

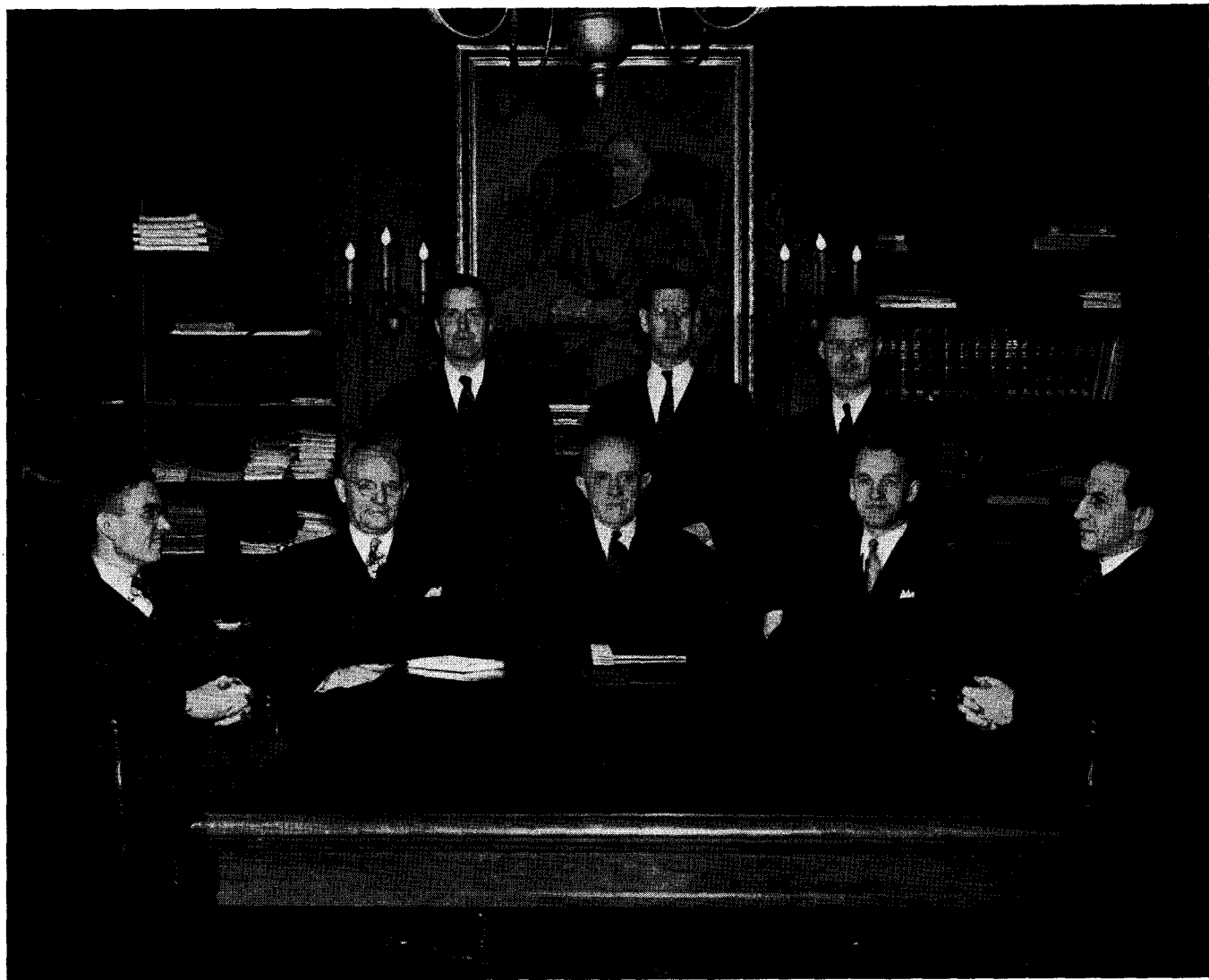
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J. GRESHAM MACHEN • EDITOR 1936-1937



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FACULTY OF WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Seated: Professors Woolley, Van Til, Kuiper, Stonehouse, Murray

Standing: Professors Skilton, Young, and Mr. Kerr

May 10, 1947

VOLUME 16, NO. 9

Tradition: Romish and Protestant

Part I: The Romish View of Tradition

By the REV. JOHN MURRAY

Professor of Systematic Theology in Westminster Seminary

THE SUBJECT of Tradition, and its authority in the life of the Church as compared with that of Scripture, is a matter of great importance. The difference between the position of Rome and that of Protestantism is one of the great marks of distinction as between these two sections of organized Christendom. The article by Professor Murray is therefore of special significance. It originally appeared in the *Westminster Alumni Annals*, and is published here by permission.

