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The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.

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Ecumenical Missions?

ON another page we present comments on a book by Dr. J. Christy Wilson. Dr. Wilson is an associate professor of Ecumenics in Princeton Theological Seminary. He spent twenty years in the Presbyterian mission in Iran, and gained an enviable reputation for his understanding of the Persian people, his knowledge of the religion and people of Islam, and his personal evangelistic zeal.

Yet, as our reviewer shows, under the impact of the modern ecumenical movement, Dr. Wilson has been led to approve views and procedures which hardly accord with the principles of sound missionary work.

In particular, aside from the question of cooperation between mission agencies on the field, he appears to approve of the idea that the "ancient" churches in Moslem lands should be brought into the missionary movement. In Ethiopia and Eritrea, for example, this means that the ancient Coptic Church would be brought into the Christian community in such a fashion that converts from paganism and from Islam would be instructed to fellowship with and perhaps to join the Coptic church. Pagans would, according to Dr. Wilson, have a better understanding of the "real meaning of Christianity" if all the forces that are known by the name of Christ would get together in a cooperative endeavor.

It is certainly true that if Presbyterians, Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists, and Coptics were to get together, and the resulting "stew" were to be presented as Christianity, the natives would have a new idea of what Christianity was. But their idea would be very far from what Christianity historically has been.

This sort of thinking shows what the ecumenical idea does to people. It leads them to substitute an organization, a fellowship, a community, for the gospel. What is Christianity, you ask? Why, Christianity is what you have when you get everyone who claims the name of Christ together in one grand organization.

In the end it makes no difference that some who claim the name of Christ deny His deity, that others deny the saving character of His death on the cross, that others bow down before saints and images, pray for the dead, and profess to repeat the sacrifice of Christ in the ritual of the Mass, or that still others are devotees of Mrs. Ellen White—if only all can get together in one fellowship, then in that fellowship Christianity is presented before your eyes and you are called on to embrace it. Such an interpretation of missionary endeavor would certainly mark the dawn of a new age in the "Christian" approach to the unsaved. But it would be a new age we hope never dawns.

In contrast to the above position, it is our contention that the task of the Christian missionary is to present to the unbeliever, be he pagan, Moslem, atheist or what you will, a message. That message he finds in and receives from the Word of God, which is set forth in the Old and New Testaments. With that message the missionary has no right to tamper, but he must proclaim it in its fulness and total character. The moment he conditions or adjusts his message to local circumstances or organizations, he has forfeited his right to carry on his missionary calling.

The organization—the church—with which the convert associates will quite normally be determined by the message he has received. It is of course true (thank God!) that persons may be brought out of paganism through an imperfect message, or an imperfect presentation of that message. God uses the crooked stick. And such persons may be expected to affiliate with a church organization which is itself conditioned by the imperfect message.

But surely our aim can be no less than that the pure gospel shall be preached in pagan lands, and that those brought by the grace of God out of pagan darkness shall be offered the fellowship of a church which is committed, in organization as well as in message, to the Scriptural ideal.

L. W. S.

pollution—God's grace alone. He who leaves room for man to merit his salvation in the least degree may bear the name "Protestant," but he has allowed the colors of that banner to fade, and ere long he will be in the camp of the enemy. We are Protestants only if we give all glory to God for saving us and renounce human merit.

No Human Middlemen

Again, we are Protestants if we believe in the priesthood of every believer. Every man who repents of his sins and trusts in Jesus Christ alone for salvation comes directly to God without human mediation. Human instruments ordained by God for the ministry of the gospel may be used by God in the bringing of a soul to the claims of that message of the Scriptures, but no man is needed to conduct the sinner from death to life. Thus grace comes directly to man by the sovereign Holy Spirit, and the regenerated child of God owes his life to Him and is responsible to Him alone. This was a liberating doctrine to the people of the sixteenth century who came on bended knees to churchmen for the grace which the church alone claimed to possess and to have the ability and right to dispense. No longer need one depend on the institution of the church for grace or for truth. With the reaffirmation of the doctrine of the sole authority of Scripture there came the truth of the right of private interpretation. God spoke to the soul of man in the Scriptures where the way of salvation was clearly set forth so that through the due use of ordinary means, not only the learned but also the unlearned could understand the gospel.

