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THE IDEA OF REVELATION.

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(The following article was one of eight lectures delivered by Dr. Mackintosh in March, 1928, on the James Sprunt Foundation, at Union Seminary, Richmond, Va. Of this particular lecture Dr. Edward Mack remarked that it was one of the ablest and most satisfactory treatments of the subject of revelation he had ever heard or read. The eight lectures will appear in book form under the title, "The Christian Apprehension of God", and will prove a notable addition to the volumes which have already been published on the Sprunt Lectureship.—Editor.)

In my last lecture I endeavored to set forth what seem to me sound positions regarding the nature of religious knowledge, the way in which we come to be possessed of it, and the methods of proof or verification which are appropriate to the case. To-day I wish to speak of the correlative subject—not, this time, our knowing as believing men, but the reality which we know, or Revelation. And let us never forget, at any stage of our discussion, that Revelation, which in itself is only an abstract noun, really stands for the most concrete and personal object with which we can have to do: it stands for God, as He makes Himself known savingly to man. If this be overlooked, the debate over Revelation may become as cold and lifeless as a treatise on symbolic logic.

ing Spirit. No conception can do justice to the Bible idea of revelation which neglects these facts. Nor is justice done even to the rational idea of Revelation when they are neglected. Here, too, we must interpret by the highest category in our reach. 'Can man commune with man,' it is eloquently asked, 'through the high gift of language, and is the infinite mind not to express itself, or is it to do so but faintly, or uncertainly, through dumb material symbols, never by blessed speech?' (W. Morrison, 'Footprints of the Revealer', p. 52.)" Pp. 44-45.

The Minister of Christ and the Student for the ministry should by all means read and study Warfield on "*Revelation and Inspiration*". He is as scholarly as he is sound in the faith. He was a man internationally respected for his learning and ability. This volume is made up of some of his most convincing papers.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1928.

BY REV. WALTER L. LINGLE, D. D., LL. D.,
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The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was held in Atlanta, Ga., May 17-23, 1928. This article is not intended to be a chronological account of all that was done at this session of the General Assembly, but rather a discussion of some of the most interesting actions of the Assembly.

The Moderator.

Rev. Harris E. Kirk, D. D., Pastor of the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland, was elected Moderator on the first ballot. Dr. Kirk is probably more widely known than any other minister in our Church. He seems to be as much at home in London as he is in Baltimore. For years he has stood in a great pulpit in Baltimore, at the very northern

extreme of our Assembly, and has drawn great audiences by his effective preaching of the Gospel. Not only so, but for years Dr. Kirk, in response to urgent invitations, has spoken repeatedly at many colleges, universities, and theological seminaries, presenting Christianity in such a way as to make a tremendous appeal to students and professors. Our Assembly did well to elect such a man Moderator.

Dr. Kirk filled the Moderatorial Chair with grace and dignity. He pushed along more rapidly with the business of the Assembly than any other man who ever filled the Moderator's Chair. In fact some of the commissioners felt that he went too rapidly. He probably went on the theory that the King's business requireth haste. His speed pleased the business men who are more accustomed to action than they are to talk. In recent years the Assembly has shown more and more impatience with long discussions. All reports are printed in the Blue Book and other books. These are handed to the commissioners on the first day. They read the reports and recommendations and make up their own minds as to how they want to vote. After that they do not want too much discussion and call for the question much more quickly than they used to do. However, the Assembly paused for discussion on most of the questions which needed discussion.

The Spirit of the Assembly.

In getting material for this article I asked a very thoughtful commissioner what struck him most forcibly about the Assembly. He thought for a moment and replied: "Its spirit." That must have struck any thoughtful observer. It was my privilege to attend practically all of the Sessions of this Assembly. It has been my privilege to attend many Assemblies, but I have never seen a finer spirit than that which prevailed in this Assembly. Debaters never indulged in personalities. I can not recall a single sharp word that was spoken. Out in the vestibules and writing rooms there were no whispered rumors of terrible things that were going on in the work of the Church. One got the impression that the commissioners

were a group of men who were eager to know and to do the will of the Lord. This is a spirit which ought to be cultivated in all of our Church courts. We do well to keep in mind the Scripture: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His."

The Committee on the Assembly's Work.

Please get the name of this committee straight. It is sometimes called the Assembly's Work Committee, but that is very different from its real name and is all wrong. Even members of the committee have been known to make this blunder in calling its name.