THE POSITION of the Romish church with reference to tradition has been officially declared by the Council of Trent. It is found in the "Decree concerning the Canonical Scriptures" of April 8, 1546. The Council declares that the Gospel "of old promised through the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, promulgated first with His own mouth, and then commanded it to be preached by all His Apostles to every creature as the source at once of all saving truth and rules of conduct. It also clearly perceives that these truths and rules are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand. Following, then, the examples of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with a feeling of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and New Testaments, since one God is the author of both; also the traditions, whether they relate to faith or to morals, as having been dictated either orally by Christ or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church in unbroken succession" (cf. H. J. Schroeder: *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, pp. 17, 296).

Summary of Romish View

It is apparent that the premise of this official pronouncement is that the

source of all Christian truth, by which the faith and morals of the church are to be determined, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The question with which the Council is particularly concerned is the way in which this Christian truth, pertaining both to faith and morals, is conveyed to us. The Council's emphatic declaration is that it has come to us by two streams, Scripture and unwritten traditions. The latter have an authority in this matter equal to that of Scripture; they are to be received and venerated with a feeling of piety and reverence similar to that with which the Scriptures are received and venerated. For these traditions were dictated either orally by Christ or by the Holy Spirit and have been preserved in the Catholic Church in continuous succession. The outlines of the Romish doctrine of tradition, therefore, should be rather obvious. The summary statement of Sylvester J. Hunter may help to elucidate what has just been set forth. "Christian truth," he says, "was delivered to the Apostles by the spoken word of Christ or by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and . . . it has come from them to us, partly committed to written books, and partly by unwritten tradition" (*Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 107).

Though this summary is in some respects simple enough, we are not to suppose that the Romish doctrine is as simple and intelligible as might appear from this formal statement. There are two things that need to be said.

Significant Features of Romish View

First, it is not to be supposed that nothing of what is implied in unwritten tradition has ever been committed to writing. The Romish Church does not mean that the whole content of authoritative tradition must be jealously guarded from ever finding its way into either script or print. In other words, it is not claimed that this teaching is such an esoteric secret that no one may presume to give any indication of its character or purport by com-

mitting it to writing. It is fair to conclude that the word "unwritten" is first of all intended to distinguish the mode of its transmission from the mode by which the revelation of Scripture has come, namely, inscripturation. The authoritative teaching embodied in tradition is not conveyed to us by inspired writings. It does not follow, however, that other writings have not played a part in the conveyance and even in the exposition of what this tradition embraces. For example, the Church of Rome in its defence of tradition as an authoritative rule and in the support of certain traditions makes frequent appeal to the writings of the church fathers. Again the symbols of faith and the definitions of the ecumenical councils are important elements of tradition. But these, of course, are committed to writing and all may have access to them as documents of tradition.

But, secondly, the Church of Rome does place great stress upon the fact that tradition is oral and unwritten. In terms of this emphasis we shall look in vain for any summary or codification of what is involved in tradition. As one protestant writer has said, "so far as we are aware, there is no publication which contains a summary of what the Church believes under the head of tradition" (Charles Elliott: *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 40). Indeed, if there could be a codification or summation of the "unwritten traditions," this would destroy the very principle that underlies the whole superstructure of tradition, namely, the Romish conception of the church. For Rome, the church as a visible, palpable organization and living organism, subject particularly to the papal see, is the depository of tradition. If writings were the depositories of tradition, this would radically interfere with the function ascribed to the church. The organs of this tradition are the official ministers of the church, the successors of the apostles. Christ and the Holy Spirit dictated these unwritten instructions to the

apostles, the apostles committed them to their successors and of these there has been an unbroken succession in the Romish hierarchy. So, while Rome does not aver that tradition receives no expression in writing, yet she is very jealous to maintain that the church is the medium through which tradition is transmitted and not written documents.

The Voice of the Church

As indicated already, the church, for Rome, is that visible, palpable organization professing subjection to the hierarchy which finds its head in the bishop of Rome. It is in this Church, called, presumptuously enough, "the Catholic Church," that these traditions are preserved in continuous succession. These traditions, therefore, do not exist outside the communion of the Romish Church; she is their sole possessor and custodian. And this claim of Rome is to be understood not in the sense in which she claims to be the custodian and infallible interpreter of Scripture but rather in the sense that tradition does not exist except as an oral transmission passed on from hand to hand by Rome's official ministers.

