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CHRISTIANITY TODAY



A PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL DEVOTED TO STATING, DEFENDING
AND FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD

SAMUEL G. CRAIG, Editor

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Editorial Notes and Comments

THE MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE Minutes of the 1934 General Assembly have the excellencies of their immediate predecessors—but also their defects. As regards their format they could hardly be improved upon. It still seems to us, however, that the Stated Clerk, in obedience to the instructions given him by the General Assembly, could have given us a more helpful volume. "To the Stated Clerk," we read in the Preface to the volume, "was committed the responsibility of selecting and arranging the contents . . . as to provide a full, accurate, and usable record of the year's history of the Assembly." In view of these instructions, it might be expected that the Minutes of the General Assembly would provide a record of its proceedings such as would enable the 9,500 ministers (not to mention the 50,000 elders) who did not attend the Assembly to obtain from a reading of its pages something like an adequate knowledge of what happened. It does not seem to us that these Minutes make such knowledge available and hence that it is hardly proper to call them a "Journal of the 146th General Assembly." For instance, while we may learn from the Minutes that the action against the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions recommended by the General Council was adopted, there is nothing to indicate that there was any debate over the matter. This is also true of the action taken relative to the proposed union with the United Presbyterians, not to mention other matters. A particularly flagrant instance of inadequate reporting is what is told us concerning the Protests occasioned by the action of the Assembly relative to the Independent Board. On page 236 a Protest against this action, signed by 15 commissioners, with eight reasons therefor, is recorded. Again on page 285 there is record of a Protest, signed by two commissioners, against the action of the Assembly in striking out section 9 of the former Protest with no intimation of the contents of said section. Such a record certainly leaves much to be desired.

One can hardly read these Minutes without realizing the large—altogether too large, it seems to us—place that the General Council plays in the life of the Church. If we deduct the pages devoted to recording the names of the commissioners, the overtures and the Revised Book of Discipline we find that more than one-third and nearly one-half of the Minutes proper are taken up with the report of the General Council. Just why so much good paper and ink should have been used to preserve the articles on "The plan of Union" by DR. STEVENSON, SPEER, DEWITT, MUDGE, KERR, VANCE and COVERT we are somewhat at a loss to know—in view of the action of the United Presbyterian General Assembly.

"THE REFORMED FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD"

PROFESSOR FLOYD E. HAMILTON, of Union Christian College, Pyengyang, Korea, to whom we are indebted for two such excellent books as "The Basis of Christian Faith" and "The Basis of Evolutionary Faith" has placed us under his indebtedness still further by making available what is perhaps the best brief discussion (pp. 37) of the distinctive doctrines of the Reformed Faith, to wit—divine sovereignty, human inability, unconditional election, definite atonement, efficacious grace and final perseverance. The following extract indicates PROFESSOR HAMILTON's point of view: "Nothing is more needful at the present time than a rediscovery of the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, which lie at the center of the Calvinistic system. The Church today needs more than anything else a new Reformation, which will sweep away the tawdry schemes of self-salvation, and get back to the Biblical teaching concerning the Almighty grace of God. Not only is Calvinism true; it is the only effective defense against modern paganism. In discarding Calvinism the Church is neglecting the only weapon which can give it the victory in the conflict with the forces of unbelief. There is no rational defense against paganism except Calvinism, and no logical position which can be successfully defended if that be abandoned; for once the Church starts attributing the tiniest portion of our salvation to man, it has started down an inclined plane on which there is no stable equilibrium this side of thorough-going Pelagianism or paganism. . . . It is with the purpose of showing the reasonableness of that position, as well as its scriptural basis, that this pamphlet has been written." Unfortunately for us this pamphlet is published only by the Sovereign Grace Union of London. Copies, however, may be ordered through this office. Single copies, 15c. Ten or more copies, 10c each.

FAIR TRIAL

INDICATIONS of the kind of "fair trial" to be expected by the members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions are supplied by an illuminating letter received by President J. OLIVER BUSWELL of Wheaton College (a member of the Board) from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Chicago. The Clerk, none other than Dr. A. C. ZENOS, professor emeritus in McCormick Theological Seminary, and noted liberal, is the chairman of a committee appointed by the Presbytery of Chicago to deal with Dr. BUSWELL. The letter is as follows:

"August 4, 1934.

"President J. Oliver Buswell,
My Dear Dr. Buswell:
Yours of July 19 informing me of your determination to con-

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Westminster Seminary and the Reformed Faith

The Rev. Samuel G. Craig, D.D.

[An address delivered in Witherspoon Hall, Philadelphia, May 8th, 1934, on the occasion of the fifth Commencement of Westminster Theological Seminary. The text follows that of the prepared manuscript as the exigencies of the occasion necessitated some abridgment in the process of its delivery.]

IT WAS zeal for the Reformed Faith that brought Westminster Seminary into existence. It is for the preservation of the Reformed Faith and its transmission undiminished to those who shall come after us that Westminster Seminary exists. It is these facts that have determined my choice of subject tonight. It has seemed to me not merely fitting but imperative that on this anniversary occasion I take as my subject, "Westminster Seminary and the Reformed Faith."

Lest any suppose that in speaking on this subject I am making an official pronouncement as to the aim and purpose of Westminster Seminary I should perhaps say at the outset that no one of my colleagues on its Board of Trustees or any member of its Faculty has any knowledge of what I propose to say. I hope that they will approve, as I hope you will, but be that as it may, they are hereby absolved from all responsibility for what I may say.

When Westminster Theological Seminary was established it was freely predicted that its first year would be its last. That prophecy has not been justified by the event. Disappointing as it may be to many, Westminster still exists. What is more, to an extent that is true of but few seminaries, no matter what their age or the size of their endowments, its line has gone out through all the earth and its words to the end of the world.

Here is something that calls for explanation. Why is it that Westminster Seminary though probably the youngest Theological school in America, certainly the youngest of the Presbyterian type, is one of the most widely recognized? The answer is not difficult. It is because it was established to carry on and perpetuate the policies and traditions of Princeton Theological Seminary as that Institution existed prior to its reorganization by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in U. S. A. in 1929. That is why, unlike most educational institutions, it had no period of infancy and youth. In its case, there was not first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Minerva-like it was born fully grown and fully armed.

This means that Westminster Seminary is a new Seminary in name only, that in reality it is one of the oldest Theological Institutions in America. What happened in effect—we are thinking now only of things spiritual and intellectual—is that the giant tree that had been maturing for upward of one hundred years in Princeton was transferred to Philadelphia. Naturally this action somewhat retarded its growth but fortunately the transplanting was done so well that its roots immediately began to draw

nourishment from its new environment and, please God, it will not be long until it will have fully regained its former vigor.

In further explanation of my reference to its Faculty as well as of my reference to its background, attention may be directed to the fact that all the members of its Faculty to date have been Princeton trained and that five of the nine professors who have occupied its chairs have actually taught at Princeton—one of them, the late Robert Dick Wilson (of blessed memory) for nearly thirty years and two others, J. Gresham Machen and Oswald T. Allis for about twenty years. What is more, I am sure that there is no body of men living today better qualified and more desirous to carry on and perpetuate the policies and traditions of old Princeton than the existing Faculty of Westminster Seminary. They have all drunk from the waters and fed upon the fruits that grow along the banks of that ancient stream and have no higher academic ambition than to show themselves workmen worthy of being accounted true successors of that long line of scholars that made Princeton for upward of one hundred years famous as a center of sound Theological learning—the Alexanders, the Hodges, William Henry Green, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield and Robert Dick Wilson, not to mention others of equal or near equal distinction.

