

GUARDIAN



The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Relaxing briefly at the recent meeting were the editor of this magazine; the Rev. John Galbraith, voting delegate and convener (chairman) of the Committee on Missions, Evangelism, and World Relief; Professor John Murray, voting delegate, elected first assessor (vice-moderator); and the Rev. Carl Reitsma, non-voting delegate and convener of the Committee on Eschatology and Inspiration.

How Do You Pray ?

EDWARD WYBENGA

Luke 11:4-13

The disciples had asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." Thereupon Jesus introduced a model prayer called "The Lord's Prayer." We come now to the fifth petition in that prayer: "And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us."

Our sins are like debts of disobedience to God, debts which we can not pay. Therefore we are liable to the divine penalty of the law which we have broken. Only a creditor can forgive a debtor by cancelling his debts. Only God can forgive a sinner, remove the penalty of his sin, and declare him justified before the divine law. God can do this only on the basis of the atoning sacrifice of Christ in the sinner's place. God does not cancel our debts (our sins), and thus leave them unpaid. God pays for them himself in the person and work of Christ. Thus we are set free or forgiven. Therefore we pray: "Forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12), or "Forgive us our sins" (Lk. 11:4).

But notice the words that follow: "for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." We must be careful not to make these words mean that because we forgive others God is duty-bound to forgive us. We must not suppose that our forgiving others is the ground or basis of God's forgiving us; or that we have earned the divine forgiveness by our forgiving others. The thought is rather this: he who is unwilling to forgive others thereby shows that he himself has never sought the divine forgiveness for his own sin by the way of repentance and faith. The two are inseparable — God forgiving us and we forgiving others. We can not expect, we dare not ask God to forgive us unless we also forgive others.

And now, the sixth petition: "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." We may be tempted to indulge in sin by the allurements of

the world; or we may be tempted to lose faith in God by the trials and afflictions of life. Against this we must pray. We must ask God to keep us from those things that would tempt us; to direct and control the circumstances of our lives in such a way that we may be spared from being tempted. "Deliver us from evil," set us free from the dominion of sin and all its consequences. Give to us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Persistence

Jesus now proceeds to encourage his disciples to pray. He uses a parable for that purpose — "The Friend at Midnight" (vv. 5-8). Here is a man who has received an unexpected guest. He has no food in the house wherewith to entertain the guest. He hurries to his neighbor in the dead of the night and begs three loaves of bread.

It was a most inconvenient time to ask for a favor. The neighbor and his family were asleep. The head of the house did not at all like the rude awakening; nor did he want to leave his place of repose, or disturb the rest of the family. But the man outside would not take "No" for an answer. He persisted that he must have the loaves of bread to entertain his guest. At last he prevails. The man gets up, gives him what he wants.

So, says Jesus, we must persist in our prayers. If a selfish man can be persuaded to give, by perseverance in asking, how much more the God of bountiful goodness. God is not reluctant. His is only a seeming unwillingness. He may wait long but that is only to lead us to more earnest and persevering prayer; that is only to try our faith that it may be strengthened and purified. In the end God will give us what we ask if it is for our spiritual and eternal good, and for his glory.

Urgency

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall

find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (v.9). Ask, seek, knock — there is here an exhortation to pray with increasing urgency. Asking implies a sense of dependence and need. Seeking implies that our need can be met, and that we so believe. Knocking implies energetic effort to secure what we need. If we ask, seek, and knock in the right way and for the right thing, it will be granted. But we must be in earnest about it; we must persevere; we must ask in faith and according to the will of God. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Confidence

To convince his disciples and us that God will answer prayer Jesus compares God's love and goodness to that of an earthly father. When a son asks for bread, the father does not give him a stone; when he asks for a fish, the father does not give him a serpent; or a scorpion for an egg (vv.11-12). "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (v.13)? Parents are faulty, defective, sinful; yet they would not think of mocking the requests of their children, or giving them that which would hurt them. How much more, then, will the good and holy God of heaven give the very best he has for us! He will cause the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts — the life-giving, purifying, strengthening Spirit. And with this, the greatest of his gifts, God will surely give us all lesser gifts.

Let us then as children of God come to our Heavenly Father in prayer with childlike confidence and submission. Then, whatever he gives or whatever he withholds will be for our good, and in accordance with his infinite wisdom, power, and love. And that is all we want, is it not?

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For I shrank not from declaring unto
you the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Faithful Proclamation

CLARENCE BOOMSMA

Seventeen years ago this month, in August of 1946, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was organized in this city. The Christian Reformed Church is delighted to welcome all the delegates, observers, and guests of the Fifth Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1963. If America is known for its hospitality to foreign visitors I hope those who have come to us from abroad will find this doubly true of us who receive you not only as Americans, but also as fellow-Christians. Nor would I forget those who have come from various parts of our own country; we welcome you to Grand Rapids and the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church.

Seventeen years is not long on the timetable of the church of Christ, but 17 years in the rushing twentieth century is a long time. In a day when travelers can be transported from one side of the world to the other in a matter of hours, when astronauts are shot into space and circle the earth in 90 minutes, when it is possible to lift a telephone receiver and in a few minutes talk anywhere in the world, when science is experiencing such an explosion of knowledge that in three years new knowledge is outdated, when the political complexion of a nation can change in months or even days, and the balance of power among nations can shift in just a few years, then 17 years is a long time.

A fast moving world presents a fast changing scene in which the Christian church must witness and in which her children must live. God's people are not untouched by the rapid changes and frightful speed of the times. Reformed Christians are not immune to the changing patterns of society, the changing perspectives of life and its meaning, the powerful temptations of affluence and secular living, and the massive attack of unbelief on their faith and commitment: an attack that finds its strength not so much in direct argument and denial as in making the

Christian faith appear unnecessary and irrelevant in what Bonhoeffer calls "a world come of age." Those who would be faithful to their Lord in this age have no easy time of it. Those who are responsible to lead the church of Jesus Christ in its life and witness have a tremendous task.

Facing Questions

It will be the task of this Synod to address itself to questions and problems we as Reformed people have in common, on many fronts both within and without the walls of our churches. May I only remind you of your agenda? It calls for a statement of our Christian hope in this life and for the life to come in a day when men believe that astronomy leaves no space for heaven, psychology no place for the soul, biology no reason for the resurrection, philosophy no room for the supernatural, and history no time for the return of Jesus Christ. It asks you to consider how we shall understand the place of the church and draw its boundaries in what Wendell Willkie called "one world," in an age dominated by a synergistic spirit. You face the questions raised by today's world.

What does it mean to the people of God to be in the world but not of the world in our highly complex and complicated industrial and urban society? What shall we say to the church and

The Fifth Reformed Ecumenical Synod was preceded by a Prayer Service on Tuesday evening, August 6 in the Calvin Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The pastor, the Rev. Mr. Clarence Boomsma, delivered this message in the presence of several hundred friends assembled with participants in the Synod who had come from more than a score of churches and from every continent.

We expect to publish from time to time significant reports of or observations on this Fifth Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

to the world when the races of mankind confront each other in dangerous tension? How can we witness effectively to our world and evangelize in our communities in the presence of so many rival movements competing for the loyalties of men, the resurgence of other religions, and the stolid indifference of modern man to things of the spirit? What can we do to help each other in the monumental task of understanding and defending the faith once delivered to the saints and at the same time witnessing to our Lord in the second half of the twentieth century? These are the questions and problems awaiting you.

When the sessions of this Synod have ended may it be said that you did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God. This the Apostle Paul was able to say to the elders of Ephesus as he bade them farewell at Miletus.

Temptation to Trim Sails

Isn't it interesting that the Apostle should suggest the idea of shrinking? The word was used by sailors when they trimmed their sails to the wind. It may be that as he is addressing the elders this word comes to Paul's mind because he is journeying to Jerusalem aboard ship. He is saying: I did not trim my sails to the winds of opposition, but proclaimed the gospel to you in its fullness. The very fact that Paul mentions trimming his sails suggests that he knew and had wrestled with the temptation to do so.

We know the pressures on him to compromise his message were very great. There was first of all the implacable opposition of the Jews. He reminds the elders of the trials he experienced through the plots of the Jews. Then he knew the hostility of the pagan world; his gospel had incited a riot at Ephesus which was not forgotten. There was the more subtle pressure of ridicule and disdain from the intellectual world that he had suf-

ferred at Athens which he could not forget, so that when he wrote the believers in the neighboring city of Corinth he said the preaching of Christ crucified is to the Gentiles foolishness. But in addition, there was also the temptation to draw back and compromise because of forces within the churches themselves. Nearly all of his letters were written because the full gospel he preached was being challenged and the sails of the churches were being trimmed to fit prevailing winds of thought and practice. It was precisely because Paul knew the temptation to shrink that it occurs to him to say to the Ephesian elders: I did not shrink.

