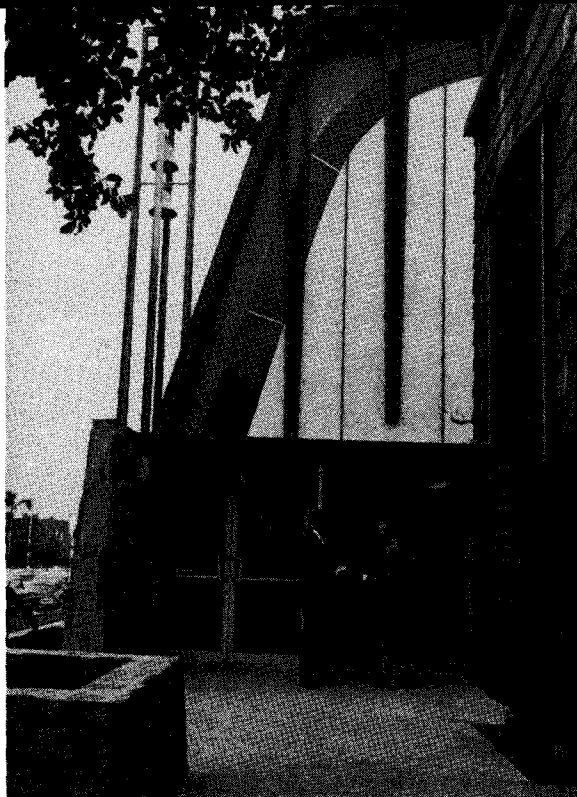


# GUARDIAN

*Entrance  
to the  
First  
Orthodox  
Presbyterian  
Church  
of  
Long Beach,  
California*



## *Long Beach Host to Assembly*

**T**he Thirty-fourth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will convene at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 25 at First Church, Long Beach California. A public worship service with communion has been planned by the Session for Monday evening.

The congregation in this thriving coastal city of 375,000 is one of the largest in the denomination. It began as a non-denominational Sunday school in the late thirties. Through the influence of Louis Knowles and the family of Wilson Albright (both now Orthodox Presbyterian ministers) it became the nucleus for a home missions work in 1940. The Rev. Henry W.

*(continued on page 40)*

## **No Turning Back**

**NORMAN A. PRICE**

I would like to tell you briefly how Jesus Christ entered my life and saved it. About three months ago I was a confirmed atheist, taking a course in philosophy and believing all of the blasphemous teachings which I received. One day I happened to see a good friend I had not seen in a while and I asked her how she was. "By the grace of God, fine," was her reply.

Well, you can imagine the astonished look that must have been on my face. I asked her what she had been doing lately and she said she had been attending church four times a week. With growing interest I started asking her various questions and exchanging my views with hers. This went on for a few days until she mentioned that she had something for me to read. I agreed to read whatever she offered, for at this point I was beginning to have doubts about my philosophy of life. She handed me a little pamphlet by C. H. Spurgeon entitled "Election."

That very day I read it through, and by the grace of God and the working of the Holy Spirit I was convicted. I could see that God was real and that everything the book had to say was true. The only thing that really bothered me was that I was afraid I was not one of the chosen ones whom God had predestined to save before the foundation of the world. Little did I know at the time that the very fact that I was convicted by the Word of God was the beginning of my rebirth.

### **Reading the Bible**

At once I started reading the Bible and other books which were given to me. I was convicted of my sin, not by any sly trickery or appeal, but solely by the Word of God and the working of the Holy Spirit. By this time I knew that I had had enough of the 'life' I was living, and I decided to

*College freshman Norman Price gave this testimony on February 19 at the evening service of First OPC, Long Beach. Guest speaker at the retreat was the Rev. Tom Champness of Modesto.*

give myself to the Lord. A talk with one of the elders of this church further strengthened my faith. I began to come to church, for the one reason that I wanted to hear more of the Word of God and talk with others about our fellowship with Jesus Christ. So here I am.

Words cannot express the thanks in my heart for the Lord. There is no reason why he should have chosen me to live. The only explanation which can be offered is found in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

### **Work of God's Spirit**

Before I became a Christian, I made a mockery of God and Christianity. I know that the change which has come over me could have been caused only by the Lord. Until the Lord shows us his love for us and gives us eyes to see and ears to hear the Truth, we cannot possibly love the Lord. It is written, "We love him because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

This new life which God has given me is not an easy one. I have already found this out through my daily contacts with the people I meet and have known, and through the daily situations the Lord puts me in. There is a constant flow of temptations surrounding me at all times. And if I were not saved and did not have the Lord on my side, I could not resist the least bit of it. But because the Lord loves me, I am able to recognize the temptations and evil things which before seemed desirable—and to turn from these things and look to God

and his Word for my guidance.

Many people tell me that this is taking the easy way out, that to deny the things of the world and to look to our loving Father for guidance is the easy way out of life. They couldn't be more wrong if they tried. For Satan is trying as hard as he can to get me back, and I am in a constant battle with him. If I did not have the Lord on my side, I know I would surely lose.

### **My Enemy — Myself**

I have found that the strongest foe I encounter each day is myself. Many times my own selfish desires cloud my judgment and cause me to do wicked things. But by the grace of God I am convicted when this happens and look to God for my help. Those whom I have known and loved are also instruments of Satan, and I am often tempted by them to give up what they call a passing fancy and to return to the old person I used to be. But my love for God is greater than my love for them, and I have decided to follow Jesus, not the world.

This past weekend I attended the annual winter retreat in the mountains. It was by far the most wonderful experience I have had as a Christian. If I ever had any doubts about my faith, these doubts were completely abolished. *I know now that there is no turning back for me.* My life here on earth is not for myself: I am here for the sole purpose of glorifying God. I pray that he will put me in situations where I may be used to let his will be carried out.

The theme for the retreat was "The Challenge to Follow Christ." I believe there is a word that is synonymous with "challenge" in this instance—and the word is *privilege*. To me it is not only a challenge, but much more it is a privilege to follow my Savior. I am eternally grateful to God for choosing me solely because he loved me. I hope I shall be a faithful servant to our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Write to Rev. Calvin K. Cummings, 1608 Graham Blvd., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15235

# Captain with the Mighty Heart

HENRY W. CORAY

## Chapter 2

### THE MAN

My first close-up of Dr. Machen left me in a state of semi-shock. It happened in the autumn of 1928. I had just entered one of the dormitories at Princeton Theological Seminary when I noticed the figure of a man bent over double, making his way up a flight of stairs. As he proceeded he slapped the steps with the flat of his hands, and with each gesture he would groan, "Poor old Dassie, poor old Dassie." Later I learned this was quite a common sight, one of the famous New Testament scholar's clowning charades.

At that time Princeton Seminary was drawing students from all over the world because of its unique stand for Christian scholarship. Those of us who went there did so because we wanted to receive instruction from men mighty in the Scriptures. We were not disappointed.

I found myself rooming in ivy-colored Alexander Hall, a noble if somewhat tired-appearing dormitory, occupied for the most part by seminary seniors. A college friend, Duke Fuller, a senior, had invited me to live with him. I, of course, a lowly junior or first-year man, accepted with unalloyed pleasure. Imagine my further joy when I learned that our room was located directly across the hall from the distinguished John Gresham Machen!

#### Appearance

In physical appearance the good doctor more resembled a business man than a theological professor. He was fairly short, a trifle rotund, with dark penetrating eyes that had a way of roving mercurially over objects under surveillance. His mouth was straight and resolute, and frequently curled humorously. He always walked with brisk measured steps, like an Oriental. In dress he favored business suits, finely but not fastidiously tailored.

Why he chose life in a dormitory in preference to a house or apartment one cannot tell. Perhaps it was because he enjoyed being near people. He never married. I suspect he drew considerable comfort from a close association with his students. True, when Westminster Seminary started and we moved to Philadelphia, he took a suite on the twenty-first floor of Chancellor Hall, but that was probably because the mounting pressure of new duties necessitated more privacy.

Invariably his students referred to him—but not in his presence—as Das. The nickname arose because the German word for girl, "das madchen" is learned by school boys with the article, and "Das Machen" is a fair equivalent of the term. I'm sure he was aware of our usage of the nickname, but it offended him not in the slightest.

