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NEW CHRISTIANITY WILL SUPERSEDE RELIGIONS

Rev. Dr. S. G. Bland, in New Book, Says Capitalistic Control and Protestantism Will Pass Away—Catholicism Not Religion of New Age.

"Capitalistic control must pass away," is one of the striking statements in "The New Christianity," a little volume from the pen of Rev. Dr. Salem G. Bland, pastor of Broadway Methodist Tabernacle, just off the press.

The book will probably "start something" in Methodist circles. It was on account of his views on industrial and social problems and his sympathy with the radical labor movement that an effort was made by a section of the Broadway Methodist Board to remove Dr. Bland from the pastorate of that church. The Toronto Methodist Conference meets next week, and it is just possible that the book's teachings will be discussed on the floor of Conference. Dr. Bland makes it plain in "The New Christianity" that control of industry by the workers must supplant capitalist control. "Capitalistic control," he remarks, "has not played a necessary and useful part in the social evolution. It has shown courage and enterprise. But it has been on the whole rapacious and heartless, and its sense of moral responsibility has been often rudimentary. When the managers on whom it depends desert to the side of the workers, it will be patent how little capacity or service is in capitalism, and how little it deserved the immense gains wrung from exploited labor and skill."

And on the next page Dr. Bland declares: "A check must be placed on the fatal fashion money has of breeding money. Wages of labor, wages of invention, wages of superintendence, are just; profits of capital must grow less and less to the vanishing point."

"The bitter conflicts between capital and labor over the division of the profits will never be settled. It probably never can be settled. It probably will cease to be. Capital will cease to be a factor; only labor in the broadly inclusive sense of the term will remain. Brotherhood and democracy are the two great principles of the new Christianity, says Dr. Bland. And he falls to find these in sufficient measure either in Protestantism or Roman Catholicism.

Protestantism Must Pass Away. The author goes so far as to say: "Protestantism must pass away. It is too roodily individualistic, too sectarian, to be the prevailing religion of a collectivist age. It is passing away before our eyes. Everywhere it reveals the marks of decay or of transformation. It must change or die."

"Not to Protestantism, not to Roman Catholicism, belongs the age now dawning, but to a new Christianity which will, indeed, have affinities with them both, but still more deeply with the Christianity of Jesus.

"This Christianity indeed is already here. Like its Master when He came, it is in the world and the world knows it not. It is still immature, undeveloped, inconspicuous, it will receive large and valuable contributions from both the great historic forms of Christianity, not improbably from the Eastern, or Greek Christianity, as well."

Then follows a statement that will probably make the Church sit up and take notice: "But in promise and potency the coming Christianity is more fully and truly here in the Labor movement than in any of the great historic Church organizations. Perhaps a more accurate statement would be that the Labor movement needs less radical change than the great Church organizations to become the fitting and efficient Christianity for the new age."

"It needs in the main but two great changes. "1. It must broaden. "What Labor Must Realize. "It must open its doors as the British and Canadian Labor parties are doing, to include all kinds of productive work, of hand or brain. It must make room for all who contribute to the feeding, clothing, housing, educating, delighting of the children of men. It must include the inventor, the research scientist, the manager as well as the manual worker; the men who grow things or distribute them as well as those who make them; the professional class, who, on their part, must cease to regard themselves as other than men and women of labor. Labor must become, in short, the category to which all belong, who really earn their living and do not seek to make more than they earn.

2. Labor must recognize the Christianness of its own principles. "I do not say Labor must become Christian. It is profoundly and vital-

ly Christian in its existence on the right of the humblest man or woman corresponding denial of the right of any human being to live on the labor of others without rendering his own equivalent of service, in its devotion to the fundamental principles of brotherhood.

