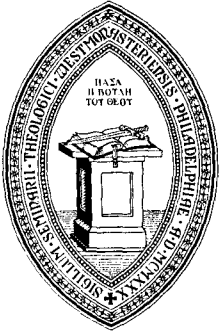


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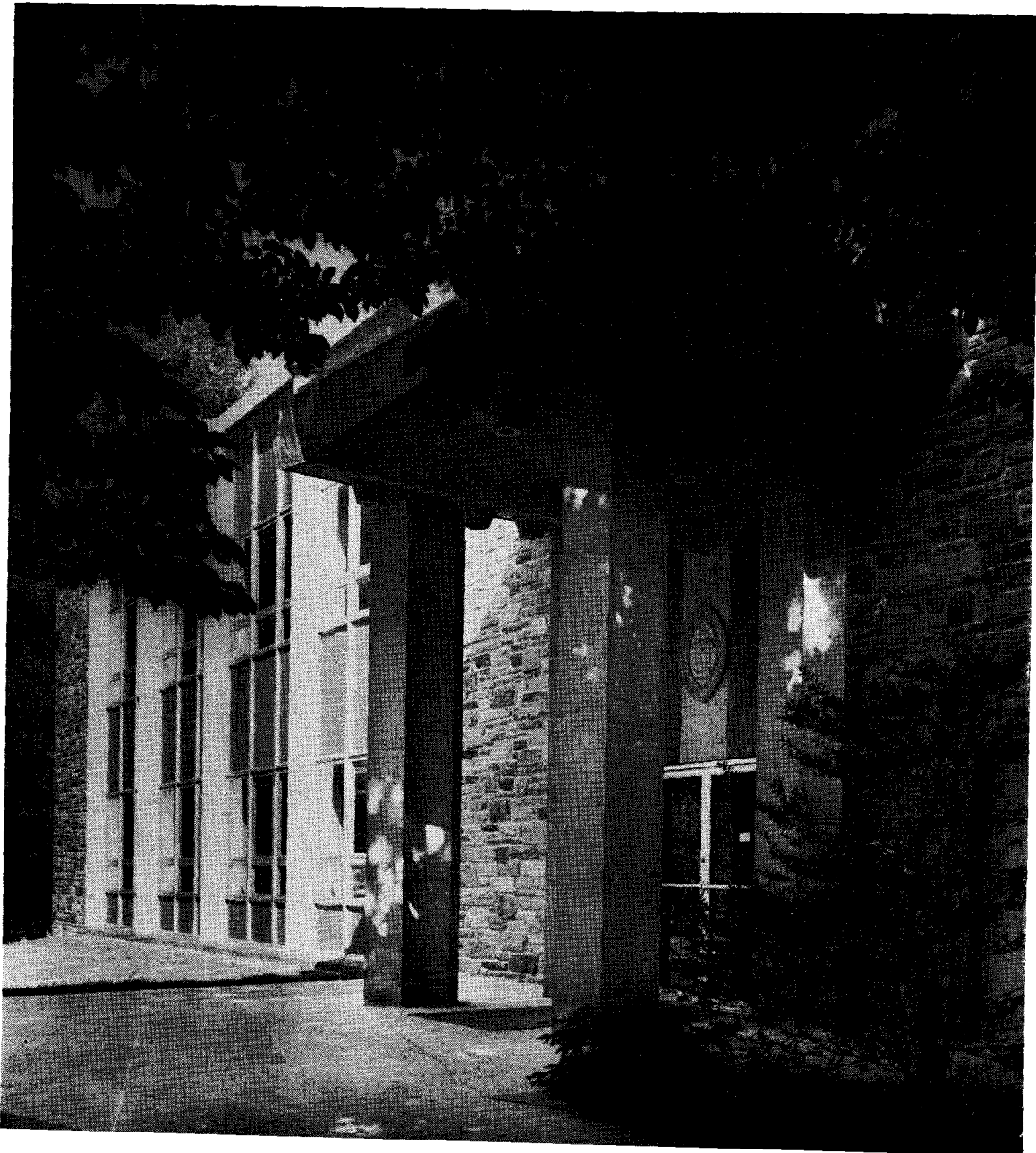
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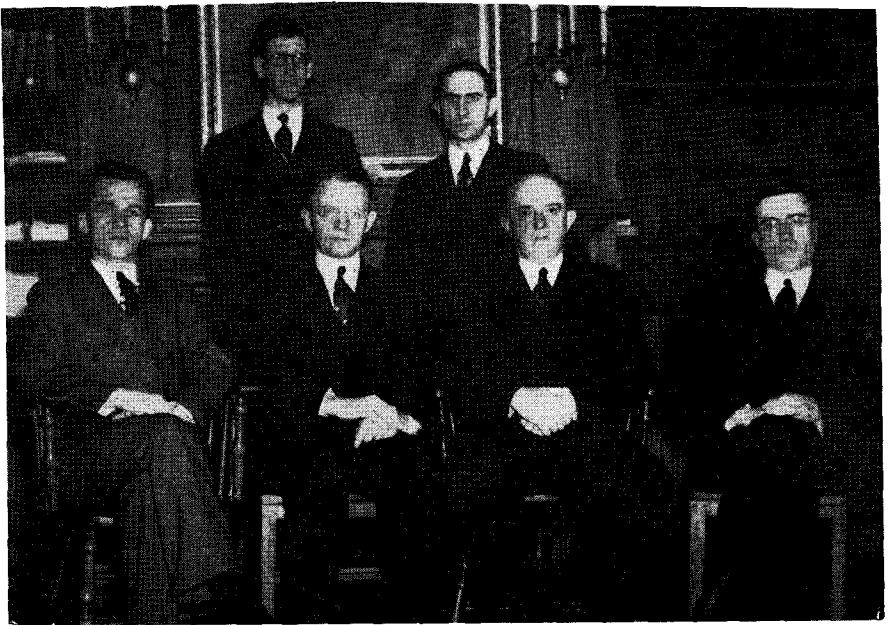
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EDITOR

