

F. S. DYRNESS
 MAY 1933-R
 R. D. 2
 QUARRY, PA.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY



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

SAMUEL G. CRAIG, Editor

H. McALLISTER GRIFFITHS, Managing Editor

Published monthly by
THE PRESBYTERIAN AND
REFORMED PUBLISHING CO.,
501 Witherspoon Bldg., Phila., Pa.

MID-OCTOBER, 1932
Vol. 3 No. 6

\$1.00 A YEAR EVERYWHERE
Entered as second-class matter May 11, 1931, at
the Post Office at Philadelphia, Pa., under the
Act of March 3, 1879.

The Corporate Witness of the Church

THE primary task of the organized church as of the individual Christian is to bear witness. Our LORD's final command was: "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." In obedience to this command the apostles (as soon as the Holy Spirit had come upon them) entered upon a campaign of witnessing—a campaign in which they continued active until their memberships had been transferred from the church militant to the church triumphant (Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3-15; 5; 32; 10:39-42; 13:31; 22:15; with which compare MATTHEW 24:14 and LUKE 24:48.)

This campaign of witnessing stressed both the facts and the doctrines that constitute the Christian religion. "I delivered unto you first of all," PAUL wrote to the Corinthians, "that which I also received: that CHRIST died for our sins according to the Scriptures." "CHRIST died"—that was the statement of a fact. "CHRIST died for our sins"—that was the statement of a doctrine, i.e. the true explanation of the fact. The fact without the doctrine would have been meaningless: the doctrine without the fact would have been empty. He who is silent either as to the facts or the doctrines that lie at the basis of the Christian religion is worthless as a Christian witness.

It is conceivable that CHRIST should not have established a church. In that case we would be under obligation to witness for CHRIST as individuals; but would not need to be concerned about the

corporate witness of the church to which we belong. As a matter of fact, however, He did establish a church. Moreover there is nothing to indicate that He approves of un-attached Christians, those who accept Him as their personal LORD and SAVIOUR but who are not members of His organized church. Hence, the situation being what it is, we are both under obligation to be members of the organized church and to do all in our power to see to it that its corporate witness is both clean-cut and adequate. Ideally there should be but one church and this one church should bear faithful witness to a full-orbed gospel. Lacking this one church we must be content to belong to the church that best wit-

nesses to the gospel in the community in which our lot is cast. But, whatever the church to which we belong, we are under obligation, as much as in us lies, to see to it that in its corporate capacity it bears full and unequivocal witness to the gospel of the grace of God. This is not to say that it is enough that we belong to an organization calling itself a church. Conceivably all the churches in a community may have "so degenerated as to become no churches of CHRIST but synagogues of Satan" (Confession of Faith, Chapter 25). Suppose, for instance, that the Presbyterian Church should so modify its creed as to bring it into harmony with "Modernism." In that case its corporate testimony would be hostile to the gospel of the grace of God and as such an organization to which no genuine Christian should belong.

We would not be understood as minimizing the importance of the witness of the individual Christian. Important and indispensable as that is, however, it is insignificant as compared to the corporate witness of the church to which the individual belongs by as much as that organization is greater than the individual. How little, for instance, is the significance that attaches to the witness of any individual Presbyterian as compared with the corporate testimony of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. with its two million members! The corporate witness of the church is therefore a matter of great importance in the maintenance and propagation of the Christian religion, true as it is that

IN THIS ISSUE:

Editorial Notes and Comments	
A Significant Letter.....	2
"Needed Emphases in the Church Today".....	3
Two Calls to Repentance.....	3
Presbyterian Pelagianism.....	4
Wm. Childs Robinson	
Notes on Biblical Exposition—XXII....	6
J. Gresham Machen	
Let Us Become "Antioch Christians" Once More!.....	9
John C. Monsma	
Letters to the Editor.....	12
"Perfectionism": A Book Review.....	14
News of the Church.....	16

Presbyterian Pelagianism

By the Rev. Wm. Childs Robinson, A.M., Th.D.

Professor of Church History in Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga.

"JUST when the Church had comfortably settled herself to an idealistic, hypocritical doctrine of the innate goodness of human nature, modern psychology interrupted her slumbers with a realistic, Calvinistic note. By uncovering the subtle process of rationalization psychology destroys the illusions of the righteous, and discloses the grimace of the Devil even in the lives of the noblest."

These radio observations by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Seminary (N. Y.) were perhaps intended to support his socialistic program; but to one hearer they were a means of starting this train of Pelagian ponderings.