This temptation to compromise the revealed truth of God is also real to us. To seek to maintain and proclaim the Word of God consistently as revealed in Jesus Christ and recorded in the inspired Scriptures is to run headlong into winds of protest and opposition today. The Christian faith is under attack from both outright unbelief outside the church and from modern adaptations, reinterpretations and compromises within. Of course it has always been so, but in our age the winds have become a virtual hurricane.

Winds of Hostility

As Christians of Reformed heritage who root their confession in the Scriptures through the thought and work of John Calvin we are particularly the objects of criticism, sometimes of ridicule and disdain. Will Durant in his monumental *Story of Civilization* concludes his discussion of John Calvin with these biting words: "We shall always find it hard to love the man who darkened the human soul with the most absurd and blasphemous conception of God in all the long and honored history of nonsense." So speaks unbelief. But Wilhelm Pauch, who speaks as a modern theologian, but with little sympathy for orthodox Calvinism, passes this judgment upon it: "Christian theological thinking can no longer be cast into this mold, simply because the modern philosophical, natural, and social sciences forbid it. It is nothing but obscurantism to base the defense of the truth of the Christian faith upon norms containing philosophical and social implications which are irreconcilable with the evidences of modern knowledge of the world." And he predicts that we or our "descendants will in all probability be compelled to give it up." These

are but samples of the winds that blow today.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod is called to witness in this hostile climate. Our churches need the support of each other and the benefit of common study of the Word of God in the face of the hot winds of unbelief and compromise. Not that we may ignore the criticisms, or disregard the attacks, or refuse to learn from the vast knowledge that modern man has achieved about himself and his world. To do so would be to lose all contact with the world in which we must make our witness and leave our people defenseless in the storm. But our sails must be set not by the prevailing winds of the world, but by the eternal Spirit, that breath of God whom Jesus promised would lead us into all truth.

Weaknesses Within

But we do well to remember that it is not only from non-Christian sources that the winds of opposition come, nor only from compromising elements in the Christian church that threatening winds blow. Even as Paul knew not only the hostility of the Jews and the Gentiles, but also the temptations to draw back from the criticism and opposition within the churches themselves, so we must beware of opposition to speak the truth among us and within our own church bodies.

God forbid that we should suppose that all is well with us, lest as Pharisees we thank God that we are not as other men. It is not for me tonight to uncover the weaknesses and imperfections in your communions or mine, but I must remind you that to do so is to engender criticism and opposition. The first of the five purposes for the holding of Reformed Ecumenical Synods as adopted in 1953 at Edinburgh is "to advise one another regarding questions and problems of import to the spiritual welfare and the Scriptural government of the churches." If then we articulate only what is known and held by all, if we cannot ask embarrassing questions and give forthright answers to each other, if we cannot review important matters in the light of new knowledge and changing conditions, if we are not free to re-examine our positions by a new searching of the Scriptures, and if we dare not honestly address ourselves to the criticisms leveled against us by the world and put to us by other churches, then we may well question whether the convening of these synods is worth the



The ecumenical character of the Synod is shown by this group of men who happened to meet near the dining hall. Members of eight denominations, they come from seven nations and include pastors, professors, a chaplain, a seminary president, and an editor, as well as a burgomaster!

Left to right, rear: Dr. R. Laird Harris, St. Louis; Rev. Lester Kilpatrick, Phoenix; Dr. C. J. Verplanke, Netherlands.

Front: Rev. Daniel Anakaa, Nigeria; Dr. Paul S. Myung, Korea; Prof. George N. M. Collins (moderator), Scotland; Rev. Shigeru Yoshioka, Japan; Rev. W. J. Grier, N. Ireland.

effort, the time, or the expense. It is, I believe, an open secret that the Reformed Ecumenical Synod has not been as effective in the life of our churches as its founders envisioned. I can only say to you, who are responsible for the Fifth Synod: do not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God to the churches.

Declaring the Truth

What a testimony the apostle gives: I was faithful in proclaiming the gospel to you in all its fullness. What satisfaction it must have been for him to be able to take his leave from Miletus, knowing he would never see the elders of Ephesus again, but assured that he had discharged his responsibility to them in obedience to his Lord. From Paul's testimony I would like to make three short observations.

First, notice that Paul says he *declared* the gospel. He really had no choice in the matter. Earlier in his message he reminded the elders that they knew how from the first day he was with them he was serving the Lord. And again, he speaks of the ministry which he received of the Lord to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Paul preached and taught in obedience to his divine commission.

The purpose of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod as described in the rules, to which I made mention earlier, calls for the Synod to bear witness, in advising one another, but also, by issu-

ing joint resolutions regarding movements, practices or dangers, when such joint statements are deemed necessary; and "to give united testimony to our common Reformed Faith in the midst of the world living in error and groping in darkness, particularly to the many churches which have . . . departed from the truth of God's Holy Word . . ." This is in the tradition of the church from its beginning when the council in Jerusalem addressed the churches regarding problems that troubled them. In answer to this task, great confessions were written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this age of mass unbelief, of incredible learning, of shifting values, of secular domination, and endless cross-currents of isms, the church of Jesus Christ must speak. To this calling the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is committed.

If, however, we are to give testimony of the Reformed faith to our churches and to other churches, and in the midst of the world, then we must know to whom we are speaking and we must speak that we may be heard. Paul says: I shrank not from declaring *unto you*. To speak to our generation, it will not do to repeat in the same way what was said to men of the first, or the fourth, or the sixteenth, or even the nineteenth century.

Bridging a Chasm

The gospel is unchanging and the counsel of God remains sure forever, but its comprehension, and its meaning, and its relevance must be adapted to each age. Not to do so is to speak but not be understood, and in so far, not really to proclaim the full gospel. To answer questions that are not asked, and to ignore the questions that modern man is asking is not to declare faithfully the word of God.

On December 10, 1962, John Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize in literature and ended his acceptance speech with these penetrating and depressing words: "We have usurped many of the powers we once ascribed to God. Fearful and unprepared, we have assumed lordship over the life and death of the whole world of all living things. The danger and the glory and the choice rest finally in man. The test of his perfectability is at hand.

"Having taken God-like power, we must seek in ourselves for the responsibility and the wisdom we once prayed some deity might have. Man himself has become our greatest hazard and

our only hope. So that today, St. John the Apostle may well be paraphrased: In the end is the word, and the word is man, and the word is with man."

How shall we witness to man who believes himself to be his own beginning and end, and himself his only hope? How shall we bridge the chasm between his thoughts and the message of Jesus Christ? Perhaps never in the long history of Christian witnessing has the world presented a more difficult task than today when man feels no need of God and no need of a Savior. He turns to natural sciences for the explanation of his existence, to medicine for the healing of his body, to psychiatry for his fears and guilt, to the social sciences to improve his society, and to politics to keep the peace of the world. How do we proclaim the gospel to this man? To answer this question is not easy, but it may not be ignored.

United Witness to the Reformed Faith

The purpose for the holding of these synods as referred to before, stresses the need to give united testimony of our common Reformed faith to the many churches which have departed from the truth of God's Word. Is it not time for the Synod to ask how this shall be done? How shall we address the World Council of Churches with whom we do not speak? How shall we testify to the Presbyterian Alliance when we do not converse? The Apostle tells us that he taught publicly for any to hear who might wish to do so, but that wasn't enough: he went from house to house testifying to both Jews and Greeks. If it may be said that the Reformed Ecumenical Synod has not contributed effectively to our churches, I venture to say it has been initially insignificant to other churches. And how shall we justify its continued existence unless it fulfills its purpose?

The Reformed faith, to which we are committed, is, we believe, the truest expression of the whole counsel of God. Its center of reference is the triune God, who revealed himself as the God of sovereign and victorious grace. And its heart is seen most clearly in Jesus Christ, the Word of God become flesh, especially on the cross and in his resurrection. Paul could say elsewhere: "For I was determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Therefore as members of the Fifth

Synod you are charged to defend and proclaim the Reformed faith, and what may be even more important for this Synod, to make competent arrangements for the effectiveness of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in the future.

