

# How Can our Teachers Retain their Christian Identity in a Secular World?

*Attributed to Siegbert W. Becker*

## **Introduction: The Problem.**

We live in a society which has become almost totally secularized but which is nevertheless striving with might and main, at least in our country, to recover and to retain some semblance of piety in public life. The sick comedians of our day are able to get a laugh from a night club audience by speaking of pupils in our public schools who smuggle Bibles into their classrooms by disguising them with the dust jackets of filthy novels and of students who escape punishment for praying in the classroom by claiming that they are telling dirty stories. Even *Peanuts* of comic strip fame gets into the act when Lucy comes home, takes Linus out behind the garage, and after making sure that no one is near to overhear, whispers, "We prayed in school today."

The struggle between the forces of secularism and religion is brought into sharp relief by the fact that in the last decade we have seen our government order the printing of the words, "In God we trust," on our paper money and the inclusion of the words, "Under God," in the pledge of allegiance to the flag, while at the same time, at the request of a blasphemous atheist, forbid the reading of the Bible and prayer in our public schools. But this part of the problem is not of primary concern for us as teachers in the schools of the church, although the whole matter does come somewhat closer to home when we see a Synod which for years held up the Wisconsin Synod to ridicule because of our stand on the military chaplaincy send its spokesmen to join with the spokesmen of the National Council of Churches, to testify before a committee of the congress to oppose the Becker amendment, which does not require, but only permits prayer in the public schools. When members of the Wisconsin Synod oppose such an amendment, we can at least claim to be consistent.

On the other hand, while the secular world is reaching out for some semblance of piety, the church is rapidly becoming secularized. The neo-orthodox search for relevancy in religion is only a suit of sheep's clothing beneath which the secularization of the church is proceeding apace. By and large, an unsuspecting laity scarcely realizes how far the secularization of the church has gone when it listens to a Lutheran pastor preaching on the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 and hears him say, without affirming or denying the miracle, that he is not so much concerned about whether Jesus fed or did not feed the multitudes two thousand years ago as he is interested in the great "spiritual" truth, which alone is relevant for our time—that we ought to be Christ-like in stilling the pangs of the hungry. We ourselves are so infected by the worldly atmosphere which we breathe in every day that we hardly recognize the secularism that lies latent in so many of the clichés that we have grown used to hearing—even from men who ought to know better. Do we still realize, for example, how unchristian it is to say that there is no point in preaching about pie in the sky to human beings who go to bed hungry every night, or in proclaiming salvation to men who don't yet know the way out of their social and economic problems, or in speaking of freedom in Christ to people who have not yet won their civil rights? Have we forgotten how incompatible such remarks are with the attitude displayed by the great apostle who said, "Art thou called being a servant, care not for it. But if thou mayest be free, use it rather," and again, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."? (1 Co, 7:21; Php 4:11).

And perhaps the most tragic aspect of this whole picture is this that the church often imagines that by adopting such an attitude, by becoming relevant, as they say, it will be on the way to winning the world for Christ. It does not realize that in this very process the world is winning the church. Of course, men will be more sympathetic with the church if the church shows itself to be concerned with the same problems with which men wrestle every day. If "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" become the church's questions, then who will be left to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness? If it is

really true, for example, that if we want to keep our young people with the church, we must give them what the world has to offer, then why do we not just lay aside all pretense of being a church and turn our houses of worship into dancing halls and replace Bach with Gershwin?

This whole process of secularization is perhaps nowhere more manifest than in the field of education. Under the influence of John Dewey, the high priest of modern education, and the Columbia school of educators, who distilled the evolutionistic biology of Darwin, the behavioristic psychology of Watson, and the pragmatic philosophy of William James and injected this witches' brew into the veins of the educational system of America, even the natural revelation of God, as St. Paul portrays it in Romans 1, has been shunted aside, and the last barriers to a complete secularization of our American system of education have broken down. The checks which the natural knowledge of God and of the law exercised to contain the more vicious outbursts of man's inborn hatred of God and his Word have been in large measure removed, and modern education knows little or nothing of any fixed moral principles or absolute moral standards. Under the influence of the dogma of evolution, modern educators have more and more drifted away from the view of man as a creature of God, responsible to his Creator, to adopt the concept of man as nothing more than a biological organism, different in degree but not in kind, from the rest of the animal world. In the field of morality we are today living from the principal stored up by previous generations and this capital itself is being steadily depreciated so that we are not far from moral and spiritual bankruptcy.