Every student of the history of Christian thought is aware that a Church may actually teach Pelagianism, while it officially rejects it. Pelagius was repeatedly condemned by the Mediaeval Church; but a neo-Pelagianism was surreptitiously re-introduced in the latter part of the Middle Ages and assiduously taught to Luther and his contemporaries by the scholastic modernists. Therefore it is theoretically possible for a Presbyterian Church, even though it profess the most anti-Pelagian creed in the world, nevertheless to teach Pelagianism.

The most conspicuous actual example of such teaching is to be found in President John Oman's *Grace and Personality*, Macmillan. According to one of his students this volume was commended, about two years ago, by Dean Weigle of Yale as an excellent example of the New Calvinism. One would naturally infer that the volume was Calvinistic from the very prominent place occupied by the author in English Presbyterian circles, as well as from the Introduction.¹ After reading the volume the student properly reported that he could find no Calvinism in it.

In the Introduction to *Grace and Personality* Mr. Nolan R. Best invites the reader to compare the volume with Calvin's Institutes. Such a comparison yields several misrepresentations of Calvin's teaching, both in Mr. Best's Introduction, pp. xi, xii, xiii, xiv, and in Dr. Oman's text, pp. 50, 86, 90. But more important than such details, the examination of this volume in its distinctive points of view, in its fundamental principles, in its specific doctrines, emphatically contradicts the thesis of the Introduction that, "in essence Dr. Oman is as Calvinistic as Calvin himself" (p. x).

Calvinism is the most consistent form of historic Christianity. If one undertakes to formulate the teachings of Dr. Oman's book on such historic Christian doctrines as sin (pp. 113, 123, 211), redemption (116-17), reconciliation (119), justification (254, 259, 262, 265), regeneration (76), the priestly (217), kingly (265) and prophetic (67) offices of Christ, the imitation of Christ (259), the Church (171), ethics (51, 67, 95, 251-4), he finds that the theology is not Calvinism; but Ritschlian "liberalism," with the earmarks by which Herrmann distinguishes that system. For example, Herrmann's statement, "the foundations of ethics can be laid without any regard for religion—the development is in connection with a religious view of the world," aptly describes Oman's book (pp. 51-2, 59, 95, 251). The same may be said of Herrmann's doctrine that Christian faith is simply trust in God's providence induced by the impression which Jesus makes on the soul. Oman's statement, "love is God" (138) is hopelessly Ritschlian; just as his rejection of the justice (138) and the sovereignty (154) of God are both Ritschlian and anti-Calvinistic.

Oman particularly rejects the Augustinian doctrine of grace, as the direct, inward work of the Holy Spirit "shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts," *Rom.* 5:5; cf. Augustine, *On the Letter and the Spirit*. Oman recognizes that in the distinction between Augustine and Kant there are two worlds (p. 60). Repeatedly he sides with Kant, condemning Augustine's doctrine that grace is the direct, inward, immediate, supernatural action of God on the heart (118, 95, 188), and ridiculing that doctrine as "irresistible violence," "mechanical," "impersonal," "arbitrary," "immoral," etc. (pp. 40, 71, 86). Augustine "from the beginning was on the wrong road" (68). Grace, for Oman, is always indirect, external, oblique, determined by his modernistic definitions of human personality. More correctly, Professor Emil Brunner has shown that these definitions lead to atomic individuality, not to gracious personality. *The Word and the World*, p. 116.

Dr. Oman is a Kantian. Neither Augustine nor Calvin would regard the Kantians as disciples. The burden of Brunner's book is that the modern mind with its self-sufficient reason derived from Descartes and its autonomous will derived from Kant is the true enemy of historic Christianity. And yet these principles are the very axioms of Oman's volume. The absolute antimony between Brunner (the neo-Calvinist) and Oman (the Kantian) is acutely sharpened in their respective treatments of autonomy and heteronomy. Oman agrees with Kant that whatever is heteronomous is morally worthless (252); Brunner contends that "faith is through and through heteronomous," *The Word and the World*, pp. 66, 105.

The great Dutch Calvinist, H. Bavinck, holds that even Kant, with an eye on the inborn sinfulness of men, comes in the end to an appeal to the will, the wisdom and the powers of man, i.e. to heathenism, *Gereformeerde Dogmatik*

¹ Cf. also *The Union Seminary Review*, July 1931, p. 414, note.

