

"NEW RELIGION IS ONE OF SERVICE, NOT OF CEREMONY"

Dean Brown of Yale Sees No Cause for Anxiety in Decreased Church Attendance—Says Men Are Now Measured by Good They Do Rather than by Cash They Have.

By Edward Marshall.

THAT the religion of the future is to be one of service rather than of ceremony, devoted not to social betterment, is the optimistic view of Dean Charles R. Brown of the Yale School of Religion.

The old-fashioned heaven and hell play no part in the philosophy of this eminent modern theologian; he regards them as figments of the superstitions of an era which has passed.

He does not look forward to a universal church, but sees signs that in the future all churches will cooperate for the general good far more effectively than they have worked together in the past.

He does not consider attendance should be falling off, and told me very frankly, declaring that in spite of it religion is continually becoming more vital, perhaps through the very facts that it now concerns itself less than it once did with listening to sermons and observances of ritual and more with the practical good and right development of humanity. He thinks an outdoor Sunday may be better than a Sunday spent in church.

Altogether Dean Brown's views, while sufficiently advanced to startle some of those who read this interview, are very closely in tune with modern thought and very nicely link the days of the old dogmatism with these days of liberality, mourning not at all about a loss, but rejoicing at a gain.

I was especially interested in the dean's expressed regret that the character of Christ should have been softened, almost to effeminacy, in the minds of many, and in his short and snappy declaration that: "Christ's job is very frequently a man's job."

Altogether there can be no doubt of the virility of this important leader in the nation's rapidly changing religious thought.

"Life," he said, "is being measured with a new yardstick. It is not the yardstick of material wealth in these days, any more than it is now the yardstick of church attendance and outward devotion to religious form."

"It is a hopeful and undeniable fact that men's value as community forces for good counts more than the value of their bank accounts or their devotion to religious rituals."

"This is a mighty change, and more significant of good, I'm sure, than the reputed falling off in church attendance can be significant of evil."

"Names like those of William Kent of California and George W. Coleman of Boston, who is behind the Sagamore conference, and the Ford hall meetings count more, even, than the names of the great merchants of the time, or those of great railroad men or great lawyers."

Service Is the Test.

"Good will and competence in service, these are the things which are continually increasing in impressiveness among us. The time has come when it is tacitly acknowledged by sufficient numbers to be really important that men reach the highest level of individual expression not as they reach the highest pinnacle of material success, or pray loudest, but as they serve best."

"We find this conviction growing on all sides. It is a sentiment which will invariably draw fire from a college audience, or, for that matter, from young men anywhere."

"What will this broadened conception mean to the denominations?" I inquired.

Dean Brown did not pause to think. The promptness of his answer proved that frequently, or, at least, carefully, he had considered this very question or some variation of it.

"It will mean a reduction of the number of denominational units," he replied, "and, of course, that will mean fewer local church units."

"Instead of three or four straggling and struggling congregations, each worshipping God according to a rule slightly differing from that which the others follow, in each small town, there will be one community church there, where the mere contagion of enthusiasm and conviction that comes from numbers and the magnetism of association will be of vast assistance in the propagation of the true religious spirit."

"Shall we eventually get along without denominations, do you think? Is the time at hand or even remotely approaching when all religions will follow one broad creed?" I asked.

"Scarcely," said the dean. "Denominationalism is largely a matter of temperament. As long as human beings differ in temperament, so long will they differ in their religious denominations."

"I imagine there will always be those who wish to be ministered to by liturgy, as are the Episcopalians; those who prefer the ministrations of authority, as the Roman Catholics, and those to whom these particular varieties of religious manifestation do not appeal. These facts will maintain denominations."

"Those who stand, instinctively, for the utmost simplicity of worship without rigid creed or centralized authority, and for the utmost democracy in government, like the Congregationalists and Baptists, would be uncomfortable in a church which did not fulfill these ideals—as uncomfortable as the others would be in a church which did."

"And we have and must have churches which appeal especially to the emotions, as do those of the Methodist denomination. They meet a certain temperament which belongs to many people. The natural Metho-

dist temperament might find the Congregational and Baptist churches chilly. I see no reason to look forward to one universal church, although the old intolerance of the followers of the creed for the followers of all others is already passing—almost passed, in fact.