I am not ignorant of the fact that there are those who contend that Princeton Seminary, in the present as in the past, is loyal to the aims and ideals of its Founders. The *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, published by the Trustees of the Institution, in its issue of November, 1929, stated:

"The reorganization of the Seminary undertaken and completed by the General Assembly was concerned only with the reorganization of the administration of the Seminary. It had nothing to do with its theological position, except to strengthen the safeguards whereby it should be held to the teaching of the Reformed Theology in accordance with the standards of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A."

As evidence of the correctness of this representation, the same issue of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* cited the fact that the new Board of Control at its first meeting made the following corporate declaration:

"In the one hundred and seventeen years of its history, Princeton Seminary has stood with firm steadfastness for the propagation at home and abroad, and for the scholarly defense of Evangelical Christianity as formulated in the standards of the Presbyterian church. In taking up the duties assigned to it by the General

Assembly, . . . the Board . . . feels that it has a solemn mandate from the Assembly to continue unchanged the historic policy of the Seminary and to do nothing whatever to alter the distinctive traditional position which the Seminary has maintained throughout its entire history."

If the statement and the declaration I have just cited stood alone, they would be fitted to provoke a question as to what sort of mental aberration the Founders of Westminster Seminary were suffering when they judged it necessary to establish an institution to carry on and perpetuate the historic policies and traditions of Princeton Seminary. This statement and this declaration, however, do not stand alone even in the issue of the *Seminary Bulletin* from which I have quoted. In this same issue may be found a letter from the Board of Control to the Alumni, signed by both its President and the President of the Seminary, in which it is not only asserted that its thirty-three members—two of whom are signers of the Auburn Affirmation, according to which belief in the full truthfulness of the Bible, the Substitutionary Atonement, the miracles of our Lord, His Virgin Birth and bodily Resurrection, need not be believed even by ministers of the Presbyterian Church—"have the high regard and confidence of the Presbyterian Church," but in which a lengthy paragraph is devoted to an attempt to show that the presence of these two Auburn Affirmationists on the Board, with the approval of its other members, has no significance for the doctrinal position of the Seminary. The conclusion is inescapable that the doctrinal position of Princeton Seminary, as long as it is under the control of its present Board, will be one that has the assent if not the approval of Auburn Affirmationists. If that does not involve a departure from its historic doctrinal position, it is difficult to say what would.

It is impossible, it seems to me, to justify the establishment of Westminster Seminary if it be true, as was alleged, in the issue of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, from which I have quoted, that the Assembly in reorganizing Princeton Seminary "not only preserved the old safeguards of conservative doctrinal teaching devised when the Seminary was organized, but enlarged and strengthened them." It seems necessary therefore for me to say something in this connection about the controversy that preceded the reorganization of Princeton Seminary and that resulted in the establishment of Westminster Seminary. That controversy, in my opinion, had its origin in that naturalism of thought and life that began with the so-called "Enlightenment" of the Eighteenth Century. Previous to that time, all life and world views, whether within or without the Christian Church, had been supernaturalistic to the core. To quote Herman Bavinck: "The religious supernaturalistic world-view has universally prevailed among all people and all ages down to the present day, and only in the last hundred and fifty years has given way in some circles to the empirico-scientific" (the Philosophy of Revelation, p. 1). The outstanding characteristic of the life and world-view which then made its appearance is its

thorough-going naturalism, the resolute manner in which it turns its back on all supernaturalism and supposes itself able to find in this world all that thought and life is warranted in asking. It is this naturalism in which modernism has its roots and of which it is a more or less consistent manifestation in all its forms of expression.

I do not mean necessarily to imply that there are any thorough-going modernists in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., but whether there are any thorough-going ones there are a great many half-way ones. This is evidenced by the fact, among others, that in 1924 nearly 1300 ministers signed the so-called Auburn Affirmation which attacked the pronouncement of the previous Assembly in a way that detracted from its supernaturalism in regard to its doctrines of the Bible, of the Virgin Birth of Christ, of His labors of love, of His work of Redemption and of His Resurrection. The promulgation of this document was in effect a declaration of war by the advocates of this reduced supernaturalism against the advocates of the full supernaturalism of the Assembly's pronouncement. In the war that immediately began, the majority of the Board of Directors and of the Faculty of Princeton Seminary with a small minority of its Board of Trustees took their stand in favor of the full supernaturalism of the Assembly's pronouncement, but a minority of both its Board of Directors and of its Faculty, including the President of the Seminary, and a large majority of its Board of Trustees without expressly approving the reduced supernaturalism of the Auburn Affirmation—except in one instance—took a position that met with the approval of its advocates. When the latter became convinced that it was impossible to secure a majority in the Seminary's Board of Directors they appealed to the General Assembly, meeting at Baltimore in 1926 and thus precipitated a conflict in the Church at large that was not concluded until the Assembly of 1929.

The lines of this "Battle of Princeton" were drawn by President Stevenson when speaking before the Baltimore Assembly he said: "We are the agency of the Old School and the New School, and my ambition as President of the Seminary is to have it represent the whole Presbyterian Church and not any particular faction of it"—a statement that he further explicated a few months later, in a written statement, by saying that "Princeton is, according to its title, *the* Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., and therefore should be inclusive not merely of the Old School, but of the New School descendants." This declaration for an "inclusive" Seminary won for the minority of the Faculty and Directors and the majority of the Trustees the support of the Auburn Affirmationists and their sympathizers, with the result that the effort to reorganize Princeton Seminary was successful.

In the light of what has been related it is vain and futile to allege that the issue at stake in the Princeton controversy was administrative, not doctrinal. As a matter of fact it was doctrinal to the core and the administrative issue was introduced solely in the interest of the doctrinal issue. I question whether anyone seriously believed, as

the Assembly's Committee affirmed, that "the root and source of serious difficulties at Princeton and the greatest obstacle to the removal of these difficulties was its plan of government by two Boards." As a matter of fact, Princeton Seminary as an educational institution did not have "two Boards of Control," in the sense implied, for while Princeton Seminary had two Boards of Control, they controlled *different things*, the Directors being in control of things educational and the Trustees of things financial. But whatever may be thought of the old plan of governing Princeton, from a purely administrative point of view, it cannot be denied that it worked successfully. For it was under that so-called divided control that it waxed great. If Princeton Seminary had been on the wane there might have been some seeming warrant for blaming its plan of government. As a matter of fact, however, when the effort to reorganize it was launched it was at the height of its influence as a center of sound Theological learning. Beyond reasonable question the reorganization of Princeton Seminary under a single Board of Control, was sought not because the Seminary was unsuccessful but because it was successful—successful, however, in furthering the supernaturalism of the Bible and the Westminster standards rather than that measure of supernaturalism for which the Modernist-Indifferentist party in the church was willing to stand. The one controlling reason, in fact, for advocating a single Board of Control was that it offered the only feasible method of ousting the old Board of Directors and of putting in their place a Board that would favor an inclusive Seminary.