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WESTMINSTER'S FACULTY THIRTY YEARS AGO

From an address on Alumni Day in the spring of 1969

A TRIBUTE TO MY COLLEAGUES

C. VAN TIL

Dr. Van Til and Professor Woolley, the only two remaining from the Seminary's original faculty, were honored at the annual alumni banquet for their forty years of service. Both spoke to the alumni in the afternoon of their recollections of the early days and their hopes for the future.

We are happy to share with you Dr. Van Til's reminiscence of his colleagues of the past, in slightly condensed form.

Charles Hodge is supposed to have asserted that in his lifetime no original idea had ever been broached by him. What Hodge and the old Princeton men meant to say was that God has revealed himself in his saving work once for all through the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, and that he has given us a definitive interpretation of what he has done for man in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The Princeton Tradition

The men of the old Princeton never believed that any one of them or that any other living man possessed, or that the Westminster Confession expressed, an infallible or final interpretation of the revelation of God to man through Christ in the Scriptures. But the allegation was made by men of unbelief that to say that in Scripture they have infallible truth is, in effect, the same as to say that they themselves, in their private interpretations of Scripture, have infallible truth.

The assumption of all apostate thought throughout history has been that man, individually or collectively, knows himself and his environment for what they are independently of what God may have said about them.

Influenced by this apostate notion of human self-sufficiency, the first great modern theologians like Schleiermacher and Ritschl reinterpreted Christianity so as to make it accord with this view of fallen man about himself and his

world. At the beginning of the century Professor Harnack reduced the teachings of Reformation theology to the notion of the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man.

The old Princeton men, more Biblically and more steadfastly than others in this country, stood up for the gospel proclaimed by Paul and after Paul by the Reformers. It is at this point basically that Westminster Seminary, from the beginning, has tried to carry on the Princeton tradition.

The Reformed Tradition

The men of old Princeton were convinced that the gospel of sovereign grace as taught in Scripture had been best re-expressed in the Reformed Confessions. In this point too Westminster has, from the outset, followed the men of old Princeton.