This is the sort of world into which we have been placed as educators, and the question addressed to Esther by Mordecai ought to have special significance also for us, "Why knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Applied to us as professional laborers in the church, we might rephrase Mordecai's concern for the Jews by asking what we can do to protect ourselves and our pupils from being drawn into the whirlpool that threatens to engulf our society. A part of the problem certainly is the question that we have before us for discussion this morning, "How Can a Christian Teacher Retain His Identity in a Secular World?"

### I. **The Identity of the Christian Teacher.**

If the Christian teacher is to be consciously concerned with retaining his identity, he must first of all know who and what he is. It is obvious that he is, first of all, a Christian. In fact, this is so obvious that we have a tendency to become a little impatient when we are reminded of it. But just as the simple message of the Savior's love should always be and remain for us the good news, the Gospel, which retains its freshness and its wonder for us though we have heard it a thousand and more times, so that we never begin to think of it as the "same old stuff"; so the realization that we are the redeemed children of God, purchased and won with the holy precious blood of the Savior, ought to inspire us to a neverending hymn of praise to the Triune God, by whose grace we are what we are. A Christian teacher ought to be first and foremost a person in whom the fear of God's wrath and the comforting assurance of his gracious forgiveness in Christ has worked a warm and vital sense of gratitude and appreciation for the manifold grace of God by which he lives. No less than the missionaries we send to the heathen, Christian teachers ought to be, yes, must be, men whose eyes have seen the King, men in whose ears his sweet words ring, men to whom Christ is everything.

Obvious as this is, it nevertheless bears endless repetition. What we take most for granted is the one thing that we can not and dare not take for granted. And its very mention ought to make us supremely conscious that the retention of our Christian identity is not a task that can be accomplished by powers that reside in the hearts and souls of men. How often does it not behoove Christian teachers to pray, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," and "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy Salvation and uphold me with Thy free Spirit."? In the final analysis, only the Holy Ghost can do the work by which we retain our identity as Christians, and anything we say or do here at this conference ought to build on this presupposition. Coupled with this consciousness of the need of the help of the Holy Spirit in retaining our Christian identity, there ought to be also a realization of our need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the last sermon which Dr. Martin Luther preached in Wittenberg, he spoke of this life as a

hospital in which we Christians are indeed on the way to recovery, but where there is always still room and need for improvement. He told his congregation, “We are now under the Physician’s care. The sin, it is true, is wholly forgiven, but it has not been, wholly purged. If the Holy Spirit is not ruling men, they become corrupt again; but the Holy Spirit must cleanse the wounds daily. Therefore this life is a hospital; the sin has really been forgiven, but it has not yet been healed.” (Am. Ed. 52, 373.)

We need also scarcely to be told that this work of spiritual healing, which the Holy Spirit must carry on also in the lives and in the hearts of professional workers in his church, is done by means of Word and sacrament. Not only as an example to others, but first of all for himself. The Christian teacher ought to be diligent and faithful in his use of the means of grace. It seems superfluous to mention also this, but not so many years ago a Lutheran school teacher told me that as soon as school was out, he and his wife left for the north woods where they had a cabin, and from the middle of June to the end of August they did not attend church services, because, as he said, during the school year he played the organ for two services every Sunday and he felt that he had done his duty so far as church-going was concerned because he still, on the average, attended more than one service a week.