A close reading of Dr. Oman's moderatorial address in the October 1931 number of this periodical reveals the same doctrinal positions referred to in the book. One remark in this article should be applied to its author: So pro-

foundly does the English Moderator disagree with the doctrines of the Westminster Confession that one wonders "by what liberality of interpretation" he can find any substance of his faith in these Presbyterian standards. *Union Seminary Review*, October 1931, p. 36.

iii, 425-6. Kant's axiom that man has the ability to do whatever the moral law demands is Pelagianism. Around the central principle of the plenary ability of the human will Pelagius built his autosoteric system. On this same foundation, plus the self-sufficiency of man's reason (pp. 65, 75), Oman has reconstructed the old building. The words of America's greatest Calvinist scholar offer the best characterization of this system. Dr. B. B. Warfield wrote: "The New Protestantism, attaching itself to the Enlightenment" (even Oman's philosophy of history follows Troelsch in depreciating the Reformation and magnifying the Illumination, Chapter 1)—"forgets even Kant's sense of radical evil—this modern thought reproduces ancient Pelagianism with a less profound sense of guilt and with no expiation for sins." Therefore it is "a Pelagianism which out-Pelagianizes Pelagius." *The Plan of Salvation*, pp. 53, 54, 56.

Dr. B. J. Kidd, the Oxford historian, resolves Pelagianism "into two main propositions: (1) We do not need supernatural Grace, because (2) We do not bring into the world with us Original Sin." *A History of the Church*, ii, p. 64. The first of these is conspicuous in Dr. Oman's volume. The second, whether or not one enters the world with original sin, therefore, awaits attention. Dr. John McNeil, the old Scottish evangelist, used to declare that one's doctrine of babies determined his whole theology. Certainly the doctrine of babies distinguished the views of Augustine more clearly from those of Pelagius than any other doctrine. An Augustinian believes that the souls of these little ones are so precious to the heavenly Father (Matt. 18:10, 14) that, though they are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), they are sought by the Shepherd (Matt. 18:11-13), redeemed by His blood, and regenerated by His Spirit (West. Conf., Ch. 10, Sect. 3). The New England Primer expressed this teaching in its opening sentence: "In Adam's fall we sinned all." On the other hand, a Pelagian merely dedicates a sinless and spotless babe to God, believing that the child deserves Heaven for his own goodness. This doctrine of the innate good-

ness of human nature has been for centuries the orthodox Chinese teaching, inculcated by Confucius in his Analects and by Mencius in his philosophy. The following lines from a Chinese classic could as well be used by every Pelagian:

"Men, one and all, in infancy
Are virtuous at heart;
Their moral tendencies the same
Their practices wide apart.
Without instruction's kindly aid
Man's nature grows less fair;
In teaching, thoroughness should be
A never ceasing care."

—Translated by Giles.

The finest opportunity which a minister has for indicating his own views and for indoctrinating his people in this theme is at the baptism of a baby. The old Westminster form for administering baptism required the minister to exhort the parent as to the danger of God's wrath to himself and to his child. Both the U. S. A. and the U. S. Books of Church Order direct the minister to instruct those present at this sacrament that: "We are by nature sinful, guilty and polluted, and have need for cleansing by the blood of Christ and by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God." The Southern Presbyterian Book further proposes, as the first question to be asked the parents:

"(1) Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?" In other words, the official position of those who profess the Westminster Standards (in America) is Augustinian. Alas, too often ministers in both these great American communions conduct this ordinance without an intimation that infants are baptized "because they have a sinful nature and need a Saviour." Ministers make out questions of their own, no one of which parallels the first question in the Southern Presbyterian Book or otherwise indicates the primary reference which New Testament baptism holds to sin. The opportunity for testifying one's Augustinianism is allowed to pass and a service is presented that inculcates Pelagianism. This regrettable practice is about to be authorized in the largest

part of American Presbyterianism. The Directory for Worship for the use of the proposed American Presbyterian Church gives a thoroughly Pelagian form for the administration of infant baptism. *Documents relating to the Proposed Organic Union*, December 1931, p. 186. The Augustinian elements in the instructions and the promises of the older forms are carefully and completely deleted; so that parents are invited to dedicate their children to God, merely promising to instruct them. The Confucian lines quoted above are congruent with the proposed form. In direct antithesis stand the excellent Augustinian words of the editor of *Christianity Today*:

"We take it that no doctrine of infant salvation is *Christian* that does not assume that infants are lost members of a lost race, for whom there is no salvation apart from Christ."