To bear faithful testimony to this faith in the post-Christian era is a herculean assignment. Therefore we must pray. Was it not Anselm who interspersed his theological writings with prayers because he knew the only proper way to study theology was on his knees? We must work and pray to know the truth of God better and, in love, faithfully declare it to one another, to other churches, and to the world. To meet this responsibility we need the blessed presence of God's Spirit, whom Jesus promised would speak for him, and in the hour when we are called to make our confession before men, give us the words to speak. Brethren, above all we need to pray.

Eldersveld Speaker at Reformation Rally

A Philadelphia area Reformation Rally on Friday evening, November 1 will feature the Rev. Dr. Peter Eldersveld, well-known radio preacher of The Back-to-God Hour. The 8:00 P.M. service is to be held at the Christ Memorial Church (Reformed Episcopal), 43rd and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia. Host pastor Harold Mathisen will offer the invocation.

The service is being sponsored jointly by local presbyteries of Reformed and Presbyterian bodies which not only call themselves 'Calvinistic' but continue to hold the principles of the Geneva Reformer, particularly the sole authority of the Word of God. Presiding at the rally will be the Rev. Elton Piersma of the Trinity Christian Reformed Church, Broomall.

Other participants include the Rev. Charles Anderson, Evangelical Presbyterian pastor in Boothwyn, as song leader. The choir of the Newark E.P. Church will sing, with Westminster Seminary senior John Frame at the organ. Scripture is to be read by U.S. Army Chaplain John Betzold, an Orthodox Presbyterian. Elder Charles Eckardt, stated supply of the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, will offer a closing prayer.

Machen's Ecclesiology

DAVID C. JONES

INTRODUCTION

The pre-eminence of Machen's leadership in the movement which led to the formation of what are now known as the Orthodox and the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches is everywhere recognized. No one contributed so much to the furtherance of that cause by way of lucid and logical expression of the issues involved. No one saw more clearly the necessity for consistent application of the principles which were held to be Biblical.

Machen's ecclesiastical policies were questioned then, both by liberals and by tolerant "conservatives," and his ecclesiology as a whole has been severely criticized recently in Loetscher's well-written and aptly titled *The Broadening Church*. Loetscher analyzes Machen's doctrine of the Church in the following vein: "For him the Church was, in essence, a voluntary society, created *de novo* by contract by people who find themselves in theological agreement."¹ According to Loetscher, Machen's view is "good Anabaptist doctrine" but certainly not Presbyterianism. "The Presbyterian conception of the Church is organic. Presbyterian doctrine is that normally people are born into the Church."²

Loetscher goes on to say that this conception of the Church was illustrated not only in the break with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. but also in the divisions which subsequently attended Machen's movement. In this study we shall have opportunity to examine Loetscher's analysis in some detail. Of special interest is whether the later "splits" can be said to follow from the ecclesiology espoused by Machen.

Courageous Consistency

Whatever one may think of Machen's doctrine of the Church, it is impossible to deny that his view remains constant throughout the whole period of controversy. From his entrance into the controversy in print, at least as early as the January 21, 1921 issue of *The Presbyterian*, to his sermon "The Church of God," preached before the

This article was written earlier this year by Mr. Jones in connection with one of his courses under Professor Paul Woolley as a graduate student in Westminster Theological Seminary, from which he received his B.D. degree in 1962. Mr. Jones is an applicant for foreign service under World Presbyterian Missions.

Though somewhat longer than articles we ordinarily use, the research here compiled should prove of particular interest to a generation that 'knew not Machen' as well as to others. It is gathered from sources not readily accessible to the average reader and is carefully documented.

The matters discussed are quite relevant in this ecumenical period when the issue of the sole authority of the Word of God is still very much in the foreground.

First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, we are confronted with one consistent picture. Application of the doctrine, of course, did change as it became increasingly obvious that the Church, with the resources then in the Church, could not be reformed. But the doctrine itself remained the same; the alternative was expressly stated from the beginning that if reformation should fail, separation would be the inevitable issue. Machen and those who stood with him are to be much admired for the courageous consistency with which they put their principles into action; the birth pangs of establishing a "true Presbyterian Church" cannot be minimized.

Machen's ecclesiology was hammered out and applied in a context of theological controversy. One cannot do justice to his doctrine of the Church without giving due consideration to Machen's analysis of the existing theological situation in the Church. For it was from that theological situation that his ecclesiastical policies inevitably followed. The first section of this paper, therefore, is devoted to the theological issue in Machen's day.

THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE

Machen found in the Plan of Organic Union, approved almost without debate by the 1920 General Assembly and sent down to the presbyteries for ratification, positive evidence of the Presbyterian Church's infection with naturalistic liberalism to an alarming degree. This liberalism he characterized as "the chief enemy of Christianity in the modern world."³ Why did Machen so vigorously oppose liberalism? Because he saw clearly that it was another religion having no affinity whatsoever with the gospel of Christ. In an article in 1921 he stated: "Modern naturalistic liberalism and Christianity are two distinct religions; they are not only different religions, but religions that belong to two entirely different categories. There could be no greater contrast than that between these two. A man who decides for one decides against the other."⁴

Machen's book, *Christianity and Liberalism*, published in 1923 and admired by Walter Lippman for its acumen and saliency, expounds the difference between these two religions. In this work it is established as clear as day that liberalism differs *in toto* from the religion founded by Christ and his apostles and historically received by the Church. Liberalism's use of traditional language is not allowed to obscure the issue. Liberalism does away with the factual basis of Christianity; doctrine as such is unimportant, for creeds are merely the expression of a Christian experience. Contradictory creeds may therefore at bottom be the same. To this Machen answered that Christianity was not merely a life but a life founded upon a *message*, and having no meaning apart from that message.

Machen also pointed out that liberalism differed from Christianity in its conception of God and man. Knowledge of God was reduced to "feeling his presence." The transcendence of God was lost in a theology of immanence. On the liberal construction the Incarnation was simply a symbol that God and man are one. The gulf

between the Creator and the creature was thus filled in. The fact of sin, of course, went out when the essential goodness of man came in.

Christianity vs. Liberalism

When Machen comes to the doctrine of salvation he first of all points out that it is no wonder that liberalism differs here from Christianity since it differs with regard to the presuppositions of the gospel in its view of God and man, the Book of the gospel, and the Person whose work is the foundation of the gospel. Accordingly, "Liberalism finds salvation (so far as it is willing to speak at all of 'salvation') in man; Christianity finds it in an act of God."⁵ With regard to the nature of the Atonement Machen pointed out, as he was to do on many occasions, that the Bible was supremely clear and simple. It could be expressed in language that a child could understand: "We deserved eternal death, but the Lord Jesus, because he loved us, died instead of us on the cross."⁶ In contrast to this concept he presented various liberal "interpretations" of the death of Christ, which, when stripped of traditional language, embodied totally alien ideas.

The impact of the clarity and logic of Machen's statement of the issue was registered in a review in *The Pacific Unitarian*, June-July, 1923:

What interests us is that from the point of view of a certain type of theology, Dr. Machen's arguments are irrefutable. His logic, it seems to us, is impeccable. The issue does exist and does confront us. For the first time he has done us the great service of putting it in a clear-cut and definite form. You must be either a believer or an unbeliever, an evangelical or a liberal, you cannot be both at the same time. Our judgment is that Dr. Machen puts the liberal party within the evangelical church where it has not a sound leg to stand on.⁷

Machen plead with the liberals to withdraw and to leave the Church at peace. Simple honesty demanded it. They had no right to remain in a confessional Church and espouse what was the very antithesis of the confession. And there could be no peace in the Church as long as these two religions remained unequally yoked together. Nor could Machen and those who agreed with him be expected to keep silent. For as Machen stated in an article in October, 1925:

If these views of ours are wrong, they should be refuted; but it is unreasonable to ask us to hold these views and then act as though we did not hold them. If

these views are true [i.e. the factual basis of faith, the exclusive salvation of the Bible] *they must determine our every action*, in our capacity both as men and as ministers in the Church. God has placed us in the world as witnesses, and we cannot, in the interests of ecclesiastical harmony or for any other reason, allow our witness to become untrue. We cannot consent to deceive men into thinking that they can be saved in any other way than through the gospel that is set forth in the Word of God.⁸

Subsequent ecclesiastical policies were founded on principle. The belief that there were two religions in the Church did indeed determine their every action.

