

October 15, 1955

Vol. 24, No. 10

The Presbyterian

G U A R D I A N

It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute or other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the Pope any power and jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and, least of all, to deprive them of their dominions, or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

Westminster Confession XXIII. 4

J. Gresham Machen
Editor 1936 - 1937

Published Monthly
\$2.50 per year

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN

OCTOBER 15, 1955

After Twenty Years

THE first issue of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN is dated October 7, 1935. In that issue, and for a number of issues following, Dr. J. Gresham Machen wrote a page under the general title, "The Changing Scene and the Unchanging Word."

Viewing the changing scene in 1935 Machen wrote:

"Everywhere we find centralization of power under arbitrary bureaucracy; the area of liberty is slowly but very surely being reduced. Solemn contracts public and private are being treated as scraps of paper; the solid foundations of liberty and honesty are crumbling beneath our feet."

Where, asked Machen, in the midst of these shifting sands can we find anything solid? In particular what about the church? After referring to certain "secret" trials then going on in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., Machen declared:

"The truth is that the bureaucracy in the Church has not a bit more regard for the Constitution of the Church, than the bureaucracy in the State has for the Constitution of the State in so many countries of the world. We are today in the midst of a time when the landmarks are being destroyed. Solemn constitutional guarantees of liberty are treated as though they meant nothing; and when people make solemn subscription to a system of doctrine that solemn pledge is treated as though it were a mere empty form of words."

The answer of Dr. Machen was, that in the midst of the changing scene, men could turn for assurance to the unchanging Word of God. Where was that Word to be found?

"Our answer is very simple. We find it in the whole Bible. We do not say in Modernist fashion, that the Bible contains the Word of God. No, we say, in Christian fashion, that the Bible is the Word of God.

"There, at last, we find something that we can trust. We cannot trust the world; we cannot trust that elusive something known as 'civilization'. We cannot, alas, trust the visible Church. But when God speaks we can trust Him. He has spoken in the Bible. We can find our way through all the mists if we will make the blessed Book our guide."

Machen was never to know the full measure of the changing scene about which he spoke. Called to

his eternal rest less than a year and a half after writing these words, he was spared the experience of the world's agony. But these past twenty years have painted a changing scene.

The European dictators, Hitler and Mussolini, who were riding to their zenith in 1935, suffered eclipse, but only after a second World War which spread not only through Europe, but into Africa, and Asia, and which proved once for all that this is indeed "one world." Necessity being the mother of invention, the military necessity spawned the atom bomb, which finally ended the hot war with a dull thud, and brought on the cold war, which is still being fought by words and threats and subtle pressures. If the world was unhappy in 1935, it is terror stricken in 1955. The changing outward scene has brought no peace to man, but has persuaded him more than ever that his feet are set on shifting sands and he has here no sure abiding place.

To meet this tremendous uncertainty, men have set up the United Nations, an approach to the single government which their "one world" seems to need. But history shows that rebellion can flare within the bounds of any government, and men know that it is not the United Nations Assembly, but the long shadow of the atom, that has thus far kept the cold war in the cold stage.

In the midst of all this, what contribution has the church made? First we can say that the old Modernism of Machen's day has very largely been discredited. Based on a theory of benevolent humanism, it was jolted from the throne by the guns of Europe and the bombs on Japan. It still has its adherents, but they have lost the respect they once enjoyed.

In place of a discredited humanistic theology, the church has substituted two concepts. One is the concept of a world church, the movement we know as ecumenicism, paralleling in many respects the concept of the United Nations. The churches feel they have been weak in meeting the world's problems, because they have been divided. Let them become a single organization, with a single voice, and the world will be compelled to listen. The prestige of numbers and the authority of a united conviction will produce the longed-for era.

(Continued on next page)

reminds me in a whisper to speak very simple English. And I begin.

A world removed, until I so recently came to this land; a vast language removed, except as I bridge it in makeshift fashion with an interpreter—I am yet keenly aware that here is the arena of my activities, the stage of my strivings in the Gospel, the perennial pattern of approach save for the interpreter I hope not to need next year. Where God has led me to communicate the gospel, there I face with deep misgivings the communication problem.

But as I speak, listening apprehensively as the translator makes four sentences to my one, filling in where he thinks I am brief or vague though he was not instructed to do so—I see a face change here, a visage crinkle in thought there. I test my visual observation with a funny illustration. A few smiles and a laugh and I know that I have gotten across a point. A simple but weighty truth I state with all the solemn simplicity I can muster. An aged, intelligent looking granny nods perceptibly, as in agreement. I begin to breathe easier. Soon I am taken up with my message of the Christ who has visited our dark earth to make of sinful men of all races and nations one re-

deemed family. Then I am done and take my seat.

The hymn next announced is surprisingly appropriate — From Greenland's Icy Mountains. Again many sing from memory. I am grateful for the Christians present, but hope they have brought some for whom the message was primarily intended. Despite all my communication problems, someone else has already told them before most of the things I am saying, else there would be no church to preach in. I sense that greater men than I have been here before, and that I am entering into their labors.

Soon the meeting is dismissed, and as I, the interpreter, and the evangelist walk across the mats to the black sky-etched doorway, my hand is gripped by old and young in warm greeting. Several of the women come near to bow, as the custom is, and thank me for the message, smiling and repeating the common but warming phrase — "We have received much grace."

