfort. All it contained was five dates with a brief comment under each as follows:

In 1801

Wilberforce said, "I dare not marry—the future is so unsettled."

In 1806

William Pitt said, "There is scarcely anything round us but ruin and despair."

In 1848

Lord Shaftesbury said, "Nothing can save the British empire from shipwreck."

In 1849

Disraeli said, "In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope."

In 1852

The dying Wellington said, "I thank God I shall be spared from seeing the consummation of ruin that is gathering about us."

Today I see a ray of light. It can grow to dispel the darkness of sin. As Christians let us take courage anew. The time is ripe for the repair of the foundations and a return to God and vital religion.

PRESIDENT'S CHARGE TO GRADUATING CLASSES

(All classes were asked to stand)

You have now come to the closing hours of Commencement. You are to be congratulated upon your attainment scholastically. Many of you have been compelled to work your way through school. Some of you have passed through serious illnesses. During the past years many of you have had occasion for deep sorrow in the loss of a close relative; in some cases a father or a mother. You have faced many obstacles, but in spite of everything you have finally reached the point where you are about to receive the degree or diploma for which you have striven. Faculty, Board, classmates, and thousands of friends, extend you the heartiest congratulations today. It has been a hard fight, but a glorious victory. As President of Northwest Nazarene College I leave this parting charge with you:

1. I charge you in the name of your parents to make good. Fathers have worked hard and mothers have sacrificed much in order to further your education and bring you to this Commencement Day. Your parents are counting on you. Don't let them down.

2. I charge you in the name of your classmates who are counting on you to uphold the traditions of the Class of '41. Today you are united, tomorrow you will be separated. As the years pass your classmates will rejoice at your successes and be grieved at your failures. The Class of 1941 will expect you to

uphold the ideals for which your class stands, and when the great reunion comes, God grant that every member of your class may answer to his name at the roll call in heaven.

3. I charge you in the name of Northwest Nazarene College. Tens of thousands of people have contributed at great sacrifice to make this institution possible. Many faculty members have devotedly given their lives to promote the ideals for which Northwest Nazarene College stands. The Board of Regents have given their time and leadership to make our college what it is. Therefore I lay upon your hearts the solemn duty to go forth into the world and remain true to the ideals and standards of this Christian institution.

4. I charge you in the name of the church, which has made this institution possible, to be true. God is counting upon each member of your class to work and pray in whatever vocation you enter that the gospel of Christ may be spread throughout the world.

5. Finally, I charge you in the name of Christ who gave Himself for us as a ransom for sin, who has made salvation possible, who is the dynamic personality which has made Northwest Nazarene College what it is, that you go forth from these halls not only to carry out His great command "Go ye into all the world," but also that you may carry in your hearts His abiding presence.

Several months ago a very striking incident occurred in the field of commercial aviation. A large twenty-one-passenger plane took off from Cleveland for Baltimore.

The pilot of the plane had made this run for many months and maintained his home in Cleveland. After about an hour of the flight had passed the plane suddenly quivered. A few minutes later a second shock came which was more marked. The pilot, upon examination, found that one of the twin motors had pulled away from the fuselage and in dropping had pulled off the landing gear. He found himself with a plane incapable of landing. Sitting behind him were twenty-one persons whose lives were in his hands. There wasn't a chance in a thousand that he could save his own life or the lives of the passengers. In this solemn moment his mind worked rapidly. What should he do? Go on to Baltimore or return to Cleveland, or try to land where he was? He came to a quick conclusion. The wise thing was to return to Cleveland, his home and the home of several of his passengers. Therefore he radioed the home port, informing them of his plight, and asked that they have ambulances and fire apparatus on the field. In a very few minutes he brought his plane over Cleveland and circled the airport. He continued to circle it several times and finally had to make up his mind to bring the plane to the ground. He swooped down as near the ground as possible and as he did lifted the plane up and then let it drop. The strange but very gratifying result was that no one was killed, although several were seriously injured. The next day the newspapers, in commenting upon this feat, asked the question, "Why didn't the pilot bail out?" He had a parachute the only one permitted. He could have left his ship, saved his own life on the ground that it would have been impossible to save any of the passengers. But

he did not. It is a recorded fact that never in the history of commercial aviation has a pilot left his ship with passengers on board. He could have, but he didn't. The moral is **THE BEST PEOPLE DON'T BAIL OUT.**

To the members of the 1941 graduating classes. May I give you this final admonition. **DO NOT BAIL OUT.** Ideals have become part of your life. Northwest Nazarene College stands for something. The church is depending on you. Your parents have staked everything to see you through. Your classmates are looking to you. Northwest Nazarene College is depending upon you to hold true to her ideals and standards. And, finally, Christ is looking anxiously for members of this class to carry on.

DONT BAIL OUT!