ECCLESIOLOGY

A. *The Church: Invisible and Visible*

When dealing with the doctrine of the Church in *Christianity and Liberalism* Machen states, "When, according to Christian belief, lost souls are saved, the saved ones become united in the Christian Church."⁹ The Church is thus the "Brotherhood of twice-born sinners," "the brotherhood of the redeemed," the "society of those who have been saved." He continues, "And the Church invisible, the true company of the redeemed, finds expression in the companies of Christians who constitute the visible Church to-day."¹⁰ Thus there are not *two* churches, but *one* Church viewed from two aspects—as invisible on the one hand, infallibly known to God alone, and as coming to a visible manifestation on the other. "The Church . . . is the visible representative in the world of the body of Christ; and its members are not merely seekers after God, but those who have already found; they are not merely interested in Christ, but are united to Christ by the regenerating act of the Spirit of God."¹¹ No statement could be clearer as respects

the unity of the visible and invisible Church.

Although the identity of the visible with the invisible Church is maintained in Machen's thought, nevertheless there is a certain amount of tension which is almost always the case when these terms are employed. In one place he states, "According to the Westminster Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, the invisible Church is to be distinguished from the visible Church. The invisible Church consists of the whole number of those who are saved; the visible Church consists of those who profess the true religion, together with their children."¹² So that it seems that to profess the true religion is something different from being truly saved. That is true in a certain respect in that a *bare* profession is not a mark of being a member of God's Church. But the profession of which the Confession speaks is a genuine profession on earth by those whose names are enrolled in heaven.

It is the opinion of the present writer that Machen recognizes that in the passage for he goes on to say that "there is absolutely no warrant in Scripture for supposing that any particular branch of the visible Church will necessarily be preserved. Always, it is true, there will be a visible Church upon the earth, but any particular Church organization may become so corrupt as to be not a true Church of Christ, but (as the Confession of Faith puts it) 'a synogogue of Satan.'"¹³ Ecclesiastical organization, even with a Biblical Confession, is not the same thing as profession of the true religion. This is confirmed in another passage:

That Church [the Church of Jesus Christ] is not always easy to distinguish today. It does not always present itself

¹Lefferts A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, p. 117.

²*Idem.*

³"The Second Declaration of the Council on Organic Union," *The Presbyterian*, March 17, 1921, p. 8.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 117.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁷Cited by N. B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, pp. 367f.

⁸"The Real Issue Stated," *The Bible for China*, Oct. 1925, p. 17, italics added.

⁹*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 157.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹¹*What is Faith?* p. 158.

¹²"The Mission of the Church," *The Presbyterian*, April 8, 1926, p. 8.

¹³*Idem.*

to you in powerful organizations; it is often hidden away here and there, in individual congregations resisting the central ecclesiastical mechanism; it is found in groups, large or small, of those who have been redeemed from sin and are citizens of a heavenly kingdom. But wherever it is found, you must turn to that true Church of Jesus Christ for a message from God.¹⁴

For Machen, the true Church of Jesus Christ, composed of those who are really united to Christ, may be tucked away within an ecclesiastical organization which can lay no claim to being the Church of God.

The visible Church is the community of the redeemed upon earth. Because the inclusion and exclusion is placed in the hands of fallible men, it is inevitable that some hypocrites gain admission to the organization. However, it is important not to define the visible Church in terms that will allow for hypocrites in the definition. The visible Church can be defined in no terms less than the Body of Christ upon earth, composed of those who are truly united to the Head. (Cf. John Murray, *Christian Baptism*, pp. 42ff.) Machen recognizes that admission of hypocrites is inevitable. "It is indeed inevitable that some persons who are not truly Christian shall find their way into the visible Church; fallible man cannot discern the heart, and many a profession of faith which seems to be genuine may really be false."¹⁵ But his definition of the visible Church is not formed in terms that provided for hypocrites within the definition.

Principle of Exclusion

Though hypocrites will gain entrance, nevertheless in the interest of its purity the Church must practice the principle of exclusion. The problem with the Church in Machen's day was not that certain ones had been admitted on the basis of what seemed to be a credible profession but really was not. The problem was that those who had made no confession at all and

whose attitude was hostile to the gospel had been admitted to the Church and even allowed to dominate its councils.¹⁶ One supreme cause of the trouble in the Church, said Machen, was that "the Church of today has been unfaithful to her Lord by admitting great companies of non-Christian persons, not only into her membership, but into her teaching agencies."¹⁷

Thus in the interest of purity a credible profession must be required of all those who would become members of the Church:

The visible Church should strive to receive, into a communion for prayer and fellowship and labor, as many as possible of those who are united to Christ in saving faith, and it should strive to exclude as many as possible of those who are not so united to him. . . . In order, therefore, that the purity of the Church may be preserved, a confession of faith in Christ must be required of all those who would become Church members.¹⁸

This confession was not to be merely a verbal acknowledgement but a "credible profession," which gave evidence that the person understood and personally received the gospel.

This concern of Machen was always accompanied by the following word of caution: ". . . such requirements ought clearly to be recognized as provisional; they do not determine a man's standing before God, but they only determine, with the best judgment that God has given to feeble and ignorant men, a man's standing in the visible Church. That is one reason why we must refuse to answer, in any definite and formal way, the question as to the minimum doctrinal requirements that are necessary in order that a man may be a Christian."¹⁹

Requirements for Ministry

However, nothing could be farther from the case when it comes to the teaching ministry of the Church. "Certainly requirements for Church membership should be distinguished in the

sharpest possible way from requirements for the ministry."²⁰ Misunderstanding of that difference on the part of Machen's opponents (even Loetscher) resulted in great injustice. He was represented as requiring the infallibility of the Scripture and the full teaching of the Confession of those who wished to become Church members. To this Machen answered, "In point of fact we have been requiring these things only from candidates for ordination. Surely there is a very important distinction here."²¹

According to Machen, the first step in the unity of the Church was the removal from the teaching ministry of the advocates of agnostic Modernism, which he rightly calls "false brethren privily brought in."²² To the objection of some that such exclusion would split the Church Machen answered that he was working not for the disruption of the Church but with all his heart for its unity. "They [the liberals] have introduced a wedge into the mighty structure; allow that wedge to remain and there will be a 'split' indeed. The way to save the building is to remove the disruptive elements."²³

Any course other than the attempt to exclude those men from the teaching ministry would be disloyalty to Christ. The following shows that this was clear to Machen all along since it is from an article written in March 1924:

The worst sin today is to say that you agree with the Christian faith and believe in the Bible, but then say that you receive into your teaching ministry and make common cause with those who deny the basic facts of Christianity, like the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of our Lord. Never was it more obviously true that he that is not with Christ is against him.²⁴

B. The Message of the Church

It was necessary to exclude such men from the teaching ministry of the Church if the Church was to remain true to her mission. "The Church, I hold, is in the world to propagate a message."²⁵ What is that message? "The Church plainly exists for the express purpose of propagating the message which is set forth in the Confession of Faith and which is declared to be derived from the Bible as the Word of God."²⁶ This view of the Church was founded upon Acts 1:8 among other passages.²⁷ ". . . the business of the Church is a campaign of

(continued on page 138)

¹⁴*The Responsibility of the Church in Our New Age*, p. 10.

¹⁵*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 159.

¹⁶*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 159.

¹⁷*Idem*.

¹⁸*What is Faith?* p. 159.

¹⁹*Idem*.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 157.

²¹*Idem*.

²²"Honesty and Freedom in the Christian Ministry," *The Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, March 1924.

²³*Idem*.

²⁴*Idem*.

²⁵*Statement*, p. 14.

²⁶*The Trenton Evening Times*, October 15, 1924, Cited in *Appended Documents*, p. 6.

²⁷*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 52.

EDITOR

Robert E. Nicholas



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Reformation Day

By custom of long standing the last day of October has come to be thought of as Reformation Day, since it was on that date in 1517 that Martin Luther, with hammer and nails and written words, began to build something that is still growing. Or is it? There are those who see the structure as toppling and who write of the 'post-Protestant era.' And there are plenty of signs that they may be right in so construing events. Others are busily engaged in 'undoing the Reformation.'

Item. The World Council of Churches, having admitted the Eastern Orthodox churches into its fold, is becoming less and less 'Protestant' — if it ever really was such — and more and more aware that this new and largest segment of its membership scarcely recognizes that the Reformation took place. For these churches the path ahead is for all to make a U-turn back to Orthodoxy — Eastern style.

Item. All roads again led to Rome for the September 29 opening of the second phase of the council called Vatican II. While Protestant observers may sense a slight shift in the ecumenical winds with the transfer of papal power from John to the present pontiff, Paul, it is evident that the leaders of Protestantism in the sixties have one great and recurring dream — the hope of an ecumenical church in which Protestant and Orthodox and Romanist will form one all-inclusive Catholic Church.