Furthermore, tradition is not to be regarded as a verbatim transmission of sayings and directions given by Christ orally or by dictation of the Holy Spirit. Tradition is not a static corpus of oracles handed down from generation to generation. Tradition is rather that which the Church propounds in each successive generation; it is the living voice of the Church. Hence new decrees and dogmas may be officially declared from time to time which are invested with all the authority claimed for tradition. Rome, indeed, does not claim that such official pronouncements regarding faith and morals are new inventions of the Church. It is claimed rather that they are concrete expressions and formulations of what was implicit from the beginning in the tradition of the Church. By the authority vested in the Church they are declared to be infallible dogmas which are implicit in and grow out of tradition.

We can readily see how fluid and flexible this concept of tradition really is, and how difficult it is to determine what exactly is included in it. Indeed, there is something banefully elusive about it all. We get good examples of what the doctrines of tradition and of

the Church can produce in the hands of the Roman hierarchy when we think of the dogmas of the immaculate conception (1854) and of papal infallibility (1870). Blasphemous pretensions can emanate from so elusive, but for Rome so convenient, a doctrine!

Protestants should be alive to the consequences of the Romish position, particularly in two respects. First in the name of tradition there can be foisted upon the church what is the antithesis of the truth of the Gospel. We see this in the impious claims of the papacy. Secondly, Protestants should understand that the claim of Rome implies that the protestant church is excluded from access to one of the indispensable media of divine revelation, with the result that it cannot possibly be the church of Christ.

Examination of Romish View

In examining the Romish position, a thorough discussion would take us far beyond the limits of such an article as this. But a few considerations may be briefly adduced.

(1) It is true that the Gospel was at first orally communicated and transmitted. We have no evidence that Christ Himself gave to the apostles or to the church written documents. Even the first of our New Testament books was not written for several years after the ascension of Christ. The Gospel by this method of oral transmission was indeed the same Gospel and was the power of God unto salvation.

(2) All that Christ revealed and spoke was infallible and normative for faith and morals. If we today possessed any actual instructions of Christ which have not been committed to Scripture and if these instructions could be authenticated to us by some infallible criterion, then these unwritten sayings of our Lord would be on a plane of authority equal to that of Holy Scripture. The same would hold of instructions or revelations given to the apostles by dictation or inspiration of the Holy Spirit, provided they were also authenticated by an infallible criterion.

(3) It is a remarkable providence that notwithstanding the many sayings and deeds of our Lord not included in the canonical Scriptures, alluded to, for example, in John 20:30; 21:25, the number of sayings or of deeds, not incorporated in the canonical books, which have come down to us

are very few indeed and are of such doubtful authenticity that we cannot rely upon them or make use of them in any determinative way in matters of faith or morals. When we bear in mind the mass of material that existed in the instructions and deeds both of our Lord and of His apostles, not included in Scripture, and then ask the question: how much of that material has been conveyed to us by a really authentic tradition? we are really confronted with an amazing phenomenon. There is scarcely anything. We are constrained to ask: is this not a fact of God's providence intended to confine the church to the canonical Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and morals?

(4) The very doctrine of tradition as propounded by the Romish Church is indicative and indeed corroborative of the foregoing providential facts. The "unwritten traditions" of Rome do not purport to be simply sayings of our Lord or inspired utterances of the apostles that have come down to us by authentic transmission. Tradition is not by any means conceived of as a collection or corpus of such instructions. Tradition, for Rome, is something quite different. But the only tradition that we would concede would be equally authoritative with Scripture would be the tradition of instructions given or deeds done by our Lord and inspired utterances and deeds of the apostles, communicated to us by infallibly authentic testimony. The only tradition then which we Protestants could place on a par with Scripture is that kind of tradition which does not exist, and which, indeed, Rome does not aver.

(5) Protestants, particularly Reformed Protestants, do not deny that there is such a thing as tradition to which all due deference must be paid. At the outset the word "deference" should be noted. We have not used the word "reverence." In this resides a very important distinction.

Protestants and Tradition

There is truly a catholic tradition to which all due respect is to be paid and for which we should thank God. The Romish Church has attempted to monopolize the word "Catholic" by trying to fix upon itself the denominational name, "the Catholic Church." Protestants should not be the dupes of Rome in this respect and should

(See "Tradition," page 138)

which we build are local; they are free for the carrying or cutting, and anyone who really wants can use them. It is true that we have servants—employees and friends, not slaves. These boys are more than glad to work for five to ten dollars a month; that money buys their food, pays their tuition, and gives them more clothes than they ever had before. Without them, it should be remembered, we would have to haul and chop over a cord of wood a week, haul from the well and carry to the house over twenty buckets of water per day, cook on a wood stove, boil drinking water the same way, do the laundry twice a week with a hand scrub board, and do an infinite variety of other time-consuming tasks that are peculiar to the tropics. It is not true, however, that we have no appreciation of the people's life. We eat their food as much as possible, we try to learn their problems, we walk their paths, and when we travel we live in their houses with no complaints. A mud house is cool, at least.