#### 'Das' in Class

I was nurtured on the belief that no man can do two things at the same time. Das undecieved me. At Princeton I studied New Testament Greek under him. We used his *New Testament Greek for Beginners* for our text book. I shall never forget the way he would swing into our classroom clutching a sheaf of correspondence, take his place behind his desk and direct one of us to conjugate the verb *luo*, to loose. While the recitation was under way our teacher, to all appearances, would be totally absorbed with his morning mail. But let the conjugator make one slip and Das would be on him like the Assyrian Army on Israel. No orchestra leader ever had a keener ear to detect a sour note. A single syllable mispronounced, and up would go a professorial hand and we would hear, "Ah, ah—let's go over that again, shall we?"

One of Dr. Machen's famous aphorisms was, "Boys, there are two

The most recent book in which Mr. Coray has had a hand is *Heroic Colonial Christians*, edited by Russell T. Hitt (J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966, 255 pages, \$4.95). It describes the life and work of four ministers at the center of the Great Awakening: Jonathan Edwards (Courtney Anderson), Gilbert Tennent (Russell Hitt), David Brainerd (Clyde Kilby), and John Witherspoon. The study of this "Son of Liberty," the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence, was written by Henry Coray.

things wrong with this institution: you're not working hard enough and you're not having enough fun." He would then set about to correct the second of the two defects.

#### "Tightwad Parties"

He called these social affairs "tightwad parties," certainly an original and quite weird epithet. Sometimes on a Saturday evening when there was a break in his preaching schedule he would fling his bedroom door open and we'd hear a stentorian, "All right, men, don't be tightwads!" It was the signal for us to assemble in his bailiwick, where we would find a waiting cornucopia of edibles: apples, oranges, candy, dried fruits, nuts, cookies, soft drinks. Our genial host always presided over the affair from his place as autocrat of the chess board. There he would take on all challengers and proceed to cut them down, victim upon victim, systematically and mercilessly. An appropriate text for him might well have been, "Samuel hewed Agag in pieces." His mind seemed to function like an electronic computer: it anticipated each move of his opponent and was prepared to checkmate the maneuver. I cannot recall ever having seen him lose at the game. He was also expert at checkers. Students who were fortunate enough to have taken his course in the *Origin of Paul's Religion* could not help drawing a parallel between the method he used at

these board games and the marvelous skill we saw demonstrated in the way he demolished the arguments of brilliant scholars who tried to separate the theology of Jesus from the theology of Paul.

### Stunter

Another delightful facet of seminary social activity was our annual Stunt Night, an occasion when faculty and student body would relax and romp. Representatives from each class would present some light skit, the sillier the more appreciated. Always Machen would be called on to give one or more of his famous stunts. "Both as a student and professor, Dr. Machen was known not only as a scholar, but as a 'stunter'. At student gatherings he would get off an amusing recitation about 'Old Bill' and Napoleon. None thought of him then, as his modernistic foes afterwards caricatured him, as sour, bitter and unfriendly." So wrote Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney in his autobiography, *The Making of a Minister*.

At these affairs I used to sing a ridiculous little number called "The Chocolate Cake," accompanying myself on the ukulele. The offering was nothing but a series of stanzas touched up with local coloring.

One year at Westminster Seminary, the students adopted an alley cat—or it adopted us—we never were quite sure which. I will say that animal resembled a cross between a pretzel and a lady's muff. We promptly gave it the name Papias in honor of one of the early church fathers, and made it the seminary mascot. Before long we realized we'd made a horrible mistake in the selection of the name. Papias, it turned out, was a prospective mother!

About a week after our discovery Stunt Night arrived. Our mascot had furnished me with excellent material for a couplet in one of the stanzas. I sang:

*It really is an awful shame  
We've had to change poor Papias'  
name . . .*

I thought Das was going to pass out. As when things hit him in the funnybone, he perched precariously on the edge of his chair and rolled up and down like a car on a roller coaster, his eyes shut tight and the tears flowing down his cheeks in rivulets. He was far more comical than the skit and provided a lot of amusement.

"Boys," he used to say to his stu-

dents with a twinkle in those bright eyes, "you can't ever be a good theologian unless you're a good stunter."

He cherished varied and surprising interests. He was ever a lover of good food, of the opera, of poetry, of children. Younger men seemed to converge on him, as they did on Paul. He enjoyed giving his books away. He climbed towering mountains with the joyful abandon and vigor of a well-trained athlete.

Another of his hobbies was to ride trains. When the schedule of the Broadway Limited eventually recovered from the slowdown of World War I under government control and was restored to sixteen hours from New York to Chicago, Das was really excited. He took a ride to Chicago and back just to see how that crack train ran at its new high speed.

One evening in the winter of 1932, I drove him to a railroad station in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where he was to board a night train for Philadelphia. I expressed my sympathy because of the rough trip ahead.

"Listen, don't feel sorry for me," he said. "I love to curl up in a berth and fall off to sleep."

"How in the world do you manage it?" I said. "I can never sleep on trains. They're too noisy."

"Not to me they aren't," Das said. "The good old sound of wheels rumbling over tracks—that's a lullaby in my ears."

Now to the more serious side of his nature.

### True Gentleman

Those who were close to him will always remember J. Gresham Machen as a courtly gentleman, the product of Southern aristocracy, with a profound appreciation for classical learning. This, combined with a full exposure to historic Calvinism, endowed him with a fine balance. Ironically, it was at this precise point that his enemies attacked. When, for instance, the Board of Directors of Princeton Seminary reported to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (now the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) that it had elected him to the professorship of Apologetics at the seminary, and asked for the customary confirmation, the opposition

came out swinging. Machen, his critics charged, was unfit for the post because of "temperamental idiosyncrasies." Exactly what the idiosyncrasies were remained vague, but the strategem worked. The Assembly failed to approve the recommendation.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that he carried on his ministry "by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report." An American politician once said of the candidate he was nominating, "We love him for the enemies he has made." Not a few of us may say the same of Machen.

### Fair to his Opponents

"His preaching was bitter, schismatic and unscriptural," Dr. Henry van Dyke said in a burst of generosity. "A dismal bilious travesty of the gospel." I have heard him referred to again and again as the 'beer baron.' His family, it was whispered, received its revenue from liquor interests. All manner of vicious calumny was poured on his head. The tactics are comparable to those of the clever attorney who, when the defense of his client breaks down, resorts to the method of destroying the integrity of the witnesses for the prosecution. I will have to say for Das that he never descended to this miserable practice. He was the quintessence of fairness, keeping controversy always on a high objective level and avoiding personal assault. You notice this in his writings.

Ned Stonehouse in his *Biographical Memoir* has ably answered the criticisms of his character. Dr. Machen never tried to. It is an established fact that Machen never received, to his knowledge, nor did his father, one penny revenue from the alcoholic liquor industry.

An example of the verbal shadow boxing he became involved in is found in connection with the Pearl Buck dispute. Mrs. Buck was a Presbyterian missionary to China prior to 1934. When she began to spell out openly her radical views of the person of Jesus Christ, Machen rose up and demanded some kind of action from the Board of Foreign Missions, under whose direction Mrs. Buck was laboring. I recall his giving an account of the cross-correspondence.

"I write to the Board," said Das, "and ask what the Board intends to

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*It is understandable why some of us still thank God upon every remembrance of him.*

do about Mrs. Buck. The Board writes back, saying, 'Dr. Speer (one of its secretaries) is a very fine man.' I answer, 'I agree that Dr. Speer is a fine man but I would like to know what you are going to do about Mrs. Buck?' The Board's reply is, 'Dr. Machen, why are you so bitter?'"

### Protestant

The key to his vigorous and often fiery stand for the gospel lies in the fact that from the depths of his heart to the core of his brain he was a Protestant. Tragically, huge segments of modern Protestantism have ceased to be Protestant. We have in reality spawned a school of Major O'Dowds. Of that placid Army officer Thackeray says, "O'Dowd passed through life agreeing with every one he met on every conceivable subject." He was not a man, really; he was a piece of spaghetti.