Quoted from *Christianity Today*, January 1931, by Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 145.

Pelagianism is naturalism. Out of the caves of the old man it creeps upon every man and every minister. Only eternal vigilance and the continual illumination by the Word and the Spirit can keep any preacher from repeating its suave phrases. Therefore in the case of the writer the cries of the confessional must mingle with the pipes of the polemics. How easy it is to slip into the popular habit of praising the goodness of modern youth, commending them for never having known the deep things of sin, especially when one shuts his eyes to the things that are actually going on all the way from many circles of "high society" married people down to some junior and high schools. Cf. Sally Martin, Youth and Prohibition in *The Forum*, February 1932. As a young "theolog" conducting a "revival" meeting in a West Virginia mission point, I went up Saw Log Hollow to talk to a group of children. After I had wasted most of the available time telling the group how good all modern children were, I called on an old Methodist local preacher for a few words. This brother told the children that they were guilty,

(Continued on page 7)

who hath bewitched you?" "You have had bestowed upon you all the marvels of the free grace of God; you have received new life through the Cross of Christ; yet you are making it all of none effect in order to try to earn by your own miserable works what Christ has purchased for you by His blood. Who hath bewitched you to make you turn your back upon so great salvation?"

The Missionary Preaching of Paul

"Who hath bewitched you," says Paul, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly pictured as crucified." Here we have one of the precious references in the Pauline Epistles to the missionary preaching of the Apostle as distinguished from the instruction which he gave to Christian people. There are many things that we do not know about the missionary preaching of Paul, since the Epistles are addressed not to the unconverted but to Christians and since the Book of Acts gives us only brief examples of the Apostle's preaching to the unconverted world; but one thing we do know about it—we do know that at the very heart of it was the Cross of Christ. "The story of the crucifixion," Paul says in our passage, if we may paraphrase his words, "was made so vivid and so plain in my first preaching among you that it was as though a great picture of Christ on the cross were being held up before your eyes, or [if we adopt a different interpretation of the word that is figuratively used] as though a great placard were being held up before you with the words on it, 'Jesus Christ crucified.'"

Of course, this story of the Cross was not presented by the Apostle merely as an inspiring story of a holy martyrdom; but it was presented as something that had profound meaning for those to whom it was proclaimed. "Christ died for your sins," said Paul to those unconverted people in the Galatian cities.

Should Doctrine Be Preached to the Unconverted?

According to the tendency of religious work which is prevalent at the present day, Christian doctrine, including the central doctrine of the atonement, is to be presented to people, if at all, after

rather than before they have been saved. The advocates of this method sometimes have kind things to say about doctrine; it is necessary, they admit, in its proper place. A man who has already entered upon holy living, some of them no doubt say, will go on to study his Bible and will attain an ever more correct view of Christ and of the meaning of Christ's death. But at the beginning all that, it is held, is unnecessary; at the beginning all that is needed is surrender of the human will. What a man needs to do first, it is thought, is to put away his sin by his own act of surrender; there is time enough later for doctrinal instruction.

Whether that non-doctrinal, anti-intellectualistic method of religious work is right or wrong, it may be observed at any rate that it is quite contrary to the New Testament from beginning to end. The New Testament does not, in the manner of these modern religious workers, offer a man salvation first and then preach the gospel to him afterwards; but it preaches the gospel to him first—with the blessed doctrine of the atonement at the centre of it—and then, through his acceptance of that gospel, it brings salvation to his soul. It was to unconverted people that Paul preached in Galatia the message of the Cross of Christ; and when they accepted that message—that "doctrine"—they were saved.

Presbyterian Pelagianism (Continued)

wicked, depraved little sinners, who needed the cleansing grace of the Holy Spirit. Both Pelagianism and Augustinianism were taught that day in the Hollow. But the Presbyterian "Seminole" preached the Pelagianism; the Methodist brother supplied the Augustinianism.