"The Draft Report of Reconstruction, for example, prepared near the close of 1917 for the Labor party of Britain, is not only the ablest and most comprehensive program of social reconstruction so far drawn up, but in its aims and methods and spirit it is profoundly Christian, a thousand times more Christian than the ordinary ecclesiastical pronouncement, though the name of Christ does not occur in it. The need is not so much that Labor become Christian as that it become clearly conscious that it is Christian and can realize itself and win its triumph only on Christian lines."

It is not strange after all that among workingmen should arise the Church which is to give the truest interpretation of Christianity. The Lord Jesus was Himself a working-man and brought up in a working-man's home. His chief friends and chosen apostles were workingmen. How can he be fully understood except through the workingman's consciousness? The high, the served, the rich, the mere scholars, as such, are not fitted to understand Christianity. Individuals of exceptional character and insight may escape the limitations of their environment and education, but in any large community interpretation the workingman's consciousness would seem to be essential. And on any large scale, Christianity has never found such an expression to give it—so essentially and predominantly democratic and brotherly.

Stand and Fall Together. "Labor and Christianity, then, are bound up together. Together they stand or fall. They come into their kingdom together or not at all. It is the supreme mission of the prophetic spirit at this fateful hour to interpret Labor to itself, that it may not in this hour of consummation miss the path. To turn away from Christianity now would be for Labor to turn away from the throne. But it will not. Mankind is in the grasp of divine currents too strong to be resisted."

Dr. Bland's reference to Protestantism are apt to cause a considerable stir among his brethren. In the chapter of his book entitled "A Labor Christianity," he traces the history of the Protestant Church, Luther's part in it, and summarizes it as follows: "Protestantism in a word is bourgeois Christianity. It is the Christianity of the middle or trading classes. It was born where these classes were strongest—in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, England and France. It has exalted the middle classes and the middle classes have exalted it. It has been with them in their struggle and has shared their triumph. It sanctions their tastes, emphasizes their virtues, is indulgent toward their faults, condemns their aversions."

Speaking of the origin of Protestantism, Dr. Bland says: "With Luther himself and many of his followers the motive was a genuinely religious one. It was a revolt against the legalistic interpretations of Christianity and the moral failure of the Roman Catholic Church. But with the mass of the city people, who were the main support of Luther, the motive was not so noble. It was a revolt against a religion which was a burden and a hindrance to a purer faith or a holier life."

He severely scores Luther for his attitude toward the peasants, who in 1524 made twelve demands of the German prince, and he quotes Luther's incitement to the prince to slaughter the rebellious peasants. From 1525, the year in which the revolt was crushed, the new Protestant Church was estranged from the proletariat.

Branch of Autocracy. "On Luther rests the responsibility of converting the German Church into a branch of an autocratic Government, as such distrusted and detested by the laborer in the country and the worker in the town, and of thus bringing about a condition of things which has earned for Protestant Prussia the reproach of being the least religious country of Europe."

"Protestantism, then, by its very origin is Christianity shaped to suit the trading and the manufacturing class. Now what are the characteristics of members of this class? They are 'keenly, but, in general, superficially intelligent, alert, watchful, ambitious, pushful, courageous, energetic, industrious, self-reliant, independent. Freedom-loving, intensely individualistic. They are honorable according to the standards of their class; often generous when the business struggle is not involved, but in the struggle itself, they tend, almost of necessity, to become hard and selfish. Their great aim has been to "get on," to make money, to rise to as high a social position as possible."

"Protestantism fits a people of such characteristics like a glove. It cradles the rich man. It consults him and honors him, puts him forward on every possible occasion, suitable or scarcely suitable. Knowing his sensitiveness, it deals with him tactfully and deferentially.

Lacked Humility. "Above all Protestantism has lacked humility and pity. Naturally so. They are the two virtues least called for in the business struggle, the two virtues, indeed, most likely to prove embarrassing. Here it is where, probably, Protestantism most sharply differs from Primitive Christianity and from the Christianity which was in the mind of Jesus.

Protestantism is a fighting faith. It trains men to be self-reliant and hard. Fair play is its substitute for brotherliness, and it often finds it

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