Warfield gives classic expression to this idea when he says that an ever deeper insight into the implications of the gospel of sovereign grace enables one to set this gospel ever more clearly and more sharply over against the false gospel of man's self-sufficiency. By searching for the deeper implications of the gospel, Warfield did not mean that we must make an ever increasing number of logical deductions from one or more basic concepts, such as God's all-encompassing decree. What he apparently meant was that by continued exegesis of Scripture, and therefore by an ever more faithful expression of every aspect of the truth of Scripture, we must learn to see ever more clearly the depth and the breadth of the revelation of God in Christ.

Robert Dick Wilson

Robert Dick Wilson was willing to make great sacrifices so that the Word of God might continue to be heard. In the memorial minute of the faculty for him we read: "Dr. Wilson was a humble and faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. The inspiration of all his work was love of his Lord. He counted no investigation too laborious if only

it would confirm the Word of God." And then: "The members of the faculty who have been Dr. Wilson's colleagues at Westminster recall with gratitude to God that they are all Dr. Wilson's 'boys'; and it is their prayer that something of his spirit may be vouchsafed to them as they carry on the work which he laid down, and that the Lord of the harvest who has given rest to his aged servant may send forth many laborers into his harvest" (*Minutes*, October 14, 1930).

J. Gresham Machen

The memorial minute to Dr. Wilson, written I think by Dr. Machen, says that all the early faculty members at Westminster were Wilson's 'boys'. In a deeper sense the younger ones were all Machen's 'boys'. In the faculty memorial minute for Dr. Machen we read: "In the death of its chairman the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary loses a man of simple faith. The home in which he was reared was a home of culture and refinement but first of all a home of child-like faith. In that faith of his childhood Dr. Machen continued to live and in the joy of the sufficiency of that faith he died." Further:

Dr. Machen was a great defender of the Faith. He held that "the Christian life is founded upon Christian doctrine as set forth in the Word of God" and also that "the Christian religion requires and is capable of scholarly exposition and defense." Machen was peculiarly fitted to defend the Faith. His great heart sympathized with those who doubted. He had himself been harrassed with doubt. He listened with patience to those who sought to defend a halfhearted Christianity. He had himself been "playing with the notion that a minimizing apologetic may serve the needs of the church." But "later investigation and meditation" convinced him "that consistent Christi-



anity is the easiest Christianity to defend, and that consistent Christianity is the only thoroughly Biblical Christianity . . . (and) is found in the Reformed Faith." With painstaking research and scientific method Dr. Machen sought to defend the Reformed Faith which he loved so well.

Dr. Machen was a great church leader. He was a man of penetrating vision. He understood the deadly "spirit of the age" as it is at work in the church of Christ. He set before himself and others the goal not of some halfhearted but of a thorough reform in the church. Every thought must be brought into obedience to Christ, the Head of the church . . . He allowed nothing to discourage him. When others hesitated or stopped short he went forward still. He was willing to pay the price of scorn and derision for the sake of Christ. Those who followed him followed him gladly; he led them always, and only, by the force of his reasoning and by free discussion. He disliked dictators in politics; in the church they were for him the enemies of Christ usurping His authority . . . He was a never-failing source of inspiration to those who labored with him.

These words of the 1937 memorial minute express accurately, I think, in what way Dr. Machen sought to continue the old Princeton position. He did not mean merely to repeat the words of the earlier Princeton men. He meant to express in the language of his own day the fact that in God's revelation through Christ in Scripture we have that which alone has saved and does save the whole man and the whole world from the ravages of sin.

If Kant sought to "save science" and make "room for religion" by means of the idea of human self-sufficiency, Machen was ready to point out that only in the Christ preached by such men as Luther and particularly Calvin can man with his science, with his philosophy, and with his theology be saved.

Beyond Princeton

Machen sensed the fact that truly to follow the older Princeton men it was necessary also to go beyond them. The full particularity and with it the full universality of the gospel must be brought out in relation to science and philosophy as well as in relation to theology. Moreover, the full particularity and the full universality of the gospel cannot be fully brought out in theology unless it is also brought out in science and philosophy.