Well, why do we go to church? Do we go to fulfill an obligation or to perform a duty, or do we go because we want to hear once more that Jesus loves us, that our heavenly Father has had mercy on us and has forgiven us all our sins? Do we go to be edified in our Christian faith and to sing our praises to our Lord, to acknowledge how much he and his grace are worth to us, or in other words, to worship Him? Do we go to do something for him, or to let him do something for us? And why do we go to the Lord’s Table? Do we go again because it is our duty or to set a good example, or do we go because we know how much good it does us to kneel before his altar and to hear him say, “Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you. Take and drink, this is my blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins.”? And why do we read our Bibles, — to prepare for a class, or to behold wondrous things out of His law? And when we read our Bibles, what is our chief concern? Do we ask first of all, “How can I teach this story to my youngsters? What will be my approach to the story and what aim do I intend to pursue?”, or do we ask, “What does this mean to me, for my life and for my faith? And why do we memorize Bible passages? Or have we stopped doing this because we know as many as we expect our children to learn? But if we do it still, do we do it because we are just a little ashamed to have to use a book when we check on the children’s memory work, or do we do it because we know from experience the comfort that comes with the ability to recall the words of God in times of sorrow, because we know the strength that is to be found in being able to say, “It is written,” in times of temptation, because we know the solace that is to be gained if we can make the psalms our own personal pleadings before the throne of grace in the dark and quiet hours of the night? These are the attitudes toward Word and sacrament that we ought, under God, to develop if we want to retain our identity as Christian teachers. I have in my library a book with the title, *Kann auch ein Pastor selig werden?* (Is it possible for a pastor to be saved?), The implications of that question ought surely not to be lost on teachers who share with the pastor the office of the holy ministry, and the Christian teacher will certainly catch also for himself the significance of the words of Paul to Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” (1 Ti 4:16)

As a child of God, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, the Christian teacher knows himself also to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ of the heavenly mansions. As a member of God’s family, he should bear in mind that his life here on this earth should be lived with one foot in heaven. In the armor of the Christian teacher this is surely the breast-plate that he puts on when he goes out to do battle with the forces of secularism. Our citizenship is in heaven, from when we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Php 3:21). On this earth we are strangers and pilgrims who are mindful of a better country and who look for a city that has foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God (Heb 11: 10,15,16).

One of the greatest barriers against the spread and conquest of secularism in the church is this conviction that Christianity is an “other-world” religion which prompts the children of God to sing “Heaven is

my home.” So long as this conviction has deep roots in the hearts of God’s people, just so long will their ears be closed to the siren song of the social Gospel which masks its inherent secularism with overtones of piety. It is just this aspect of Christianity which arouses the most vicious attacks on the church. And what is saddest of all is that these attacks on the church come from within its own walls. Those who point suffering humanity to the heavenly mansions are ridiculed even by churchmen as preachers of a “pie-in-the-sky” religion. Those who proclaim salvation for the individual through repentance and forgiveness and who insist that this, and not the reformation and renovation of society so that this world may become the kingdom of God, is the main function of the church are castigated as loveless people who have little concern for the social and economic well-being of their fellowmen. Those who teach that men should be content with what God gives and comfort themselves amidst the groanings and travailings of this world with the hope that some day the sons of God will be manifested and the whole creation will be set free to have a part in the glorious liberty of the children of God are denounced as men who stand in the way of progress. It was just this aspect of Christianity which prompted Karl Marx to call it the opiate of the people.

And the steady erosion of the other-worldly character of the Christian Church accounts for the rapid spread of secularistic thinking that pervades so much of the church of our time. It is the spread of secularism that prompts the *Adult Student*, the official Sunday School paper of the General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, to draw a parallel between Jesus Christ and Karl Marx as two great revolutionary leaders deeply concerned about the need for social and moral reform. (Sept., 1962, p. 21) And is it any wonder that large areas of the church have fallen prey to secularism when a poll taken in eight leading Protestant seminaries indicates that only about 1% of the young men training for the ministry in our country believe in the second coming of our Lord? The more a Christian teacher focuses his gaze on that great event when heaven and earth shall pass away and the Savior will come in the clouds of heaven, the more proof he will be against the blandishments of secular philosophies.

The Christian teacher, then, will have gone a long way toward retaining his identity in a secular world if he keeps in mind that he is a redeemed child of God, kept in the faith by the Holy Ghost working in him through the means of grace, and an heir of eternal salvation in heaven. But in addition to being aware of being a Christian in the Biblical sense of this word, in addition to being conscious of the nature of his personal relationship with God, he ought to bear in mind always his official position in the church and recognize what it means to be a Christian teacher.