The issue at stake in the Princeton controversy involved the question whether a Seminary of the Princeton type would be tolerated by the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Princeton Seminary, previous to 1929, did not claim to represent the whole church doctrinally, any more than Auburn or Union Seminaries. All it claimed was the right to maintain its distinctive doctrinal position within the larger unity of the church. Its historic attitude had been one of strict adherence to its distinctive doctrinal position *within the Seminary itself* combined with a tolerance *within the Church at large* of any and all views consistent with belief in the Bible as the Word of God and acceptance of the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster standards. President Stevenson once defined the historic doctrinal position of Princeton Seminary as "simply one of unquestioned loyalty to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church." While this definition contained nothing but truth it did not contain the whole truth. It quite ignored the fact that Princeton's doctrinal position, both before and after the Reunion of 1870, had been that of the Old School—a position to which it was committed morally by the intention of its founders and legally by the trust funds which it held subject to the condition that certain specified doctrines (to which reference will be made later) be taught as "understood and explained by the Old School General Assembly." This representation would have been more excusable on President Stevenson's part had it not been for the fact that his colleague, Professor Caspar

Wistar Hodge—whose knowledge of the doctrinal history of Princeton Seminary is unsurpassed—had made perfectly clear that "the Faculty of Princeton Seminary always has been whole heartedly attached to the pure Gospel of God's sovereign grace or the principles of pure and consistent evangelical religion as held by the Old School type of Calvinism, and that after the Reunion of 1870 Princeton Seminary continued to maintain the same doctrinal principles" (Report of the Special Committee to Visit Princeton Theological Seminary to the General Assembly, May, 1927, pp. 75-80).

The friends and supporters of Princeton Seminary were long of the opinion that the right to maintain their distinctive doctrinal position within the larger unity of the Church had been guaranteed to them by the terms of the Reunion of 1870. It was that Reunion that Dr. Patton had more particularly in mind when in "Fundamental Christianity," he wrote: "Two unions of the Presbyterian Church have made the recognition of a certain area of tolerated difference of opinion a moral obligation" (p. 140). Had the Princeton Fathers of 1870 not been of that opinion, we may be sure the Reunion of the Old and New Schools would not have taken place, as one of the chief obstacles in the way of that Reunion was the fact that while all the Old School Seminaries were under the control of the Assembly, the New School Seminaries like Auburn and Union enjoyed a relative autonomy or independence. Naturally the friends and supporters of Princeton Seminary, whose influence was more or less dominant in Old School circles, were much concerned over what might be the effect of having the institution placed under the control of an Assembly having a large element of New School members. The result was the so-called "Compact of 1870" in which the Assembly's method of control over Princeton Seminary was modified in important respects. While this "Compact" was not regarded as a legal contract, enforceable in the courts, yet it was generally recognized that it created a situation in which it would be a breach of faith on the part of the Assembly if it should take any action that, directly or indirectly, nullified the right of Princeton Seminary to maintain its distinctive doctrinal position within the larger unity of the Church. The friends and supporters of Princeton also thought that this right was guaranteed to them by Article VIII, Section 4, of the Plan of the Seminary which read: "The intentions and directions of testators and donors, in regard to moneys or other property left or given to the Seminary shall, at all times, be sacredly regarded"—an article that in the nature of the case they interpreted in the light of the fact that a large part of the funds given the Seminary during the disruption period had been given under the condition that "if at any future time the leading doctrines of the Confession of Faith and catechisms of the Presbyterian Church such as the doctrine of universal and total depravity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all His people for their justification, the doctrine of human

inability, the doctrine of the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration, conversion and sanctification of sinners, *as these doctrines are now understood and explained by the aforesaid Old School General Assembly*, shall cease to be taught in said Seminary" these funds should no longer be retained by the Seminary. With these two guarantees—one moral and the other both legal and moral—it is not surprising that whatever fears the Princeton Fathers of that period cherished as to the wisdom of the Reunion itself, they felt perfectly confident that they would be permitted to maintain their distinctive doctrinal position within the larger unity of the Church.

Wise as the Princeton Fathers of that day were, however, they did not foresee what would happen when a generation that "knew not Joseph" should appear. At that time though Modernism was in process of incubation it had not yet burst its shell, as far as appearance *within* the Presbyterian Church was concerned. Twenty years later, we may be sure the Princeton Fathers would have demanded stronger safeguards before they would have agreed to Reunion with the New School branch of Presbyterianism, especially as it was among the descendants of the New School that the de-supernaturalizing tendencies of modernism found their most ready acceptance, as far as Presbyterians were concerned. For it was in 1891, that Dr. Francis Landey Patton speaking at the death of Dr. Caspar Hodge, after mentioning the fact that Dr. Hodge's closing years had been saddened by the blindness of the church and its leaders to the dangers of the "New Theology" that had already begun to flaunt its face within the Presbyterian Church, uttered the prophetic words:

"I cannot think of him today without feeling that by his death he has been spared a great sorrow. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that American Christianity is about to pass through a severe ordeal. It may be a ten-year conflict. It may be a thirty years' war; but it is a conflict in which all Christian Churches are concerned. The war will come, the Presbyterian Church must take part in it, and Princeton, unless her glory is departed, must lead the van in the great fight for fundamental Christianity. It is not amendment; it is not revision; it is not restatement; it is a revolution that we shall have to face. The issue will be joined by and by on the essential truth of a miraculous and God-given revelation, and then we must be ready to fight, and, if need be, to die, in defense of the blood-bought truths of the common salvation."

Unfortunately, however, when Princeton Seminary under the control of its old Board of Directors was still leading the van in this great fight for fundamental Christianity, the General Assembly of 1929, dominated by a combination of Modernists and Indifferentists, approved the plan of reorganization that had been proposed to the previous Assembly and thereby not only ousted the old Board of Directors but placed the Seminary under a Board of Control that favored an "inclusive" Seminary—so inclusive in fact as to include those reduced supernaturalists known as Auburn Affirmationists. Inasmuch as Princeton

Seminary was the one outstanding Seminary in the Church that had stood four square and without equivocation for the Bible as the Word of God, and as such infallible, and for the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster standards as the one and only system taught in God's word, this meant that its historic viewpoint no longer had anything like adequate representation in the educational life of the Church, and that a new Seminary was needed if the policies and traditions of old Princeton were to be carried on and perpetuated. Hence the founding of Westminster Seminary.

In pointing out what led to the establishment of Westminster Seminary, I have been pointing out at the same time why Westminster Seminary did not seek ecclesiastical approval. It was ecclesiastical control that had led to the undoing of Princeton Seminary. Surely an Institution that sought to carry on and perpetuate the aims and ideals of an Institution that had been suppressed by ecclesiastical authority could not be expected to seek such approval—even if there had been reason to suppose that such approval would be given. It is not impossible that Westminster Seminary, provided it be content to be and remain a small and insignificant institution would be tolerated by the Presbyterian Church as it now is; but I am sure that it could not be as influential as it is, still less as it hopes to be, without finding itself "cabinéd, cribbed, confined and bound," if not rendered absolutely helpless, if it were to allow itself to be brought under Assembly control.

I have sought to make clear the nature of the Princeton controversy and so the occasion and purpose of the establishment of Westminster Seminary. I have done so not only that I might justify its establishment but that I might indicate why it appeals for support not merely to maintain its existence but to "lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes," despite the fact that there are apparently already too many Seminaries in the Church. If Westminster Seminary were merely "another" Seminary of the type of which there were perhaps too many before Westminster was started, I for one would not be interested in its welfare. Westminster Seminary, however, is not merely "another" Seminary. It is a Seminary with a task to perform that is not being adequately performed by other Theological Schools—a task moreover that, in the judgment of its Trustees and Faculty, is of such importance that it must not be left undone if Christianity is to renew its strength and thus maintain the validity of its claim to dominate the culture and civilization of the world. The occasion of the establishment of Westminster Seminary belongs, of course, to the past but the purpose that led to its establishment is still, and please God will continue to be, its dominant purpose until He whose right it is to rule and reign shall appear. That task is the exposition, defense and propagation of the Reformed Faith in its purity and integrity. As it was zeal for the Reformed Faith that brought Westminster Seminary into existence, so it is zeal for the Reformed Faith that urges it to the performance of what it conceives to be its God-given task.