Now if anything is clear, it is that the Eastern Orthodox churches know their tradition and regard it as unchanging and apostolic. It is even more plain that Rome knows where she stands and why. So-called modernizing elements are largely in such mat-

ters as permissive introduction of the vernacular into portions of the mass or statements on social questions or perhaps allowing bishops a little more authority in some areas. But abolish the hierarchy? Unthinkable. Retract doctrines such as the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption of Mary? Not open to discussion. Deny the infallibility of the pope as supreme Vicar of Christ on earth? No more than give up the claim of being the one true and apostolic church!

We may say that we have far more respect for churches that cling to basic convictions because they hold them to be unchanging truth, than for the vacillating and compromising attitudes of most of today's sons of the Reformation. For how is the ecumenical 'Protestant' dream to be fulfilled? By making concessions. By further toning down such Reformation truths as yet retain any distinctiveness. By emphasizing that unity at any price is the thing, almost the only thing, that matters. So it appears.

Item. The Detroit Council of Churches' annual Reformation Rally has this year been designated a "Festival of Faith" to further the cause of Christian unity. Said the director of the council's Division of Public Services: "We think that by calling it a 'Festival of Faith' it will be more meaningful to members of all denominations. The Reformation of Luther dealt with only a particular part. We want to witness to Christian unity." He said that Episcopalians and Orthodox particularly have been "unhappy" with the former name of the observance and that some leaders felt a Reformation Rally was "an anti-Catholic slap, and we don't want to do that."

We are glad, however, that there are still Protestants who make no apologies for Reformation rallies and sermons. Here and there are voices which proclaim that Reformation principles were valid in the 16th century because they were biblical and therefore true also in the first or the 20th century. We cite just two examples.

In this issue of the *Guardian* appears an article on J. Gresham Machen's views of the church. It bears upon the application of Reformation principles in the present century, no less today than when he espoused them a generation ago. Machen's viewpoint is doubtless even less popular now than it was then, but it is 'a voice in the wilderness' that ought to be heard.

We mention also the apparent renewed determination of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod to fulfill the purposes for which it came into being. Its constituent bodies do take their Reformation heritage seriously. From time to time we expect to reproduce or note some of the actions and reports of the Fifth Synod which met this year, and to call attention to significant developments between now and the next meeting. We rejoice in the witness of all who still seek to enunciate and practice the principles of the Reformation.

E.P. Ministers Get *Guardian*

A St. Louis businessman, who prefers to remain unnamed, an active Evangelical Presbyterian, has made it possible to send a one-year subscription of the *Presbyterian Guardian* to every minister of his denomination. His generosity is intended further to promote information and understanding between adherents of the OPC-Westminster cause and leaders of the EPC-Covenant group. We concur, gratefully, in his desire.

Orthodox Presbyterian ministers are currently receiving the *Evangelical Presbyterian Reporter* as a gift, with the same purposes in view.

— R. E. N.

EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Dear Sir:

We state two reasons why we cannot accept the recent decision of the Supreme Court on the matter of prayer and the Bible in our public schools. First, because we believe that decision to be contrary to the revelation of God's Word, and second, because we believe it to be unconstitutional.

Their decision removes the name of Jesus Christ very effectively from our public schools, even though they did not say (this) in so many words. We maintain that those who accept the decision without protest leave themselves open to the charge of denying the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Scriptures reveal as Lord of all! He is either Lord of all, or not Lord at all. Therefore we protest the Supreme Court decision as being unscriptural and anti-Christian.

Now, as to the second reason: How can an American citizen accept a decision that is contrary to the Constitu-

tion of the United States? . . . Only the powers written into the Constitution can be exercised by the agencies of the Federal Government. All other rights and prerogatives were retained by the States. Will someone tell us when the Supreme Court was given 'authority' over either religion or education?

The California Christian Citizens Association has written to the Governors of the 50 States asking them to present this matter to their Legislatures.

Thomas Jefferson warned the people of the United States of the danger of a Supreme Court assuming dictatorial powers. Writing to his friend, T. Ritchie (as recorded in *The Complete Jefferson* by Padover), Jefferson said: "To consider the Judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions is a very dangerous doctrine indeed, and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy."

So while the crown rights of Jesus Christ are denied and his name dishonored, and while the Constitution of the U.S. is being disregarded, and while we still have a measure of freedom, why don't the Christian citizens arise in protest? "Why set we here until we die?"

DAVID CALDERWOOD, TH.D.
President, California Christian
Citizens Association

Inauguration of Westminster Seminary Professors

Two associate professors named to full professorships by the Board of Trustees last spring are being inaugurated at a public service under the auspices of Westminster Theological Seminary on Tuesday evening, October 22 at 8 o'clock.

The Rev. Meridith George Kline, Th.M., Ph.D., has been designated as Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature. Earlier this year Erdmans published Dr. Kline's *Treaty of the Great King* — a study in the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Rev. Edmund Prosper Clowney, S.T.M., who has been named as Professor of Practical Theology, is to deliver an address entitled "Sandals at the Seminary." His book *Preaching and Biblical Theology* appeared last year from the same publisher mentioned above.

Machen's Ecclesiology

(from page 136)

witnessing."²⁸ Christianity is based upon the account of something that has happened; the Christian worker is primarily a witness.²⁹ As he told a group when asked to speak on the relations between Jews and Christians, "Here is a group of people who believe that the greatest thing in the world is to proclaim a way of salvation, a system of 'doctrine,' if you will, that is summarized in the Westminster Confession."³⁰

Because of this conception of the mission of the Church, Machen was greatly disturbed by the men in the teaching ministry of the Church who were running counter to the Church's true witness. They were, in fact, destroying the purpose of the Church as it exists for the proclamation of a message. Loetscher's contention that Machen's view of the Church was that of a society "created *de novo* by people who find themselves in theological agreement" does not do justice to Machen's view. The Church by its very nature exists for a message. The "theological agreement" is nought but the message committed to the Church by her Lord which one accepts when becoming a member of her fold.

That message was never conceived of by Machen as a "brand" of theological truth, but rather *the* truth of the gospel of which the Westminster Standards were the consistent expression. For Machen the Reformed faith was the Christian faith. (It might be noted that it was on this basis that Machen was tolerant of premillennialists in the same ecclesiastical organization, though disagreeing with them sharply.)³¹ In a letter to *The Presbyterian* in 1925 he stated, "Christian doctrine, I hold, is not merely connected with the gospel, but it is identical with the gospel."³²

Ministers in the Presbyterian Church pledged to proclaim that message, as expressed in the standards of the Church, as the true system of doctrine taught in the Bible, not as one allowable system among many.³³ Thus the Auburn Affirmation, while it may have been right on the constitutional issue (to the knowledge of the present writer Machen did not attack this part of the statement), presented a real threat to the Presbyterian Church as a confessional Church. "It is directed against the creedal character of the

Church because it advocates a freedom of interpretation of the creed which makes the creed a dead letter. If a man may 'interpret' a perfectly plain confession of faith to mean its exact opposite, what is the use of having any confession at all?"³⁴ Machen pointed out to these ministers their inconsistent behaviour and plead with them to leave the Presbyterian Church and unite if they wished in some non-creedal organization.

C. The Church: a Voluntary Organization

Machen's suggestion that the liberals had no place in the Church and ought to withdraw accordingly drew loud protests of "intolerance." Machen's reply was that it could not possibly be intolerance in view of the distinction between involuntary organizations, like the state, and voluntary organizations, like the Church. "Involuntary organizations ought to be tolerant, but voluntary organizations, so far as the fundamental purpose of their existence is concerned, must be intolerant or else cease to exist."³⁵ Membership in the Church is voluntary; no one is forced to join the Church if not in agreement with her message, or, to answer Loetscher's objection, to remain in the Church if born of Christian parents and later repudiating the Covenant. Therefore it is not a curtailment of liberty to insist on loyalty to the Church's distinctive message, especially among those whose task it is to proclaim and to teach it.