In the world of unbelief, a false view of particularity and a false view of universality were beginning to be expressed in a new form in Machen's day. To illustrate we may mention Rudolph Bultmann's program of demythologizing the gospel. Bultmann was, even in the later year's of Machen's life, beginning to appear as one of the greatest modern New Testament scholars of his day. But Bultmann's views were intricately interwoven with and deeply dependent upon the modern existentialist views of philosophy of such men as Martin Heidegger and the modern philosophy of history of such men as Robert Collingwood. It was impossible to state and defend the gospel of the New Testament without at the same time defending the philosophy of history as a whole in which this philosophy is immersed and which finds expression in it.

This is, I believe, the vision Machen saw, much in the way that Moses saw the promised land.

Oswald T. Allis

I can say only a word about Dr. Oswald T. Allis, professor of Old Testament. Much that was said about Machen could be said about Dr. Allis. He was a close personal friend and a great admirer of Dr. Machen. He was, as he is now, a humble saint. Machen worked in the limelight, debating on one occasion Dr. Robert E. Speer on the issue of Pearl Buck in Trenton, New Jersey. When he saw that the audience was with Dr. Speer, Dr. Machen gave a most eloquent and moving testimony to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, pleading with all those present to humble themselves under the hand of almighty God and not to seek help for themselves or for others from man in whom there is no help.

At a faculty meeting soon after that Dr. Allis said something to this effect: "I have never seen our chairman more eloquent than when he spoke in defense of his Savior at the meeting in Trenton." Would that Dr. Allis, instead of only coming to this point with Machen in carrying on the old Princeton tradition, had carried on with Machen as he developed through his program of church reform to the point where the modernists, now largely in control of the church, compelled a break.

Dr. Allis continues his struggle for the truth till this very moment, and all of us who worked with him are his friends to this day.

R. B. Kuiper

Professor R. B. Kuiper was unique among his brethren. In the memorial minute in his honor we read: "The faculty pays grateful tribute to the superb contribution made by Professor Kuiper during these twenty years of service to



R. B. KUIPER
(1886-1966)

the upbuilding and strengthening of the Seminary and to the witness which it has by God's grace been able to render to the whole counsel of God. His career at the Seminary as in other activities has been marked by unrelenting fidelity to the Reformed Faith" (May 21, 1966).

R. B. was good fun to have about. "Why do you suppose, Van Til," he once asked, "that I never write out my name in full, not even on the diplomas of the Seminary? Did A. Z. Conrad ever write out his name in full? Rienck Bouke Kuiper would sound as bad as Arcturus Zodiac Conrad. And why do you suppose my parents gave me such a pe-

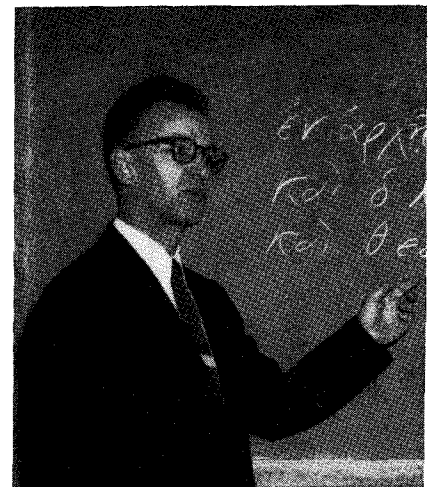
culiar name? Well, I'll tell you, Van Til. I was named after an aunt of mine. I was supposed to inherit her money, but never did. And here I was stuck with this name all my life!"

Recall R. B.'s brief pointed speeches at the opening and closing of the Seminary year. We all have him in grateful remembrance.

Ned Bernard Stonehouse

As I speak of Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse I quote from the 1962 faculty memorial minute for him. His "scholarly work was marked by caution and sound judgment. He was never too busy or concerned to pay attention to the apparently minor matters. In Browning's phrase, it was not beneath him to settle 'Hoti's business' . . . In turn, Ned Stonehouse was a man beloved of his brethren who was able to accomplish great deeds in the service of his Lord with a minimum of fanfare and noise."