And so the young missionary goes home, another encounter for the communication of truth past, one more sally for the faith made, encouraged that one day it will be as well understood and useful as when he preached in the homeland in his own tongue.

people of Israel and through them to the world as the Light of the world. "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." It is the primary or proper work of the Christ to save, not to condemn. To be sure, from the beginning His work was negative as well as positive. But it was negative against Satan and all his hosts. Christ came forth from the Father to save the world from Satan, not to give it, or any part of it, into his clutches. "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost. . . . For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jesus looks upon the multitude and has compassion on them. They are blind, and therefore stubborn. Their fathers had killed the prophets, and they sought to kill Him. Recognizing degrees of guilt, He yet found all of them responsible. But guilty and polluted though they were, He sought to lead them out of darkness into light. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. . . . I am the light of the world."

Shall we not then as preachers of the gospel learn to have true Christ-like sympathy with men in their blindness and their resultant folly? Shall we not patiently present to men the Christ of Scriptures as the Light of the World? To do so we must learn to distinguish darkness from light. We must learn about the devious ways in which those who are in the church but not of the church often think in terms of the principles of the world. We must learn the meaning of the Word, not in a vacuum but in the midst of and by way of contrast to the thought of the world. To preach Christ as the Light of the world we must know the world and its ways of darkness. Christ with unequalled keenness signalized that which was Satanic in the hearts and lives of men. But He did so in order to liberate them from it. We too must know the way of Satan in this world, but we must know it primarily in order

Address of Welcome to Students of Westminster Theological Seminary

On Preaching Christ

By C. VAN TIL

FOR THE FACULTY and for the student body I bid you welcome to the Seminary and its work. You are going to prepare yourself for the preaching of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You are going to preach Christ and Him crucified. You will preach Jesus and the Resurrection.

You will preach this Christ both to the church and to the world. Both sorely need that Christ. The church needs to be built up in the faith; the world needs to be brought unto the faith. Those in the world need to be brought unto Christ through the Word, and those in the church need to be sanctified through the Word. You are therefore with us to learn to under-

stand the Word in order from it to preach the Christ.

Not as though the distinction between the church and the world as made is absolute. There are those in the church who are not true believers. So then both the promises and the warnings of the Word must be preached to all men everywhere.

Look then with me for a moment at the Christ as He presented Himself to the people of God and through them to the world.

The Deep Sympathy of Christ

Watch Him first as with deepest sympathy for their needs and their distress the Christ offered Himself to the

to preach the Christ as the One through whom the prisoners of darkness may see the light of truth.

The Warnings of Christ

To preach Christ as the Light of the world, however, requires us to follow His example also when He warns of the consequences of rejecting Him. "And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall thereof." And what he claims for Himself He also claims for His ambassadors. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Mt. 10:14-15).

The choice for or against the Christ must be shown to be all important for this life and for the life to come. We are to warn men of the wrath to come. Those who accept not the Christ as the Light of the world will be cast out into outer darkness: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

But if our warnings are to be fraught with such stupendous consequences how thoroughly must we understand the Word! We dare not bring any warning but the warning of the Word. We must learn to use the keys of the kingdom. But we must learn to use them aright. Usurpers in the church have claimed to use these keys and have locked out the true children of God. They knew not the Christ and drove others from the Christ. To use the keys of the kingdom aright we must learn to use them as the King Himself used them. We must learn to present the Christ so clearly that men will be compelled to choose for or against Him. We must preach Christ existentially.

The Results

Will men then readily accept that Christ? Will they turn to the Light as soon as it is placed before them? They will not. They love darkness rather than light. Their blindness is self-imposed and irremediable except for

the grace of God. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. (Mt. 12:27) . . . But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). Men are not like the innocent child, unable to find its way in the woods. They hate the light. They turn from it. The carnal mind is at enmity against God (Rom. 8:5), and this enmity is death. The god of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18).

Is then our preaching vain? Are you preparing yourself for a task with no results, or with only negative results? Far from it. Whether men hear or forbear, they have heard the Word and through it have seen the Christ, the beckoning, the pleading Christ, but also the King of Kings and the Lord

of Lords who will place at his left those who have not desired Him to be *their* king.

But never fear. Study the Word. Present the Light of the world to all men everywhere. God has caused the Light to shine into the hearts of His people. He has promised to make His Word effective to the conversion of sinners even through our preaching, if only the preaching be true to His Word. His Word cannot return unto Him void. Christ's work cannot be in vain. His Spirit envelops Saul the persecutor and turns him into Paul the apostle. His Word and Spirit do essentially the same today.

Welcome, then, thrice welcome, to the work of preparation for the preaching of the gospel. To help men prepare for that task is the sole purpose of the Seminary. It is the sole ambition of its faculty. We would help you in any way we can, personally as well as in the classroom. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

Our Reformation Heritage

*The Bible Only;
Grace Only; Faith Only*

By RAYMOND O. ZORN

IT WAS THE REFORMERS who rediscovered the truth, "For freedom Christ has freed you. Stand therefore and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1, literal translation). The Christian Church had succeeded in gradually burying this truth in the centuries preceding the Reformation. Salvation by God's grace through faith had been forgotten in the bondage of multiplied works performed to earn or merit salvation. But salvation in Christ is wholly by God's grace. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," because the Gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the

Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" (Rom. 4:5; 1:16-17). The salvation we experience in Christ therefore sets us free, not only from the burden and condemnation of sin, but from the yoke of works' bondage performed as a means of earning salvation. We are free because, being unable to do anything to save ourselves, Christ did it all for us. And, since His servants walk in the realm of this liberty, they may devote themselves completely to His service, presenting their bodies as living sacrifices, wholly acceptable unto their Lord (Rom. 12:1).

But the truth of salvation's freedom