

# THE CONSTRUCTIVE QUARTERLY

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

**T**HE first number of "The Constructive Quarterly," "A Journal of the Faith, Work, and Thought of Christendom," is of noteworthy character. There is not an article in it which does not deserve careful study. As is stated in the introduction, the journal is founded on the conviction that a constructive treatment of Christianity will make for a better understanding between the isolated communions of Christendom. It attempts, not to tear down, but to build, on what the Christian Churches are actually believing, doing, and thinking. Writers of all churches are brought together—Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Orthodox, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. They are not invited to occupy neutral territory, but common ground—the ground of loyalty to the essentials of Christianity. There are only two conditions imposed upon contrib-

utors: first, that the faith and work and thought of each communion shall be presented in its absolute integrity, including and not avoiding differences with other communions; and, second, that no attack with polemical animus shall be made on others. In short, the purpose is that the adherents of each Christian Church shall set their own case forward as strongly as possible, rather than assail any other Church. The "Quarterly" is meant not merely for clergymen, but for Christian laymen; and its purpose is to induce a better understanding and a truer sense of fellowship among them.

The opening article by Dr. DuBose, of the University of the South, at Sewanee, Tennessee, on "Constructive Christianity," is one well worth reading. It cannot be read without very serious thought, and it emphatically repays such serious thought. It

is rare indeed for any article of the kind to show such breadth and scope. It is significant to see in such a magazine articles by Wilfrid Ward and John J. Wynne presenting the Catholic, and Friedrich Loofs presenting the Lutheran, views. They are scholarly articles, in excellent temper, each loyal to its own standards and each written in a way that proves the possibility of this kind of open forum.

Bishop McConnell, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, treats of Conversion in singularly sane fashion and really places Conversion in its true perspective as a part of Christianity. Canon Sanday, in writing of "The Pacific and the Warlike Ideals," undoubtedly scores neatly off the German General whom he criticises, although he is not quite so successful in presenting his own ideals. Mr. Henderson, the Secretary of the English Labor Party, has a very striking paper on "Religion and Labor," and Robert E. Speer a delightful study of Clay Trumbull under the head of "A Puritan Saint." Professor Bacon, in discussing St. Paul's "Message to Religion," writes a really brilliant paper.

But to me personally the most interesting among all these interesting articles is that by Dean Mathews, entitled "The Awakening of American Protestantism." It is not only stimulating and thoroughly American in its presentation of Protestantism, but it has a grasp of present-day industrial and political conditions that is really astonishing. The Dean's insistence in on the need of the churches to-day adjusting themselves to the modern world by laying new emphasis upon the social implications of the Gospel. He says frankly that hitherto, as in the Peasants' revolt, the Church has usually been on the side of the socially dominant class, urging them to charity, it is true, but not to a sacrificial transformation of a social order. His article is so very good that my tendency is to quote it all. I cannot forbear quoting the following:

The attitude of the New England capitalist towards his employees was only one stage removed from the attitude of the Southern planter to the Negroes. He might be ready to care for them personally, but he was not ready to see any change in the structure of society which gave the laboring classes larger rights. Such charity recognizes no rights on the part of the person helped. And as long as charity rules, justice is feeble.

This new social interest of Protestant Christianity in America, as in Great Britain, is radi-

cally different from that of charity. It cares less for good Samaritans than it does for good policemen. It wants to save men into Heaven by embodying the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven in the state. It is less concerned in rescuing people than in educating them to keep out of danger. Its fundamental motive has not changed; it still seeks to extend the principles of love. But the love it urges is more intelligent. Your sociological Christian is no keener to do good than were the early Christians who preferred martyrdom to political revolution, but his knowledge of the social problem makes him attend primaries rather than inactively await the millennium.

It must be admitted that certain groups of Protestants, notably the Pre-millenarians, have little sympathy with the evangelization of social evolution, and that to others real democracy is as hateful as were tyrants to the song-writers of the eighteenth century. But in the long run the Church will follow its creative enthusiasm; and there is only one great creative enthusiasm in American Protestantism—the gospel of a saved society as well as of saved individuals.

Compare this utterance of a Protestant Dean with that of a Catholic Archbishop. The venerable Archbishop Spalding in his book "Socialism and Labor and Other Arguments" writes as follows:

There must be brought into our public life something to appeal to minds and conscience as well as to interests; for it is the disgrace of a Nation that its chief concern should be a question of money, and that the significance of political contests should lie in the emoluments of office; and while this state of things continues our best men will remain aloof from the struggle, and leave the direction of public affairs in the hands of the baser sort. We need an ideal to which all noble minds and generous hearts may rally, and this ideal here in America at the present day can neither be intellectual nor religious; it must be moral. There is still left in the mass of the people a deep moral earnestness which, if it can be called into action, may yet lift the whole Nation to higher and purer life. The welfare of the Nation demands a new party springing from the deep yearning of multitudes for purer and nobler National life and upheld by the enthusiasm inspired by high moral aims and purposes.

I have quoted this address from the Archbishop, then Bishop of Peoria, because it bears out so well not only the teaching of Dean Mathews but the whole trend of thought and purpose of the "Constructive Quarterly" itself.

I believe that the "Quarterly" will fill a great place. It is impossible to read it, or, more accurately, to study it (for it is a magazine that calls for study), without feeling in a great world atmosphere, an atmosphere of the great world problems before us all. As an American I am glad that such a journal should be published in this country.