Consider the average appeal made to the college man to accept Christ. Utterly oblivious to the Reformation doctrine that "faith is a certainty," the speaker begins with the assurance that Christian faith cannot be scientifically validated or historically vindicated as other truths are verified. Then he appeals to the student to exercise his good

will, and by the plenary ability of his autonomous will to throw himself on the side of Christ. Faith is presented as a glorious venture made by the will-to-believe, betting one's life that there is a God. This form of appeal has developed a considerable tradition. With such names as Donald Hankey, William James, Fichte, Kant, Erasmus, William of Occam and Pelagius, it might be said to constitute a "liberal" orthodoxy. Perhaps it is about time for Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr to remind those who are cutting these ruts deeper that the free, autonomous will with plenary ability has fared worse at the hands of modern psychology than even at the hands of Calvinists. Indeed, Barth declares that if we are to have any will at all we get it by positing our freedom on the royal freedom of the Sovereign God. With biting irony Barth describes an ecclesiastical machinery with young people's programs well prepared to keep good people good or even to make them better. The magnificent response which German youth has thus far given Barth's own proclamation of the brokenness of man's will and the sinfulness of his self-affirmation would serve to indicate that he has approached a bit closer to the hard facts of human psychology by leaving the ruts of "liberalism." From personal observation and information the writer can testify to the wonderful response which the youth of the Southeast and the youth of the Southwest have given Dr. "Bill" (W. M.) Anderson's presentation of the Biblical portrait of man and his need. Youth needs something more than the unsuspected resources of spiritual power in his own soul; the latent energies of his own will. He needs the supernatural, inward, purging, regenerating and renewing grace of the living God. He needs to have the heart of stone taken away, to be created anew in Christ Jesus, to have the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost. The actual young man one faces across the pulpit of a college chapel needs the Gospel of a God Almighty enough to make a bad man good, preached by a man who repents of his own sins while he calls others to repentance.

Once more, Pelagianism shows itself

in a poorly learned doctrine of election. There is a very naive kind of complacency and self-satisfaction in the conception of election held by some Presbyterians. "Am not I rich, comfortable, ethical, cultured, one of the bon tons, the elite, yes the elect?" An old Gettysburg elder told an incident which happened years ago in Carlisle Presbytery illustrating this point. A younger brother was doing an excellent piece of missionary work among a neglected group of people of German descent. The successful mission was killed by the pastor of one of the stronger churches who told Presbytery that "Pennsylvania Dutch never would make good Presbyterians anyway." What an utterly amazing statement for a minister who professed to believe in unconditional election! A real Augustinian absolutely denies that he is of the elect in the sense of standing before God as one of the elite, the bon tons. The true Calvinist confesses that he is the chief of sinners, the last, the least, the lowest at the Lord's table. He sees his egocentricity, his opposition to God, his love of evil and hatred of good. The white light of God's holiness wipes away that smug complacency. Illusions are gone. The sinner stands naked and undone before his Maker, confessing "nothing good have I Thy grace to claim." Ah then, he catches a glimpse of the true character of grace. Grace is love to the undeserving, the ill-deserving, the hell-deserving. The election taught by Paul and Augustine was wholly unconditioned by anything the sinner could ever offer. Real predestination has its foundation and its ground solely in God. All its springs are in Him; none in the sinner. "When we were hateful and hating one another, then God's love to men appeared." Election by God unconditioned by anything in man, "not that we loved Him, but that He loved us," sings "God is love" (1 John 4:7-10).

Augustine was a preacher of grace, as the love-energy of the holy God. Pelagius was the propagandist of moral reform wrought by human ability. The disciples of each have walked in the steps of their masters ever since. It has been well said that Luther was a sinner seeking a saviour; while Erasmus was a

scholar seeking a religion. Luther certified his Augustinianism by teaching the bondage of the will; Erasmus indicated his spiritual ancestry by defending the freedom of the will. In our day the Augustinian preaches the Gospel; the Pelagian preaches a social gospel. The Augustinian is a witness called "to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." The Pelagian is an exhorter urging measures of moral reform. In his *Rutherford B. Hayes—The Age of Hate*, Mr. H. J. Eckenrode has distinguished the two. This author declares that Christianity is not a narcotic; but the most overpowering stimulant humanity has ever experienced; that the real narcotics are the reform movements to which men give themselves as substitutes for Christianity. Augustinians offer the Christian stimulant; Pelagians shift from one reform narcotic to another. A Lutheran friend once asked the writer of this article why the conservatives were so much slower in preaching pacifism than the "liberals." The reply, then and now, is: "For the same reason that they were so much slower in preaching war; they have something else to preach." About six years ago the American *Mercury* raised a storm by quoting the way in which the great Eastern pacifist preachers (of about 1926) had fervently damned the Kaiser, in the years from 1914 to 1919.