This is not to say that a person who has accepted Christ has a choice whether or not he will associate himself with the visible Church. Machen held that, having voluntarily accepted Christ, believers *are* members of his body and must seek fellowship and nurture in the visible manifestation of the Church upon earth. "The Bible commands Christian people to be members of a true Church. . . . It represents the nurture provided by such a true church as a necessity, not a luxury, in the Christian life."³⁶

Co-ordinate with the doctrinal requirements for office Machen argues, "No man is required to enter the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. If he is not in agreement with the faith for the propagation of which the Church (in accordance with its constitution) plainly exists, he can enter into some organization of his own."³⁷ At this point Machen drew

an analogy from political clubs; obviously a Republican ought not to pretend to be a Democrat in order to gain entrance to the latter's club and proceed to espouse Republicanism. The obvious point was that "the fact that the Church is more than a political club does not mean that in ecclesiastical affairs there is any abrogation of the homely principles of honesty."³⁸

D. The Corporate Witness of the Church

It is just here that an exceedingly important principle, one with a thoroughly Biblical basis, comes into view, namely that of corporate responsibility in the life and ministry of the Church. Who was responsible for the false witness in some of the Church's teaching? Only the false teachers themselves?

Every Christian is a witness; he is in possession of a message that is true. But Christian witness-bearing is not only individual; it is collective. The Church has a corporate witness carried on especially through its pulpit. And as Machen pointed out, "Under Presbyterian law, no man can permanently occupy a pulpit of the Church without the Church's endorsement; the preacher therefore speaks not only for himself, but for the Church."³⁹

An inescapable responsibility thus rests on each individual member. Witnessing cannot be considered only a personal or individual matter. One cannot say, "I will witness for Christ, but it is no concern of mine whether other pulpits in the Church do so or not." This was clear to Machen in the early twenties; his own concerned action in trying to bring the pulpits of the Church in line with the Bible must be understood in this light. As far as Machen was concerned necessity was laid upon him. To let him speak for himself:

It is really quite impossible to place one's life in distinct compartments, and to be Christian in one capacity and anti-Christian in another; it is really quite impossible to be Christian in the prayer-meeting or the pulpit and anti-Christian at presbytery or at the General Assembly. It is really quite impossible to be a member of a body and evade the responsibilities involved in membership.⁴⁰

Again, at the conclusion of his presentation to the New Brunswick Presbytery of the documented case concerning Modernism in the Board of Foreign Missions, he asks if it is the

Foreign Board who is carrying on this false propaganda. The answer is inevitable: "No, my friends, *you* are carrying on this destructive propaganda if, having the power to stop it, you do not take steps to do so; I am carrying it on if, knowing the facts, I keep silent and do not commend this Overture to you today."⁴¹

Why were Machen's actions so vigorous even in the face of fierce opposition? Because he was firmly convinced that not to act would be acquiescing in a witness that was false, and such a course was clearly sin. "Individuals must witness for Christ, but the Church must also witness in its corporate capacity; and no individual is walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel if he acquiesces in a corporate witness that is false."⁴² For, as he stated near the end of the controversy, "To endorse unbelief is itself unbelief."⁴³

E. The Separateness of the Church

In some ways this aspect of Machen's ecclesiology is the most significant. For it was this that necessitated the cataclysmic upheaval in the mid-thirties which resulted in the establishment of first one, and then two, new churches. We are concerned here with the definition of apostasy and the criterion for ecclesiastical separation.

The separateness of the Church is another aspect of Machen's ecclesiology which was consistently expressed all along. He wrote in April, 1924:

²⁸"For Christ or Against Him," *The Presbyterian*, Jan. 20, 1921, p. 9.

²⁹*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 52.

³⁰"Relations Between Jews and Christians," October 29, 1924, *What is Christianity*, p. 113.

³¹*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 48.

³²Cited in Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

³³"The Second Part of the Ordination Pledge," *The Presbyterian Guardian* (hereafter cited as PG), December 2, 1935, p. 70.

³⁴"The Parting of the Ways," *The Presbyterian*, April 24, 1924, p. 7.

³⁵*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 167.

³⁶"What Should be Done," PG, October 21, 1935, p. 22.

³⁷"The Issue in the Church," 1923-24, *God Transcendent*, p. 46. Cf. "Honesty and Freedom in the Christian Ministry," *op. cit.*, p. 356.

³⁸*Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 169.

³⁹"The Parting of the Ways," *The Presbyterian*, April 17, 1924, p. 8.

⁴⁰*Idem*.

⁴¹*Modernism in the Board of Foreign Missions*, p. 32.

⁴²"The Parting of the Ways," *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴³*The Presbyterian Guardian*, March 16, 1936, p. 194.

⁴⁴"The Parting of the Ways," *op. cit.*, p. 368.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁶*The Attack upon Princeton Seminary*, p. 32.

We do not wish to split the Church; on the contrary we are working for the unity of the Church with all our might. But in order that there should be unity within the Church, it is necessary above all that there should be sharp separation of the Church from the world. The carrying out of that separation is a prime duty of the hour.⁴⁴

This is borne out in Machen's policies. It was his contention, as we have seen, that the world had invaded the Church, and was operating as a Fifth Column within her very ranks. The first duty, as Machen saw it, was to remove the world from the Church. But the possibility was always entertained that, failing this, the Church would have to separate herself from the world. The two could not permanently be yoked together.

Efforts to Reform

For a while Machen thought that the heart of the Church was sound and that by education, especially among the lay people, the Church's witness could be restored. Two somewhat optimistic statements, the latter as late as 1927, bear that out:

The Presbyterian Church, we are convinced, is still predominantly Christian; it would stand for Christ if it knew the real meaning of the hostile propaganda which is attacking the center of its life.⁴⁵

Our only hope for victory is by a frank appeal from the present ecclesiastical authorities to the rank and file of the Church. We have a just cause; and the inner heart of our Church, we hope, is still sound. If the facts could only be made known, we think that justice would be done.⁴⁶

It should be noted that that latter statement is less optimistic than the former. Yet by creating this ground swell among the laity, Machen still hoped that the conservatives would eventually gain control of the "machinery" of the Church which was in the hands of "modernist-indifferentist" forces. But Machen realized that this would take a long time. He wrote after the 1924 General Assembly:

The unfortunate compromising action at the last General Assembly [with regard to Fosdick] shows clearly . . . that the clear witness-bearing of our Church cannot be restored in one year or in two years. It will take far longer than that to place what may be called the 'machinery' of the Church in the hands of evangelical men, so that the machinery may become an effective instrument in the propagation of the truth. . . . If the movement is of God, then it will continue through the years . . . and we shall then have within the Church the true unity that is founded upon the authority of the Word of God.⁴⁷

Separation the Alternative

Though Machen hoped for reformation, separation was the only alternative should their efforts fail. The events of 1936 were not a later development of Machen's ecclesiology. It was always recognized that if the Church should become truly apostate, the conservatives would have to leave. In his sermon, "The Separateness of the Church," preached in Miller Chapel, Princeton, March 8, 1925, Machen put side by side his earnest hope for reformation and the solemn possibility of separation:

True, the forces of unbelief have not yet been checked, and none can say whether our own American Presbyterian Church, which we love so dearly, will be preserved. It may be that paganism will finally control, and the Christian men and women may have to withdraw from a Church that has lost its distinctness from the world. Once in the course of history, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that method of withdrawal was God's method of preserving the precious salt. But it may be also that our Church in its corporate capacity, in its historic grandeur, may yet stand for Christ. God grant that it may be so!⁴⁸

As the third decade of the century approached, Machen appeared less and less optimistic about reforming the Church, though he continued to strive for reform in the face of what seemed to be an impossible task. Precisely what the ecclesiastical duty of conservatives was at this time he did not know. He wrote in the April 4, 1930 issue of *The Banner*, "But doubtful though we

*If reformation should fail, separation
would be the inevitable issue.*

hold the optimistic conviction about the soundness of the Church to be, that conviction is at least natural; and since God, alas, has raised up no Abraham Kuyper to lead us in the true path, many of our number are at present uncertain what our immediate ecclesiastical duty is."⁴⁹ And in an article in *Christianity Today* the following month he wrote: "About our immediate duty in detail there may be some doubt. But one thing at least is clear—there can be no peace, save a shameful peace, between the Christian religion and that which the Auburn Affirmation, for example, represents. If the latter is really in permanent control of our Church, then a new Church should be formed to be a true witness to Jesus Christ."⁵⁰

In the next few years it became increasingly clear that such was the case respecting the control of the Church. This Machen exposed in articles in *Christianity Today*⁵¹ and in the overture already referred to in *Modernism in the Board of Foreign Missions*.

When the Church refused to examine its Foreign Missions Board Machen and others felt obliged to establish an Independent Board. Such an action, of course, was abnormal; but so was the underlying situation that made it a necessity.

