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*The infallible rule of interpretation
of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and
therefore, when there is a question about
the true and full sense of any Scripture
(which is not manifold, but one), it must
be searched and known by other places
that speak more clearly.*

Westminster Confession I.9

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Roman Catholic Authority

THE Roman Catholic Church is in a dilemma. On the one hand it maintains an absolutist position. The authority of the church, as established by tradition and particularly in the person of the Pope, is complete. The church is the controller of the administration of saving grace to men. Salvation can therefore exist only for those who submit to the church.

But this position involves a very serious threat to the principle of religious liberty. Under conditions of religious liberty men who deny and oppose Catholic dogma and Catholic authoritarianism have freedom to promote their views, and to try and win converts from Romanism. To the strict Romanist, this is bad. Only Romanism is true. Only in the church is salvation.

Hence the efforts of the church to secure a favored, and if possible exclusive, position under the civil government are quite logical. But at the same time they arouse steadfast opposition. And even many Roman Catholics themselves recognize that the church's totalitarian claim does not help things.

This dilemma of the church has recently come to expression in the conflict between the Spanish Cardinal Segura and the Catholic magazine published in this country, America. Cardinal Segura has on several occasions asked the Spanish government to be more strict in banning Protestant activities in that country, and has described the Protestant work there as a threat to the Catholic church and population.

However, the Jesuit magazine America has expressed a different opinion, indicating a measure of tolerance for non-Catholics and holding that the few thousand Protestants in Spain did not constitute any real threat to the millions of Catholics.

Now, several months later, Cardinal Segura expresses his amazement that a Jesuit magazine should dare to question a Cardinal of the Catholic church. It is incomprehensible, says the Cardinal in effect, that this magazine should on its own account judge and criticize a pastoral document published in an official ecclesiastical bulletin by a bishop and cardinal of the Holy Roman Church. The magazine, he added, had caused spiritual harm among Catholics.

Here is the absolutism of Catholicism when it is in a majority position. All of the efforts of Catholic spokesmen to tone down the church's position in lands where religious liberty exists come up against the rock of Romanism's view of its own nature as the sole and authoritative church.

It was against the tyranny of the Roman Catholic Church that Luther rebelled, both in spiritual and in temporal matters. He found that the church was bankrupt spiritually, and that all it offered for the peace of the human soul availed nothing. He found his salvation when he took the Bible alone, listened to the gospel there set forth, and knew the joy of being justified by faith apart from the works of the law. And once the church's claim to be the sole administrator of salvation was gone, all of its other authority over the souls of men likewise disappeared, at least in principle.

Roman Catholicism must be opposed today, as it was in the sixteenth century, not primarily because of its secular and political interests, but because its doctrine relative to the salvation of human souls is false. It follows that opposition can be effective only where the false doctrine of Romanism is countered with the truth of the gospel of free grace.

It is at this point that Modernism fails. Modernists have frequently attacked Rome's political claims, and its attempts to secure a favored position. But Modernism does not have the true gospel of salvation which alone can bring freedom to Rome's enslaved millions. And in its failure to understand the true genius of its own heritage, Modernism, as represented for example in the World Council, is even desirous of bringing the Catholic Church into its fellowship.

True opposition to Rome must in this day, as it was four centuries ago, be based squarely on the authority of the Bible as the Word of God, on the sufficient work of Christ as the only Mediator and redeemer of sinners, and on the free and universal offer of salvation in the gospel to mankind. Only in such a Biblical approach can the threat of Rome be faced and overcome.

L. W. S.

Welcome to New Students

Word of God only answer
to the pessimism of the age

By PROFESSOR C. VANTIL

At the opening exercises of Westminster Theological Seminary, the message of greeting to new and returning students was given by Dr. VanTil, Professor of Apologetics. Dr. VanTil welcomed the students in friendly fashion, assuring them of the faculty's interest in them and its willingness to help them in any way possible. He made special mention of students who had come from the Orient. Dr. VanTil then continued substantially as follows:

You have come here to prepare yourselves for the gospel ministry. And if you look for a moment with me at the world round about us, you will see how badly, how sorely, that gospel is needed. Ask for a moment, if you will, what that world thinks of itself, and of its own predicament. The predicament of men and of nations will fill your hearts with deepest sympathy, and with earnest desire that God's glory through them may be accomplished.