Westminster Seminary is bound to the Reformed Faith,

both by the charter granted it by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and by the Constitution adopted by its Board of Trustees, in the form in which it has found expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith. It is specifically stated moreover that it is bound to the Westminster Confession of Faith in the form which it possessed in 1929. Hence even if the Presbyterian Church should alter or amend its Confession of Faith, that would have no effect on the doctrinal standard of Westminster Seminary. That does not mean that in the judgment of Westminster Seminary the existing doctrinal standards of the Presby-

terian Church in the U. S. A. are incapable of improvement, or that there are not confessions of Faith other than the Westminster that set forth the Reformed Faith. What it means is that, in the judgment of Westminster Seminary, the Westminster Confession of Faith is the clearest, the most adequate and most carefully guarded statement of the Reformed Faith that has as yet been penned by the hand of man and that until that statement has been improved it will remain the doctrinal standard of the Institution.

(To be concluded in our next issue)

The Genius of Supernaturalism in Religion

By the Rev. William H. Topping

THE genius of supernaturalism in any field, science, philosophy, medicine, religion, may be said to be a mind or aptitude for the supernatural. Its essential principle is a world-view which regards God as immanent and active in His world. In the Christian religion this presence and control of the Deity manifest themselves in the form of prophet, miracle and incarnate word, three elements that distinguish revelation from the physical sciences. This mind or genius for the supernatural may be said to be a native endowment of soul disposing the individual more readily to the supernatural phenomena of conversion, rather than a product of education or the refinements of the arts.

Some individuals appear to have a mind much more open to the concept of the supernatural than others, and with whom the approach is made quite naturally and easily. Others again experience great difficulty in grasping the idea of the supernatural, while multitudes of people seem quite unable to receive it at all. How are these facts to be explained, for facts they are, as every worker familiar with dealing with the unsaved, knows.

The ancient Hebrews thought in terms of the supernatural. Their history as the chosen people of the Lord is replete with theophanies, miracles, personal manifestations of the Deity, and revelations of the divine will to the prophets. Hence their history as recorded in the Scriptures is one of the supernatural leadership and interposition of the Deity in every phase of their national life. This element of the supernatural persists in the New Testament. Christ Himself, and every phase of His life and teachings were altogether supernatural, and could not be understood apart from it. This same genius of the miraculous is to be found in the church letters, and naturally so for the reason that they are but the development and interpretation of the supernatural acts and facts of the life and passion of Jesus Christ.

The amazing thing to be noted in connection with this mind for the supernatural is that the "natural man," or the mind of the flesh unenlightened by the Spirit of God, can not see or understand it. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are

foolishness to him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned," or revealed to one by the Spirit of God. This is true of many of the finest minds in the intellectual world, notably scientists, philosophers, artists, physicians and surgeons. Whether the nature of their professional studies and pursuits contributes a naturalistic mental atmosphere or sceptical attitude toward the supernatural we are not prepared to say, but the fact remains that the natural mind challenges the miraculous and supernatural in every field, and finds no place for God in the world of nature, science or religion.

The modernists in religion are simply men of the natural, fleshly mind, who, influenced by one motive or another, have strayed into the field of religion. Religion is one thing, however, and Christianity is quite another. The religions of the world are very largely if not altogether naturalistic in their world-view. Humanism, ethical culture, Unitarianism and a thousand others are merely religions of the flesh and of the mind, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Christianity on the other hand is essentially supernatural in character and form, having its tap-root in the life and passion of the Son of God, and the dynamic ministry of His Spirit.

There are all degrees of modernistic unbelief from the extreme types exemplified by some of our leading metropolitan Modernists, who have little or nothing left of the supernatural of Christianity in their faith or preachments, to less radical types who recognize something more than human or moral in the Scriptures and the person of Christ. Many of these men of the natural mind in religion are men of culture, gentility and scholarly attainments; are gifted with charming personalities, and attain eminence in the social, intellectual and literary worlds. But the fact remains, and we say it kindly, that they seem to be utterly bereft of a sense of the supernatural.

They are "good fellows," with an abundance of the milk of human kindness; interested in social betterment and political reform; use the symbols and speak the language of Christianity, but "deny the power thereof." They can not be said to have the mind of Christ because they do not speak the language of Christ or of His Word. In their

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Editorial Notes and Comments

THE GENERAL COUNCIL AS A CLOSE CORPORATION

WE have previously made clear that the General Council exceeded its legal powers when it proposed and in effect initiated judicial action against the members of the Independent Board. It is true that this action by the General Council has been defended on the ground that Section XII of Chapter XXVI of the Form of Government refers only to the General Councils of Synods and Presbyteries. The speciousness of this contention was pointed out in our last issue (p. 107). In this connection we are concerned to direct attention not only to the fact that the resolution adopted by the 1930 Assembly—which is relied upon to prove that only General Councils of Synods and Presbyteries are forbidden to deal with business of a judicial nature—was proposed by the General Council itself but that the membership of the General Council that initiated the action against the Independent Board in 1934 was very much the same as it was in 1930. Members in 1934 who were also members in 1930 include L. S. MUDGE, W. C. COVERT, C. B. MCAFEE, H. B. MASTER, J. W. McIVOR, W. E. BROOKS, M. A. MATTHEWS, C. S. LAWRENCE and J. M. T. FINNEY. Members of the Administrative Committee of the General Council (its most important committee) in 1934 who were also members of this committee in 1930 include L. S. MUDGE, C. B. MCAFEE, M. A. MATTHEWS and J. M. T. FINNEY. It will be generally agreed, we believe, that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is largely controlled by its General Council, as the General Assembly is little more than a rubber stamp that gives validity to the decisions of the General Council. Obviously this was the case as far as the action against the members of the Independent Board is concerned. Probably, however, the degree to which the General Council is a close corporation is not so generally recognized. Explain it as we may, there seems to be no doubt but that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., despite its boasted democracy, is in effect controlled by a self-perpetuating hierarchy.

THE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY

WE take this occasion again to commend this theological review to the attention of the more scholarly of our readers. In exposition and defense of the historic Christian faith it comes nearer to filling the vacancy created by the passing of the Princeton Theological Review than any existing publication. DR. OSWALD T. ALLIS, former editor of the Princeton Review, is one of its associate editors. It is edited by DRs. JOHN R. MACKAY and DONALD MACLEAN of Edinburgh and published by James Clarke & Co. Ltd., London, but may be ordered through Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 234 Pearl Street, N. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan (price ten shillings per annum). It seems to us

that every minister ought to be a regular reader of a scholarly magazine of this type—for the preservation of his intellectual self-respect if for no other reason. DR. W. CHILDS ROBINSON, of Columbia Seminary, who writes our Southern Presbyterian Church letter, has recently contributed two notable articles to this magazine under the titles "Jesus Christ Is Jehovah" and "The Theocentric Theology Implicit in the Name of the Trinity." Its contributors include European as well as English and American scholars so that in fact as well as in name it is "international in scope and outlook." Book reviews constitute an outstanding feature.