(Here follows a paragraph describing Dr. Welmer's unsuccessful attempt to get a shot at a leopard which was stealing chickens from the porch of a near-by house. At last reports the leopard was still quite healthy.)

Liberia does not appear to be a hunter's paradise, but we have eaten a considerable amount of good meat here. Various kinds of antelope are shot now and then, and wild boar and dwarf buffalo upon occasion. Guinea fowl are comparable to pheasant. Catfish are an occasional delicacy, and our one experience with porcupine meat still makes our mouths water. All meat is fifteen cents a pound, whether it is bones, brains or porterhouse steak.

Other foods are plentiful, but we find it difficult to get people to bring them to sell. Pineapples are a penny apiece. Oranges in season are three for a cent, bananas are twenty cents for a big bunch, rice is four cents a pound, and eggs are two cents each. We can at least imitate a good many favourite American dishes with French-fried or scalloped casava, mashed eddoes, and rice muffins. Our incomparable cook, Sammy Jensen, has forever spoiled us for commercially baked bread, and on those rare occasions when we are prodigal with our supplies, his cinnamon buns would make Messrs. Horn and Hardart turn green with envy.

To reach us here in Sanoyea, you would have to start from Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, on the coast. A trip by truck or private car over some seventy miles of bumpy, hilly clay road brings you to Totota, a small mud and thatch town half way across the country. If your trip was late in the day, or too tiring, you may stay there in a mud house maintained by the mission. The doorways and ceiling mats bruise the top two inches of my head, but those nasty-looking spiders with a four-inch leg spread and a fat body are nothing to get excited about; they are harmless and their diet of mosquitoes and flies is the best malaria preventive known. The next morning you round up the carriers you ordered several days before, find that half of them are not there, and start off anyway. Unless you are well conditioned, you ride a good deal of the way in a hammock, carried by two or three alternating teams of four men. The hammock is strung on a pole, and each end of the pole is fast to a three-foot cross piece. Each end of the cross piece rests on a man's head. Your baggage, supplies, and everything else you have also goes on heads, up to sixty pounds per person (though I have seen a man who weighed 108 carry a 100-pound keg of nails). Don't pity the men too much; you will soon learn that the easiest way to carry a compact load, even for yourself, is on your head. If you are used to walking, you may not use a hammock at all. But beware, because you have about fifteen to eighteen miles (five hours for an experienced walker) of mountainous paths ahead of you. My longest day on the path so far has been twelve hours, out of which I walked nine, or probably thirty miles. That was after a month of pretty regular hiking, in which I covered well over a hundred miles, and I do not choose to deny that the thirty miles wore me out. . . . But to return to this trip to Sanoyea, you finally stagger into town, and chances are you find yourself completely unexpected. News of people arriving has an unfortunate way of never getting here in advance. The town seems small (there are perhaps a hundred houses, or about four hundred people at most), and you are soon through it. The sight of the lovely stone church cheers you up, and as an occasional visitor you are warmly welcomed at the mission. You have your choice of

Danish, Swedish, German or Dutch hospitality. Miss Jensen, the middle-aged Danish nurse here, always has coffee for you, and so do the Welmers. This is not to disparage the coffee served by the Slifers, or the Homrig-hausens, but only Miss Jensen and the Welmers are famous for it. For several months we were here alone with Miss Jensen, but the fame of "Kirsten's Kitchen" is known all over Liberia.

(To be continued)

Tradition

(Continued from page 134)

resist every attempt on the part of Rome to appropriate that denomination. The Church of Rome is not the catholic church. It is presumption for her to claim to be. We should understand that all who profess the true religion belong to the catholic church and in the catholic tradition we glory. The catholic tradition is enshrined particularly in the ecumenical creeds, and is found also in the line of orthodox interpreters and theologians throughout the centuries.

There is also a protestant tradition. It is the viewpoint of the protestant church as over against the perversions and apostasies of the Romish communion. This tradition is enshrined in the great protestant creeds and in the theology of the protestant reformers. It is also embodied in the worship and practice that prevailed in the protestant churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

There is in like manner a reformed tradition. It is enshrined in the reformed creeds, theology, worship and practice. It is in this latter tradition that we specially glory. And we glory in it because we believe that it is the purest repristination and expression of apostolic Christianity. It is in this tradition that we move; it is the stream along which we are borne; it is the viewpoint we cherish, foster and promote. We cannot abstract ourselves from it; it gives direction and orientation to our thought and practice.

