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A WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED FAMILY NEWSPAPER - \$2 A YEAR, IN ADVANCE

660 S. FOURTH AVE., LOUISVILLE, KY.

EDITORIAL
DEPARTMENT

December 11-1912.

Rev. J. M. Frost, D.D.,
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Brother:

Keep that Bergson-Eucken book as my Christmas present. I have gotten another one.

When I remarked that the churches can only enlist and train individual units for the Kingdom of God and that the state is to become the expression and propagandist of the Kingdom, you raise the question if that did not lean toward Catholicism. Just the reverse. The Catholics say that the church, their Church, is the expression and propagandist of the Kingdom. That is church and state. As individual Baptists enter into as separate bodies churches, associations, conventions, etc., just so they enter as individuals into a new body, the state, which we are told is ordained of God. The state in one form or another (through public schools, fire and salvage companies, hospitals, play-grounds, et al.) is doing everything which Jesus Christ said at the judgment days would characterize the "Sheep" and give them right to "inherit the Kingdom prepared for you (them) from the foundation of the world". I am greatly interested in this thought and will be glad to have you think it through and write to me about it. "The Christian State" by Batten is the best book on the subject. The A.B.P.S. has put him at the head of its new department along the line of social service. Rauschenbusch is the next best in his newest book, "Christianizing the Social Order". He has another book which led up to this, called "Christ and the Social Crisis". Prof. Waffle, also a Baptist, has a great book on this subject called "If Christ were King". The chapter in this on "The State" is the strongest statement of all. It is a little interesting that the three men who are pronouncing this view most strenuously are Baptists.

I confess to growing excitement on the new turn in philosophy. Be sure to read my first article in our Book Number, a review of Prof. Fullerton's "The World We Live In". That is one of the greatest books of the year. A happy Christmas to you.

Fraternally yours,

J. N. Prestridge

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December 16-1912.

Rev. J. M. Frost, D.D.,
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Brother:

Thank you for your very kind letter of December 13. I am interested in your intimated criticism of "these men", I suppose Bergson, Eucken and Fullerton. Remember, beloved, that we are not to judge them as professors of systematic theology. They drop more nearly into the thinking category of the prophets of the Old Testament. I believe it can be easily shown that they are equal to several of the Old Testament prophets and surpass in their thinking more than one. More and more I cling to the theology deduced from Paul's experience in his conversion and in the experience of his union with Christ, where he says, "I live yet not I but Christ in me". I am glad indeed that just at this time I have received a great book from Forsyth, whom I count the greatest theological thinker living, "Faith, Freedom and the Future." He is waging a mighty battle between the "Word" and the "Spirit". He means by the Word not definitely the Bible, but the Logos and his gospel as revealed in the cross and by the Spirit the freedom in the spirit which was seized upon by the Anabaptists and which I was talking about in the early part of this letter. I am not at the end of his argument, but he is making me think through the whole question involved. The thinking is so deep that I find myself rereading page after page and waiting again until the morrow to reread.

These philosophers are breaking up the ground for the Baptists, it seems to me. They have killed Materialism dead; they have killed Intellectualism; they have killed Naturalism, the three bases of the old philosophies. They have come to Life and our experience of life, to the spiritual universe and our at-home-ness in it. They are glorifying Intuition, the answer back of the individual heart immediately to God without priest or ceremony. They are killing ecclesiasticism and scholasticism - have killed them. They have gone far enough to accept Christianity as the highest and a complete expression of the life of God in the human world. So far as I have gone I have not found that they have discussed the person of Christ involving his atonement, but Eucken in particular demands an outright conversion and a life-long struggle for harmony

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with God, that is, for holiness. I repeat: we cannot try their thinking by the standard of Strong or Boyce or Mullins, i.e., we could hardly hope for them to go that far, though of course we should condemn them if they go contrary to any fundamentals taught by our own theologians.

I would prefer that you would discuss this matter with me in correspondence. Kindly show me where you think I may misread them or use them to the hurt of our brethren.

Fraternally yours,

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December 18-1912.

Rev. J. M. Frost, D.D.,
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Brother:

The enclosed is clipped from my Note and Comment columns which I wish that you shall not miss. The more I think of it, the more clearly do I see that in this new philosophy of life the priest, infant baptism, water remission are absolutely debarred. Dr. Sampey and I were talking today and he said "This philosophy of life gives the whole field to the Baptists and they ought to go in and take it."

I did not mean to imply that I was not ready to publish anything that you might wish on the subject of this philosophy of life, and I meant in saying let us write about it that we should first understand each other and the philosophy. A great book is "Christianity and the New Idealism" by Eucken, which Dr. Mabie has been seeking to scatter throughout the world. He says a new prophet of righteousness, a new advocate of the Kingdom has come in Eucken. If you find anything definite contrary to these opinions please let me know. I am anxious to have a clean-cut and definite conception of the truth and the bearing of the truth involved. I see that Prof. Eucken is going to spend three months at Harvard University and so America is to hear much of him in the early months.