Today we are witnessing a professing church in which it is considered an almost unpardonable sin to engage in doctrinal controversy. Lefferts A. Loetscher, currently on the Princeton Seminary faculty, in his book *The Broadening Church*, points out that virtually no discussion of theological issues has disturbed the United Presbyterian Church since 1936. It was the year that Dr. Machen and others were ejected from that organization. Men have forgotten that

**To sin by silence when we should protest**

**Makes cowards of us all,  
The world has ris'n on protest.**

I suspect that in those dark hours when he was being tested in the crucible, Dr. Machen was a lonely man. In his gripping story, *Alone*, Admiral Richard Byrd makes his readers feel the raw pain he endured during the terrible months he spent in solitude at the Antarctic. Robinson Crusoe, cast upon a desert island, so longed for the sound of a human voice that he would station himself opposite a mountain and shout out words so that he could take in the echo. The great Apostle must have known a measure of the sufferings of the Savior when he wrote Timothy, "At my first defense, no man stood with me."

I am certain that Dr. Machen tasted bitterness to the full as he saw friend after old friend part company with him when the going was hardest. Some of them were stout men and true, church leaders who held Machen's lofty view of Scripture and its noble

redemptive doctrines, and yet could not see eye to eye with him on certain vital issues. That very fact made the agony of separation all the more poignant. "What Beza said at the end of his brief, but most admirable, biography of John Calvin, can truly be said of Dr. Machen," wrote Dr. Macartney, who eventually broke with Das: "An example which it is as easy to slander as it is difficult to imitate."

### Man of Prayer

I cannot leave the subject of "Machen the Man" without a reference to his public prayers. Who of his students has not been edified as they listened to the renowned Christian scholar standing with bowed head in chapel or in the classroom at the open-

ing of the period, acknowledging in the simplest language the multitude of divine mercies channeled through the infinite merit of the Son of God? Always there was in his supplication a quality of child-like wonder, a tenderness, a naked honesty and humility as he poured out his soul like water before the face of his Heavenly Father. When some of the important lessons we learned from him in the classroom have faded from the cabinets of the mind, the recollection of his prayers will linger, like the scent of rare perfume, beyond the limits of the intellect.

It is understandable why some of us still thank God upon every remembrance of him.

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*Interview with James I. Packer*

## Puritan Enthusiast

DONALD M. POUNDSTONE

"I am a Reformed churchman and I count it a privilege to put my efforts into a seminary that feeds Reformed churches." With these words Dr. James I. Packer explained why he lectured at Westminster Seminary this winter.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Packer for an hour and a half on the evening of January 26. We met after dinner in his library office (on loan from Dr. Van Til).

Dr. Packer was born and raised in Twynning, a village about twelve miles north of Gloucester, England. "My father," he said, "was a clerk in the railway."

Although his family was nominally Christian, he didn't trust Christ until age eighteen. "I knew I needed something," he said, "but it wasn't until my first year at Oxford that I found the gospel, or better, it found me." Over a period of time he realized he couldn't put himself wholeheartedly into anything other than the Christian ministry.

### Biblical Calvinist

During those early years he arrived at the Reformed faith by an interesting route. As he told it, he wasn't orig-

inally a Calvinist ("Calvin would be horrified at the term") except in the sense that every Christian really is one. He tried Arminianism, going right down the five points. "The Bible finally made me a Calvinist," he said. "But I was never a system Calvinist in the sense of starting with the doctrine and then going to the Bible to find it." His sympathy for the Reformation shows in his family life; his youngest son Martin has a teddy named Luther!

I asked Dr. Packer if he could tell me who had influenced his life most of all. "That's hard to say," he answered. "I could give you some names but that would give you the wrong impression. I'm really an eclectic sort of chap. I suppose I have learned more from Martyn Lloyd-Jones (minister of Westminster Chapel, London) than from anyone else.

Before he was graduated from the university he "booked a seat" at Wycliffe Hall, a theological "college" (seminary) in Oxford. Then he received an emergency call from Oak

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*Mr. Poundstone is in his first year at Westminster Seminary.*

Hill, an evangelical college in London, to teach classics. Actually, he wanted to get away from Oxford, and this provided a chance to be on his own and earn some money as well. It was providential for both parties: he discovered his calling to theological teaching and the school, in addition to gaining a classics instructor, found someone to prep the seminarians for their external exams in philosophy and ethics, for a degree given by the University of London.

Returning later to Wycliffe Hall, he packed his theology course into twelve months ("I never want to do anything like it again") and was ordained in the Church of England on Christmas Day, 1952.

### Warden of Latimer House

Dr. Packer now serves as Warden of Latimer House, Oxford — "not a penitentiary," he said with a smile. "In England a warden is simply the head of an institution." Latimer House is just what the name implies — a house. It consists of a small library and provides for two free-lance publicists. "Our object," he noted, "is to produce written material with the aim of getting the gospel as near back to the heart of Anglican thinking as possible."

From him I learned that the ideal embodied in Latimer House stems from the revival of evangelicalism within the Church of England since the end of World War II. In 1958 Dr. Packer published *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*. That started the sparks. "The Oxford SCM (Student Christian Movement) invited me to debate with my former college chaplain about Scripture—'interaction' is the American word for it." They expected only 150 persons but 800 showed up.

A friend of Dr. Packer, impressed with the stir the book caused, decided to seek money to carry on the same sort of work. He issued an appeal to 400 people for funds to start a new study center for this purpose. Dr. Packer saw what was at stake: "It's a wicked world; if you don't publish, you perish. People conclude you don't have anything to say." But he wasn't exactly optimistic. "I frankly thought our people were too pietistic for this. But I was wrong. Soon we had over \$50,000."

He joined Latimer House six months after it was founded. When



JAMES I. PACKER

the first warden left he was on his own for two years. The work is straightforward. "In addition to writing ourselves, we get teams of men together for symposia . . . the sort of thing Carl Henry does in your country."

Right now most of the work is focused on the proposed liturgy for the Church of England and a merger with the Methodists. As a result of Dr. Packer's responsible and competent criticism, the Archbishop of Canterbury has placed him on the Anglican-Methodist negotiating committee discussing church union. He is convinced that God is reviving the evangelical cause in the Church of England. "I find that people will listen," he stated, "if what one says is presented in a sober, scholarly, and courteous way."

### Popular Author

In addition to efforts directed toward his own church, Dr. Packer has made significant contributions to the wider theological debate. In *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* and *God Speaks to Man* he cogently defends the orthodox doctrines of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. Another book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, presents a timely and clear statement of man's responsibility within the framework of the Bible's teaching about divine sover-

eignty. He states his purpose in the Introduction: "There is abroad today a widespread suspicion that a robust faith in the absolute sovereignty of God is bound to undermine any adequate sense of human responsibility . . . I shall try to make it evident that this is nonsense."

These are two of the most crucial issues the church faces today. The Reformed churches, in particular, are deeply indebted to Dr. Packer for his engaging and scholarly work.

I finally got around to asking him how he came to teach at Westminster. "I was invited. In 1965 I lectured at Fuller Seminary. On the way back I stopped off here to speak at your commencement. I was around for a week and some of the faculty and trustees took me out to meals. After some argy-bargy I agreed to a visit."

This winter (Jan. 17 to Feb. 24), four afternoons a week, Dr. Packer lectured to more than forty students and a number of visitors on English Puritanism. He chose this topic, he explained, because it interests him. But, one might wonder, how could a modern man become enthralled by wordy divines of a bygone age? His fascination with Puritanism started when he was an under-graduate at Oxford. He characterizes himself as "the sort of bloke who dips into books." One day he happened upon a set of John Owen. Reading through one of the treatises on sanctification, he sensed that here was a man who spoke to his own spiritual needs. From then on Owen became lunch-hour fare.

### Puritan Relevance

Dr. Packer believes the Puritans have great relevance for our day because they excel where we are weak. In his view, they understood the secret of Christian living and effective pastoral ministry. This secret lies in searching and thorough application of God's Word. Puritan writers show a man the depths of his sin, but they always provide remedies for the problems they uncover. Obedience to God was the Puritan way of life; their whole being was taken up in the service of God. They emphasized "experiential," or what we would call experiential, religion. We mustn't, however, think of them as pietists. They never fell into the modern error of separating doctrine from Christian living.