A Christian teacher is, from the professional point of view, a special gift of God to the Church. According to the words of Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:11), it is the ascended Christ who gives pastors and teachers to the Church; and the teacher who bears this in mind will never descend to adopting the low, earth-born, naturalistic, and materialistic view of his office which the secularistic philosophy of modern education would seek to force upon him. It is generally agreed in our society that the work of a teacher is a noble profession, and we will surely not dispute this. Even an unbelieving teacher in a religionless school may be a source of great blessing for men, but he who has no more than this to say on the subject is surely superficial in his judgment and ignorant of the distinction between what Luther called the “glittering vices” of the heathen and the truly good works of the children of God. We do not want to disparage the service which is rendered by the public school system of our land. Illiteracy and ignorance are not conducive to the welfare of any nation, least of all a democracy, but if there is side by side with the impartation of useful knowledge a concerted effort to rob God of his glory and honor by the teaching of the dogma of evolution, to rob man of his dignity as a creature of God made in the image of his Creator, by depicting him as nothing more than a fortuitous biological accident, to destroy the whole moral fabric of society by setting aside all absolute moral standards and by relativizing all moral values, if there is in the educational enterprise an inherent atheism, which perhaps does not blatantly deny the existence of God but nevertheless by example and precept subtly inculcates the idea that God need not be taken into consideration in our daily life, then in the long run the educational system of a nation will not turn out to be a blessing but will actually contribute to the eventual decay and downfall of a civilization.

Many years ago God said to Ezekiel, "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it." And who can doubt that in the Christian teacher God has found himself a man who can stand in the breach which the secularism of Dewey and his school has torn in the walls that guard our country from destruction. But if the Christian teacher himself becomes a secularist in his thinking, then the sale will have lost its savor and there will be no remedy.

Against that background it ought to be plain how important it is for a Christian teacher to know that he is a gift of God to the church. This realization ought to go far in supplying the motivating power that drives him to do what God wants done. About this, God has not left us in doubt. St. Paul tells us that the risen and ascended Christ gives pastors and teachers to the church for the work of the ministry. As a new member of the Wisconsin Synod I am happy to belong to a church which was not forced by the pressures of the draft board to declare its parish school teachers to be ministers of religion, but which has always assigned to the teachers of the church this exalted position. This does not mean that teachers hold the same position in the congregation as the pastor, but it does mean that all of us, pastors, teachers, and professors share in the same work and in the same service. Where we shall serve and in what capacity is determined by the call which we receive, but if we divide ourselves into classes and begin to struggle with one another for power and to compete for honor, and to jockey for preferred positions, we are adopting the characteristics of the secular world and are forgetting that all of us, pastors, teachers, and professors are collaborators in the vineyard of the Lord—the one planting, the other watering, but with God giving the increase. The Savior himself pointed to this as one of the areas in which His kingdom is to be distinguished from the secular world when He said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whomever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (Mt 20:25-27).

It is significant that God has called the highest office in his church not a dominion but a ministry, not ruling but service. So long as we are true to the spirit of our calling therefore, one of the chief characteristics of the secular world will be foreign to us.

And if we keep in mind not only the attitude that this ministry requires of us but also the ends that this ministry is to serve, we will be all the more distinct from the secular world. This, too, God has spelled out in significant detail. He has told us that he has given pastors and teachers to the church for the perfecting of the saints and for edifying the body of Christ. A Christian teacher, whatever else he may be in his capacity as teacher, is to be above all else an instrument of God for building the kingdom. And as the Bible says, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. His first goal in life is not the elimination of illiteracy or the production of responsible citizens of the republic or the training of cooperative members of society. These aims, which stand among the highest and most honorable goals of a secularized educational system, are only by-products of a Christian system of education, important in their own way and in their own place, but by-products nevertheless. This does not mean that we depreciate them or intend in any way to neglect them, but only that we give them a different place in our thinking when we construct the curriculum and arrange the schedule and in general go about our business of carrying on the academic enterprise. The Christian's first aim is to build the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to win souls for that kingdom, to keep boys and girls loyal and faithful to that kingdom, to make them better subjects and soldiers of that King.

This work is also described by Paul as a perfecting of the saints, of God's holy people. Since the Christian knows that the holiness of God's people is a twofold holiness, first the holiness which is theirs through the forgiveness of sins which they have through faith in Christ, and, secondly, the holiness which consists of their obedience to the law of God, he also knows that his first and chief task as a teacher is to proclaim the Word of God, by which alone such faith and obedience are worked. To perfect the saints means to strengthen the faith by which his pupils cling to Christ and his forgiveness, to increase their love and devotion to the Savior, to stir them up to more faithful service to their Lord. And the teacher who never forgets that this is the assignment which has been given to him by God himself is from the beginning vaccinated against the

disease of secularism. Christianity and secularism are incompatible and they cannot both live long in the same heart. Also here it is true that no man can serve two masters.