AUBURN AFFIRMATIONISTS LAUNCH ORGAN

UNDER the title of "*The Presbyterian Tribune*" a group of Auburn Affirmationists has launched a bi-weekly paper. Both in appearance and content its first issue (October 4th) is quite similar to that of the defunct *Presbyterian Advance* of which it is professedly a continuation. Its publication office is located at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

In referring to this new paper as an organ of the Auburn Affirmationists we do not mean to assert that it makes this claim for itself. However *The Christian Century*—misnamed if we mistake not—which "extends good wishes in unlimited measure," has stated that "building on the support of the group which signed the 'Auburn Affirmation,' the promoters of the *Tribune* hope to prove that there is sufficient liberalism within the Presbyterian denomination to keep a periodical going" (Oct. 3, p. 1229). That this representation is amply warranted is indicated not only by the fact that its editor is an Auburn Affirmationist but by the fact that fifteen of the twenty-two ministers on its "Editorial Council" and among its "Special Contributors" are also Auburn Affirmationists. What is more, the other seven include outstanding Presbyterian liberals. How thorough-going this paper expects to be in its liberalism is indicated by the fact that it "aspires" to be a denominational rather than an interdenominational magazine because the latter field is "already ably and brilliantly covered by the *Christian Century*." Its close sympathy with the *Christian Century* is further indicated by the fact that its editor is and expects to remain on the staff of the *Christian Century*.

We are told that "this new paper is not being launched to carry on theological controversy" but rather "to apply the spirit and ethic of Jesus Christ to the baffling problems of this day." Such statements, however, should be taken with several grains of salt. A paper whose theological assumptions and presuppositions are those of Modernism is necessarily engaged in theological propaganda even if it contains little formal theological discussion. Moreover it should be remembered that the ethic of Christianity is tied up with its doctrines. It is self-deception to suppose that the ideals and attitudes of Christianity will long

book there is a running criticism of "Re-Thinking Missions" which is as timely as it is for the most part cogent. We think he puts the matter too mildly when he says that its "appraisal of the basis and aim of missions is all out of focus," that "it resembles a passport photograph, sufficiently accurate for purposes of identification to outsiders, but hardly suited for enlargement and admiration" (p. 22). In our judgment it rather resembles the photograph of a person quite other than the bearer. Elsewhere, however, he puts the matter more strongly and so more accurately. There are other minor defects—for instance the statement that Peter "was no more infallible than his so-called successor at Rome" (p. 43)—but as a whole the book is admirable and is bound to have a wholesome influence. It puts first things first and we wish for it a wide reading. We would even commend it to the Board of Foreign Missions. While it is a popular rather than a profound discussion of the missionary enterprise it indicates where the emphasis should be placed. If the message, motive and goal of the official Board had been one with that stressed in this book there would have been no occasion for an Independent Board.

MISLEADING THE YOUTH



VALUED correspondent has sent us a clipping from "Forward," which is widely distributed in the Sunday Schools of our churches, with the following comment: "This clipping is merely a sample of what this periodical is presenting to our young people in its campaign against the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church and the teachings of the Bible." The clipping before us was written by DR. ELIOT PORTER, a Presbyterian minister, and appeared in the issue of "Forward," dated June 30, 1934 (p. 208). The writer has not been a regular reader of this Sunday School periodical and so is dependent on his correspondent's word for the assertion that this clipping is but a sample of its contents. We have no hesitation, however, in saying that in as far as this clipping is typical of its contents

the distribution of this periodical among our young people ought to be prohibited. DR. PORTER writes in part: "When is a 'Christian' not a Christian? No man can draw this line for another. We more than waste time; we arrogate to ourselves the function of judging our fellows when we try to decide whether certain other folk are or are not Christians. It is for us, as Confucius said, 'to sweep the snow from our own doorstep rather than to worry about the frost on our neighbor's tiles.' The question we each need to face is 'Am I a Christian?' . . . Jesus Christ is the only ideal Christian who ever lived." No doubt there is truth in the representation that the primary question for each of us is "Am I?" not "Is he a Christian?" And yet it must be clear to all that if it is worse than a waste of time to concern ourselves over the question whether others are or are not Christians, evangelism in all its forms should be shunned. Had Jesus Himself held that view He would hardly have given the commandment: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." What is worse, if anything, is the representation that "Jesus Christ is the only ideal Christian that ever lived." For as a matter of fact Jesus Christ was not a Christian at all and to represent Him as being a Christian is so highly dishonoring to Him as to be but little short of blasphemy. To represent Jesus Christ as a Christian is to say that He differs from us only in degree and so involves a denial of His deity. It erases the distinction between the saved and the Saviour, between the Lord and His disciples. Such teaching is thoroughly modernistic and patently anti-Christian. It leaves room for looking upon Jesus Christ as our teacher and example but forbids our seeing in Him our Lord and Saviour in the New Testament meaning of these terms. Apart from Jesus Christ as living Lord and Saviour there would and could be no Christians but Jesus himself neither was nor is a Christian. A Christian is not merely one who tries to think and act like Jesus Christ, he is one who worships Him and who relies upon Him alone for salvation from the guilt and power of sin. Jesus was not the first and as yet the only perfect Christian; but He was and is the Christ and as such the Lord and Saviour of the world.

Westminster Seminary and the Reformed Faith

By the Rev. Samuel G. Craig, D.D.

Part II

Thus far I have said nothing to indicate what the Reformed Faith is, other than to say that it is the faith that has found its most notable expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith. I might content myself with that reference as a sufficient indication of its nature and contents. It would seem, however, that on this occasion I ought at least to point out its leading features. By its leading features I mean partly that which distinguishes it from other expressions of the Christian faith such as the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic, but more especially that which is characteristic of it irrespective of its agreement or disagreement with other expressions of Christian faith. While I recognize that there are expressions of the Christian faith other than the Reformed, that does not mean that I think that there are other expressions as adequate as the Reformed. Still less does it mean that I regard every alleged expression of Christian faith as an

actual expression of that faith. With Dr. Kuyper I distinguish between deformations and falsifications of the Christian faith. Modernism in any of its consistent forms of expression, even though it wears the robes of Christianity and employs the speech of the New Testament, I regard as a somewhat that is diametrically opposed to Christianity all along the line and therefore as a somewhat that in common honesty ought not to call itself Christian at all. All expressions of the Christian faith other than the Reformed, I regard as more or less serious deformations of the Christian faith. In all genuinely Evangelical expressions the deformation seems to me relatively slight, in all sacerdotal expressions it seems to me relatively serious; only the Reformed expression seems to me to be anything like a pure and adequate expression of the Gospel of the grace of God. I, of course, grant to the adherents of these other expressions the right to make the same distinction

as over against the Reformed expression; but for any man of faith, be he Reformed or un-Reformed not to make this distinction seems to me a tacit confession of a lack of courage and conviction. I do not hesitate to say, therefore, that for me the question, What is the Reformed Faith? is essentially one with the question, What is Christianity? For what the Reformed Faith claims to be, and all that it claims to be, is just Christianity — nothing more but nothing less. That does not mean, however, that I think that only Reformed Christians are real Christians. It may be good Roman Catholic practice to claim that only Roman Catholics are Christians; it certainly is not good Reformed practice. Having stated that what the Reformed Faith aims to be is just Christianity—just that, no more and no less—but that, in view of other expressions of Christianity, it would be contrary to Reformed practice to treat the question, What is the Reformed Faith? as identical with the question, What is Christianity? I shall endeavor to indicate, as fully as I can, in the time at my disposal, its essential and more or less distinctive features.