But it would be a mistake to think that Dr. Packer advocates a *return* to the Puritans. His comments revealed that he believes we must, rather, bring their teaching into our present-day situation. In support of this conclusion he quotes a Puritan, Thomas Manton: "It is but a cheap zeal that declaimeth against antiquated errors."

The great value of the Puritans, he concluded, is that they will teach us to live in both Romans 7 and 8. They will take us both lower and higher than we are accustomed to going. "I would define a Calvinist," he said, "as a man who lives in Romans 8 — and that man will also live in Romans 7."

## ***Calvinistic without Apology***

**NORMAN SHEPHERD**

*"All honest work is honorable in the sight of God. May we speak of 'kingdom service'? How inclusive is this term?" "The Bible teaches that a nation prospers materially and spiritually by keeping God's law. How do you account for the prosperity in Japan?"*

These are a sample of the provocative questions at the end of each chapter in a study manual bearing the title, *Calvinism: Its History, Principles and Perspectives*, by Simon Kistemaker (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. 104 pp. \$1.50).

In the first half of the book the author introduces us to John Calvin, and the development of Calvinism where it has taken hold, especially in the Netherlands, Britain, and the U. S. The final fifty pages are concerned with the central truth of the sovereignty of God and its meaning for the various areas of Christian concern including the church, politics, and education.

The writer recognizes that Calvinism is not simply a term to describe a particular brand of theology but is a dynamic movement with a life and world view that deserves to be taken seriously and studied because it can provide answers to questions which men are asking today. It is refreshing to have a booklet of this kind which does not dodge the word Calvinism.

Being Calvinistic is not being provincial or sectarian, but is being consistently biblical, and biblically Christian in all of one's life and thought to the glory of God whose command is law and whose word is truth.

If your group or society is looking for a study guide or source book to help focus the discussion on matters that count, this book may well be the item to supply your need. It can profitably be used in conjunction with Professor Paul Woolley's fine, earlier publication, *Family, State, and Church*, also from Baker Book House. Both deal with some of the same issues from a Christian perspective, without always reaching or anticipating the same conclusions.

The questions for discussion indicate that not all answers have been spelled out. We may even have to take exception to some of the points made.

For example, our attention is drawn to the obligation which Christian fathers have to instruct their children in the Christian religion. However, because Christian fathers ordinarily consider themselves incapable of the task, they entrust their children to qualified teachers in the Sunday school and Catechism classes (p. 85).

### **Obligation of Parents**

Unfortunately, Professor Kistemaker has hereby encouraged the further neglect of a God-given obligation on the part of parents. Even in many orthodox Calvinist circles, Christian instruction in the home is woefully inadequate, and the whole body of Christ is suffering because of it. No command of God can be set aside with impunity.

But more than that, the author seems to suggest that the church carries on its program of instruction by virtue of a delegation of authority from the parent. This idea is surely out of

keeping with our Lord's directive to his disciples (Matt. 28:19). The church teaches the faith to covenant children in its own right under the authority of Christ. It is a solemn obligation and there is room for asking whether our present procedures are adequate to it. In any case, Sunday school and Catechism classes, even the best of them, are no substitute for instruction given in the home.

More surprising is the view that a church member who fails to pay his financial debts in the community is not a potential subject for church discipline, because, we read, "The church is not a consultant for better business practices" (pp. 68f.). It is here that the problem involved in too artificial an application of the principle of sphere sovereignty becomes apparent.

Is it the case that non-payment of debts is a matter belonging to the business world and therefore of no concern to the church as institute? Non-payment is a form of theft, and Professor Kistemaker asserts in the same paragraph that the church ought to discipline a member who steals.

### **Christian Schools**

The strong stand for Christian day schools is most commendable, as the need for such schools advances and becomes clearer by the day. But not all supporters of the Christian school might be willing to concede that they ought to be released from support of the public school through taxation, as the author insists.

The point is debatable, and if the booklet stimulates debate, it will have achieved one of its purposes. It makes all the difference in the world whether units of intelligence are fishing around for answers in a sea of relativity or whether men made in the image of God are looking for answers from the Word of God in a world made by God though now marred by the disastrous consequences of human sin. The author's commitment is certainly to the full authority and trustworthiness of Scripture.

Professor Kistemaker teacher at Dordt College. His own commitment is indicative of the commitment of the faculty and institution as a whole. Orthodox Presbyterians headed for college next fall will do well to investigate the offerings of this liberal arts school located in Sioux Center, Iowa.





**THE SESSION: FIRST ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF LONG BEACH**

Rear: The Rev. Lawrence Eyres, moderator: Paul van Houte, A. M. Laurie, Richard Aldcroftt, Eugene Scherer.  
 Front: Lloyd Sheneberger, William Olson, Delbert Schowalter, Morrison Penkoff, George Ryan.

## Long Beach General Assembly

*(continued from the cover)*

Coray, forced to return from the Orient near the end of that year, began his labor as a home missionary in Long Beach. An Orthodox Presbyterian church was organized the following year with 17 communicants and seven covenant children.

Meeting in a store-front chapel at first, the congregation began a branch work within two years in the Bixby Knolls area of the city, where a small office building was acquired. In due course the two groups were combined at the latter site, which soon proved inadequate.

The present location (about three blocks from the converted office building) was purchased in 1943 and the original unit of its plant was occupied in 1946. In 1952 a second unit was added. Mr. Coray left for a home mission field in Sunnyvale in the spring of 1955 and was followed by the late Rev. Glenn R. Coie. He served for two years until called to a home missions pastorate in Florida. The present pastor, the Rev. Lawrence R. Eyres, came to Long Beach in the summer of 1958.

A new sanctuary of contemporary

design, seating 400, was completed in the fall of 1961, and was featured on the cover and in a story in the *Guardian* for March 1962. A full basement (4000 square feet) was included in the enlargement but was not completed for use until January of this year — just in time for the meeting of the General Assembly!

The numerical growth of the congregation has been fairly steady over the years. Membership as of December 31, 1966 stood at 353 communicants with an additional 153 baptized children, making the church the second largest in the denomination. First Church was also the parent church of the Garden Grove congregation and had a part in the early days of the Whittier (now La Mirada) work.

Twenty-five years ago the present location of the church was a cabbage patch. Now it is in the center of a north Long Beach residential and business community. Not only is its physical site advantageous, but its stand for the full-orbed gospel of sovereign grace without entanglement in modern liberal ecumenism is widely known. The always friendly congregation is attracting a steady influx of earnest Christians, disheartened with the social-oriented and unbiblical 'gospel' of denominations affiliated with the Na-

tional Council of Churches, according to the pastor.

First Church is now seeking a full-time, specially trained minister of Christian education—perhaps the first in the denomination to obtain (hopefully) a minister to devote his full time to the sphere of Sunday school, Machen League, and youth instruction and activity.

## New Addresses

Rev. Robert L. Atwell, 1125 Summit Ave., Westfield, N. J. 07090 (after April 20).

Rev. Abe W. Ediger, 9161 Vine St., Thornton, Colo. 80229.

Rev. Carl E. Erickson, 186 Country Club Dr., South San Francisco, Calif. 94082 (ordained March 31 by the Presbytery of the West Coast).

Rev. Rollin P. Keller, 1811 Gravers Lane, Wilmington, Del. 19803.

Rev. Stephen L. Phillips, 21 Bryn Mawr Ave., Stratford, N. J. 08084 (ordained by the Presbytery of New Jersey on March 10).

Rev. Eugene C. Saltzen, 12132 La Mirada Blvd., Calif. 90638 (new street name).

*The Presbyterian Guardian*



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The Presbyterian  
**GUARDIAN**

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EDITOR

ROBERT E. NICHOLAS



All correspondence should be addressed to The Presbyterian Guardian, 7401 Old York Road, Phila., Pa. 19126

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### Self-Supporting Volunteers

Under this same heading a few months ago the example of some "missionary associates" was presented as a challenge to others who might volunteer a year of service with an Orthodox Presbyterian mission abroad. There is no reason why the idea cannot be utilized as well at home. In fact, for every one who may be able to see his or her way clear to travel to a distant land, there may be several who could give a year of service to one of our home mission fields or other churches in the states. (Many a Mormon youth donates two years of his early career to full-time service at his own or his family's expense!)