In his inaugural address on "Rudolph Bultmann's Jesus" there is indicated the genuinely original way in which he put into practice Machen's principle that Westminster should follow but also go beyond the old Princeton. As noted, Bultmann's 'Jesus' was the Jesus of what Machen called modern reconstruction. But Bultmann modernized the modern reconstruction of such men as Harnack in terms



**NED
BERNARD
STONEHOUSE**
(1902-1962)

of the philosophy of the existentialist Heidegger. In Heidegger a deeper irrationalism made correlative to a deeper rationalism than had yet been seen enabled Bultmann, together with Barth, to reinterpret the Gospels so as to have a Christ both wholly hidden and wholly revealed.

Modern man was supposed to understand the gospel as thus reconstructed and made to fit in with modern science and philosophy. Dr. Stonehouse rose to the occasion when, with detailed and careful argument, he pointed out that, together with Barth, Bultmann presented to men a false gospel, a gospel as false as the 'gospel' of the earlier modernists and much more difficult to detect as false.

John Murray

As for John Murray, who of us did not suffer healing through his seemingly impeccable holiness of conversation? And who of us can read his commentary on Romans without sensing that no one more deeply than he penetrated into the mystery of the sovereign grace of God? And no one more deeply than he bowed before the majesty of God.

Professor Murray illustrates again, though in a way that

differs from that of Dr. Stonehouse, the genuine particularity as well as the genuine universality of the gospel. When they feared that through overstatement of the sovereign, electing grace of God, the true nature of the universality of this grace might be obscured, they collaborated in the writing of a pamphlet entitled "The Free Offer of the Gospel."

One time John Murray rode with my wife and myself north from Toronto to a meeting at a summer resort where he and I were both to speak to a group of ministers. An elderly Scottish minister, who had been the prime mover back of the union of churches in Canada, said that he was called "the bishop of the beach." "Think none the more of ye for that," was Mr. Murray's laconic reply.

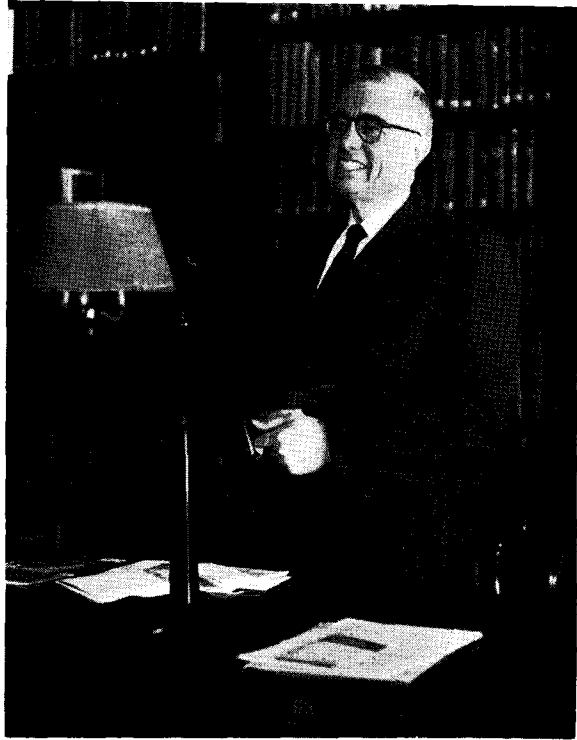
Paul Woolley

It is difficult to say what should be said about Paul Woolley. His signature at the bottom of the first page of the minutes of the first faculty meeting looks precisely as does his signature today. Woolley the *registrar!* There was no *president*. There was no *dean* of the faculty. There was no *dean* of students. There was no *business manager*. There was no *executive director*. Paul Woolley was all of these for many years, the whilst that his main responsibility was that of teaching church history.

There were many facts to be learned by those who took his courses, but these facts were shown to be telling one story, the story of the Christ of God victorious over all his foes throughout the ages. Here was a genuine following of and going beyond the old Princeton method of teaching church history. Here was an even more detailed description of facts joined to a much deeper and more significant explanation of meaning. He studied broadly in the field of systematics and in the history of doctrine so as to enrich his teaching of church history.