A Pelagian desire for a great ecclesiastical machine with sufficient numbers to dominate state politics is one reason why there are so many calls for church affiliation and union. This purpose may be unknown or unrealized to many good men who push such schemes. The writer has the highest regard for the doctrinal soundness of certain ones of his brother ministers both in the North and the South who have recently advocated membership in the Federal Council. These particular brethren could never be Pelagian themselves. They would never consciously tolerate a Pelagian position for their churches. May the writer have the temerity to ask them to consider whether in supporting the Federal Council they are not unconsciously asking their respective churches to take a position which is logically Pelagian? Does not the

history of the Federal Council to date show that Presbyterian Churches have held membership in it only at the cost of *sacrificing the Gospel for the sake of the social gospel, and is this not Pelagianism?*

In frankness the writer should perhaps say that he has three other questions about this Council. (1) Has not the Council taken up for discussion and pronouncement matters which are beyond the scope of the Church's activities according to chapter 31, section 4 of the Westminster Confession? (2) Has not the Council and its agencies professed to speak the mind of the affiliated Churches on matters on which these Churches hold divergent and contradictory opinions? For instance, the Westminster Confession holds that Christian magistrates "may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions" (Chapter 23, Section 2). On the other hand, the most recent protagonist of the Federal Council, Dr. William Adams Brown, maintains that Presbyterians "feel increasingly the fundamental contradiction between war and the spirit of Jesus." In the immediately preceding paragraph the New York professor affirms that there is room "for honest difference of opinion" as to the righteousness of using "force" to accomplish "a radical revolution in the whole social sphere," "among men who agree in holding the Social Gospel." (*Union Seminary Review*, July 1932, p. 401). Is this, then, the casuistry of the Social Gospel: first, that it is right for certain advocates of the Social Gospel to use force in a radical, socialistic revolution; second, that it is proper for all the other Social Gospellers to tolerate this armed attack upon the American Government, since "here there is room for honest difference of opinion"; but third, that it is wrong, in "fundamental contradiction" to "the spirit of Jesus," for the Chief Magistrate to wage war against armed revolt as well as against the foreign abettors thereof? Except His Apostles had given a very different interpretation of "the spirit of Jesus" in relation to civil authority (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 12:1-6; 1 Peter 2:13-17), this loved land

(Continued on page 11)

course, is not only illogical, and even foolish, but dangerous in the extreme.

No, the inclusive Church idea must be torn up and cast out, root and branch. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. stands unequivocally opposed to it, both historically and doctrinally. Those who belong to her membership and yet attack her Constitution, her doctrines, her polity, and her historical methods, are interlopers and seditionists. They have a full right to their opinions; they even have a full right to spread them as assiduously as brains and money will allow;—but not until they are outside our Church boundaries. And when once we have them outside—may God speed the day!—they will at once become the objects of our loving missionary effort. We can then try to win them for our precious, eternal faith.

I want to stress something else. A thoroughgoing reformation requires more than a *revival*. A genuine spiritual revival is the first requisite. I have already stressed that at the beginning. But we need more, far more, than the stirring of individual souls to a fuller and more zestful life. The whole, enormous structure of the Church needs overhauling. Great reconstructive efforts must be made in all departments. The great doctrinal and governmental principles to which our fathers held with utmost tenacity, by which they lived, for which they died, must again be brought to the fore; they must again be made to exert their powerful directive influence—everywhere.

Let Presbyterians no longer give heed to the twaddle that those principles are outworn; that they no longer fit in the twentieth century scheme of things. Gold is gold, whether you find it new in the gold mines of South Africa or bring it up from the darkness of King Tut-Ankh-Amen's tomb in Egypt. There is no old or new to it. It is never outworn or out of style. Let Presbyterians wipe the dust from the gold of their principles, those principles that hail from eternity and belong to the ages, and let them highly resolve that no materials will be found in their reconstructed temple that are out of harmony with their solidness and lustre.

To introduce, in the name and with the help of God, our desperately needed reformation we must organize our orthodox forces throughout the Church. If anywhere, the old motto is applicable in our situation: "United we stand; divided we fall." No battle has ever been won by soldiers acting individually and for and by themselves. In solid, compact, well-organized ranks we must meet our opponents. If we do, there is no doubt about a victorious outcome. Our opponents have really nothing to fall back on. They are religious privateers, everyone of them. They have nothing authoritative to back them. They soar on Icarus-wings and seek to reach the glamorous nothings of

a *fata morgana*, a mirage. We have *back of us* and *with us* and *in us* the history, the traditions, the Constitution, the doctrines, the world-conquering FAITH of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; we have going on before us the everlasting SON OF GOD;—and in these circumstances the outcome should not be in doubt. All we need do, and do carefully and thoroughly, is *organize*.