1. An essential and in some respects a distinctive feature of the Reformed Faith is its recognition of the Bible as the sole source and norm of saving truth. The Reformed Faith does not minimize the significance of what is called natural or general revelation but it stresses what is called supernatural or special revelation. It holds that God can be known only as He reveals Himself, and so says with Warfield; "Were there not general revelation, there would be no religion of any kind in the world; were there no special revelation there would be no Christianity." For it, the Bible is the written record that God Himself caused to be made of supernatural or special revelation. For it therefore the Bible is completely trustworthy in all its statements—factual, doctrinal, and ethical—and as such the only infallible rule of faith and practice. For the Reformed Faith, the Bible not only contains the word of God, it is the word of God. What is more, this statement applies to the whole Bible, not merely to some portions of it. This does not mean that all parts of the Bible have the same value, but it does mean that they are equally truthful and that all those parts which its authors approve are equally authoritative. Abraham Kuyper — preacher, theological professor, university founder, author, editor of Holland's leading daily, statesman, Prime Minister of Holland, leader of one of its outstanding political parties for fifty years—expressed the Reformed Faith about the Bible when he said:

"I say it frankly and unhesitatingly, to us Christians of the Reformed Faith, the Bible is the word and Scripture of our God. When I read the Holy Scripture, neither Moses nor John addresses me, but the Lord my God. He it is who narrates to me the origin of all things and the calamitous fall of men. God tells me with silent majesty how He has appointed salvation to our fallen race. I hear Him Himself relate the wonders which He wrought for our deliverance and that of the people of His choice, and how, when that people rebelled against Him, He afflicted them in His wrath, and when chas-

tened restored them again to His favor, the whilst they sought the day of the coming of the Son of His love. In midst of that sacred history I hear the Holy Spirit singing to my spiritual ear in the Psalms, which discloses the depths of my own soul; in the prophets I hear Him repeat what He whispered in the soul of Israel's seers; and in which my own soul is refreshed by a perspective which is most inspiring and beautiful. Till at length, in the pages of the New Testament, God Himself brings out to me the Expected One, the Desire of the fathers; shows the place where the manger stood; points out to me tracks of His footsteps; and on Golgotha lets me see, how the Son of His unique love, for me poor doomed one, died the death of the Cross. And finally, it is the same God, the Holy Spirit, who as it were, reads off what He caused to be preached by Jesus' Disciples concerning the riches of that Cross, and closes the record of this drama in the Apocalypse with the enchanting Hosanna from the Heaven of Heavens.

"Call this, if you will, an almost childish faith, outgrown in your larger wisdom, but I cannot better it. Such is my Bible to me, and such it was in the bygone ages, and such it is still, the Scripture of the Church of the living God. The human authors must fall away; in the Bible God Himself must tell the narrative, sing, prophesy, correct, comfort, and jubilate in the ear of the soul. . . . If they the Scripture have spoken, all controversy is ended; when it affirms, the latest doubt departs; even the habit of turning to the Scriptures, in times of need and despair, for help and direction from God, seems to me by no means unlawful, but a precious usage. Thus I stand with Augustine and with Comrie, who entirely along his lines explains: 'When I read the Scripture, I listen to what God speaks to me; and when I pray, God listens to what I stammer'" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1904).

2. An essential and in some respects a distinctive feature of the Reformed Faith is its thorough-going theism. The God-concept occupies a place in the Reformed or Calvinistic Faith that it does not occupy in any other. It stresses the sovereignty of God. It sees God behind all phenomena and in all that occurs it recognizes the hand of God, working out His will. Its view of the universe is thoroughly teleological; for in everything that takes place it sees the outworking of God's plan and purpose. Its view of life and duty is determined by this all-controlling thought. In answer to the question, "What is the chief end of man?" it ever replies, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." It is here that we place our finger on the formative or regulative principle of the Reformed Faith. Let Warfield state it for us:

"The formative principle of Calvinism . . . lies in a profound apprehension of God in His majesty. . . . The Calvinist is the man who has seen God, and who, having seen God in His Glory, is filled on the one hand with a sense of his own unworthiness to stand in God's sight as a creature, and much more as a sinner, and on the other hand with adoring wonder that nevertheless this

God is a God who receives sinners. He who believes in God without reserve and is determined that God shall be God to him and all his thinking, feeling, willing—in the entire compass of his life-activities, intellectual, moral, spiritual—throughout all his individual, social, religious relations—is, by the force of the strictest of all logic which presides over the outworkings of principles into thought and life, by the very necessity of the case, a Calvinist (*Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today*, pp. 22-23).

We are now dealing with what is not only essential to the Reformed Faith but its most distinctive feature. If we would know the genius of the Reformed Faith, that specific tendency in Christian thought that it represents, we must do justice to the stress it places on the sovereignty of God. The so-called "five points of Calvinism"—human inability, unconditional election, limited atonement, efficacious grace and the perseverance of the saints—are all constitutive elements of the Reformed Faith to such a degree that the denial of any of them is logically its rejection. But neither individually or as a whole do they constitute the formative or regulative principle of the Reformed Faith. They are branches on the tree but not the root from which the tree grows. What is true of the so-called "five points of Calvinism" is also true of other doctrines that have been put forward as the formative or regulative principle of the Reformed Faith. They may all be essential to the integrity of the system, but it is its doctrine of the sovereignty of God that gives it its specific character as an expression of Christian faith. Dr. Kuyper after denying that the specific character of Calvinism may be found in the doctrine of predestination, the authority of the Scriptures, the doctrine of the covenants, the tenet of hereditary guilt, or the strictness of life that characterized its advocates goes on to say: "For Calvinism all these are logical consequences, not the point of departure—foliage bearing witness to the luxuriance of its growth, but not the root from which it sprouted. Because Calvinism would have God remain God, and could not conceive of any good will or work in man unless depending on a will and work of God, it professed the doctrine of predestination. Because it would have God remain God, and therefore held that whenever He spoke it behooved the creature to be silent, it professed the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Because it would have God remain God, and hence ascribed absolute validity to the bond of His covenant, it professed the mysterious working of covenantal grace. Because it would have God remain God, and hence did not allow itself to put the moral question of our guilt individually, as we are accustomed to do, but organically as is the standing of humanity before God, it professed not only hereditary corruption but also, as the cause of this, hereditary guilt. And again, because it would have God remain God, and held the entire range of human life in subjection to His law, for this and for no other reason Calvinism came to advocate a strict Puritanism" (*The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, July, 1891).

It is to this formative or regulative principle of the Re-

formed Faith, this belief in the sovereign majesty of God—permit me to remind you in passing—that we are indebted for the civil and religious liberties that we enjoy. What is more, if democracy is not to perish from the earth, this doctrine of the sovereignty of God must be restored to honor in the thoughts of men in general. For it is those who fear God, and those only, who do not fear the face of man and who dare therefore to assert their rights and the rights of their fellows as over against tyrants and dictators—whether in Church or State.

3. An essential and in some respects a distinctive feature of the Reformed Faith is its Evangelicalism. Calvinists lay no claim to being the only Evangelicals. Historical Protestantism as a whole is evangelical as over against the sacerdotalism of the Greek, Roman and Anglican Churches. Calvinists do claim, however, that the Reformed Faith is consistently evangelical to an extent that is not true of any other. An Evangelical is first of all one who holds that God in His saving activities acts directly upon the human soul and so stands opposed to sacerdotalism which holds that God acts indirectly, i. e., through instrumentalities He has established for that purpose, namely, the Church and its ordinances. It is even more important to remember, however, that an Evangelical is one that holds that salvation is wholly of God, that nothing that we are and nothing that we do enter in the slightest measure into the ground of our acceptance with God. Hence the real Evangelical has much more in common with the Roman Catholic than he has with the Modernist who teaches that man is his own saviour. The Roman Catholic, be it remembered, holds, as we do, that salvation is the supernatural gift of God and that ultimately it is God and God alone who saves the sinner. Let no one suppose, then, he is an Evangelical merely because he is not a Sacerdotalist. He is no Evangelical unless he also confesses that any part man plays in the saving process is secondary, is itself due to Divine influence. What we claim is that the Reformed Faith alone is consistently Evangelical. It not only excludes sacerdotalism and maintains the immediacy of the soul's relation to God but it excludes the evil leaven of synergism by which man is given some initiative or power in the saving process. It alone says without reserve that salvation is wholly of God. It not only ascribes glory to God in the matter of salvation, it ascribes glory to God alone. The note that echoes and reechoes in the heart of the Calvinist is not merely *Deo Gloria* but *soli Deo Gloria* and that with a purity of tone that is elsewhere absent.