The Church issued a Mandate that Presbyterian ministers withdraw from the Independent Board since to continue on it was unconstitutional. In a pamphlet entitled "Studies of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.," prepared under the direction of the General Council, the extreme position was taken that "A church member or an individual church that will not give to promote the officially authorized missionary program of the Presbyterian Church is in exactly the same position with reference to the Constitution of the Church as a church member or an individual church that would refuse to take part in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."⁵²

Mandate Disobeyed

Machen declined to obey the Mandate and offered a "Brief Statement of My Position" which offered the following reasons why he could not obey the order:

A. Obedience . . . would involve support of a propaganda that is contrary to the gospel of Christ.

B. . . . would involve substitution of a human authority for the authority of the Word of God.

C. . . . would mean acquiescence in the principle that support of the benevolences of the Church is not a matter of free-will but the payment of a tax enforced by penalties.

D. All three of the above mentioned courses of conduct are forbidden by the Bible, and therefore I cannot engage in any of them. . . .

Yet Machen maintained that he had a right to remain in the Church because he could appeal from the General Assembly to the Constitution.

At this time Machen wrote that one does not have the right to insist on absolute perfection in the Church militant, and therefore one may not withdraw from any branch of that Church just because it is not perfect.⁵³ But, he continues, this does not apply to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Why? Because that Church is "very largely dominated by unbelief. It does not merely harbor unbelief here and there. No, it has made unbelief, in the form of a deadly Modernist vagueness, the determinative force in its central official life."⁵⁴ Separation is thus a dire necessity. The only question is how. Machen's hope for what is "unquestionably the best way," that of reformation, is almost gone. "The other way is the way of separation from the existing organization on the part of the loyal part of the Church. Only, if the separation comes, it ought to come in such fashion as to make perfectly clear the fact that those who are separating from the present Modernist organization are not founding a 'new Church' but are carrying on the true, spiritual succession of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A."⁵⁵

Criterion for Separation

When is the time for that kind of separation? That is no easy question. Machen struggles with it in two articles in the *Presbyterian Guardian*, in April and May of 1936.

In the first of these he draws from the Reformation the principle that "the time for separation comes at a time when the existing church organization ceases to heed the Word of God and follows some other authority instead."⁵⁶ It is schism to leave a Church

that is still true to the Bible; such schism is a very heinous sin. But it is not sin to leave a Church that is untrue to the Bible. Rather, "it is schism to remain in it, since to remain in it means to disobey the Word of God and to separate oneself from the true Church of Jesus Christ."⁵⁷

Had the Presbyterian Church ceased to follow the authority of the Word of God? Machen's answer at this time was:

If the Permanent Judicial Commission declares the Mandate of the 1934 and 1935 Assemblies to be constitutional or on any of the other grounds alleged confirms the condemnation of any one of the members of the Independent Board . . . and if the General Assembly, sitting as a court, confirms this decision, then the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. will have dethroned Jesus Christ and placed the word of men above the Word of God.⁵⁸

In the second article Machen argues that it is not sin to break from an apostate Church, but rather sin to remain in it; and that the Presbyterian Church will be shown to be apostate if the General Assembly sitting as a court declares the Mandate constitutional. The reason was as follows:

The Mandate, by making the support of whatever program of boards and agencies is set up by shifting majority votes in the General Assembly a condition of ordination and of membership in the Church, is placing the word of man above the Word of God and is dethroning Jesus Christ. A Church that places the word of man above the Word of God and dethrones Jesus Christ is an apostate Church. It is the duty of all true Christians to separate from such a Church.⁵⁹

Machen continued that if a man was not convinced that he should with-

draw from the Church which by *any* act had dethroned Christ, he should withdraw from a Church which had done so by this particular action because it endorses a policy of "exclusion from the ministry of all who will not support the propaganda of the Modernist boards and agencies . . . and will not promise for the future a blanket allegiance to human programs as shifting majorities in the General Assembly may set them up."⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

It is in the light of the theological issue and the ecclesiology set forth in this paper that Machen's ecclesiastical policies must be read. The Independent Board was an abnormal thing; but abnormal circumstances required it. The formation of a separate body was a radical measure; but radical measures are necessary to remedy radical evils. Machen's policies rested on a thoroughly Biblical ecclesiology from which subsequent splits cannot be said to follow.

It must not be overlooked that Machen worked for the reformation of the Church for the better part of two decades; he worked earnestly for the exclusion of non-Christian forces, only to find himself excluded in the end. Thus it was with a clear conscience that Machen entered into the warmth and joy of "A True Presbyterian Church at Last." For he could say, "We have not escaped into that warmth and joy without making an earnest effort to bring about a reform of the church organization in which we formerly stood. . . . We have not separated from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. before it became abun-

dantly clear that it was not God's will that that Church should be reformed."⁶¹

One final word concerning Loetscher's analysis. He holds that the problem of power and freedom in the Church was resolved by "increasing physical power while at the same time anxiously seeking to prevent its trespassing on the realm of the spirit."⁶² But it is abundantly clear that Machen, at least, felt that the actions of the General Assemblies of 1934-36 very definitely trampled in the realm of the spirit.

Machen was not put out of the Church on a mere technicality. In the action of the General Assembly there was something far more significant involved than just the questioned legality of the Independent Board. The Church took the position that support of her benevolences, of whatever character, was mandatory. Support of them was on a par with the partaking of the sacraments. When Machen protested that for conscience sake he could not support the Foreign Missions Board, the Church did not investigate the Board in order to determine whether Machen's reasons were valid. The General Assembly virtually commanded implicit faith in the agencies of the Church. Not only was such a demand itself a violation of Biblical principles, but the course of action which it entailed, support of that particular Foreign Board, was one which Machen could not conscientiously follow. For it would be acquiescing in a witness that was false; it would be furthering the cause of anti-Christian propaganda. Such a course was forbidden by the Word of God. And the Word of God



Machen
Memorial
Hall
on the
Campus
of
Westminster
Seminary

⁴⁷"Dr. Fosdick's Letter," *The Presbyterian*, October 23, 1924, p. 6.

⁴⁸*God Transcendent*, p. 106.

⁴⁹"A Future for Calvinism in the Presbyterian Church?" *The Banner*, April 4, 1930, p. 320.

⁵⁰"The Present Situation in the Presbyterian Church," *CT*, May 1930, p. 7.

⁵¹"The Truth about the Presbyterian Church," December 1931, "Freedom in the Presbyterian Church," October 1933.

⁵²*Studies in the Constitution*, p. 43.

⁵³"What Should be Done," *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁵⁴*Idem.*

⁵⁵*Idem.*

⁵⁶"Are We Schismatics," *PG*, April 20, 1936, p. 22.

⁵⁷*Idem.*

⁵⁸*Idem.*

⁵⁹"An Apostate Church?" *PG*, May 4, 1936, p. 42.

⁶⁰*Idem.*

⁶¹"A True Presbyterian Church at Last," *PG*, June 22, 1936, p. 110.

⁶²Loetscher, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

held Machen's conscience captive; for conscience sake he could not obey the order.

Was such disobedience the act of an Anabaptist? To remain in the Church would be to put some authority above the Word of God. Thus to leave the Church, was but true Presbyterianism — Presbyterianism which continued to adhere to one great basic principle of the Reformation: the supreme authority of the Word of God.

APPENDICES

A. *The Limited Function of the Church*

Although this aspect of Machen's ecclesiology was no main feature in the great Presbyterian controversy, yet in the interest of completeness it is well to append at least a brief note respecting his viewpoint on this matter. Though there is little material we will do well to listen to Machen, for his ideas are formulated with characteristic lucidity and irresistible logic.

In the main the printed matter respecting this topic is that which is directed against the entrance of the Church into the political field. It is sufficient to quote from two articles, the first written in 1925 in opposition to the Church lobby respecting the Child Labor Amendment, and the second written some eight years later expressing the same viewpoint:

... we do not think that the Presbyterian Church ought to become a political lobby; we do not think that it has any right to put itself on record as either favoring or opposing political and social measures about which no direct guidance is found in Scripture. That does not mean at all that we deprecate advocacy of good political measures and opposition to bad measures on the part of the members of the Church; on the contrary, we think that such activity is a very important Christian duty, and that Christians ought to organize themselves in accordance with their consciences for the furtherance of the political and social ends that they may think right. But what we do deprecate is such activity on the part of the official agencies of the Church. ("The So-Called Child Labor Amendment," *The Presbyterian*, January 22, 1925, p. 6.)

... you cannot expect from a true Christian Church any official pronouncements upon the political or social questions of the day. . . . Its weapons against evil are spiritual, not carnal; and by becoming a political lobby, through the advocacy of political measures whether good or bad, the Church is turning aside from its proper mission, which is to bring to bear on human hearts the . . . gospel of Christ. (*The Responsibility of the Church in Our new Age*, 1933, p. 9.)