We thank God for young people who are giving time during the summer to the S-A-V-E program. And for the many, young and old, who offer their time and talent week after week in the service of Christ through their local churches. We are wondering, however, if there are not some who would make a specific commitment, say for a year, as self-supporting "missionary associates"?

With the strength and energy of youth and without all the responsibilities that may come later, you might catch the vision of definitely setting aside your evenings and weekends (or perhaps a summer vacation period) in the cause of the gospel through the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Assistance might be offered in many areas: survey calling, secretarial, youth activities of many kinds, Bible classes, visitation evangelism, work on building and equipment (when were your Sunday school rooms last painted?) if you are a jack-or-jill-of-all-trades!

How about it, you who can earn your livelihood in 40 hours a week and have plenty of leisure time for

recreation or reading or moonlighting or evening courses or whatever it may be? Would you be willing to forsake such quite legitimate activities for a term of definite assignment as a missionary volunteer? Of course, for the sake of good order you should certainly work through your session and/or the home missions agency of your presbytery or the denomination.

Finally, when you come right down to it — what about all of us? To be sure, we have family obligations, or our jobs don't fit into a neat 40-hour week, or we must go to night school, or we no longer have all the strength of our youth. But who gets most of our 'free time'? How much are we doing beyond "going to meetings" at which others do the work?

Is there some task in my church that isn't being done that I could do? Is there a class without a regular teacher? A vacant row in the choir? A visitor who should be called on? Students in school or fellows in the armed forces who would appreciate church news? Shut-ins whose days are lonely? Repair jobs neglected that I could take care of? Office tasks that the pastor is forced to do? All too few at prayer meeting? Every congregation needs more volunteers to accomplish what urgently needs doing right where we are, for the sake of our Lord and Savior.

— R. E. N.

### EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Dear Sir:

The recent letter (February) by Harry Schat and Raymond Commeret discussing Francis Schaeffer's article "The Practice of Truth" (*Guardian*, December 1966) reveals a commendable concern for maintaining a biblical apologetics in the modern world. At the same time, it does not seem to me that the writers of the letter have quite understood the purpose of the article by Dr. Schaeffer.

He does not appear to be teaching a nature-grace opposition when he reasons that truth must be practiced as well as affirmed. As I understand his article he is saying rather that co-operation in evangelism with those who do not accept the authority of Scripture is dangerous—that such a practice, in effect, undercuts and relativizes the truth we affirm.

Moreover, although his language could have been more precise, in speaking of "brute facts" Dr. Schaeffer

is not presupposing a modern philosophical interpretation of existence. Instead he is merely saying that history is taken seriously by the Christian, that he refuses to accept a dialectical relativizing of the past.

For myself, I too wish that the article had mentioned the Scriptures *as the truth* in a more explicit way. Yet even here I think the authors of the letter go too far when they state that "without the revelation of the Bible there would be no truth anywhere for blinded sinful man." Is this to be understood to mean that general revelation to man does not exist? I am sure that the writers of the letter do not really want to take this position, a point of view which is clearly not that of the Scriptures themselves, of the Westminster Confession, of Calvin or Dr. Cornelius Van Til.

### Fruit of L'Abri

In the Mechanicsville Chapel, where I have carried on a part-time pastorate, I have found numerous co-workers in the young men converted through the ministry of the Schaeffers at L'Abri in Switzerland. These young men have spoken in our services and at present two of them are conducting a children's Bible club with consecration and Christian zeal. Two things stand out in our association with them: 1) the love these new Christians have for the Bible as the Word of God and 2) their dependence upon Him in prayer. I haven't seen the slightest evidence of a "sort of neo-rationalism and neo-humanism" in these young men.

Cordially yours,  
C. JOHN MILLER  
Jenkintown, Pa.

Dear Sir:

I had the privilege of hearing Francis Schaeffer speak on "The Practice of Truth" at the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin. I find it regrettable that Harry Schat, in his letter of criticism printed in your February issue, makes no mention of the main point of the address. With earnest courage Dr. Schaeffer stood up to warn against taking part officially in an evangelistic campaign in which men holding false doctrines are invited to share the platform and program with the evangelist.

Dr. Schaeffer's concern is eloquently put in this sentence: "Evangelism that does not lead to purity of life and purity of doctrine is just as faulty and

incomplete as an orthodoxy which does not lead to a concern for, and communication with, the lost."

In seeking the "practice of truth" Dr. Schaeffer called for consistency in doctrine and practice to keep the antithesis between God's truth and man's error: "we who stand in the historic stream of Christianity really believe that false doctrine, at those crucial points where false doctrine is heresy, is not a small thing; this is an enemy."

Mr. Schat has a clear grasp of principles and issues in apologetics but he does not do full justice to Dr. Schaeffer's position.

It is quite mistaken, in my judgment, to say that Dr. Schaeffer finds the principle of verification in "brute facts." Rather, he asserts that behind the "brute facts" of history is the truth of God's existence.

### Evangelism More Difficult

Dr. Schaeffer does imply that the relativistic thinking of our time makes the task of evangelism more difficult. He is right. In Romans one, Paul traces a descent into idolatry as God gives men up to the exchanging of truth for a lie. There are degrees of apostasy and error.

In stressing the deterioration in modern thought, which he traces to the acceptance of Hegelianism, Dr. Schaeffer does make the earlier assumption of the "classical concept of truth" sound a bit like Paradise. Yet he does note that non-Christian thinkers before Hegel had no sufficient foundation for their absolutes.

It is not nominalism or weak apologetics to say that the Christian faith is true. To stress the *objectivity* of truth is not rationalism or humanism. The Christian bears witness to the truth to the blinded sinner who misconstrues the very possibility of truth. Yet it is not as though the Christian and the non-Christian had alternate systems of truth so that a man could choose between them. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; reality is as God has revealed it to us in his Word. Without "borrowed capital" not of his minting the non-Christian cannot carry on any of the business of thinking or living.

As for the necessity and apologetic value of adding sound Christian living to sound Christian doctrine I would only refer to Philippians 2:14-16, one of the great New Testament passages on the Christian witness. After experi-

encing myself some of the fruits of Francis Schaeffer's ministry I can understand better how the Lord has used him to bless so many. Authentic Christian love and meekness have a heart-warming effect and cause us to glorify our Father in heaven.

Sincerely,  
EDMUND P. CLOWNEY  
Willow Grove, Pa.

Dear Sir:

Let the unfair remarks by Schat and Commeret concerning Francis Schaeffer's "The Practice of Truth" be regarded as representative of the OPC, let me show some appreciation.

The third word in Schaeffer's article was "rather." He would rather do what he is criticized for not doing, but at the moment he had something else to say. This was his privilege.

Schat and Commeret criticize him for not saying that Scripture alone is the measure of truth. Now Schaeffer might be trying to get in at a non-Christian's back door at times, but when it comes right down to definitions, he comes out with the truth. At Wheaton College in September, 1965 Schaeffer said:

In all this modern discussion about what the Bible is, often men seem to fail to take into account the Bible's own testimony of itself. The Bible gives a testimony of what it itself is as it speaks toward man. God directs the Bible communication of propositional truth in verbalized form, to those, as made in his image, who can know.

Would Schaeffer have us "plummet headlong into the practice of 'consensus of opinion' so popular in the country today"? I would deny it. At Wheaton he spoke of the contrast between Christian faith and modern faith:

The only thing it has in common with Christian faith is the use of a word that has been used, with exactly the contrary meaning. In modern faith there is no hope of a rational, logical answer, nor even any hope that it is something that can be discussed.

We should not plummet into premature criticisms of fellows that can become very good friends.

Sincerely yours,  
EDWARDS E. ELLIOTT  
Garden Grove, Calif.

\* \* \*

Note: All mail for Korean missionaries (Conn, Hard, Hunt) must now be sent to the Seoul or Pusan addresses; APO is no longer available.