4. An essential in some respects and distinctive feature of the Reformed Faith is its system of doctrine and its theory of life. I mention these together because I want to make clear that according to the Reformed Faith the Christian life is founded upon Christian doctrine. It regards the widely accepted saying, "Christianity is life, not doctrine," as folly and unbelief. It is zealous for doctrine but not in the interest of a sterile intellectualism. Rather it is its interest in the Christian life itself that makes it zealous for doctrine. It recognizes as fully as any that Christianity is a life and that a knowledge of Chris-

tian doctrines, no matter how correct and exhaustive, is unprofitable unless it issues in or strengthens the Christian life. Doctrines are not life. Certainly not. It does not follow, however, that they are not indispensable to life. Doctrines are not the cause of life. Nobody, as far as I know, ever said they were. It does not follow, however, that they are not an essential condition of life. As a matter of fact Christianity is both doctrine and life—but, and this is important to remember, the life is the expression of the doctrine, not the doctrine the expression of the life.

It is obvious that the Reformed Faith ascribed great importance to doctrines. It does not hold with the Modernists that Christian doctrines are but the changing intellectual expressions which men give to the sort of life that Jesus lived and that He inspires in others. If it did it too would regard doctrines as of secondary importance. That it ascribes both primary and permanent importance to Christian doctrines finds its explanation in the fact that for it doctrines are not interpretations of life but of facts—and facts in the nature of the case are unchangeable things. The particular facts of which Christian doctrines are the interpretations are those great acts of redemption that God wrought for the salvation of his people—acts that had their culmination in the birth, atoning death, and triumphant resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are content with a religion that affords only moral and spiritual instruction and inspiration may be unconcerned about historical events, about what happened in the long ago. But not those who realize their need of a religion that objectively saves from sin. Such will not be content with anything short of an authentic record of those wonders that God has wrought for their salvation. Apart from the facts recorded in the Bible as actual historical occurrences—as actual as the Battle of Gettysburg or the Great War—there is no such thing as Christianity as the Reformed Faith understands it. But while the Reformed Faith stresses the importance of these facts, it does not suppose that these facts of themselves are constitutive of Christianity. Give these facts no interpretation and they are meaningless. Give them an interpretation other than that of the Bible and they yield us something other than Christianity. It takes both the facts recorded in the Bible and the Biblical interpretation of those facts (i. e., Christian doctrines) to give us Christianity. We adequately value the Bible only as we perceive that it contains not only a trustworthy record of the great facts that lie at the basis of our salvation but an authoritative interpretation of those facts.

I cannot stay to enumerate those doctrines. Suffice it to say that they constitute the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. I cannot refrain from saying, however, that according to the Reformed Faith this system of doctrine is not a system of doctrine taught in the Bible, as though there were other systems that with equal right can claim to be Biblical. No. According to the Reformed Faith it is *the* system and the only system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture. In the nature of the case we cannot believe the Bible to be

the Word of God in the Reformed sense and yet suppose that there are mutually opposed systems of doctrines to be found in its pages.*

Let it not be said that in its zeal for doctrines, the adherents of the Reformed Faith have failed to commend the doctrines by their lives. No doubt that is true, only too true of many of us, but I believe that there is ample historical warrant for saying that the noblest men and women of which this world has had any knowledge have been the fruits of Calvinism. Men have said that Calvinism is fatal to morality, to high and noble endeavor. They knew not of what they spake. It was Froude, no Calvinist, who wrote:

"I am going to ask you to consider, if Calvinism be, as we are told, fatal to morality, how it came to pass that the first symptoms of its operation, wherever it established itself, was to obliterate the distinction between sins and crimes, and to make the moral law the rule of life for States as well as persons? I shall ask you, again, why, if it be a creed of intellectual servitude, it was able to inspire and maintain the bravest efforts ever made to break the yoke of unjust authority? When all else has failed; when patriotism has covered its face, and human courage has broken down; when intellect has yielded, as Gibbon says, 'With a smile or a sigh,' content to philosophize in the closet or abroad worship with the vulgar; when emotion, and sentiment, and tender imaginative piety have become the handmaids of superstition, and have dreamt themselves into forgetfulness that there is a difference between lies and truth, the slavish form of belief called Calvinism, in one or other of its many forms, has ever borne an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity, and has preferred rather to be ground to powder like flint than to bend before violence or melt under enervating temptation."

Dr. Warfield once said that Dr. Kuyper never wrote anything better than the passage that I am about to quote. It is a passage which while not anti-doctrinal—Dr. Kuyper was too great a Christian thinker to be guilty of that—deals with the Christian life rather than with Christian doctrines. It binds together what I have said about the relation between Christian life and Christian doctrine by setting forth the life-tendency that Calvinism is fitted to create and further:

"Religion on earth finds its highest expression in the act of prayer. Calvinism in the Christian Church is simply that tendency that makes the man assume the same attitude towards God in his profession and life, which he exhibits in his prayer. There is no Christian . . . whose prayer is not thoroughly Calvinistic; no child of God, to whatever Church organization he may belong but in his prayer he gives glory to God above and renders thanks to his Father in Heaven for all the grace working in him, and acknowledges that the eternal love of God alone has, in the face of his resistance drawn

* "The Reformed Faith in the Modern World" (pp. 37, fifteen cents), by Prof. Floyd E. Hamilton and "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination" (pp. 430, \$1.50), by Prof. Loraine Boettner, may be commended in this connection. They may be ordered through this office.

him out of darkness into the light. On his knees before God, everyone that has been saved will recognize the sole sufficiency of the Holy Spirit in every good work performed, and will acknowledge that without the atoning grace of Him who is rich in mercies, he would not exist for a moment, but would sink away in guilt and sin. In a word, whosoever truly prays ascribes nothing to his own will or power except the sin that condemns him before God, and knows of nothing that could endure the judgment of God except that it be wrought within him by the Divine love. But whilst all other tendencies in the Church preserve this attitude as long as their prayer lasts, to lose themselves in radically different conceptions as soon as the Amen has been pronounced, the Calvinist adheres to the truth of his prayer in his confession, in his theology, in his life, and the Amen that has closed his petition reechoes in the depths of his consciousness and throughout the whole of his existence" (*The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, July, 1891, p. 382).

5. An essential and in some respects a distinctive feature of the Reformed Faith is its high supernaturalism. Calvinists are not the only supernaturalists any more than they are the only evangelicals. The entire organized Church—Greek, Roman, Lutheran, and Reformed—unless we include sects of such doubtful standing as the present-day Unitarians, profess a supernaturalistic creed. Even the ancient Pelagians and the old Unitarians were supernaturalists though they held to a naturalistic plan of salvation. But while Calvinism is not the only supernaturalistic system of thought and life it is supernaturalistic to a degree that is not true of any other. "The Calvinist," in the words of Warfield, "is by way of eminence the supernaturalist in the world of thought. The world itself is to him a supernatural product; not merely in the sense that somewhere, a way back before all times, God made it; but that God is making it now, and in every event that falls out, in every modification of what is that takes place, His hand is visible, as through all occurrences His one increasing purpose runs. Man himself is His, created for His glory, and having as the one supreme end of His existence to glorify his Maker, and happily also to enjoy Him forever. And salvation, in every stage and step of it, is of God; conceived in God's love, wrought out by God's own Son, in a supernatural life and death in this world of sin, and applied by God's spirit in a series of acts as supernatural as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of the Son of God themselves, it is a supernatural work through and through. To the Calvinist thus the Church of God is as direct a creation of God as the first creation itself. In this supernaturalism the whole thought as feeling and life of the Calvinist is steeped. Without it there can be no Calvinism; for it is just this that is Calvinism" (*Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today*, pp. 38-40).