However, if we are to retain our identity in a secular world and be well on our guard against secularism, we must have a clear picture of the enemy and we will need to define clearly what is meant by the secular world. We have a tendency sometimes wrongly to identify the secular world with the material world which we see all about us. But when we sing, "This world is very evil," we do not mean this world of persons and things is per se essentially bad or wicked.

We must be on our guard against adopting the neo-Platonic view, which has so often passed for Christianity, and according to which all matter is evil and everything spiritual is good. This heathenish view of the world was, in the early middle ages, adopted by many in the church, and it led to the asceticism of the Roman monastic orders with their vows of celibacy and poverty. Celibacy was the attempt to flee from what was considered to be evil in man and poverty was to sever the Christian from the evil that resides in things. The men who adopted this view felt and believed that the less they had to do with the visible world of men and things by which they were surround, the farther they had progressed on the way to holiness, and the more distance they had put between themselves and temptation. Erasmus caricatured this attitude in his *Praise of Folly* when he wrote of a monk who boasted that he had never touched money in his whole life unless he was wearing at least two pairs of gloves.

Neo-Platonism saw the whole or reality as a struggle between the two poles of spirit and matter. At the top of the ladder of existence was pure spirit, or reason, perfect and good in every way; at the bottom of the ladder was pure matter, totally and incurably evil. On this basis the medieval theologians taught that the soul or reason of man, being spiritual, was inherently good, and the body or flesh was basically evil, and the soul was led astray only as it was tempted by the body. Food, drink, physical comfort, the sex urge, etc., were all looked upon as unworthy of a spiritual man's enjoyment or even of his attention. The material world in which man lived was to be despised without qualification or reservation and only used to the extent that became absolutely necessary.

The Lutheran Reformation did much to free the church from this false and misleading view of the world of men and things. Dr. Martin Luther was raising his voice in protest against this philosophy when he taught that truly good works did not consist in fleeing out of the world to what was called the spiritual life but rather in carrying out the ordinary, every-day tasks of our calling in life. It was this that prompted him, for instance, in the *Large Catechism* to denounce fleeing into the monastery as a sin against the fifth commandment.

And it is strange that the Christian Church should have been so easily misled into this false philosophy. How could anyone who believed the Biblical doctrine of creation believe that the things which God has created could possibly be inherently and essentially evil? That a wrong use could be made of them and that they could be sinfully employed was, of course, consistent with Biblical thought; but after all, God had said that what he had made was very good. And if men imagined that the fall into sin had made nature inherently sinful, they ought at least to have believed the plain and simple words of Paul who said that every creature of God is good and is to be received with thanksgiving. Those words were spoken long after the fall into sin by one who also wrote that the whole creation has been made subject to vanity because of the fall of man.

Or how could anyone have believed that the body is essentially evil when the Bible so clearly taught that the Son of God was made flesh, that He had a truly human body, and yet was a lamb without blemish and without spot? The body as such, therefore, could not possibly be in itself a blotch on man's character. Or how could such a view of man have been reconciled with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body? If the body is evil, would it not be laid aside with the old Adam? But if God himself will raise our bodies and change our vile bodies, contaminated by sin, that they may be made like unto his glorious body, what right have we to despise it? Rather we ought to join the psalmist in saying, "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." And Dr. Martin Luther, too, saw that the body was not something of which we need to be ashamed, but in the first article he spoke of body and soul, eyes, ears, and all our members as precious gifts of God. He has given them to me, and I should rejoice in them with thanksgiving.

And wife and children, too, were not—in Luther’s view—a mark of carnality and weakness, but likewise gifts of the heavenly Father’s love. And all the objects that we see about us in this material world, all the things that we need to support this body and life, food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, fields, cattle and all our goods, all these are not necessary evils but signs of God’s mercy and grace toward us for which it is our duty to thank and to praise, to serve and obey Him.

We must therefore not be quick to identify a concern for and interest in this world with secularism. The material gifts of God are not to be despised, yes, it is the will of God that we should be interested in them and concerned about them. When God said to man in the beginning that he was to have dominion over the whole earth and over every living creature that moved upon the face of the earth, He gave a command which still has significance for our time and place. And this command ought to be pregnant with meaning for every Christian teacher. The so-called “secular” subjects in the curriculum are not just a waste of time nor are they necessary evils that we are willing to bear for the sake of the opportunity to give our children instruction which will prepare them to meet their God. They are a noble and a worthy and a God-pleasing part of the curriculum also in a Christian school.