## Does your Sunday school have Teenage Troubles?

Perhaps you've noticed—when it comes to Sunday school, many teenagers couldn't care less. Somehow it is hard for a Bible class to compete with the swinging beat of the everyday life of modern adolescents. And in a sense, no Sunday school curriculum will ever "swing" enough to satisfy these hyperactive, unpredictable individuals.

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The Presbyterian Guardian

# The Confession of 1967 — New Subscription Vows

EDWARD ROBERT GEEHAN

On March 1, 1967, Stated Clerk William Phelps Thompson reported that the necessary two-thirds of the presbyteries of the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. had approved Overture I (containing the *Book of Confessions*, which includes the Confession of 1967, and the new subscription vows). All that now remains is ratification by a majority vote of the General Assembly which meets in May in Portland, Oregon.

In the first article (February) we concerned ourselves with the Confession of 1967 proper. Now we shall look more closely at the new form of subscription vows two and three (the first is unchanged).

## Present

2) 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?

3) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

\* \* \*

I believe these significant changes indicate both the theological framework of the Confession of 1967 and the apostate nature of a church which deliberately repudiates the old form of subscription for the new.

Of course many conservatives in the UPUSA want to escape this conclusion. Consider, for example, the interpretation of these new vows by one such Presbyterian, Dr. John Gerstner of Pittsburgh Seminary, expressed in *Christianity Today* (Dec. 9, 1966, pp. 4-6, "New Light on the Confession of 1967").

## The Third Vow

With reference to the third vow in particular, Gerstner wishes to clarify two ambiguities having to do with the nature and object of subscription. He observes that within the *Book of Confessions* are some elements contrary to the protestant tradition (e.g. a reference to "the ever virgin Mary" in the Second Helvetic, Chap. XI) and still others which are "grievous heresy" such as

## Proposed

2) Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church catholic, and by the Holy Spirit God's word to you?

3) Will you perform the duties of a minister of the gospel in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of the Scriptures, and under the continuing instruction and guidance of the confessions of this Church?

"the divine acceptance of all men" taught by C67. ("The new life takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are" — Part I, C, 1.)

Therefore he concludes that "we have in the Book of Confessions some documents that are merely catholic; others that are catholic, evangelical, and reformed; and, scattered throughout some of them, elements that are not catholic, evangelical, or reformed."

In the light of such inconsistencies among the various confessions, in what sense is the one taking the vows "to perform the duties of a minister (elder or deacon) . . . under the continuing instruction and guidance of the confessions of this Church"? Gerstner details two possible views. On the first view, it is held that the words of the third

Mr. Geehan is a middler student at Westminster Seminary.

vow "do not necessarily commit the ordinand to believing that in which he is instructed and by which he is guided." Actual adherence to the *Book of Confessions* is not intended. It means, as he illustrates it, "merely that a person considers, very respectfully, what these documents teach and presumably follows them, unless his own judgment is contrary." In other words, one's subjective opinion, be he liberal or conservative, is the norm. Gerstner concedes that "the language of the vow does not clearly rule out this interpretation."

## What Is 'Intended'?

He prefers another construction of the "intention" of the subscription vow, however. The ordinand is to "accept" that which is "catholic, evangelical, and reformed" in the *Book of Confessions*. These words, says Gerstner, should have been added to the third vow to make this plain. As a matter of fact, however, the Assembly rejected a proposed amendment that in his opinion would have removed the ambiguity. Nevertheless, he maintains that "under the continuing instruction and guidance of" means "the acceptance of this instruction and guidance" on the levels of catholic, evangelical, and reformed.

Such an attitude or intention prevailed in the Assembly discussions of 1966, he avers. Understood in this way, the UPUSA in adopting Overture I will be "more catholic, evangelical, and reformed" than ever before, a point of

The proposed *Book of Confessions* for the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. consists of:

The Nicene Creed  
The Apostles' Creed  
The Scots Confession  
The Heidelberg Catechism  
The Second Helvetic Confession  
The Westminster Confession of Faith  
The Shorter Catechism  
The Theological Declaration of Barmen  
The Confession of 1967

## There is no effective basis for church discipline.

view upon which he says he will "insist." Yet he concedes that if the words of the third vow are taken by themselves "with strictest literality," they "threaten to vitiate the entire document."

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that Gerstner's second alternative is correct. What value will it have? What is "catholic, evangelical, and reformed" in the *Book of Confessions* for Gerstner is not so for Dowey and Hendry — who wrote into the Confession of 1967 what Gerstner calls "grievous heresy!" As noted in the first article, Hendry speaks of "contrary views" and "an unstable theological compromise" between the viewpoints of 1967 and 1647 as to Scripture itself. The reformed and the neo-orthodox positions as to the Bible as the Word of God are simply irreconcilable. Even had Gerstner's desired addition to the third vow been added, much less his contention as to the general interpretation supposedly given to it by the 1966 Assembly, the ambiguity would not have been removed. This alternative likewise fails to escape the subjectivism so plainly inherent in the first view.

I believe that it is that first alternative which is the only one that makes sense if the language of the third vow is taken for what it actually says and does not say. As Gerstner has admitted, when taken literally the words themselves can support this view, and the "inexcusable" vagueness of the third vow "remains the most defective item in the entire Book of Confessions." There is therefore no effective basis for church discipline in terms of this almost meaningless vow, which certainly sidesteps any wholehearted acceptance of a "system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures" as was required by the one it is replacing.

### **The Second Vow**

By the proposed second vow ministerial adherence to the Word of God as the inscripturated and thereby infallible rule of faith and life is abandoned. Defining the Bible as "the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ . . . and by the Holy Spirit God's word to you" is a far cry from viewing the Bible as in and of itself the objective Word of God written. For Overture I the 'word-of-God' character of the Bible

depends, not upon its divine origin (II Peter 1:21, cp. West. Conf. I, 4), but upon an unidentified operation of the Holy Spirit in man, the reader.

No matter how 'orthodox' a few 1966 revisions of the Confession of 1967 supposedly may be, the second vow actually nullifies their effect. Even if there were no new Confession, this vow contradicts the Westminster teaching as to Scripture and therefore abandons it as outdated. It is not the case that the Bible is *more* than the second vow implies; rather it is that the Bible is *other* than it implies. One wonders how an elder or minister who claims to be orthodox can subscribe to this new second vow.

Nobody denies that the third vow is vague, nor that the second vow rejects the Westminster Confession's position on Scripture. Such legal ambiguity and contradiction in the ordination vows removes from the United Presbyterian Church its scriptural function of discipline (Matt. 18:15-17) toward its officers. Even the first vow, requiring belief in the Trinity, when taken in the context of these other changed vows, is open to ambiguity.

### **Heresy Protected**

No longer will it be the case that heretics may remain in the UPUSA by *default* of evangelicals. Now rather they will be *protected* by the church from those who would tie the church to the 'rationalist' categories of the Westminster Standards! Instead of being "set for the defense of the gospel," the church will be in a better position, within its lukewarm walls, to shelter

### **THE CONFESSION OF 1967**

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of Westminster Seminary*

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those upon whom Paul pronounces the very curse of God (Gal. 1:8ff.).

In view of this official apostasy about to be effected by constitutional change, surely the Pauline and Johannine injunctions apply: to turn away from those who teach contrary to the doctrine which you have learned (Rom. 16:17); and to receive not a bearer of false doctrine nor give him a brotherly greeting (II John 10, cp. I John 4:6).

When the church has persistently and officially rejected the historic Christian faith, the true servant of God who would be faithful to his Presbyterian vows ought to move out of the church which has forsaken its duty to God and to his people.

If, however, in the face of such apostasy, the conservative still tells us that unity is to be preferred above purity, that any division is the one thing to be avoided, then he must be asked to tell us at what point he *would* separate from his church. How far down the road will he walk with one with whom he doesn't agree (Amos 3:3)? If he cannot tell us, how can we take seriously his protestations of concern for the church of Jesus Christ? We shall know that he would have sided with Rome against Calvin (*Institutes*, IV, 2:1-12). We shall know that he has denied his heritage. We shall be heavy of heart for him and for his children.