(To be continued)



"Buy the truth and sell it not; yea wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." Proverbs 23:23.

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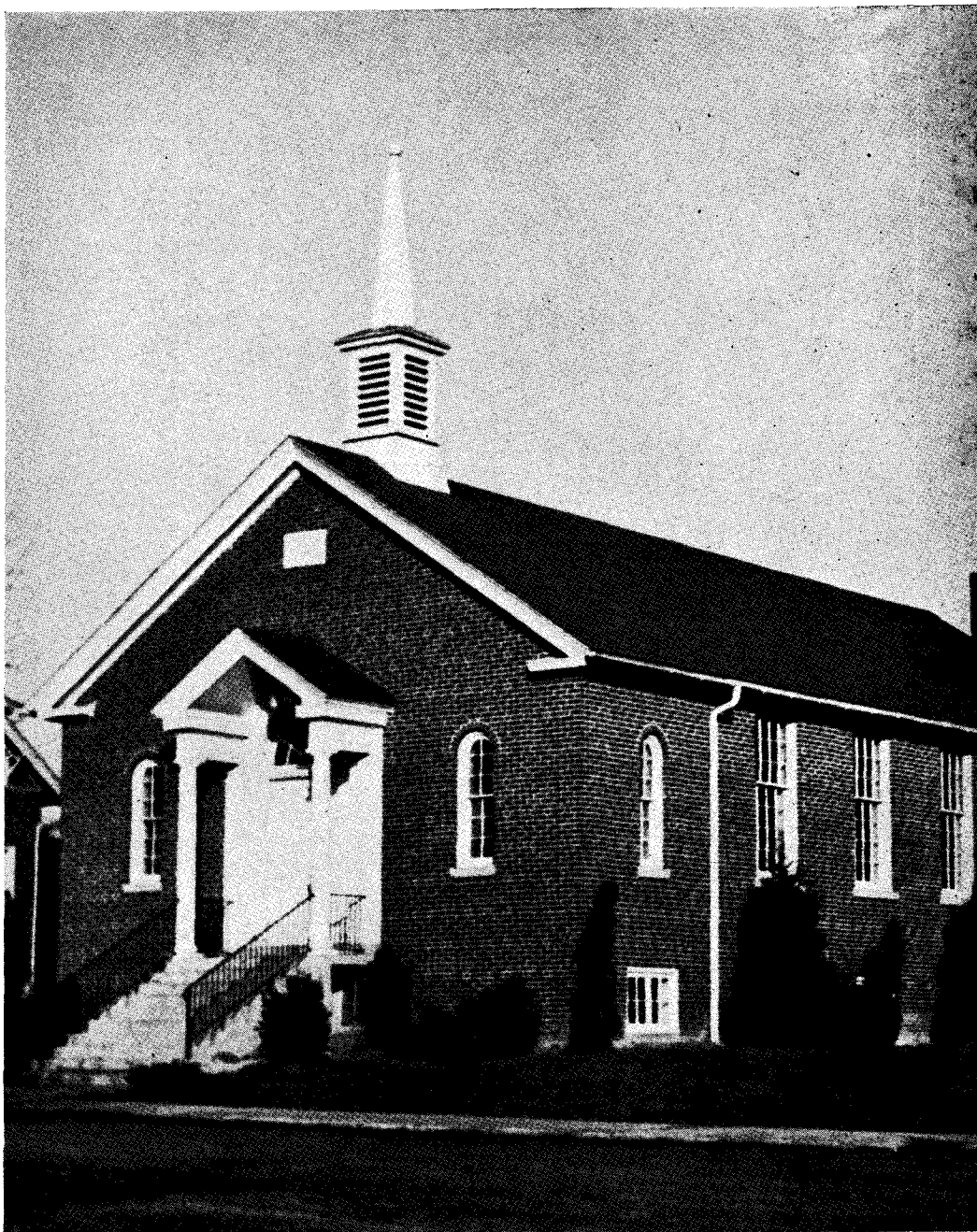
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Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

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Guardian News Commentator



CALVARY ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Middletown, Pennsylvania

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Tradition: Romish and Protestant

Part 2: The Protestant View of Tradition

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(Continued from previous issue)