At any rate, the General Assembly in 1927 elected a committee of forty-four members, thirty-three men and eleven women, to take general oversight of the General Assembly's Executive and promotional agencies. This Committee has been at work for a year and made its first report to the 1928 General Assembly. The commissioners were deeply interested to know what manner of report it would be.

Before looking at the report it may be well to refresh our minds in the organization of this committee. The forty-four members of the committee are divided into six sub-committees. Twelve of the forty-four members constitute the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, seven the Executive Committee of Home Missions, seven the Executive Committee of Religious Education (Publication and Sabbath School work), seven the Executive Committee of Christian Education and Ministerial Relief, five the Committee on Stewardship and Men's Work, and five the Committee on Woman's Work. During the interim between the meetings of the Committee on Assembly's Work these several sub-committees direct the work of their several departments. As a rule the whole committee of forty-four members meet twice a year, and in these meetings all the work of all the sub-committees is gone over carefully. The purpose of the big committee of forty-four is to give unity and effectiveness to the work of all of the committees, and thus to the whole work of the Assembly.

The report of the committee on the Assembly's work was carefully worked out and well-printed in a pamphlet of about thirty pages. It covered the work of all the Executive Committees and of the promotional agencies. There was nothing startling about the report. It was quietly constructive. The commissioners may have been a bit disappointed because it was so free from anything that was startling and because it did not purpose any radical changes. When men and women realize that they are in positions of great responsibility it sobers them, and even if they had expected to do something radical they become more cautious and conservative.

In the main the General Assembly seemed to be pleased with this first report of the Committee on the Assembly's Work. The best way of handling this report before the Assembly has not yet been found. A Standing Committee on the Assembly's Work, consisting of fifteen members, was appointed to consider the report. The usual Standing Committee on Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and other Assembly agencies were appointed, and to these were referred the parts of the report which related to their respective causes. This resulted in a great deal of duplication. The Standing Committee on the Assembly's Work made their recommendations on the whole report. These other Standing Committees made their recommendations on the parts of the report which were related to their respective causes. In this way several Secretaries of Executive Committees and of the promotional agencies were elected twice, and a number of items of business were transacted twice. In several cases the Standing Committee on the Assembly's Work made one recommendation about a matter, while another Standing Committee would have a different recommendation about the same matter, and these differences had to be ironed out on the floor of the Assembly. This was notably true in reference to the department of Country Church Work. In another case a Standing Committee recommended that a Secretary be elected for a term of three years and the Standing Committee on the Assembly's Work recommended that he be elected for one year.

A better way will have to be found for handling the report

of the Committee on the Assembly's Work. The rule for next year is that the Assembly shall appoint a Standing Committee on the Assembly's Work and the usual Standing Committees on the Assembly's causes, and then the Standing Committee on the Assembly's Work will call all these other Standing Committees into conference. That will be a big conference as the total membership of all these Standing Committees is more than one hundred and twenty-five. It will be a little Assembly in itself. That method will probably be too cumbersome to be practical, and a still more excellent way will have to be discovered.

Further Consolidation.

The report of the Survey Committee a year ago contemplated the ultimate consolidation of all four of the Assembly's Executive Committees, their removal to some central point and their being housed in one building. The Committee on the Assembly's Work was instructed a year ago to take this proposal under advisement and to report to the Assembly. The proposition makes a great appeal to a great many people in this day of big business and of consolidations of all kinds. The Committee on the Assembly's Work reported that little progress had been made in this matter and asked for an appropriation of \$2,500.00 to be used in employing expert advice. The Assembly authorized the appropriation, but also uttered a word of caution in the following recommendation which was offered by the Standing Committee and approved by the Assembly: "We would recommend that the Assembly advise the Committee on the Assembly's Work not to decide this matter on purely financial reasons."

That reminds me of a paragraph in Dr. Francis L. Patton's memorial address on Dr. B. B. Warfield. In discussing Church union, he said that a great many people were clamoring for union in order to save administrative expenses. He said that he would designate this group as those who were in favor of union for revenue only. Then he said that there is another group who are always pleading love as a reason for

union and they seem to forget all other considerations. He said that they were always cooing about love. Then he unexpectedly said: "My brethren, I want to remind you that our Lord drove out of the temple not only the changers of money, but also all those who bought and sold doves."