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# Creedal Changes and Subscription to the System of Doctrine

CLAIR DAVIS

The year 1967 is already well known as a year when Presbyterian statements of faith are undergoing intense study. The proposed adoption of the Confession of 1967 in the United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. insures that. Not so well known, however, is that similar study is required of Orthodox Presbyterians in response to action of last year's General Assembly. That Assembly instructed certain committees to "work toward the ultimate goal of organic union between the Orthodox Presbyterian and Christian Reformed Churches on a scriptural basis" and "between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod on a scriptural basis." For there are certainly differences in the doctrinal statements of these bodies which call for careful investigation.

First, there are matters of subscription. What does an officer of a church really mean when he states that he accepts the doctrinal standards of that church?

In particular, what about questions concerning the Second Coming? The Westminster Standards in their original form seem to rule out the premillennial view of the return of Christ. This was understood long ago in American Presbyterianism, whose "spiritual succession" the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has pledged herself to perpetuate. Apparently there was never any concern over the numbers of ministers who could not accept the Confession on this point.

## Attempt to Alter Confession Rejected

The issue did come to a head in 1936, however, when some in the new Presbyterian Church of America became convinced that it was necessary for the church to make clear that ministers and elders would not have to agree with the Confession on this point: this was to be done simply by

altering the Confession. This course of action was rejected by the majority of the church, for the sort of reasons that Dr. Machen gave:

Subscription to the Westminster Standards in the Presbyterian Church of America is not to every word in those Standards, but only to the *system* of doctrine which those standards contain . . . we think that a man who holds that the return of Christ and the final judgment take place not in one act, as the Westminster Standards contemplate them as doing . . . yet may honestly say that he holds the system of doctrine that the Standards contain. It is no new thing to take this position regarding creed subscription. It is the position which has long been taken by orthodox Calvinistic theologians (*Presbyterian Guardian*, Vol. 3, #2, p. 21).

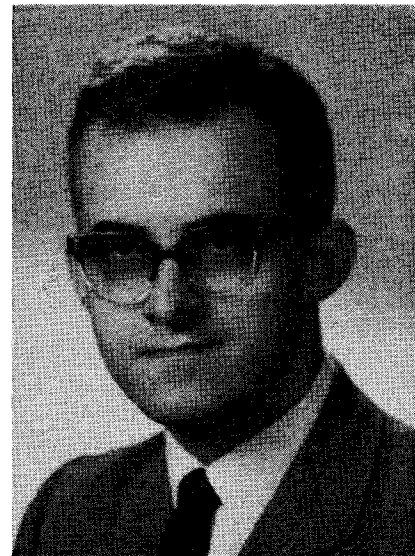
We think that any attempt to deal with these matters in the Constitution of the Church would be nothing short of folly. The doctrinal standards of the Church should be simply the historic Westminster Standards. This is not a creed-making age . . . For the reasonable interpretation of the meaning of the ordination pledge, so far as the time of our Lord's return is concerned, we must have confidence in our brethren. Unless we have that mutual confidence, it would have been better that we should not have attempted to form a church at all (*Guardian*, Vol. 3, #3, p. 43).

## Catechism Amended

It is this approach which has come to be explicitly rejected by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Not only has that body issued a statement affirming liberty to hold "any eschatological view which includes the visible and personal return of our Lord to earth," but it has also amended questions 86-89 of the Larger Catechism so as to remove any statements contradictory to premillennialism.

---

*Dr. Davis is Assistant Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, and a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.*



The difference between the two churches does not concern whether or not premillennialism is acceptable, for both hold that, but rather, how that acceptability is to be expressed. The RPCES believes constitutional amendment is necessary, while the OPC is convinced that since the "system of doctrine" is not in question, a "reasonable interpretation of the meaning of the ordination pledge" does not require that the items of the Constitution in this matter be made a test for ministers and elders.

Who is correct? Is there not something refreshing about the RPCES position, which sets out publicly in jot and tittle the actual position of the church? Is this not a much safer course of action as well? It certainly is true that the vagueness of subscription to the "system of doctrine" has been used in the past to excuse all sorts of heresy. Where can the line be drawn between tolerating premillennialism as not contrary to that system, and tolerating denial of the virgin birth on the

## A call for study and much prayer.

same basis? Would not an explicit, detailed statement of faith, which appears to be the RPCES way of doing things, provide a real *guarantee* against heresy in the church?

Historically, American Presbyterianism has not thought so. Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield, probably the greatest of her theologians, were exactly of the opposite opinion!

### Hodge and Warfield Quoted

In Hodge's words, To adopt every proposition contained in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms is more than the vast majority of our ministers either do or can do. To make them profess to do it is a great sin. It hurts their consciences. It fosters a spirit of evasion and subterfuge. It forces them to take creeds in a 'non-natural' sense. It at once vitiates and degrades. There are few greater evils connected with establishments than the overwhelming temptations which they offer to make men profess what they do not believe. Under such strict requirements, men make light of professions, and are ready to adopt any creed which opens the door to wealth or office. *The overstrict the world over are the least faithful.* (Church Polity, p. 332).

Warfield made an even stronger statement in his discussion of the desire toward Confessional revision:

A public confession, by virtue of the very fact that it is public, cannot be, and ought not to be pretended to be, just the expression of his faith which each one who accepts it as representing his faith would have framed had he only himself to consider. The most we can expect, and the most we have right to ask is, that each one may be able to recognize it as an expression of the system of truth which he believes.

To go beyond this and seek to make each of a large body of signers accept the Confession in all its propositions as the profession of his personal belief, cannot fail to result in serious evils—not least

among which are the twin evils that, on the one hand, too strict subscription overreaches itself and becomes little better than no subscription; and, on the other, that it begets a spirit of petty, carping criticism which raises objection to forms of statement that in other circumstances would not appear objectionable . . .

Of course it lies in the courts of the Church to decide what is and what is not 'of the system', and Church courts are not infallible, nor always faithful. But Church courts can afford, and do venture, to hold men strictly to the terms of a liberal formula, when they could not to an illiberal one. Overstrictness demands and begets laxity in performance; while a truly liberal but conservative formula binds all essentially sound men against laxity ("The Presbyterian Churches and the Westminster Confession," *The Presbyterian Review*, Vol. X, No. XL, pp. 648, 650-51).

In short, instead of strict subscription being a real deterrent to the inroads of heresy, Warfield is convinced that it is the exact opposite:

Where the formula of acceptance is such that no one signs without some mental reservation, some soon learn to sign without reference to mental reservation; and gross heterodoxy becomes gradually safe, because there is no one so wholly without sin that his conscience permits him to cast the first stone (*Ibid.*, pp. 648-649).

### Subscription to the System

Has history shown that Warfield's estimate was incorrect, that perhaps the decline within the Presbyterian churches could have been arrested by creedal change and a stricter formula of subscription? The decline in America appears to have been almost as rapid as in Scotland, where strict subscription was failing even in Warfield's day. But this writer thinks that in the final analysis there simply is no *constitutional* device that will guarantee continued orthodoxy. For that must depend upon the continued endeavors of faithful officers and members, who in reliance upon God, aware of the temptations of the day and searching Scripture for a deeper understanding of God's truth, are able to discern and evaluate the new approaches to doctrine which arise within the church.

Strict subscription has too often proved an excuse for laziness in study of the Bible and of how that Bible is to be applied to the needs of men in *this* generation. Probably the best course for evangelical Presbyterianism to take would be to heed Warfield's and Machen's advice to resist that "spirit of petty, carping criticism" and

instead enjoy "confidence in our brethren." The truth must be maintained, but subscription to the "system of doctrine" seems to be the best way of doing just that.

Have we understood the motivations of the RPCES correctly? Is it tending in the direction of continual creedal amendment and the strict view of subscription which goes along with it? Or do the Larger Catechism amendments reflect only action on an "extraordinary" situation, with no further implications? This is what the Orthodox Presbyterian Church must discover as she faces the question of union.

### Resolutions on Morality

A similar question concerning the position of the RPCES concerns her resolutions on "The Christian Life and Testimony," one paragraph from which follows:

Since the standards of our church mention many of the sins commonly committed in the day in which they were drawn up:

Be it resolved that we counsel our ministry and membership against the temptations to impurity that are found in pornographic pictures and magazines, the moving picture theater, television programs, and the modern dance.