Presbyterian Pelagianism (Continued)

would have long since been Mexicanized, or Sovietized, or anarchized. This method of defending the Federal Council easily suggests the third question concerning that body: (3) Is the Federal Council patriotic or unpatriotic, pro-American or pro-Soviet? The wide prevalence of this question is acknowledged even by those who defend Presbyterian participation in the Federal Council, e.g., Rev. Dr. J. T. Bergen of Minneapolis in *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, July 1932.

But even if each of these three questions were satisfactorily answered, from the standpoint of this article there would still be grave objection to Presbyterian participation in this organization. Are not Presbyterians taking a Pelagian position when, for the sake of accomplishing such social and political matters as the abrogation of the color line in the best hotels, the Americanization of Dr. D. C. Mackintosh, the proper disposal of Fiume, the removal of the German confession of unique war guilt in the Versailles treaty, the curbing of militarism, they support a Federal Council which uses as a radio preacher a man who has "decoded" the Resurrection of Jesus into the Greek doctrine of the immortality of His spirit (*The Modern Use of the Bible*), who has rejected the Virgin Birth and the Second Coming of Christ, who has used the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church of New York to caricature and hold up to ridicule the doctrine of the atonement found in the Westminster Standards and taught by the Southern Presbyterian Church, namely, the satisfaction of Divine justice by penal substitution (*Shall the Fundamentalists Win?*), who

calls in question the supreme object of Presbyterian worship with a sermon, *The Peril of Worshipping Jesus?* Can Calvinists properly support for social purposes a Council whose radio preachers present a New Protestantism antagonistic to the Reformation battle standard—justification by faith—in the nature of faith, the function of faith, the certainty of faith, the ground of justification, the nature of justification, and the graciousness or meritoriousness of the whole process? Basing ecclesiastical organization on social interests, to the disregard of difference in belief, is the characteristic of Hinduism, not of historic Christianity.

Turning finally to the question of Church union, Dr. William A. Brown's article, already mentioned, furnishes the latest basis for discussion. In the interest of Augustinianism statements by prominent representatives of each of the two Union Theological Seminaries will be opposed to the unionism advocated by this professor emeritus of Union, N. Y., in the *Review of Union*, Va. In his inaugural address Dr. Ben R. Lacy, Jr., of Union (Va.), very courageously drew a line of distinction and demarcation between those seminaries which accepted the supernatural and those which rejected the supernatural (*Union Seminary Review*, July 1927, p. 360). It does not admit of doubt that Dr. Lacy used the word supernatural in its usual and historical sense of miraculous; and that three years after the *Auburn Affirmation* he thus heroically placed himself and his seminary on the side of the miracles of the new Testament. On the other hand Dr. Brown defends the *Auburn Affirmation* and thus undertakes to destroy Dr. Lacy's line of distinction, since *The Affirmation* declares that the acceptance of the miracles of the Gospels is not necessary for Presbyterian ordination. A careless reader may not gather this from Dr. Brown's article. The New York professor comes out in large type for "THE RE-DISCOVERY OF THE SUPERNATURAL." But the sensitized reader will discern that in this section, *Union Seminary Review*, July 1932, pp. 390-392, Dr. Brown is not using the word supernatural in its usual sense of the miraculous. Of course,

Professors Whitehead and Oman do not wish to be understood as standing with Dr. Lacy for the literal acceptance of the miracles of the Gospels. To heed Dr. Brown's plea, then, and to unite on the basis of the *Auburn Affirmation* is to obliterate that line which the President of Union (Va.) so magnificently drew in his inaugural address.

Nor is this all. Dr. Brown closes by urging the submerging of lines of division by "simplifying our terms of subscription, putting all emphasis upon the central convictions which we share as Christians with all our fellow Christians" (Ibid, pp. 405-6). In the light of his defense of the *Auburn Affirmation* these central convictions would certainly not include the Virgin Birth, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, or that He offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and reconcile us to God. It should also be remembered that not so many months ago Dr. Brown came out in the Introduction to Horton's *Theism and the Modern Mood* for the inclusion of the Humanists (men who do not believe in God) in Christian fellowship. Just which "central convictions" are common to the Southern Presbyterians, the Auburn Affirmationists, and the Humanists? Certainly, the lowest common denominator of that equation is a sacrifice of Augustinianism. The humanistic *motif* in American religion from Channing to John Deitrich and John Haynes Holmes has ever been the destruction of the Augustinian-Calvinistic doctrine of man.