It might seem as if this truth needed less emphasis today than it did at the time of the Reformation. This is a day when the champions of freedom speak loudly. But let us not be deceived by an apparent freedom found in the ecclesiastical world. The Roman Church has not changed its doctrines. It has added new and wholly unscriptural teachings to its creed. The Pope of Rome has proclaimed a holy year to observe the one-hundredth anniversary of the proclamation of the false doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The Roman hierarchy still claims to stand between the worshipper and God. And among non-Romanists church architecture has replaced the Bible-bearing pulpit with

an altar. The modernistic church seeks the loyalty of men to itself above all else. Church programs and organization are emphasized and the solution for personal, social and economic problems are said to be found in the message of the church. But unfortunately that message of the church is at variance with the message of God for men in the Bible. Many who bear the name "Protestant" have raised man above the Word; so we are to look to the church for a message. As true Protestants we will demand that the church subject itself, its programs, pulpit and pew, to the Bible.

Proper View of the Church

On the other hand we still have with us those who would seek to upset the balance found in Scripture. While we are prophets, priests, and kings, the expression of our faith must be found in the church which Christ established and purchased with His blood. Believing in the right of private interpretation does not rule out corporate testimony and responsibility. It does not make creeds unnecessary or an evil to be avoided. It does not call for independent agencies to do that which Christ commissioned His church to do. As Protestants we will protest against by-passing the church in the interest of the individual expression of faith.

In holding to these three precious truths, the sole authority of Scripture,

salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and the priesthood of every believer, Protestantism forever separates itself from Romanism in every generation. The efforts of some to embrace the Roman hierarchy in the World Council of Churches is an abandonment of the heritage received from Luther, Knox and Calvin. It is an attempt to reenslave a church that was once shown the bright light of freedom.

But we do not mean to say that all who bear the name of Protestant wish to join forces with Rome in the name of ecumenicity. Some value freedom but want to retain it while embracing the very error which led our fathers in the Protestant faith to break with Rome. Their freedom will not last. A virile Protestantism is needed today. Unless we clearly set forth the truth of the Scriptures over against the doctrines and commandments of men, Romanism will have little to fear. A court fool, at the time of Luther, was said to have told a certain cardinal in Rome, "My Lord, take my advice and first depose Paul from the company of the Apostles; it is he who is giving us all this trouble." Luther stood upon Paul's doctrine. Let us also vigorously proclaim that Word of God, meeting error point by point. It is still our only trusty shield and weapon. If God and His truth be for us, who can be against us?

Building the Ark of God

Address to New Students

By PROFESSOR C. VAN TIL

AT the opening exercises of Westminster Seminary it is customary for the Chairman of the Faculty to deliver a brief address of welcome to the students, having particularly in mind those coming to the Seminary for the first time. Here is the address delivered this year by Dr. VanTil.

FIRST of all I would greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and welcome you to our campus and to our fellowship together in Him. May our fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ be increasingly precious to every one of us as the days go by.

But secondly I wish to welcome you

also to a fellowship of labor in the Lord our God. To describe briefly this fellowship of labor I invite you to think with me for just a few moments about that great man of God, Noah, the builder of the ark.

Noah, we read, found favor in the sight of God. He alone of his generation did find favor, and he walked with God. This is said also of Enoch before him, but Enoch was translated suddenly into glory. Not so with Noah, for God had a task for Noah to perform in his generation.

It was a godless generation in which Noah was called to perform his task. It was a generation of men who had

openly and in brazen-faced fashion forsaken the living God. They are exemplified in the person of Lamech, who boldly said to his two wives that if a young man met him and he was angry he would cut him in two—and it would not trouble his conscience in the least for while his great-great-grandfather Cain still thought there was a god, he no longer thought so. He knew that the idea that there was a god was a projection of the human imagination.

This was the attitude of the children of Cain. Sad to say, it was also virtually the attitude of the children of Seth. Instead of witnessing against and to these children of Cain, the children of Seth had become fellow-breakers with them of the laws of God. They had all of them in effect taken the same position that Lamech took. All that remained was a test of strength between the living God and the children of men.

It was in this situation that Noah found grace in the sight of God to build the ark. He walked with God, as Enoch had walked with God. To God he presented the needs of this generation. The awful apostasy from the living God burdened his heart. He wept over it. He besought God for relief from the situation.