THERE is then a catholic, a protestant and a reformed tradition. It would be false to disavow them. It would be presumptuous and even absurd to try to extricate ourselves from these traditions. We cannot do it and we should not attempt to. And we must bear in mind that these traditions of which we speak are not transmitted and carried on simply in the documents that enshrine and exemplify these traditions. In a highly real and important sense each tradition is established and perpetuated from generation to generation within the community and communion of those embracing and cherishing it. The family, the visible church, the school, to a certain extent even state institutions and various other organizations are instruments whereby these traditions are fostered and communicated. For example, a reformed community breathes in a certain atmosphere, is animated by a certain spirit, embraces a certain viewpoint, is characterized by a certain type of life and practice, maintains and promotes certain types of institutions. We call this the reformed tradition; it permeates the whole life of that community. When we pass on to another community of a different tradition, we immediately notice the difference. In these respects the fact of tradition and of its all-permeating influence on thought and life is undeniable. Where it is a good tradition, it should be welcomed, embraced, cherished, promoted. It is the way whereby God in His providence and grace establishes and furthers His kingdom in the world.

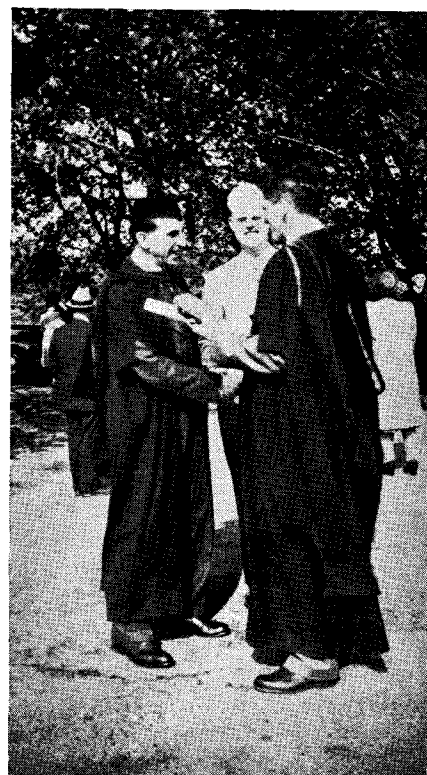
We must ask then: what is the difference between this view of tradition and that of the Romish Church? The difference is not to be sought in the denial that there is such a thing as tradition. Undoubtedly there is a reformed tradition, and Romish tradition, and Lutheran tradition and Methodist tradition. Neither is the difference to be sought in the badness of tradition as such. We would not condemn Romish tradition simply be-

cause it is tradition in the sense of our immediately foregoing discussion. If it stood a fair test of the criteria of Christianity, it would be good. But our present discussion is not concerned with an analysis of Romish tradition in the sense in which we also properly speak of reformed or Lutheran tradition. What we are concerned with is the Romish claim to the "unwritten traditions" which Rome says are to be received and venerated with a feeling of piety and reverence equal to that with which Scripture is received and venerated. We can immediately perceive that we are here dealing with something that is distinctive of Rome and finds no analogy in any protestant avowal. The difference between Romanists and Protestants is not that Rome claims one set of "unwritten traditions" which are to be received with piety and reverence, and Protestants claim another set of "unwritten traditions" which stand in opposition to those of Rome, but which are also to be received and venerated with piety and reverence. No, not at all. The difference is that Rome claims such "unwritten traditions" and Protestants deny that there are any such. For Protestants there are not two streams by which Christian revelation has come to us; there is but one—Holy Scripture. For Protestants there are not two norms of faith and morals, both equally authoritative; there is but one—Holy Scripture. It is precisely here the issue is joined, not at all in the denial of a protestant tradition and of its potent and beneficent influence.

It is, of course, quite true that the Romish view of the "unwritten traditions," which are regarded as on a par with Scripture in the matter of authority, has deeply affected the Roman Catholic tradition in thought and life. And any evaluation of the Romish tradition would have to take into account the influence exerted upon that tradition by Rome's view of the "unwritten traditions." But our concern now is simply Rome's claim to the "unwritten traditions."

Protestants unequivocally deny that there are "unwritten traditions" which provide any of the content of divine revelation or any of the instructions that are of divine authority. What then, we must ask, is the place or function of tradition in the protestant heritage?

Tradition, in the true sense of the word as delineated above, has the greatest potency and, if of the proper kind, the greatest value. But one thing must be appreciated, namely, that tradition, even when it is the best, has no *intrinsic* authority. Tradition is always subject to the scrutiny and test of Scripture. Its rightness or value is always determined by its conformity to Scripture. This is just saying that it is never proper to appeal to tradition
(See "Tradition," p. 152)



Professor Murray smilingly congratulates graduate Boertje, while Student Zetterholm looks on.

wherever their responsibilities have fallen. Hence the Seminary men have vigorously supported a program of evangelism at home and abroad. Hence, too, they have sought to stimulate a program of Christian education all along the line.