Let Ernest Hemingway, the novelist, first tell you briefly, as he speaks to you in his new story, *The Old Man and the Sea*. You've read it in the recent issue of *Life*, perhaps.

An old, old man goes out in a skiff all alone. For eighty-four days he has been fishing, and has caught nothing at all. But on this eighty-fifth day he is going to have good luck. And good luck he gets. A big fish takes his bait at last. Victory seems to have come. "He made the fish fast to bow and stern and to the middle thwart." And on his way home he goes.

But the sharks come. The first shark takes forty pounds out of his big fish. And the old man now has sympathy with the fish that he has caught. The fish has become his friend. The sharks are now his enemies. One after another they come. The last shark takes the last bite. There is nothing left but the tail at the stern, the head at the bow, and that bare backbone, altogether naked, in between.

Therein is the picture of what the modern novelist thinks of the accom-

plishments of human civilization. Therein bespeaks the pessimism, the utter pessimism, of the men of this world. They know they are licked. The universe, hostile to man—man, as the Greek tragedians pictured him—always conquered at last. When the old man, with the last ounce of his strength, steps out of the skiff, he sees in the reflection of the light that bare skeleton of all his accomplishments. And he goes out to "dream of the lions" and then to die.

But, you say, that's the novelist. Let's hear from the scientist.

Well may you hear him. He speaks of facts, does he not? Not merely by means of imagination does he try to interpret the world. Let him speak of facts. What does he say? An old man went out to fish. He fished eighty-four days and didn't catch anything. The eighty-fifth day he had good luck. He lost his catch, came home to dream of the lions, and then to die.

The scientist speaks only, he says, of phenomena. He doesn't know what's behind the world. He knows that some forces are somehow there. He knows that these forces eat up the accomplishments, the culture, of man, and condemn him to utter futility. But outside of that, he says, science has no pronouncement to make.

You tell me to pass on hastily then to the philosopher, for he does not speak by imagination, nor merely of facts, but in terms of reason. He *does* speak of ultimate reality, of what lies beyond. But the philosopher himself today tells us that, when he speaks, of necessity he speaks in terms of utter contradiction. Self-consciousness, he says, is itself composed from the beginning of contradiction, and there is no hope for escape. For in terms of contradiction you can say nothing that means anything at all. And so philosophy too gives up all hope of giving any meaning to life.

Ernest Hocking tells us what he thinks philosophy can do in the story of Merlin, the magician of King Arthur's court. One day Merlin suddenly disappeared. Out went a travel-

ler, a weary traveller, alone into the desert. And he heard, when he was stricken, worn out and tired, a voice purporting to be that of Merlin the magician. He understood from this voice that if many travellers, coming seven years after one another, over an infinite period of time, would put all their fragments, all they had said, together, Merlin might at last, possibly, walk the earth again. But Merlin will not walk the earth again, no more than the marlin of Hemingway's story will ever leave the sea. Literature, art, science and philosophy predict their own doom, and offer no hope whatever for man.

One more voice there is, the voice of religion in our day, to which men turn for hope. Richard Kroner, of Union Seminary, informs us that in religion men seek for the solution of their problem of self-contradiction, in imagination once more. The truth of Christianity, he says, is imaginary, not factual. It supersedes the contradiction of reason, but in terms of imagination. "The antinomies of experience are thus solved, not intellectually, but spiritually." Thus the man of religion, the theologian, hopes against hope that imagination may ultimately lead man out of his distress.

But the worst has not been told. Because in this self-professed ignorance with respect to what man is, what he's here for, and what his accomplishments mean, these self-same people, the man of literature, the man of science, the man of philosophy and religion, nevertheless by implication assert that God does not exist, that He has not spoken, that there is no truth, that Christianity is a lie. "Creation is not a fact, and taken as a fact it is simply not true." (R. Kroner: *Culture and Faith*, p. 249.)

It is in preparation for the preaching of the gospel to such a world as this, that you have come here to prepare yourselves. We welcome you, because we are not pessimistic. We're not hopeless. God's power is strong enough to overcome the resistance of the world. You know that God has revealed Himself, that He has spoken to man originally in paradise, that man has become a sinner, that now in grace God through Christ has sought him out. Men will hear that gospel. By the Spirit's power they will be raised from the dead. Whether men hear or whether they forbear, they will have heard the word of the Lord. It is your

duty, your task, your privilege, with ours, to join in preparation for the preaching of that gospel.