But, and here is the crux of our problem, they must be kept in their proper place in the hierarchy of our concerns. St. Paul urged the Christians of his time to use the world without abusing it. (1 Co 7:31). Secularism is only another name for the idolatry that makes a God out of the things of this world, which sees the world of material things not as a gift of God to be used for the glory of God, for the welfare of our fellowmen, and for our own enjoyment, but as ends to be sought for their own sake. And when our fathers emphasized that the Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil but that it is the love of money that deserves that epithet, they pointed out a distinction that we still need to keep in mind.

The secular world that we must be on our guard against is therefore not this tangible, visible, material world that we see and touch on every side. It is rather an attitude which impinges on our hearts and minds, it is a spiritual atmosphere which we draw in with every breath. It is not a new problem, for it is graphically described for us by the Savior in his remark concerning the conditions which prevailed on earth prior to its destruction in the flood and in Sodom Before its fall. He said, “They did eat, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, . . .they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded,” (Luke 17: 27,28). We think of those times as depraved and corrupt times, and so they were. But is it not remarkable that in that list of activities there is not one which we might characterize as sinful in itself. But the list does indicate that they were interested only in the things of this life, and this is secularism.

However, the old secularism continually reappears in new forms. We are horrified when we hear of teachers in communistic country who tell their hungry charges to pray for food and then taunt them with remarks about the futility of prayer, assuring them, that they will ask the party for bread. The bread, then, is forthcoming, thus demonstrating in the classroom that this is so. But when we read in our Scott-Foresman readers about a lazy squirrel who refuses to store up nuts for the winter but who is able to survive by scratching at the door of a white house from which the nuts are then supplied, what is our reaction to this? Where are the American people taught to go in the hour of need in this latter half of the twentieth century? To whom do they apply for security? Who does not forsake them in their old age? Is it not the all-powerful socialist state which mortgages the future to satisfy the needs of those who slept through the harvest? And what will the American people have left to depend on when that well runs dry?

This is not a lesson in economics, but what we ought to be concerned about is the spiritual dry rot which this dependence on the state rather than on God will inject into the fabric of our society. What can we do to see to it that the all-powerful and benevolent government of the Sherwood Forest type may not replace the omnipotent God in the hearts of our people?

But perhaps the great force for the secularization of our civilization is the philosophy of evolution. No matter how many efforts are made to save God’s honor by those who intend to reconcile Darwin with Genesis, the fact still remains that the whole theory of evolution is basically atheistic. Murder, rape, and robbery can hardly anymore be viewed as offenses against the will of God, if this is the heritage that the human race has

brought with it out of the jungle. The image of God can hardly mean much to a being that boasts of its superiority over its simian ancestors. Death itself can no longer be viewed as the wages of sin and as a testimony to the wrath of God, if we die only because we are descended from globs of protoplasm which had to perish to make room for us who are more fit to survive. And if the process more or less runs itself and needs millions of years to account for the changes brought about by chance, where is the place for God in our thinking? And if the law itself is only the product of social evolution, what room is there left for a sense of sin and where is the need for salvation?

If we would only look around us, we would see everywhere the evidences of a secular view of life and of the world. Martin Luther spoke of the people who said, "What do we care about heaven? What we need is flour." We still have them with us today. Their attitude might be summed up in the words of Max Otto of the University of Wisconsin, "The type of religion which looks to a realm other than the world about us for criteria of the good life is not a religion in man's interest. Those who aid in furthering that religion, whether they recognize what it implies or not, are making such contribution as they can to man's intellectual and moral defeat." (*Science and the Moral Life*). As a test for our own people, we might ask whether it would be easier to interest them in a new and beautiful church which would impress the community or to get them to raise \$100,000 for the work of winning more souls for the kingdom. The visible church is not untouched by the secularistic atmosphere in which it lives, and it is not at all difficult for us to become part of the secular world for our fellow-Christians. But who ought to be better equipped and in a better position to stand in the breach in this hour of the church's peril than a Christian teacher in a Christian school?