It is a source of deep gratitude that Westminster has been enabled, by the grace of God, to keep the faith. In spite of many imperfections, it has pursued a straight course with respect to the truth. One tangible proof is found in the volume, *The Infallible Word*. This book has been hailed at home and abroad as an effective exposition and defense of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It has brought comfort and strength to hundreds of people in a time of new subtle attacks upon the authority and integrity of the Bible.

In this volume, as in all of its instruction, Westminster has also sought to remain true to its commitment to the Reformed Faith. While joyfully acknowledging that there are many Christians who are not Calvinists, and cordially welcoming into its student body members of non-Presbyterian churches, the Seminary has endeavored, both militantly and winsomely, to expound and defend the Calvinistic system of doctrine.

Westminster Seminary stands today on the threshold of a new day of opportunity. It is fully as true now as it was in 1929 that Westminster has come to the kingdom for such a day as this. Its exposition and defense of the whole counsel of God are needed more than ever. Around the world men are looking to Westminster as a true center of Reformed learning, and are increasingly availing themselves of the instruction given there. In America too the situation in the churches remains one of widespread departures from the faith and thus of the defection of seminaries which were once true to the Word. But there are also signs of revival and reformation in many places, and in such areas there are many who take heart at the stand of the Seminary and welcome the men trained there. May Westminster prove sufficient for this new challenge! May she be preserved and strengthened in the work to which she has been called! May God's people be in earnest prayer that Westminster shall go forward mightily!

Tradition

(Continued from p. 150)

as having intrinsically an authority in matters of faith or morals. Tradition when true and right and good always flows from the Scripture and is simply God's will as revealed in Scripture coming to expression in thought and life. Tradition when right is always derived; it is never original or primary. And this is invariably true from whatever aspect tradition is viewed.

Perhaps the best example that can be provided is that of a creed. In the reformed tradition, particularly, creeds or confessions of faith have held a highly honoured place and have exerted a powerful influence for good. A creed is a formulation of the truth believed, a confession of the faith of that branch of the visible church which adopts it. It should not be disputed that the church has a right and duty to declare what it believes to be the system of truth contained in Scripture as well as to declare what it believes to be the sense or meaning of any particular part or teaching of Scripture. In such cases the creed is the bond of fellowship, a bulwark against the incursions of error, a testimony to the faith once delivered unto the saints, and an instrument for the preservation of both purity and peace. The persons subscribing to that creed are bound to adhere to its teachings as long as they enjoy the privileges accruing from that subscription and from the fellowship it entails. They must relinquish these privileges whenever they are no longer able to avow the tenets expressed in the creed. In this sense a creed may be said to be normative within the communion adopting it. For the Church concerned officially declares in the creed what it believes the teaching of Scripture to be. And so the person who has come to renounce the tenets of the creed to which he once subscribed has no right to continue to exercise the privileges contingent upon subscription. He may not in such a case protest his right to these privileges by appeal to Scripture as the supreme authority. It is entirely conceivable that the creed may be in error and his renunciation of it warranted and required by Scripture. But his resort in such a case must be to renounce subscription and with such renunciation the privileges incident to it. Then he may proceed to expose the falsity of the creedal position in the

light of Scripture. In a true sense, therefore, the creed, even in a reformed Church has regulative authority. But while full recognition must be given to this fact, there are certain positions that must be very jealously guarded lest we fall into the Romish conception of ecclesiastical authority.

(i) A creed never possesses by reason of the Church's action or adoption an authority that is intrinsic to itself. The action of the Church in framing the creed or the action of the Church in adopting it in no way guarantees the truth or correctness of the interpretation the creed embodies or of the formulation it presents. No creed or other official declaration of the Church is by the action of the Church invested with divine authority. A creed by reason of its being a creed is never *per se* authoritative so as to bind the conscience in matters either of faith or of morals.

(ii) A creed or any other ecclesiastical pronouncement derives its whole authority from its consonance with Scripture. It is only as it reproduces and only insofar as it reproduces the teaching of Scripture that it possesses authority over the faith and lives of men. As it is the transcript or reproduction of the teaching of Scripture, it has binding authority for the simple reason that what is scriptural rests upon the authority of Scripture itself and carries with it the mandate of Scripture.