"At the time of the San Francisco earthquake I was living in California and was a member of the relief committee. The object of that body was worthy, and its work religious in the highest sense. At the first meeting I sat between a Roman Catholic and a Jew."

"Differences of religion did not enter into our relations. We were all there to help relieve distress. Creeds became minor matters. That was an illustration of what, in the presence of a commanding need, should exist in every community."

"But it did not mean that any man abandoned his own creed, adopting that of another, or that all creeds were merged into one. It simply meant religious team work in the face of an emergency."

"Modern thought has had its definite effect upon all creeds however. From each creed except the Catholic much has been taken, and to each creed except the Catholic something has been added by modern life. The modern Baptist churches are standing now for open communion, for example. At the Congregational council last autumn a very simple creed was adopted. Its simplicity and liberality mark a great change. We have had very elaborate creeds in the past."

"Nor is our denomination the only one which has revised its creed along the lines of modern, broadened thought. The Presbyterians do not require assent to the Westminster confession from all ruling elders and ministers, and they are showing also a more tolerant attitude toward Union Theological seminary. The general assembly would not enter now into such a controversy as threw out Dr. Briggs and Henry Preserved Smith."

I asked if it might not be among the possibilities that the church would gradually merge and disappear within the increasing general humanitarian impulse.

"No; I think that improbable," Dean Brown replied. "The church stands and must always stand not only for human sympathy but for spiritual authority. It deals with spiritual verities, values and ideals. This gives it a place beyond humanitarianism."

"In the human heart it satisfies the longing for a sense of kinship with the Divine, and this, I do not for a moment doubt, is as strong and universal today as it ever was."

"There are many indications of this sentiment of kinship to the Infinite. Modern literature evidences it as clearly as did that of 50 years or more ago."

"Note the tremendous popularity of Ralph Waldo Twine's 'In Tune with the Infinite,' of which 2,000,000 copies have been sold; and Gerald Stanley Lee's 'Crowds' is having an enormous sale."

"These books are not works of fiction, or sensational philosophies, such as are the books with which the thought of great editions is usually associated, but are spiritual essays. Their vast popularity cannot mean that the religious spirit is losing force in modern times."

"It is as real, as potent as it ever was, but now is finding less conventional methods of expression than were afforded by the churches alone in bygone times. Such men as the authors of these books are among the greatest preachers."

"There are many indications of a general betterment. Among these not the least significant is the higher point of view which newspapers are taking. They are far less exclusively devoted to the crass and the material than they once were."

"Another indication of the upward trend is found in the expressions of such new philosophers as Euchen and Bergson. These men are not reactions, but developments. The materialism which was very much in vogue 25 years ago, when I was in college, is not intellectually respectable now."

Religious Education Changed

"Religious education has been materially remodelled, and every change has been along the lines of increased efficiency. The Yale School of Religion may fairly be considered one of the two or three leading divinity schools in this country, and is typical of this modern trend. It trains men for effective Christian service, making effectiveness, even more than orthodoxy, the target of its best ambitions. "It is a university school. It offers all the advantages of a great university in opening to the young minister or missionary such collateral courses in philosophy and ethics, in sociology and economics, in history and in education as will add greatly to his efficiency."

"It combines thorough, fearless, modern scholarship with spiritual earnestness and missionary enthusiasm. While accepting frankly the modern point of view in religion and the critical method, Yale never has



broken away from evangelical mood and spirit.

The school is non-sectarian. The professors in the School of Religion are on the Carnegie Foundation, as could not be the case were there any denominational restraints. The faculty is made up from various branches of the Christian church and the student body this year is made up in almost equal proportions of Methodists, Disciples, Congregationalists, Baptists and Presbyterians, with other denominations represented.

"It has the best equipped missionary department of any divinity school in America. The Day Mission building, given entirely to this work, contains the largest missionary library in the world. The endowment fund left for its upkeep enables it to purchase every book of value bearing upon the language, the literature, the history, the religion or the people of all the missionary fields of the earth."

"The arrangement between the academic department and the School of Religion by which in the senior year certain courses can be taken in theology and used toward the bachelor's degree, enables the student in Yale to save a whole year."

Organized in four main departments, it offers the broadest opportunity for training for Christian service. It fits men for preaching and pastoral service at home, for missionary service in the foreign field, for social service in connection with institutional or settlement work, or in the work of charity and correction, and

for educational service as paid superintendents of large city Sunday schools or directors of Bible study in city or college Young Men's Christian Associations.