I have sought to indicate the leading features of the Reformed Faith, and that no one may think that I have been merely expressing my individual opinion, I have expressed myself largely in the words of its outstanding

modern exponents. It is for this Reformed Faith that Westminster Seminary stands. Westminster Seminary is not a Fundamentalist Institution unless the word "Fundamentalist" be used in its broad sense as opposed to the word "Modernist." It has much sympathy with "Fundamentalists," meaning by Fundamentalists members of the World's Fundamental Association or similar organizations. What it stands for, however, is not five or nine or any other limited number of Christian points but for the Reformed Faith in its purity and integrity. Its enemies and detractors may call it "extreme" but those who want to describe it rather than caricature it will rather call it "consistent." Be that as it may, what it stands for is an unabridged not an abridged edition of Christianity.

Westminster Seminary believes that the Reformed Faith is true and that it needs and is capable of scholarly defense. Its Faculty believes not because it does not know but because it knows. For instance, I am sure that at the time of his death there was no man in the world—I make no exceptions—who knew more about the New Testament and what has been said against its trustworthiness than Benjamin B. Warfield. Again I am sure that at the time of his death there was no man in the world—here too I make no exceptions—who knew more about the Old Testament and what has been said against its trustworthiness than Robert Dick Wilson. Yet I am sure that Dr. Warfield would have said about the New Testament what Dr. Wilson said about the Old Testament: that no man knows enough to say that it contains errors. What was true of these great men is hardly less true of the present Faculty of Westminster Seminary. As a result, it graduates men who need not fear the taunt: "If I knew as little as you do, I too might believe as you believe."

Westminster Seminary does not indeed believe that rational arguments alone will make a man a Christian—apart from the regenerating activity of the Holy Spirit rational proofs will ever prove ineffective—but it holds that no one ought to be a Christian unless there are good reasons for supposing that Christianity is true. The court of reason is at least the court of original jurisdiction. If non-suited before the bar of reason, Christianity will be rightly denied a hearing before every appellate court. The basic reason for the present-day defection from Christianity is that men have been led to suppose that Christianity is not true. The task of convincing our modern age that it has been premature in assuming that Christianity is false cannot therefore be shirked. Nothing is more needed today than men with sufficient breadth of knowledge and power of thought to make clear to reasonable and reasoning men that the Christian life and world view is the only tenable one. The Trustees of Westminster Seminary have the happiness to believe that there is no body of men more capable of performing this task than the Faculty of Westminster Seminary.

Westminster Seminary believes moreover with Warfield that the Reformed Faith, "as it has supplied the sinews of Evangelical Christianity in the past, so is its strength in the present, and its hope for the future." This means

that, in its judgment, the Reformed Faith must be preserved and propagated not so much for the sake of its distinctive features as for the sake of what it holds in common with real Christianity in all its forms. Christianity is today engaged in a life and death struggle with Modernism. Modernism does not merely attack Christianity at this point and that. It attacks it all along the line. It aims at nothing short of its complete destruction. If we are to meet this attack with any hope of success, humanly speaking, our counter-attack must be equally comprehensive. Eclectic, half-way methods will not suffice. We must set principle over against principle, world view over against world view. As Dr. Kuyper put it: "As truly as every plant has a root so truly does a principle hide under every manifestation of life. These principles are interconnected and have their common root in a fundamental principle; and from that fundamental principle is developed logically and systematically, the whole complex of ruling ideas and conceptions that go to make up our life and world view. With such a coherent world and life view, firmly resting on its principle and self-consistent in its splendid structure, Modernism now confronts Christianity; and against this deadly danger, ye Christians cannot successfully defend your sanctuary, but by placing, in opposition to all this, a life and world view of your own, founded as firmly on the basis of your own principle and wrought out with the same clearness and glittering in an equally logical consistency" (*Lectures on Calvinism*, pp. 260-261). Such a life and world view we hold is possessed only by those who hold the Calvinistic or Reformed Faith. In it alone do we find that consistent religious supernaturalism of thought and life, armed with which we will be able to wage successful war against that naturalism of thought and life which flaunts itself wherever we turn in the modern world. It is only as we realize this that we can perceive what Dr. Caspar Wistar Hodge in his inaugural address called "the tremendous significance of the Reformed Theology for us today." It gives us, as he went

on to say, "the only adequate support for supernaturalism against a naturalism which, when it has run its logical course and borne its bitter fruit, not only robs us of a supernatural salvation, but of supernatural Christianity and a supernatural Bible, and which indeed does not stay in its course till it has robbed us of Christ and even of God" (*The Princeton Theological Review*, Jan., 1922, p. 13). In defending the consistent supernaturalism of the Reformed Faith Westminster Seminary is serving the interest of all Christendom. It is here, perhaps, that it is rendering its greatest service.

As a concluding word permit me to say that I think we have reason to thank God tonight for the five years of service that Westminster Seminary has been permitted to render. What its future shall be, I do not pretend to know. It may be that the ecclesiastical machinery of the Church will succeed in its efforts to crush and extinguish it. It may be that it will grow great only to have its love for the Reformed Faith grow cold or even turn to opposition. But of the Reformed Faith itself I am sure we can say with Warfield that it "can no more perish out of the earth than the sense of sin can pass out of the heart of sinful humanity; than the perception of God can fade out of the minds of dependent creatures; than God Himself can perish out of the Heavens." In this confidence let us go forward. An inferiority complex may become some minorities but not those whose trust is in the Lord God Almighty. God's plans and purposes will not fail. We may be sure, therefore, that at the end of the years all that is opposed to God will have been brought into subjection and that a great multitude, which no man can number, out of every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, shall be gathered before the throne and before the Lamb and join in the great jubilation; "Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and our Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

"Mission Work in China: Its Trends"

By the Rev. Courtenay H. Fenn, D.D.

(This article is a reply to the contribution with the same title by the Rev. A. A. MacLeod, published in our September number. Dr. Fenn is a secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This reply has not caused the Editors of Christianity Today to lose confidence in Mr. MacLeod.)

THE September number of CHRISTIANITY TODAY contains an article by the Rev. Alexander MacLeod, a missionary of the Presbyterian Board at Tenghsien, Shantung, China, entitled "Mission Work in China: Its Trends." There is in this article such a combination of fact and fiction, due in part to the brevity of its author's experience in China and in part to certain pre-conceptions which affect his judgment, that the present writer, after forty years of intimate acquaintance with China, feels deeply concerned as to the harm which may result to the Mission work in China (especially that of

our own Church) from Mr. MacLeod's unintentional misrepresentations. Before attempting to correct them, it should be said that the present writer, a missionary for thirty-four years in China, and for the past seven years continuing in intimate relations with China Missions, has maintained an unbroken record as a "fundamentalist" in theology, a "conservative of the conservatives," both by training and by unaltered personal conviction. But he is on that account the more unwilling that such a description of Missions in China as that which is now under review should be left unchallenged.