We welcome you most heartily for this earnest task which God by His grace has assigned to you.

Westminster Seminary Opening

THE twenty-fourth academic year for Westminster Theological Seminary of Philadelphia was officially opened on Wednesday afternoon, September 24, at a service held in Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Glenside, located on ground adjoining the Seminary campus.

The small auditorium was filled to capacity by an attendance of about 200 persons. A public address system was in operation, to carry the service to the down-stairs room, in case there was an overflow crowd. However, the only "overflow" was the occupants and attendants of a nursery which was operated for the benefit of those with very small children.

The service opened with the singing of the Doxology, followed by an invocation prayer offered by the Rev. Ralph Clough, pastor of the Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Bridgeton, N. J. After the singing of a hymn, the Scripture lesson was read by the Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary to Japan, and the Rev. Lewis J. Grotenhuis led in prayer.

Professor C. VanTil, Chairman of the Seminary faculty, who presided at the service, then made a brief address welcoming the students to the life and work of the institution.

Following the singing of another hymn, Dr. VanTil introduced the Rev. John C. Hills, of the Ft. Lauderdale Orthodox Presbyterian Church, who gave the address of the afternoon, speaking on the subject, "The Reformed Faith and Human Relations." Mr. Hills said that the present age should be called the "human relations" age, because the great concern of multitudes of people was the relationship between divergent groups, and the need for harmony in such relationships. However, he felt that the modern movement for unity among peoples of all nationalities, races and creeds was characterized by many features antagonistic to Christian faith. Though some

Calvinists seemingly approved the movement, and others tried to ignore it, he felt that in its motives, methods and programs, sincere Christian people ought to oppose it most earnestly. For the movement in effect denies that there is any ultimate truth, it rejects the absolute authority of the Scriptures, it seeks to put all men intellectually on an equality, thus ignoring the distinction in gifts God has set up, and it constitutes in effect a program for the defecation of man. Men are concerned today, said Mr. Hills, with the opinions of their fellow man, but they are not

concerned with the opinions of God, or with man's responsibility to Him. "You cannot unify men on the basis of love, until the human heart is born again by the Spirit of God." Mr. Hills praised the Seminary as an institution that, in the midst of the world's confusion, was seeking quietly to build men up in the truth, the doctrines which alone would bring about a true relationship among men because they point men to the cross of Jesus Christ. In due course God in His gracious providence will bring it about that men will see the futility of their human attempts to solve the world's problems, and the tide will turn again to Him and His ways.

Following the service, those present went to Machen Hall on the campus for the tea and reception.

Some eighty students are registered at the Seminary for the present academic year. Five of these are from the Orient. The enrollment is one of the largest in the Seminary's history.

The Reformed Faith and Human Relations

*The modern movement for human unity is
a most serious enemy of Christianity*

By JOHN C. HILLS, JR.

Dr. VanTil, fellow ministers, students and friends of Westminster Seminary:

I want to talk this afternoon for just a little bit about The Reformed Faith and Human Relations . . .

Now I think if we define the Reformed Faith as that system of doctrine set forth in our Westminster *Shorter Catechism* we'll not be far of the mark. I'm often scolded for speaking of the Reformed Faith from the pulpit, or talking about Calvinism. Many people with good intentions say, — "You shouldn't do that now, you should just talk of Christianity. Because after all, that's what we believe in." Well, there are so many forms of Christianity around today, or so many things masquerading as Christianity, that we just have to put a label on that form of Christianity which we believe, which after all is said and done is the real and

the true Christianity. So we call it the Reformed Faith, and we all know here that it is summarized in our Westminster *Confession*, also in the Heidelberg *Catechism*, the *Canons* of Dort, and so on.

Now, as to human relations. Perhaps I can define that just a bit if I tell you a little story. It's a true story. It happened to me one afternoon. A professor in human relations at the University of Miami said to me, rather jokingly, "The phone rang at three o'clock this morning, and somebody wanted me to rush right over and straighten out his marriage which was going on the rocks." Well, I didn't want to show my ignorance too much, because I didn't know just exactly what he had in mind by human relations, and so I said, "Well, three o'clock is a rather early hour to straighten out a marriage, but of course you went over."