"New Haven is a city large enough to provide clinical opportunity for students desirous of witnessing and participating in the best methods of church life and charity work, yet not so large as to leave the student without those closer affiliations which have value for an all-around development."

"In the university pulpit and in the numerous lecturerships maintained by Yale the student has an opportunity to hear without added expense or inconvenience the leading preachers and lecturers of this country and of Europe, and that is a new training for the ministry, in line with the new spirit of religion."

"During the three years of the class being graduated this month such men as Euchen, Bergson, Kirkop Lake, Talcott Williams, Dean Henson, Sylvester Horne, R. J. Campbell, James Moffatt, Sir William Ramsay, J. H. Jowett, George A. Gordon, John R. Swatt, Charles H. Parkhurst, Henry Sloane Coffin, Lyman Abbott, Rabbi Wise, Norman Angell and others of equal note have been heard by our students."

Reasons for Decrease.

"The advance in educational methods, the general broadening of the field of instruction for the Christian ministry, is a sign as good as any, and we are trying hard to make it plain at the Yale school, nor in this do we stand alone."

I asked Dean Brown to be more definite in his explanation of the modern decrease in church attendance.

"There are several reasons for it, I believe," he said. "By no means all

of them may be regarded as evidences of decreased religious feeling."

"One of them is the increasing stress of modern life, which makes it more difficult for men and women to find time for formal worship."

"Another is the fact that in these days there are more social avenues open. Church service was once almost the only occasion when the better people gathered together."

"Increased confinement and increased appreciation of the value of the open air, too, has made many who are not irreligious feel that their one day of liberty from indoor labor may better be spent in the open air than in a church."

"Rigid adherence to the old church hours, beginning at 11 in the morning, has been bad for churches. These hours of service do not fit easily into the modern scheme of life in many cities."

"There certainly has been, too, a diminution of the sense of the sacramental value of church attendance. Our grandfathers felt that when they sat in church they were invested with the odor of sanctity."

"Now church attendance is regarded as not the only nor even the principal means of grace. We have more good reading than our fathers found available. Many people look to it for spiritual culture."

I asked the dean to give his views upon the liberalization of Sunday, which, during the past decade, has been so notable, particularly in New York.

"I am not sure that it is an un-

mixed good," he answered. "Upon many it entails seven days of labor. It has robbed a multitude of their day of rest. It has increased labor in the transportation business especially."

"The fourth commandment did not say 'Go to church on the Sabbath,' but it did bid mankind to abstain from toil. Insofar as the liberalization of Sunday means the loss of that humane intent, it surely is bad."

"The Sabbath was made for man—and for that part of the man which suffers neglect during the other six days."

"Inasmuch as the world now is tending toward the use of the Sabbath for the promotion of human health and for adding to the zest and relish of human life, the world is trending sensibly; it is following the teachings of the gospel. To 'keep the Sabbath holy' is to use the Sabbath for good purposes. There are conceivable circumstances where something else than church attendance would actually be for the glory of God and one's own good."

I asked Dean Brown the plain, flat questions "Is there a hell? Is there a heaven?" hoping thereby to secure a basis of comparison between the old theology and the new. I gained exactly that.

"The idea of an arbitrary judgment, of a fixed, supernatural punishment for sin, was a human device," he answered. "But it sprang from a true philosophy—the philosophy that sin will bring its own punishment."

"That punishment begins on earth, however, and will continue just as long as sin continues. Someone once said: 'The Almighty writes a very plain hand.' On all sides we see the hell which men build for themselves. The consequences of evil doing inevitably work themselves out without supernatural intervention."

"And as to heaven, I should say that the rewards of righteousness also are found on earth in peace and in the sense of a more complete self-realization. The highly developed righteous man of modern days does not think much about the bliss of transportation into a celestial paradise where he will forever abide after the morn and turmoil of his earthly life."

"That seems to have been held out by ancients as a sort of pay for being good. In these days of advancing thought no bribe is necessary to the sensible."

"And did not the Master say: 'The kingdom of heaven is within you? Very few protestant churches now teach the existence of a material heaven or a material hell.'"

I asked the dean to comment on the comparative efficiency of the churches and such organizations as the Anti-Saloon League and other social bodies which, starting out to do a definite thing, move toward it irresistibly, in straight lines.

