dom of God," which it substitutes for Communism. The Kingdom of God is not a society. It is not on a parallel, or in competition with the Communist system, as is here presented. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. The only way anybody gets into it is by the miracle of the new birth (John 3:3).

Moreover, Communism is openly called here "a faith" which summons its followers to active obedience, and throughout the five articles we see that the author, Creighton Lacy, is seeking "to show the religious nature of communism."

Communism is not a religion, not a faith. It is a conspiracy, an unmitigated, Satan-inspired plan to destroy human freedom and to repudiate God.

To admit that Communism is some kind of faith, that Communism is some kind of religion, means that the foundations from which the entire attack upon Communism is being made are false, and give to Communism a standing and a position which advances its cause.

The entire Marxist ideological offensive as presented through Castro should not be met on the basis of being some kind of faith; it should be exposed as a wicked design by which human beings are robbed of their property and their right as citizens before God. There is no social justice, no human value in the Communist system.

The failure of the Methodists at this point to develop their lessons on the basis that Communism is a total evil and that Christianity with its God is the *summum bonum* because it offers life, is indeed a tragedy. Communism is not challenged by the truth!

Communism's Promise

One of the subheads in this first lesson is, "A Promise of a Better Life." The same argument, the same approach which brought about the downfall of Nationalist China with the masses "ready for a change" are being used in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, and we must say, even here in the United States itself. At the close of this first lesson we are told, "At least communism promises, and sometimes communism delivers where democracy — or even Christianity — has failed."

How could this possibly be said? Communism does not deliver. It is impossible for it to deliver. The kind of Christianity which is failing is the kind which is being advocated here by these Methodists who envision the "kingdom of heaven" as being some kind of social, political system. Thus we have the statement, "Although communism did not create the 'revolution of rising expectations' — as much perhaps as Christianity did — it is devoting conspicuous effort to meeting these needs."

Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, on November 18, 1958, delivered the keynote address at the famous Fifth World Order Study Conference, called by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and held in Cleveland, Ohio. He concluded this address by a summons to all present, "in co-operation with brothers everywhere so change the planet that when our first visitors from Mars arrive they will find a society fit to be called The Kingdom of God."

This first lesson concludes with the appeal of a young Chinese girl who was executed because of her loyalty to communism — "They sacrifice gladly for the better world they are sure is coming." Instead of holding them up as examples for us to follow in their zeal, the church should be explaining that Communism could not possibly build a better world, and zeal for it is vain. It is impossible for such a philosophy even to contribute to a better world.

If these mission schools, which are referred to earlier and from which the

took over that country—and for sixteen months thereafter. Except among idealistic youth there was no great enthusiasm for communism as a political philosophy or form of government. Few people knew or cared what communism actually stood for, what it really means in theory or practice. On the other hand, few Chinese seriously opposed the drastic change which took place in 1949. An overwhelming majority accepted the new regime stolidly, passively, hopeful that at least in some respects the misery and hardships of bare subsistence might be relieved.

For men and women who have never known "civil liberties" and "political rights"—and for many who have—these intangibles weigh very lightly compared with what the Chinese call "a full rice bowl." After eight years of bitter war and four more years in which the Nationalist Government failed to halt chaotic inflation and corruption, the masses were "ready for a change."

By the middle of the twentieth century, all the world, from remote jungles to desert islands, knows that a better life *is possible*. Half the children need not die in their first year of life. One third of mankind should not have to go to bed hungry each night. Famine and disease can be combated. Illiteracy could be virtually wiped out. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people can replace dictatorships. The white man possesses no divine right to rule the colored races of the globe. Notice, too, that these and other "rights" to which mankind aspires are not all material satisfactions. National independence, self-respect, racial justice, education, freedom from exploitation by landlords and money-lenders—these are basically spiritual values. In fact, as Nicolas Berdyaev wisely wrote: "The question of bread for myself is a material question, but the question of bread for my neighbors, for everybody, is a spiritual and a religious question."*

It does not even matter that many of these promises are never fulfilled. At least communism promises, and sometimes communism delivers where democracy—or even Christianity—has failed. In South China, we had stable currency and improved electricity after the Reds came in. Though many wealthy people were dispossessed, and though large-scale famines now plague the country, the communist government succeeded for awhile in eliminating begging, unemployment, and chronic starvation. Although communism did not create the "revolution of rising expectations"—as much perhaps as Christianity did—it is devoting conspicuous effort to meeting these needs.

A "Religious" Cause

Many years ago, when Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek turned on his former communist allies and arrested many of them, a young girl awaited execution in her cell. "Do not weep for me," she told her grieving parents; "I am dying for a cause. You will go on living—for what?" Despite the inconsistencies and false analyses, the unfulfilled prophecies and the broken promises, millions of people still believe that communism represents the "wave of the future," the truth which guarantees ultimate victory.

They sacrifice gladly for the better world they are sure is coming. And they challenge us who stand in their way, who refuse to accept their interpretation of human history, to show comparable devotion to our cause—and our Lord.

* Nicolas Berdyaev, *Origin of Russian Communism* (University of Michigan Press, $4.40; paper, $1.75), p. 225.