But beyond that, it has been Paul Woolley who was *primus inter pares* in his penetrating knowledge of a large array of facts in the field of general human culture and in his ability to connect the meaning of these facts in terms of the Christian message.

Deeply committed to the Reformed Faith, Professor Woolley has kept up his contact with and sympathy for all those who, in non-Reformed evangelical circles, love the



PAUL WOOLLEY
Professor Woolley was honored this spring by a doctor of divinity degree from Geneva College.

Christ who washed them from their sins in his blood. He has deeply concerned himself with the work of missions of every sort to all men everywhere. In all these respects Paul Woolley had a vision and a program of action similar to that which Machen had in his day.

Dr. Machen was honorable and dignified in all his dealings with those who betrayed their trust as called to be servants in the church of Jesus Christ. All of my colleagues of whom I have spoken sought earnestly to do this very thing, but none of them, I believe, surpassed Professor Woolley in this respect.

Paul Woolley has to a large extent worked behind the scenes in all these years. Working behind the scenes he was at the helm. Through many a storm he was largely responsible for keeping the Seminary on an even keel. The good name of Westminster, academically and otherwise, is largely due to his tireless labors.

Edward Joseph Young

Dr. Young's passing is so recent that I shall only quote a short passage from the faculty memorial minute for him. Speaking of one of his numerous works, it says: "In *Thy Word Is Truth* Dr. Young explains and defends the unique inspiration and consequent inerrancy of the Bible in its original manuscripts" (July 1, 1968).

Edward J. Young replaced Dr. Allis as head of the Old Testament department. I have written a brief memorial for him for the Evangelical Society, which I shall not repeat. Dr. Young was my student; he became my colleague and finally my teacher by way of example in diligence of labor, simplicity of faith and kindness of manner.

(concluded on page 70)



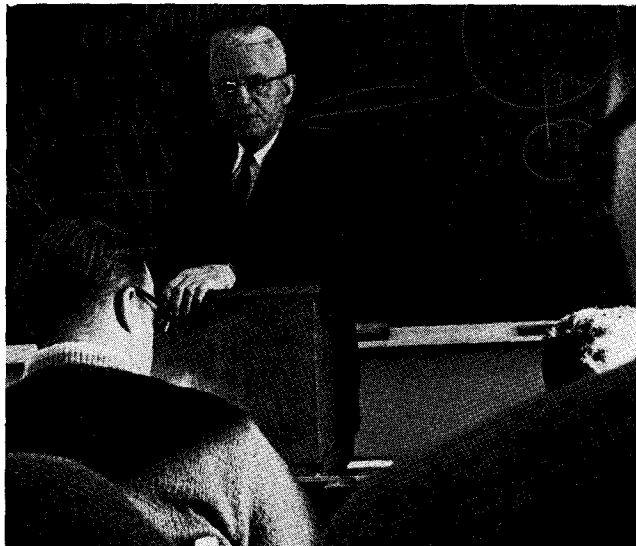
JOHN MURRAY,
professor emeritus,
and
EDWARD J. YOUNG
(1907-1968)

The Board of Trustees of Westminster Theological Seminary, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Seminary and in gratitude to God, honors...

Cornelius Van Til, Th.M., Ph.D., D.D.,

who has served as Professor of Apologetics since the inception of the Seminary in 1929.