"The Anti-Saloon League has scored because it has lined up all the moral forces of the country, most of them church born, against a specific evil," he answered. "If the churches of the country thus could line up against all evil, the nation would be transformed."

"It must come to methods somewhat similar. If all the good people of the nation could unite for definite work we should see great moral progress."

"Is America progressing in religious efficiency as rapidly as other countries?" I inquired.

"In America," said the dean, "we probably are not as well advanced as our English cousins, who, despite the weight of a state church, are doing better and more progressive religious work than we are, giving religion a larger place in the lives of the people than it has here."

"But we have made far more religious progress than have the countries on the continent. We are moving steadily toward a greater simplicity of faith—a faith with fewer articles, but vital and strongly held."

"In the United States more people than ever before are believing in God and in the essential spiritual leadership of Jesus. And this is not so much on the basis of any theological theory as because of a new appreciation for the qualities the Master showed."

"We are expressing our religion rather in terms of social service than in terms of church ceremonial. It may not be a bad sign even if it be true that fewer go to worship in the pews. The essentials of religious life are more fully met by worship expressed in terms of service through the working days."

Labor for General Good.

"Decreasing church attendance may be regarded without terror if an increasing Christian spirit marks the conduct of our routine of existence."

"The expression of the religious spirit in public worship is undoubtedly desirable, to be striven for and encouraged, but the man who endeavors to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God, is deeply religious, whether or not he goes to church."

"The existence of such men in increasing numbers in the community is everywhere evidenced by the growing number who are willing to give time, money and enthusiasm to definite and hard labor toward the general good. This is religious impulse of the highest order."

"Nothing could be more encouraging than the modern plainly apparent increase among the fortunate of the sense of their responsibility toward the less fortunate. The best modern men are not satisfied with mere charity. A social conscience has come into

being, making them feel responsible for the permanent well-being of those members of society whose advantages and opportunities have been inferior to their own."

"There has been a great change in these matters since I was a boy. Then the names of great theologians were those with which to conjure; now the magic names are those of personalities like William Henry Baldwin, Jane Adams, Booker T. Washington, and Graham Taylor."

"I have recently returned from a journey through the west and south. I found in both sections a much deeper interest in religion and the vital things of life than existed when I was in college there 20 years ago. Men are thinking less of feathering their own nests than of benefiting their communities by public spirited service."

"In the great farming states, especially, such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota, the churches are at work along broader lines. In the various state universities we find students working with an almost inspired industry so that they may learn the best the world can offer them and then go back to their home communities and lift them to a higher level. These great state institutions are marvelous promoters of a spirit truly divine."

"And all this indicates that religion, instead of dying out, is steadily becoming more vital. It is changing its form of expression as it achieves new growth. It is concerning itself less with ritual and more with things that matter—such as education and the home, industry and politics."

"I like that word 'politics.' I was much pleased when a professor told me, recently, of a strong junior who had come to his aid. The professor said he was fitting himself for the practice of law, his real ambition was to go back and work definitely for clean politics."

I requested from the dean an explanation of the great preponderance of women over men in general church membership.

"One reason for it," he replied, "is the fact that religion has been too narrowly construed. The work generally centered in church building is particularly women's work, but if we could enlarge our idea of church work so that when a man went out to fight any evil he would feel that he, also, was doing church work, we might find the attendance of men increasing."

Another reason, perhaps, is that we have had in Christian art an effeminate conception of Christ. The medieval painters almost invariably made his face a woman's with a beard. We find him feminized by mediaeval writers. Thomas a Kempis' 'Imitation of Christ' is a fine example. There Jesus is not described as an example of good citizenship but as a meek and negative personality, not calculated to make strong appeal to the imagination of the virile man."

It Is Work for Men.

"In these days we emphasize more the virile points of Christ's character and young men will respond to this. Christ's job is very frequently a man's job. In California the president of a men's church league called its members together on Sunday morning to help prevent the prizefight between Jack Johnson and Jeffries. Five hundred men came forward. It was a job for men. They shut the fight out of Oakland and then shut it out of California. That was church work—real men's work. It was work that I was glad to have the men of my congregation tackle on Sunday morning."

I asked the dean about religion and its relation to education, its relation to the modern child.