(iii) The person who adopts a creed and subscribes to it is never justified in doing so merely on the authority of the Church or simply because it is the creed of the Church to which he belongs. Creedal adoption or subscription must always proceed from the conviction that the creed is in accord with Scripture and declares its truth. The person adopting can never pass on the responsibility for such personal and individual conviction to the Church and its official action. The moment acceptance is conceded on the basis that it is the interpretation and formulation of the Church rather than on the basis of consonance with Scripture, in that moment the Church is accorded the place of God and the authority of the Church is substituted for the authority of God's Word. The gravity of such a spiritual catastrophe cannot be measured. For in principle the idolatry perpetrated by Rome has been conceded and the basis has been

laid for the gross impieties and tyrannies that have followed the career of the Romish Church. We need to guard jealously the position so eloquently expressed in the Westminster Confession: "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and

the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also" (Chap. XX, Sect. II); "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men" (Chap. I, Sect. VI).

the Preambles to the Constitutions of our various national unions we read that all people working in a given industry are welcome to join the union, irrespective of their race, color, creed or national origin. Now the question arises, should a Christian shun joining a union and by the same token be active in a union because of this all-inclusiveness; must a Christian sit idly by and allow his fellow work-mates to work and strive for better working conditions, wage increases, vacations with pay, etc.,—in other words, is it fair for anyone to enjoy the fruits of organized labor without paying or doing anything to help secure them. As a Christian my answer is that I consider it my duty and a privilege to work and strive with my fellow-workers for what I consider is right and just in the bettering of our working conditions and not to take a free ride on their efforts.

American labor history is full of accounts of those who have sacrificed and unselfishly given of their time and talents for the furtherance of better living conditions for the wage earner. Some have given their lives. And it is not class warfare that I refer to, because the heroes, and, yes, the martyrs of the American labor movement come from all classes and walks of life,—men and women who could not and would not stand idly by while advantage was being taken of those who did not know how to help themselves. The main objective of most of our labor unions is the recognition of the dignity of labor, *not class warfare*. In order for a worker to preserve his dignity, he must be considered as a human being, not merely as a cog in a machine, or a piece of merchandise that may be bought and sold in the market place. So a worker early learns that joining a union is a great help in giving him some sense of security, for his union will protect him against unfair labor practices and always seek to improve his working conditions. The worker also realizes that he is in a position to bargain with his employer on near equal terms.

To achieve its objective, organized labor welcomes the help of all liberal and progressive organizations, but labor resents any interference from outside organizations, in trying to control the unions for any particular ideology or creed of their own, as for example the abortive Communist attempt which came near succeeding because

Should Christians "Get Out" of Non-Christian Labor Unions?

Comments on the Article by Mr. Gritter

By Ruling Elder WILFRED R. MOSES

Clerk of Session, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, West Collingswood, N. J.

WE ARE glad to have this article by Mr. Moses, commenting on the one previously published from the pen of Mr. Gritter. Mr. Moses is a member of the International Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, and is on the General Executive Board of that Union. With reference to these, as to all signed articles, the reader should understand that they do not necessarily represent the position of the Editors of this paper.

IT WAS with considerable interest that I read in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN the article entitled "Christianity in Labor Relationships," by Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary of the Christian Labor Association. There is no doubt that Mr. Gritter has given a lot of time and thoughtful study to the subject, and I agree with him on such facts as the greater interest that is being taken by the public in labor relationships, and the difficulty our Congressmen have in the preparation of legislation that will take into consideration the best interests of our nation as a whole,—a difficulty due in part to the punitive approach of many of the legislators. I also agree with him in his reference to the abuse of power in a number of instances on the part of both Labor and Management, although Mr. Gritter points out that "even today the employers who own the tools for production still

have much greater power than the labor unions."

There are other points in the article with which a Christian may also agree. But the tone of the article, or at least the solution to the problem in labor relationships that is advocated by the Christian Labor Association is not practical, but seems to me rather to be idealistic and starry-eyed, based on the principle that on one side of the bargaining table are Christian employers and on the other side are Christian employees. It is possible that such a situation at the collective bargaining table happens in small plants and workshops, provided the employment manager has been extraordinarily selective in his choice of personnel. That would be an ideal condition to bargain under, for the Word of God would then be the determining factor, and the employee would stand to receive a far greater share of the goods he helps to produce and the employer to receive a much better return on his investments.

However, we must face matters the way we find them, and the answer to what we find in labor relationships cannot, I am convinced, be discovered in the manner proposed by the C. L. A., no matter how beneficial such an organization may be under certain given circumstances. Our American labor movement is made up of all types of people and in most of