Then God used this man who walked with Him, this man who had found grace in His sight, to become the builder of the ark. And in the building of the ark he was to save his house, and at the same time he was to judge the world. Just as a wall separates and keeps inside those that are within, and keeps outside those that are without, so the building of the ark accomplished in one act the saving of Noah's house and the condemnation of the world.

Think with me for just a moment on this second aspect of Noah's work. He was a preacher of righteousness. He was a just man in his generation. He witnessed to that generation of the living God, and of His requirements.

So he came to that generation which he served, first of all, with a challenge pertaining to the past. He took the tradition of Adam and Eve in Paradise as being historically true, as indicating to man just what had happened at the beginning of all things in this world. But they laughed him to scorn. They said there were no records of such things as that, no scientific evidence

Westminster Enrollment is Eighty-five

WESTMINSTER Theological Seminary of Philadelphia began its 24th academic year on Wednesday, September 23, with an enrollment of eighty-five students, including twenty-three in the entering class, and eleven taking graduate work. Among the entering students are two who came from Spain, the first time that students from that country have been enrolled at Westminster.

The opening exercises were held in Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Glenside, adjacent to the Seminary campus. The church auditorium was filled to capacity, and about 25 persons listened to the service as it came over a loud speaker in the down-stairs room.



Professor C. VanTil, the Rev. W. Vander Haak, and the Rev. John P. Clelland, President of the Board of Trustees, on the Seminary campus following the opening exercises.

Taking part in the exercises were Professor C. Van Til, Chairman of the Seminary faculty, who presided and also delivered a brief address of welcome to the students; the Rev. Fred C. Kuehner, professor of New Testament in the Reformed Episcopal Seminary of Philadelphia; Dr. Robert K. Rudolph, Registrar and Professor of Theology at Reformed Episcopal Seminary; and the Rev. William Vander Haak, pastor of the Midland Park, N. J., Christian Reformed Church, who delivered the principal address. Dr. VanTil's address of welcome is included in this issue. We intend to publish Mr. Vander Haak's address in the near future.

One of the problems faced by the Seminary in its work is the limited accommodations available for married students. Only a few families can be housed on the campus, and in most cases married students must arrange their own housing. This year at least two student families are using trailers for their living quarters.

The Executive Committee of the Alumni Association met on the day of the Seminary opening, and made arrangements for several Alumni functions, including the annual Home Coming during the winter, and the annual banquet next May. Also a committee was appointed to confer with a committee of the Board of Trustees concerning ways and means of observing the Seminary's twenty-fifth year in 1954-5.

that that was what had taken place.

He also witnessed to them of the same God as at the present time controlling the universe, as bringing rain and sunshine in season, as controlling the laws of nature. But they argued, in effect, that that was not true. They assumed that nature works by itself, that it is not under God's control.

And so when he, having been warned of God concerning things that should come to pass, also brought them a different philosophy of the future than they were accustomed to believe, when he predicted in the name of God that a flood would come and destroy all of them unless they would repent, they again laughed him to scorn. There were no records of such floods. Science knew nothing of such things. "It cannot happen here," they said, in

effect. The world just doesn't produce such things. Reality isn't of that nature. We know, they said, because the human race hasn't experienced anything of the sort.

But Noah was not afraid of their ridicule. He believed that God had spoken. When he said to them that God had revealed this to him, they in effect told him that it was natural for primitive man to think that there were such revelations, but that in reality the idea of revelation is also a projection of the mind of man. So they listened not to him. They scorned him. They reviled him. They rejected him. And they did not think that in all seriousness a man would build a ship on the top of a mountain, predicting that water would come above the highest peaks on which safety might be found.

Nevertheless Noah built the ark of God, at God's behest, for the saving of his house when the flood did come, and for the judgment of the world.

So, my friends, as you enter into the work of this year, will you not join with us in our day and generation in building the ark of God.

In the past, some hundred years and more, Princeton Theological Seminary used to join with those that built the ark of God. But in recent times Princeton Seminary has joined those that ridicule the builders of the ark. For that reason Dr. Machen and others, given grace by God and walking with God and being faithful to their generation, witnessing to that generation,

raised up this institution, once more in our day to help build the ark of God.