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The Christian is to take an active part in politics to be sure. What Machen objected to was the *Church* acting in a corporate capacity as distinguished from the activity of its individual members. (Cf. Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 387.) The function of the Church in Machen's view is only (the most glorious "only" there is) to

preach the gospel and do those things directly concerned with it.

B. *Machen on Ecumenism*

Here again the material is sparse. But what he notes in passing concerning the then embryonic modern ecumenical movement has proven to be the case: a wholesale blurring of distinctions.

For our part we have not much sympathy with the present widespread desire of finding some greatest common denominator which shall unite men of different Christian bodies; for such a greatest common denominator is often found to be very small indeed. Some men seem to devote most of their energies to the task of seeing just how little of Christian truth they can get along with. (*What is Faith*, p. 159.)

I stand far closer to them [Mo. Synod Lutheran] than I should stand if they held the differences between the Reformed and the Lutheran system to be matters of no moment so that we could

proceed at once to form an 'organic union' based upon some vague common measure between the two great historic branches of the Protestant Church. ("The Second Part of the Ordination Pledge," *op. cit.*, p. 70.)

I am opposed to the depressing dream of one monopolistic church organization, placing the whole Protestant world under one set of committees and boards. If that dream were ever realized, it would be an intolerable tyranny. I trust that the efforts of the church-unionists may be defeated, like the efforts of the opponents of liberty in other fields. (*The Responsibility of the Church in Our New Age*, p. 8.)

GOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Of God it is written that he "hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Eccles. 3:11). And as for the Creator himself, the Psalmist is eloquent in praise of "the glory of God" and "the beauty of the Lord." God is, above all other, glorious in himself and in all his works and ways. And there is nothing transient about his possession of the attribute of beauty, for God is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable."

In fact God himself might well be named, The Beautiful; since he has and holds within himself the perfect nature and content of the beautiful. All beauty that there is besides his own flows from that which is his and which he is. All other beauty exists only in virtue of his creation and production of it, and because of his love for the reproduction and reflection of his own glory in the works of his hand.

God, we may be sure, loves to behold the image of himself in all his beauty in his human offspring, especially those of that great segment of the sons of men who, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

No one, then, needs to be ashamed of being a lover of the beautiful, for we are only God-like in it. One takes delight in contemplation of a rose, a tree, a sunrise, a wren, a fawn, a snowflake, a dewdrop, a perfect day, the soft moonlight, the starry sky. So also, "a word fitly spoken," a verse from Tennyson, a landscape by Corot, a piece by Mendelssohn and all the classic, and many of the not-so-classic, works of art—all of which exhibit God working in all things "both to will and to do his good pleasure."

So then God is indeed the Master Artist. The universe as a whole with all its diversity in unity, its order and its symmetry, is a work of art. Man, the crown of the creation in his original state, was a perfect work of artistic production. And ever since the fall of man, however marred and stained and broken he may be, he is still to some extent a work of art, or, if not, he would like to think he is and tries to be.

Then there is the Bible, God's Word written. How does its beauty grow upon the beauty-loving reader and student of Scripture. What can be said, what words can express the perfection of its glory and beauty as an artistic production!

So also, Bible history; or for that matter all history, as seen from the standpoint of God and his Word with its sublime and moving drama of redemption, is a work of art. And as for Christ and the cross of Christ:

"In the cross of Christ I glory
Towering o'er the wrecks of time
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

JOHN C. RANKIN

Los Angeles Crusade

All men are speaking well of Billy Graham. Los Angeles city officials welcomed him by presenting him with a beautifully inscribed document. The entire area had been carefully prepared by a team of experts. The largest possible meeting place had been secured—the Los Angeles Coliseum with a seating capacity which reached its ultimate fulfillment on the closing night. That night, the Ice Follies opened in the Sports Arena, not two blocks away. That night the Jehovah's Witnesses filled the Rose Bowl, fifteen miles away. But with local churches cancelling their Sunday evening services, and with an airplane writing in the clear afternoon sky, "Billy Graham," and with two Salvation Army Bands playing to those who came very early, the Coliseum and its playing field were filled to overflowing.

The best of local talent had been corralled. The follow-up campaign is in the hands of an experienced Methodist clergyman, Eugene Golay. The strategy of the future of this movement is well-set in the mind of the Methodist Bishop, Gerald Kennedy, who not only was on the executive committee, but headed the General Crusade Committee.

The careful work of the team resulted in the yoking together on the executive committee of such otherwise discordant men as J. Vernon McGee, pastor of the Church of the Open Door, and Bishop Kennedy. An officer of the National Association of Evangelicals worked with officers of the Council of Churches. This raised some local eyebrows, but it shortly appeared that the voices of the objectors were only crying in the wilderness.

Thirty thousand decisions of one kind or another were recorded by thousands of counsellors and by a battery of typists, and forwarded to local churches. A similar number of decisions is expected from the television broadcasts which followed the campaign.

A ministers' breakfast, attended by over 2000, was held in the Biltmore Bowl, toward the close of the crusade. Bishop Kennedy uttered a plea to those present: "Let's not let this cooperative spirit die." He was seated next to Billy Graham. It is possible that some kind of synthesis is being achieved.

EDWARDS E. ELLIOTT

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Annual Thank Offering

Dates for the annual thank offering which has meant so much to the progress of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church have been suggested as November 24 through December 1, 1963. This is the 15th year for this autumnal expression of gratitude to God for the furtherance of the gospel through the agencies of Christian Education, Foreign Missions, and Home Missions.

Philadelphia Area Sunday School Convention

Prof. Charles G. Schaufele of Gordon College is among the speakers featured for the 18th annual Philadelphia Area Sunday School Convention November 14-16. All sessions will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 58th and Chester. There are 72 workshops on every phase of Sunday school and Christian education. Dr. William Jones of the American Sunday School Union is another of the more than twoscore leaders from a dozen states who will take part.

In addition to the National Sunday School Convention (held earlier this fall in Buffalo with over 5,000 attending from 99 denominations) regional conventions are sponsored for the benefit of evangelical Sunday school workers throughout the country. "Because OPC-ers may find themselves in disagreement with the theological viewpoint of some who participate in these conventions, they tend to stay away instead of going and soaking up as many good ideas as possible," stated Prof. Schaufele.

"Our non-participation in such opportunities shows up in the Christian education program of many of our local churches," continued Mr. Schaufele, who is a member of the OPC Committee on Christian Education. "There is much that the officers and teachers of our Sunday schools can learn, even from those with whom we do not fully agree, when it comes to methods and means of promotion, organization, teaching and many other

points discussed in the workshops," he concluded.

The OPC Committee on Christian Education (Great Commission Publications) will have a display at this Philadelphia Convention, as it did at the National S.S. Convention last winter in Miami, Florida.

Sunnyvale Self-Supporting

Three years ahead of its original schedule, First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Sunnyvale, California has become self-supporting and has issued a call to the Rev. Henry Coray to serve as its pastor. Mr. Coray began his work as a home missionary of the Presbytery of California on the San Jose Peninsula eight years ago and has been stated supply of the Sunnyvale congregation since the nucleus was organized in 1956.

Two years later the first unit of the building was erected on property purchased in the residential area of Sunnyvale which has since doubled its population to its present 80,000 people. Plans are now being formulated looking toward an adequate sanctuary for the worship of the congregation in an area of expanding opportunity, according to Mr. Coray.

Special Fall Services

The Rev. Henry Fikkert of Fawn Grove, Pa. is guest preacher for the annual fall services of Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Silver Spring, Md., during the eight-day period October 20-27. Cottage Prayer groups were arranged for the two-week period preceding the meetings.

Presbytery of Philadelphia

At its meeting in Kirkwood, Pa. on Sept. 23 the Presbytery of Philadelphia received the Rev. Messrs. Laurence Sibley and Laurence Vail who are now serving in Glenside, Pa. and in Vienna, Va., respectively. The Rev. Donald Taws was dismissed to the Presbytery of the Dakotas where

he has taken up the work in Thornton, Colo.

Mr. Sam Allison, a member of Community Church, Center Square, Pa. and a 1963 graduate of Westminster Seminary, was examined and licensed to preach the gospel.

Presbytery acted favorably on the request from Faith Presbyterian Church (Unaffiliated) of Fawn Grove, Pa. to be received as a particular congregation. The Rev. Henry Fikkert is the pastor.

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