Fraternally yours,

J. N. Prestidge

—The books that the philosophers Eucken, Bergson and Fullerton, which we have reviewed lately, do not say all we would have them say, not by any means; but how they do strike master blows at ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism, infant baptism, priests, bishops, pope, materialism, bold intellectualism, naturalism and all of their kind. They lay down as the basis of their philosophy life, and the experience and the response of life, and so fallow the ground for Baptists to sow deep and wide their principles.

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DEC 20 1912

"Oakland,"

AR SSB

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Near Hopkintonville, N.Y.

Christmas 1912.

Dear Doctor Frost:

Your kind letter has been forwarded.

Before I mention the subject of your letter let me tell you of preaching last Sunday for Mr. Thompson. He had a good service and tears in his eyes twice during the sermon assured me and will assure you that we had a good time in the worship. After dinner we had a heart to heart talk, following and completing a talk we had recently in Louisiana, when he was attending a State Board meeting. If I could see you I would tell some interesting things which had better not be written.

I thank you for your long and helpful letter. I would be better equipped to reply if I were in my study. You cause me to renew my resolution to master thoroughly the philosophies of today, who are philosopher reformers on the basis of life. Because I believe in their great message of life and have propounded it to my readers I am under special obligations to know and to condemn anything wrong in their teachings. I will count myself under renewed obligations to have help from you in this matter. Please have me a letter in Louisiana by the first of next week calling my attention to the pages where you find things to be condemned.

I feel that these three men (Cassan, Benson and Fulterton) having established their philosophy, which, in a spiritual universe of which God is the center and circumference, of which human life and experience of God is the objective, having dynamited material-

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alism & the other godless philosophies, cannot go, as philosophers, any far wrong. What they do not say in some cases is vital to you and me, but if they do not go against things precious to us I shall not forget that they are not systematic theologians but merely philosophers. neither science nor philosophy considers that Christ comes in their precinct - so much the worse for them - but I suppose we must let them specialize according to their election. Of course if they do cross over into the precinct of theology and say things which negate our Christ then we are to face them to a finish.

I am interested in your strictures of the little book on Bergson's philosophy. Just count it, if you will, a fool answered according to his folly. The book but uses the phrases and methods of all the philosophers from Aristotle & Plato down through Descartes, Locke, Kant, Schliermacher, et. al. There could be no science, philosophy, or mathematics without the terminology, the signs and symbols of the mathematicians. And there could be no philosophy, the science of the why and the wherefore of matter and concepts and intellect and memory and nature and life and death, without its special terminology, its signs and symbols and, to us, confusions. The good womanⁱⁿ the class meeting referred to, could not translate her information and experiences to a Russian, say, unless she should first translate them into the Slavic jargon. I am becoming persuaded that the terminology, of Latin origin, used in our great books on

3/ Theology, when treating of the mysteries of incarnation, trinity, atonement, election and predestination, are as senseless and incomprehensible to, in this respect, ignorant scientists and philosophers, as their phrases and methods are to us. I have been helped greatly in getting a new and fresh grasp on orthodox theology by two new books, "narrow" enough for both of us, which put it all in medical and scientific terminology, viz., "Spiritual Surgery" by Lee, and "Scientific Christianity" by Deighton.

Neither that good woman, nor her pastor, nor her editor, nor her denominational publisher, could fashion a drug which could throw a smooth stone so as to reach any of these philosophical giants who have been sending down through our colleges and through books and magazines and lecture platforms, doubt and blasphemy and death. It takes reform philosophy with the jargon of philosophy to reform philosophy. And so when men like Eucken, Bergson, Fullerton et. al., line up with us to put dynamite under materialism et., I am ready to go as far as possible to welcome their service. And when they pronounce for a spiritual universe, & the absolute rule of God, and for immortality, and for Christianity, (Even though it is not altogether as we could

(wish) I am ready to rejoice.

This to me is sad indeed: These men think they are in these things discovering new truths, while in fact they are but coming to see what Baptists have always advocated. We have not, for some reason, gone in to where they abide and looked, and these up to their doors. We have remained too much in a corner.

I am out for all there is in me to find out at first hands what is going on in the centers of thought, centers of all kinds. I know I must be careful, and so I welcome heartily such help in suggestions and cautions as my good friends may give, so proving their friendships. I am anxious, good reactor, that you and I may go along together in these and all other studies. I am glad we can write and confer together about the great things which make for the reign of Christ, our God and Saviour.

Yours sincerely,
J. H. Prestidge