Will you not then with us listen to the revelation of God, to what it tells us about the origins of things, about the present state of things, and about the future judgment of God upon those that believe not? And then will you not with us prepare for the preaching of the salvation of men's souls if they will enter into the ark, if they will believe in Jesus Christ who gave Himself for His own?

May the God of all grace give us wisdom and give us strength and fearlessness in our day, that we may be found faithful, as Noah was faithful in his day.

Mission Cooperation in Moslem Lands

Some comment on proposals by Dr. J. Christy Wilson

By CLARENCE W. DUFF

IT is unpleasant in reviewing a book in which there is so much that is commendable, to find oneself differing radically with the author on a subject of great importance, the subject of cooperation between various churches and missions in the task of evangelizing the Moslems of Bible lands. We believe in all possible scriptural cooperation between churches or agencies of like faith, but we cannot persuade ourselves that the measure of cooperation advocated by Dr. Wilson is either scriptural or practical.

Leaving aside the question as to whether evangelistic cooperation by the various foreign churches or mission agencies working in Bible lands is feasible or right, we must say something about the proposal to bring into the evangelistic effort the ancient churches of those lands, notably the Nestorian Church in Iran, the Monophysite Coptic churches in Egypt and Ethiopia, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Armenian Church and, presumably, the Jacobite Church in Syria.

Dr. Wilson appears to approve such a proposal. He says, "They (the ancient churches) should have much to contribute to the future of the Christian fellowship in Bible lands." (p. 164). And again, "All these things

make us feel that the time is drawing near when the various elements in the Christian community in Moslem countries may unite in a concerted effort to win Mohammedans to Christ, and that all Christians, of whatever communion, may welcome the convert into the society of the Kingdom of God" (p. 165).

We quote Dr. Wilson further—"If ways and means may be found for the missions and the younger churches to unite with these ancient communions

IN an earlier issue there was brief comment by the Rev. Clarence W. Duff, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary in Eritrea, concerning the book of Dr. J. Christy Wilson, "The Christian Message to Islam." Mr. Duff found many worthwhile features in the book. However, on the subject of cooperation on the mission field, Mr. Duff feels that the position taken by Dr. Wilson is open to substantial criticism. His analysis of this element in the book appears here.

of the East in the task of evangelism it will, indeed, mark the dawn of a new age in the Christian approach to Moslems" (p. 80). "Though it may take a long time for union of Christian bodies to be accomplished, we should certainly be able to get together for

concerted action in presenting Christ and His way of life to Moslems. Great progress has already been made in showing the Mohammedan people the real meaning of Christianity, and if all forces that are known by the name of Christ can get together for cooperation they might change the Moslem conception of what Christianity really is within a few years" (p. 174-5. Question: *Would we want Moslems to get such a conglomerate conception of the Christian faith?* C. W. D.)

There are other quotations, but these are sufficient to present Dr. Wilson's position. I would not feel it necessary to say so much on this subject of cooperation in evangelism with the ancient churches were it not that the idea has taken strong hold on many missionary organizations and leaders in our own day. It must be faced here in Africa in the near future. Leaders in the American Mission (United Presbyterian), the Swedish Evangelical Mission (Lutheran) and the native evangelical church which has resulted from its labors, in the Church of England's Bible Churchman's Missionary Society and in other agencies are hopeful of obtaining some measure of cooperation with the National Church of Ethiopia, the ancient Ethiopic church.

Different leaders and different groups have differing ideas on how far they may cooperate. Some seem to look forward to all Christian groups in Ethiopia becoming part of the Ethiopic Church. Some envision a national Ethiopian church formed by a federation of existing evangelical groups with the ancient church. Some, I understand, have refrained from ordaining pastors of their own up to the present time, in the hope that eventually the Ethiopic Church may recognize them and ordain their pastors. The pastors they have are ex-priests of the ancient church whose ordination has been accepted by the evangelical group. It is the set policy of at least one of the above-mentioned missions to encourage converts or any who accept the evangelical teaching to enter or remain in the Ethiopic Church, and another has, I understand, at times turned over its converts from paganism for baptism by the Ethiopic Church priests.

What are we to say about cooperating with these ancient churches in evangelism? Can we rejoice in having converts from Islam or Paganism join their fellowship or associate with their