The General Assembly struck a high note when it reminded the committee that there are other considerations which are greater than mere financial considerations. There is an assumption back of the idea of consolidation which needs careful thought. The assumption is that one small committee of busy men are capable of comprehending the whole work of the Church and of managing its affairs. That same assumption lies back of the movement which created the committee of Forty-four. I have been a member of the Publication Committee for a good many years. I have tried to be faithful, but I can not truthfully say that I yet grasp fully the whole work of this one Committee. How long is it going to take me to grasp all the work of all the Committees sufficiently well to act intelligently in the management of their affairs, even though I do my best? Every member of these various Executive Committees is just as busy as he can be with his own life work. Is it possible, then, to secure a small committee, or even a large one; whose members have sufficient time and sufficient ability to comprehend all the work of all the Executive Committees and to manage their affairs intelligently?

There is another fundamental idea which consolidation goes up against, and that is the idea of the centralization, or decentralization, of power. It would be interesting if we could know how much influence the Presbyterian Church had upon John C. Calhoun's political ideas and how much influence John C. Calhoun in turn has had upon the Southern Presbyterian Church. Opposition to the centralization of power was one of his central ideas. He was of Scotch-Irish descent, his father was a Presbyterian Elder. His sister married a Presbyterian Minister. In this way his life was brought into the closest touch with the Presbyterian Church. Not only so, but his ideas and ideals evidently made a deep impression upon a group of very able Presbyterian ministers in South Carolina,

among whom was Dr. James Henly Thornwell. When the Southern Presbyterian Assembly was organized in 1861 Dr. Thornwell and this group of South Carolina ministers had a larger part in shaping its policies and ideals than any other group. One idea that dominated that first Assembly was that there must be no centralization of power. That idea still abides in our Church. One Assembly may forget it, but the next Assembly will remember. The consolidation of all the Executive Committee in one place, in one building, under one Committee is an idea which is in direct opposition to the other idea which has had a large place in our Church from the beginning, and that is the idea which opposes the centralization of power in the Church or in the State.

The Financial Problems.

When compared with other denominations the Southern Presbyterian Church ranks high in its contributions to church causes. Our total contributions for all purposes for the year ending March 31, 1928, were \$15,781,179. That was a per capita average of about \$35.50. Our total contributions for the previous year were \$15,206,281. The total increase this year over last year was \$574,898. All of that is encouraging, and yet we have our financial problems.

The main problem is to secure a well-balanced, stable budget which will be adequate for all the causes of the Church. An analysis of the total gifts of the Church would probably lead us to the conclusion that the local church is spending too large a proportion of its total budget on itself. This is probably due to the fact that there has been an unprecedented wave of Church building for the past five years. An analysis of that part of the budget which is contributed to the missionary and benevolent causes of the Church would probably lead us to the conclusion that the distribution is not always in the proper proportion. It is certainly not according to the percentage which the Assembly, the Synods, and the presbyteries have indicated. If especial emphasis is placed upon one cause it goes

forward and at the same time other causes fall behind. This results in a variable income for the various causes, and this in turn keeps those who are responsible for these various causes on the uneasy bench all the time. Perhaps there is no perfect solution of this problem, but it would help greatly if every Church would resolve to distribute its contributions to the Assembly's causes according to the percentage named by the Assembly, to the Synodical causes according to the percentages named by the Synod, and to presbyterial causes according to the percentages named by the presbytery. It would also help if individuals in making special contributions would observe these same percentages. The great need of the hour is for the whole Church to get behind the whole budget.

There is another financial problem and that is the problem of overhead expenses. In fact it is difficult to determine what should properly be classed as overhead expenses. The actual administration of the funds contributed to the various causes does not cost a very large per cent of the total. But what we call the promotional side of the work costs a great deal and will probably cost more and more as the years go by. The six Assembly causes are drawn upon, by order of the Assembly, to support Stewardship, Men's Work, Woman's Work, the department of Country Church Work, and the expenses of the Committee on the Assembly's Work. The total sum drawn from the Assembly's Executive Committees, the Assembly's Training School and the American Bible Society to support the promotional agencies named above, amounts to about eighty-five thousand dollars annually. More than half of this sum comes out of the Foreign Mission treasury. It takes more than three per cent of all the money contributed to the Assembly's Executive Committees, the Assembly's Training School and the American Bible Society to support the promotional agencies named above. It is probably not popular to say so, but I feel that a more direct method ought to be found for supporting these promotional agencies. Money contributed directly to the great causes of the Assembly ought to be used directly for those causes. The promotional agencies can always count on the full amount asked for in cash, no matter how

deep in debt the Executive agencies may be. Practically all of the Executive agencies are at this moment borrowing money to pay their assessments to the promotional agencies.