Certainly this sort of resolution is in order in the Presbyterian tradition; not only is there a sort of precedent in the Larger Catechism's listings of sins, as the "Testimony" points out, but also the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. was especially fond of making such deliverances. But do such resolutions, in that they single out some areas of temptation from among the many which Presbyterian churches *already* publicly and officially mention, tend to suggest the same sort of thing that the eschatological amendments do? Is there here a tendency toward overstrictness, a distrust of the "system of morality" in favor of inflexible rules which are to be strictly interpreted, so that to be a Presbyterian, one must agree with the church as to *which* magazines, films, or dances contain impurity or temptations thereto?

Again, here is a matter requiring closer scrutiny: Are these resolutions the usual sort of church pronouncements, which call to the attention of individual Christians areas wherein they are to search their *own* hearts and lives to determine whether or not *they* are sinning in these areas? Or are they, *because they might be regarded as a part of the conditions of*

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union which produced the RPCES, of such a binding, authoritarian sort that they disturb our Protestant heritage?

\* \* \*

This is not the sort of ecumenical discussion which makes headlines. It does not call just for organizational activity, but much more for individual and group study and prayer, if possible with those of the other churches. We must be ready to be taught the Word as well as to teach it. May God grant that we meet these new challenges and responsibilities diligently, and may we be much in prayer for the committees of the churches, as they seek to do the groundwork for us all.

## Letter from Gary

HELLO BOYS AND GIRLS:

I am a little Indian boy. My name is Gary and I live in Wisconsin. My tribe is Winnebago which is settled near the Wisconsin Rapids. I have two older sisters and two teenage brothers. I hardly remember the little red house I used to live in for three or four years.

When Mother and Daddy were unable to care for me properly I was removed from my home. I can remember being in a foster home in Wisconsin Rapids. That family had an older son, Kenny, with whom I played. I liked it there with the Carlsons.

However, I was not there very long when I was placed with my brothers and sisters in the Winnebago Children's Home. As the youngest child there I had the run of the place, especially when all the older kids were in school. There were a lot of children there, mostly Indians of our tribe, as the name might tell you.

One day I was sailing paper airplanes from the steps when a lady visitor stopped to talk with me. She had rosy cheeks, blue eyes and a warm, friendly smile. I wondered who she was. One day I was told I was going to visit another home but I broke out with measles and had to stay in my room for about two weeks. The new home was going to be a minister's home.

I was excited about the ride and wondered what kind of a place a

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manse was. When we arrived I held back shyly until I recognized the pretty lady who had spoken to me several months before. I now learned her name was Mrs. Phillips and that her husband was a missionary (whatever

*Mrs. Robert Vining of Oxford, Pennsylvania has assumed responsibility for obtaining occasional letters for our young readers. Here is one sent by the Rev. Henry Phillips, missionary-pastor in Gresham, Wisconsin.*

that means) to the Stockbridge and Menominee Indians.

Right across the road was the church, The Old Stockbridge Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I never heard of such a long name for a church. It was hard for me to say when I was five.

I was asked if I would like to stay with these people and I thought I would for a while for they loved me from the very first. They had two sons who were away at college. But we had wonderful times together when they were home for vacation. My new "sister," Susan, had a room right across the hall from me. She attended high school. We played together in the snow sometimes.

In the snow I learned to ski on Henry's skis and had loads of fun sliding down the hill with neighboring Indian children. "Mommy" and "Dad" would come out with me too and laugh as they also slid down the hill. After the usual early thaw everything freezes up again in northern Wisconsin. So I learned to ice skate on the icy pond that formed in our side yard.

When the snow was gone I had a bicycle with training wheels on it. But it was hard to learn to ride. When I turned the handles it didn't seem to go the way I wanted it to. I was so disgusted I threw the bike down more than once and vowed not to try it again. However, I was encouraged to learn and now ride everywhere I am allowed to go. On a visit to Baltimore, my new Dad's home, I learned to roller skate. The road is so rough in front of our house that I can't skate here, so I don't get much practice.

Phew, I'm tired! Would you like me to write more another time?

God bless you,

GARY

**1967 SAVE PROGRAM**  
 Bethel Church, Oostburg is again looking forward to sending out a team of young people to assist other churches in visitation and evangelism this summer.

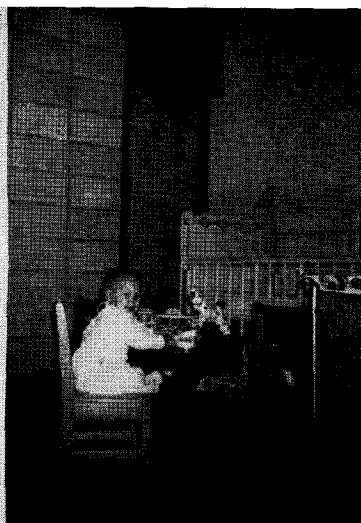
If there are places who would like a team, or young people who would be interested in serving under the SAVE program, you are invited to write to the Rev. Donald F. Stanton, 629 Center Avenue, Oostburg, Wisc. 53070. He has offered to act as a "clearing house" for 1967.



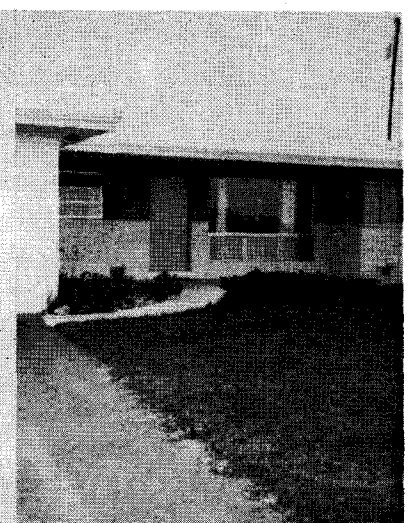
Mr. Kenneth Austin  
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Bethel Orthodox Presbyterian Church showing new Sunday school wing.



Pastor's daughter Christine smiling in the cryroom.



The manse occupied by the Rev. and Mrs. Cornelius Tolsma.

### Fort Lauderdale Church Completes Educational Wing

Bethel Church recently began to use its new wing to house a growing Sunday school in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The 70 x 31 addition is constructed of smooth concrete blocks with redwood trim. A breezeway separates the wing from the auditorium.

There are four large classrooms with drapery dividers, also a cryroom and a kitchen. Future plans call for air conditioning and permanent partitions for eight classrooms. A manse was completed a year ago. The Rev. Cornelius Tolsma is the pastor.

Bethel is the only church with a building in the municipality of Lauderdale, according to Mr. Gerrit Stonehouse, chairman of a bond committee which played an important part in financing the new structure. The con-

gregation is in an expanding area, with a development of 700 new homes going up a half mile to the north and another still larger project three miles beyond.

Prayer is urged for the fulfilling of "opportunities that appear unlimited" in the spread of the gospel in the Fort Lauderdale area.

### New Pennsylvania Church Meets in Restaurant

The Tri-County Presbyterian Church, which has applied to the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination, holds its morning worship in the Farmer's Best Restaurant, East Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. The service is broadcast over radio station WPGM. Dr. Luther Craig Long is the minister, and a Family Bible Study Hour meets in his home in Selinsgrove Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

Elders on the Session are Messrs. Charles Coryell and John Weidenhamer, with Mr. Joseph Baumer serving as deacon.

### Philadelphia Licenses Two

At its regular March meeting the Presbytery of Philadelphia licensed two men under its care to preach the gospel as probationers for the ministry. Both Mr. George Cotten-

den and Mr. Allen Curry are seniors at Westminster Seminary and have come from the United Presbyterian into the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Presbytery met at First Church, Baltimore, whose building has been redecorated inside and out under the leadership of home missionary pastor Everett DeVelde.

### La Mirada Church Picketed

A group of teenagers demonstrated in front of Calvary Church, La Mirada, California on the last Sunday of February. Contrary to the usual purpose of picketing, however, the placards were designed not to keep people away but to attract neighbors to Calvary's growing Sunday school. With an average attendance of 194 during the final quarter of 1966, a goal of 284 by June 11, 1967 has been set, according to Superintendent David Strong.

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