Across the entrance to the broad road opened by Dr. Wm. Adams Brown stands a warning sign written by the grandest Augustinian who ever occupied a chair in the New York Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Wm. G. T. Shedd warned that denominational unity was undesirable since it would compromise the glorious Calvinistic doctrine of free and sovereign grace (*Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy*, p. 247). Dr. Shedd vigorously inculcated Christian philanthropy; but as a true Calvinist he refused to subordinate "the praise of the glory of God's grace" (Eph. 1:6) to the Social Gospel. Shall Presbyterianism walk the easy road down the valley of popular

Pelagianism; or shall she essay to re-climb the steep and lonely path that leads to the mountains where her true prophets—her Shedd, her Warfields, her Calvins, her Augustines, her Pauls, her Moseses—have seen GOD?

Editorial Notes and Comments (Concluded)

the occasion of our repentance. But they are all comparatively unimportant as compared with the great root sin of unbelief, from which they all flow. To talk of "repentance" in the great "evangelical" churches today, and to leave out the most flagrant sin for which we should repent is

in itself a fearful blasphemy as we approach the mercy seat. It is not enough to talk vaguely of "repentance." Our repentance to be Christian must be directed to the one great sin that is eating like a cancer in the heart of the church.

By contrast, the appeal of the Reformation Fellowship rings true. It places the sin of unbelief in its proper setting, and insists that before all else the church should repent of it. Where the appeal of the Federal Council in referring to "the way of the Cross" is so vague that any Modernist could assent to it, the reference to the Cross in the appeal of the Fellowship is clearly Reformed, which is to say, Biblical.

Which will bring blessing, a true repentance for the church's great sin of unbelief, or a pseudo-repentance that ignores it?

Letters to the Editor

[The letters printed here express the convictions of the writers, and publication in these columns does not necessarily imply either approval or disapproval on the part of the Editors. If correspondents do not wish their names printed, they will please so request, but all are asked kindly to sign their names as an evidence of good faith. We do not print letters that come to us anonymously.]

The Board of Foreign Missions

To the Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY:

SIR: In the columns of CHRISTIANITY TODAY attention has frequently been called to the theological drift which has taken place within the Presbyterian Church away from the evangelical position. This drift has now reached a point which a few years ago would have been thought impossible, but it has come so slowly and been manipulated with such skill that many are hardly aware of it even yet. This is evidenced by what has taken place at recent meetings of General Assembly, by reorganizations, by measures initiated within the Church itself which a few years ago could not have witnessed.

In this connection I wish to submit a little evidence which will give an idea of the length to which this drift has already gone and to what a deplorable extent it has affected even the Boards and Agencies of the Presbyterian Church. Recently there came to my attention a letter sent out by the Board of Foreign Missions of The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. to more than a thousand young men and women studying in Colleges, Seminaries, and other educational institutions with a view to devoting their lives to service as foreign missionaries. The letter is signed by Lindsay S. B. Hadley and Minnie W. Corbett, Candidate Secretaries. It is evidently the plan to keep in touch with this group of young people by a

letter every six months, so that when their time of service does begin they will be fitted spiritually and in other ways for their work as missionaries.

Your readers will be especially interested, as I was, in the character of the books suggested by the Board as an aid to the spiritual growth and development of the prospective missionaries. In this connection the letter says: "Then there are books like 'The Devotional Diary' by Oldham; 'Today,' an outline of Bible readings; 'The Meaning of Faith' and others by Fosdick; 'Marks of a World Christian' by Fleming." If this list of authors is the best the Board of Foreign Missions can give in witness to the Gospel of Christ, then the situation in Presbyterianism is indeed tragic! From the suggestions here made one would suppose there were no writers, either within the Presbyterian Church or any other denomination, who had not gone over to the extreme Modernistic position. As a matter of fact there are many safely evangelical authors that might have been selected. One of the men above mentioned, now perhaps the leading exponent of Modern Paganism in the U. S., was for years a cancer spot on the body of Presbyterianism. Finally the Church got rid of his blighting influence in a direct way, but the Board of Foreign Missions, in its position of power and trust, deliberately seeks to reestablish and maintain such an influence in the lives of prospective missionaries. The other authors suggested, though not so well known, are no less objec-