Relations to Other Churches.

The Assembly touched our relationship to other Churches at a good many points. First of all the question of our union with the United Presbyterian Church came up. The Committee which has been working on this question for several years presented a rather full report, recommending union and stating the terms on which the union should be consummated. But the Committee did not care to press the matter. When opposition arose the Committee was very glad to have the matter postponed for another year, with the request that the presbyteries would give such advice to the Committee as might seem wise to them.

There does not seem to be much enthusiasm for this union. On the other hand there does not seem to be a great deal of opposition to it. The papers report that a very decided enthusiasm for the union developed in the Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church this year. The chief objection to the union from our angle is that the United Presbyterian Church has only about 225,000 members but at the same time it stretches from Maine to California. The union would make us cover a very large, unwieldy territory, and much of it would be very sparsely settled so far as Presbyterians are concerned. As the two Churches do not overlap there seems to be no urgent demand for union.

Our relationship to the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. was brought up by an overture asking the Assembly to appoint an Ad Interim Committee to make a survey of the field occupied by the two branches of the Presbyterian Church, and requesting the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. to appoint a similar Committee. This overture was answered in the affirmative and the Committee was appointed. This is a much more urgent and vital question than our union with the United Presbyterian Church. In many of the so-called border States

there is much overlapping of the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and the Presbyterian Church U. S. We ought to be able to find some solution for this great problem.

There was another overture asking that a Committee be appointed to confer with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on closer relations. This overture was referred by the Assembly to the Committee which already has under advisement union with the United Presbyterian Church. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in 1810 by Presbyterians who went out of the Presbyterian Church during a controversy about ordaining to the ministry laymen of true piety, who had not received the regular theological training. Not a great while after its organization the Cumberland Presbyterian Church revised the Westminster Confession and Catechism. The revision is a fearful and wonderful mixture of Calvinism and Arminianism. In their revised Shorter Catechism, for example, we find this definition of the decrees of God: "The decrees of God are his wise and holy purpose to do what shall be for his glory. Sin not being for his glory, therefore he has not decreed it."

By 1906 the Cumberland Church had a membership of over 200,000. In that year a union was effected between the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and the Cumberland Church. One-fourth, or perhaps one-third, of the members of the Cumberland Church declined to go into the union. This continuing Cumberland Church now has a membership of about 55,000. It is with this body that the overture is asking our Assembly to form closer relations.

Our relationship to other denominations came up through overtures asking our Assembly to withdraw from the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The overture was answered in the negative. This is a perennial question. It comes before the Assembly every year. The chief argument advanced for staying in is that it is the one organization which shows in any visible way the unity of the Protestant forces of America. It is also argued that all the Protestant denominations associated together can accomplish many things which no single denomination could accomplish alone.

Our relations to other Churches also came up through the report of the Western Section of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance. This is an Alliance of all the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in the world, and has for its purpose the cultivation of fellowship between all these Presbyterian bodies, and also for the furtherance of the Presbyterian cause throughout the world.

There is a growing tendency for the various denominations, and especially for the various branches of the same denomination, to come closer together. The two great branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland are on the very verge of coming together into organic union. No man can prophesy what the end of this tendency will be, but many of our young ministers will probably live to see a good many Church unions effected, and many more denominations brought into closer, co-operative union and fellowship. My own feeling has always been that it is always a tragedy to have a forced union. It is far better to cultivate the spirit of unity—the unity of faith, hope and love—and then to let union come about naturally and unanimously.

Doctrinal Deliverances.

Overtures have come to each Assembly for the past five years asking the Assembly to make some doctrinal deliverances. Each time the Assembly has declined to make such a deliverance. The answer of the Assembly this year to an overture asking for a deliverance on inspiration and evolution is illuminating: "No doctrinal deliverance of an Assembly can displace the Constitutional doctrinal basis of our Church. Our form of government prescribes the question for ordination, 'Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?' Our Confession of Faith declares that the Scriptures 'are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life'. Our Shorter Catechism states that 'the Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man'. The requirement is there-

fore clear, namely, belief in the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and life. A man's position in this matter can be determined as follows: In the case of the applicant for ordination, by examination; in the case of a minister, by judicial process, in accordance with our form of government. The Assembly can deal with specific cases only when they come before the Assembly upon appeal or complaint and with the full record of the case before it. This answer applies to both questions asked in the overture."