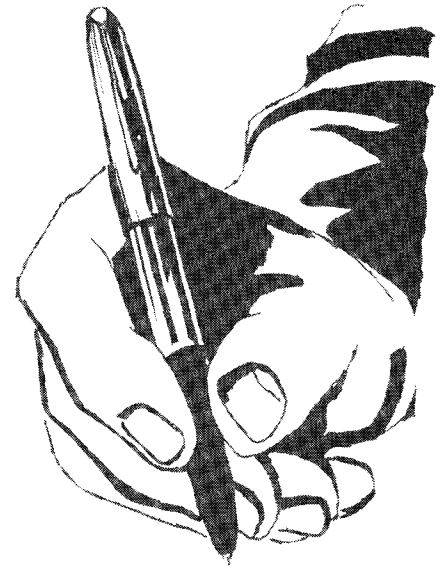
From the beginning of his professorial career Dr. Cornelius Van Til has exhibited the highest proficiency as a scholar. Beginning as an instructor at Princeton Theological Seminary and continuing as a professor at Westminster, Dr. Van Til developed a Biblical apologetic which has provided a solid foundation for Westminster's firm adherence to and enthusiastic exposition of the theology of the Holy Scriptures. Learned in both theology and philosophy, he has been a rugged exponent of Christian Theism and has masterfully defended it against every compromise with the various constructions of humanistic philosophy. From Dr. Van Til's pen class syllabi and many other volumes have come into the hands of theologians and students across the world. By this means students from East and West have been drawn to Westminster Seminary, and in diverse cultures many who have not been privileged to hear his energetic and unique classroom presentations have been influenced by his written words.



Hundreds of his students are deeply appreciative that Dr. Van Til was always approachable and ready to give Christian counsel, always gentle, always compassionate. His understanding and concern, outside as well as in the classroom have endeared him greatly and have contributed immeasurably to the growth of men and the forming of stalwart ministers of Jesus Christ.

To salute his competency as a scholar and his congeniality as a mentor, however, is an empty gesture unless from the heart acknowledgment is made of the vital force that made Cornelius Van Til the kind of person he is. Never a man of boastful pride, he has given evidence in countless ways of his humble faith in the triune God, the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of man, and the Sanctifier of sinners reborn by sovereign grace. Every word he spoke made plain that he realized his wisdom and ability were not his own, but were learned from the Holy Scriptures and impressed upon him constantly by the renewing and enlightening of the Holy Spirit through the saving merits of Jesus, the Son of God.

Thanks be to God for the faithful service of Cornelius Van Til to Westminster Theological Seminary.



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Westminster and your will.

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Tribute by Van Til

(from page 68)

John Skilton

And what shall I say of John Skilton? Speaking at the funeral service for Dr. Stonehouse, he said: "He so closely identified himself with the work of our Seminary and so freely spent himself for our benefit that we may say that he truly belonged to us" (*Presbyterian Guardian*, December 1962, p. 164). These words may be applied to Dr. Skilton himself.

Yet I must speak of a crisis of which none of you know but which might have terminated the Seminary's existence. And who or what was the cause of this scarcely averted calamity? It sprang from the kindly smile of John Skilton.

As I was about to enter the faculty room from the hall one Saturday morning, there was John Skilton. Bowing and smiling, he motioned for me to enter first. Conscious of my need to learn the ways of courtesy, I demurred and suggested that he go first. Then he backed up and again suggested that I go first. Thinking this was the thing to do, I backed up farther than he, and soon we were both with our backs to the bulletin board. I stepped forward boldly and John stepped forward boldly. Again we were at the door. Now neither of us moved.

All the faculty members were waiting to enter the room for a faculty meeting. Without faculty meetings, no board meetings. Without board meetings, no graduations. Without graduations, no students. Without students, no seminary!

At last I gave up and walked in and John followed after. If all men were as polite as John Skilton society would come to a standstill.

A Final Word

Finally, my hope and prayer for my younger colleagues is that they may see ever more clearly the vision that Dr. Machen saw. He was a man of great determination. The flag of the self-attesting and all-conquering Christ *must* be planted on the top of the mountains, for friend and foe



The late professors Stonehouse and Young

alike to see. He pleaded with his friends to join him in going up to the highest peak. When they became discouraged by the noise of the foe, Dr. Machen continued onward and upward alone. At last he had to go all alone.

The Lord of glory has greatly blessed that effort. If men in and outside the church today understand who the Christ of the Scriptures is in distinction from every false Christ raised by the heretics of the day, it is largely because Machen's followers have followed his example.

It will be a subtle temptation for those who follow the first generation of teachers to seek cooperation for a common program of action with those whose commitment to the sovereign grace of God is not all-absorbing and all-inclusive. When Christ comes, will he find faith on the earth? He will! Thanks be to God.

JOHN H. SKILTON IN A CLASS SESSION