"In adolescence," he replied, "those faculties responding to the unseen are more active than in later life. If they are well developed they help to build good character."

"The religion offered to children in the old days often made them miserable and terrified them. The old-time boy regarded the Almighty as a great taskmaster, always trying to catch him in the commission of some sin. The religion of the present day should supply the child with principles fit for the foundation of good character and wrought out in concrete terms."

"There are other than Biblical characters who can be used to teach the children religious principles, and, possibly, modern characters, easier for them to understand. If Gideon, Barack, Samson and Jephthah are good characters for children to learn about, why can not they also be instructed from the lives of modern and certain to be more interesting. Surely in the derelict persons, such as William H. Baldwin and Jane Addams?"

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"Prominent among them," he replied, "is overemphasis upon and a strained self-consciousness of the matter of sex. The less consciousness there is of this in ordinary life the better for society. I doubt the wisdom of what seems to be the present tendency to eliminate the sense of modesty. It seems to me that the discussion of the whole sex question is being overdone. It is, I fear, among the tendencies of modern society which tend to make against the home."

"Notable among many others is the fact that divorce has become commonplace. This fact has largely done away with the old-time forbearance between married people. Too many, in these days, think it easier to separate and try again than it is to make an honest endeavor to adapt themselves and win their happiness by personal adjustment."

"And, next to that, among the evil tendencies of this particular generation I should put the almost universal greed for gain. Money counts for more than it ever has before. Now is the true only of the prosperous. It is an unfortunate detail of the progress of the time which offers all a measurably equal opportunity, that the opening of opportunity has ruined many by instilling avarice for money or the things which money buys in the hearts of thousands who, in the differing circumstances of former days, would never have been distorted by greed."

THE JURY ENJOYED THIS LAWYER'S MANNERISMS

THE elderly lawyer was giving the young man some advice.

"Of course," he said, "good logical argument is all well enough, but sometimes it won't do as well with a jury as a bit of humor, and as a last resort, young man, a touch of burlesque beats everything. A little burlesque of your opponent's mannerisms may ruin his entire speech and give you a victory. What if he hasn't any? you say. There isn't a man alive who speaks frequently in public who hasn't mannerisms. He may not know it—probably he doesn't—but he has them."

"I didn't know I had any until I woke up one morning and found some of them in print. Then I recognized them. I know another lawyer who got up to find his handling of a pencil during a speech humorously described. It was a mannerism, and he recognized it."

"Now, young man, if a reporter can find out those things, why can't a lawyer? That's the way I figured it, and when I was next pitted against a good strong lawyer, I studied him. He didn't have any noticeable mannerisms, but

he did have a peculiar way of emphasizing his points with the index finger of his right hand. You would never notice it unless your attention was called to it. Then you wouldn't notice anything else. The right hand raised, and with the index finger moving slowly backward and forward, meant a strong point. The index finger pointed at the jury box meant a stronger point; and the index finger of the right hand crossed over the index finger of the left hand meant a clincher.

"Simple, wasn't it? But, young man, these three gestures won me my case. He had the closing argument, and I was afraid of him. I could not anticipate his points, but I could his gestures. I told the jury that I was afraid of him; that he was a powerful speaker and could sway men. Then I illustrated his gestures and described the importance of each. I told the jury to look out especially for him when he crossed his fingers, as he was trying to exorcise the evil spirits within him. A poor joke, certainly, but the overwrought jurors laughed at it. I said that when he crossed his fingers the third time, the climax of his speech would be reached."

"Well, that man started in with the determination that he would not use any of those gestures or mannerisms, and it became painfully apparent in the course of the first five minutes that he was thinking more of his gestures than he was of his argument. He was struggling against a habit, and the jury became interested in the struggle. Then he got mad, warmed up to his subject, and used one of the gestures I had described. The jurors grinned. "A moment later he had crossed his index fingers, and every jurymen counted "Once." You could see their lips move. He pulled those fingers apart as though each had struck a hot iron. But it was too late. When he finished he had made the poorest speech of his life, was perspiring as though he had won a foot race, and the jury was trying to keep from laughing outright. I don't believe they had heard a word of his argument, but they had followed every gesture."

"By the way, he did cross his fingers just three times in the course of his speech, as I had prophesied. The third time he got mad and cut his talk short. It was two months before he forgave me. But I won the case."

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