One of the clearest thinkers in our Church was Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, which recommended that answer to the Assembly. Whether the Chairman wrote that answer I do not know, but I do know that some clear headed man wrote it. When our Assembly begins to make off-hand, doctrinal deliverances our troubles will begin. We have our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. They set forth with clearness and fulness our doctrinal positions. They together with the Book of Church Order form the Constitution of our Church. If a minister is charged with heresy he is to be tried by the Constitution and not by an off-hand deliverance of the Assembly. If our Confession and Catechisms do not cover all doctrinal questions adequately let us amend them in a constitutional way. One Assembly can not amend the Constitution single-handed by making doctrinal deliverances. To amend the Confession and Catechisms it takes the approval of one Assembly, the advice and consent of three-fourths of all the presbyteries, and the approval and enactment of a subsequent Assembly. When they are so amended they become binding. Off-hand doctrinal deliverances of the Assembly have no binding power. They could only furnish us something to quarrel about.

By the way, the overture on this subject begins by saying: "In view of the clear and full statements of our Standards as to the plenary or verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as originally given in the original languages, etc." That statement seems to make "plenary (full) inspiration" and "verbal inspiration" synonymous terms. I do not so understand them. That statement also declares that the Confession of Faith

teaches clearly the doctrine of "verbal inspiration". The Confession does teach clearly the great fact of inspiration, but if you will search its pages again you will probably be convinced that, while it does not deny the doctrine of verbal inspiration, it does not teach it. In fact, it teaches the great fact of inspiration with power, but you will probably end your study of the Confession with the conclusion that the Confession does not commit itself to any theory of inspiration.

The Assembly and War.

The Presbytery of Atlanta overtured the General Assembly to "express its disapproval of war as the best means of settling national and international differences". The Assembly made the following answer to the overture: "The Assembly directs the attention of the presbytery of Atlanta to the actions of the Assemblies of 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1920, and 1925, touching the subject of the settlement of international disputes, and re-affirms the position therein taken, namely, that Christians in our own country and throughout the world should co-operate in securing the settlement of international issues and differences by means of arbitration and without resort to war, and further prays and hopes that the spirit and teachings of Christ, our Lord, may soon so permeate and control the nations of the earth that they will speedily co-operate in the outlawry of war and the adoption and application of some amicable and peaceful method or methods for the adjustment of all national and international questions and disputes.

You will find it interesting and edifying to study the deliverances of the past Assemblies as cited in the above reply. I was surprised to see how much the Assemblies between 1890 and 1895 had to say on the subject, and how finely they said it. That was back in the days when people who stood against war were not taunted with being "pacifists". This Assembly intimated that the spirit and teachings of Christ would outlaw war as a means of settling disputes. If all professing Christians really believed that we would hear the death knell of war within this generation.

Conclusion.

But time, and especially space, would fail to tell of all of even all the important things which were said and done at the Atlanta Assembly. For the rest we will have to refer the gentle reader to the Minutes of the Assembly. Take a day off and read the Minutes from cover to cover. It will repay you richly.

THE SUBJUGATION AND DOOM OF SATAN.

An Interpretation of the Twentieth Chapter of the Book of Revelation.

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(The following article constitutes chapter nine of a new manuscript, entitled "The Drama of Christianity", from the prolific pen and fertile brain of our Secretary of Home Missions, who already has seven books to his credit. Being part of a larger whole, chapter nine cannot be felt in its full cogency until one has read the entire manuscript. Especially is this true of the opening paragraphs, where points barely stated have already been discussed at length in preceding chapters. Our readers are asked to bear this in mind.)

The whole manuscript is divided into ten chapters, and if published would make a medium size book of about 150 pages. The Editor of the *Review*, for one, would be pleased to see Dr. Morris' interpretation in book form and to have it enjoy a wide circulation in our church; for it is an able exposition of a difficult book.

One purpose of the *Review* is to stimulate our ministers to write more and to publish more books. With this end in view, we request our readers who desire the publication in book form of Dr. Morris' entire manuscript to write the Editor to that effect.—Editor.)

The Christian Dispensation from the Incarnation to the Second Coming of Christ is presented for the seventh and