

CHRISTIANITY TODAY



A PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL DEVOTED TO STATING, DEFENDING
AND FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Editorial Notes and Comments

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY SUSTAINS DR. MACHEN



IN stating his opposition to the "Plan of Union," in the January issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, DR. MACHEN expressed the opinion that its proposed "Formula of Subscription" "obscures what is really quite central in the present formula of creed subscription in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.—namely, that there is only one system of doctrine taught in the Bible and that system is the Reformed or 'Calvinistic' system of doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith and the Catechism of the Church."

In its issue of March 14th *The Christian Century* says editorially: "Professor MACHEN is, we think, right in so interpreting the new formula. His keen, incisive mind,

Skilled to divide
A hair 'twixt south and southwest side,

did not overlook, as a less meticulous critic or a more careless theologian might have done, the significant difference between the system and a system of truths drawn from the Bible." *The Christian Century* then adds: "If he has called attention to a point which might otherwise have escaped attention, he deserves the gratitude of all schools of Presbyterian opinion. He has helped them to take this step, if they take it, with their eyes open to its meaning."

The Christian Century does not, of course, share Dr. Machen's opinion that the system of doctrine expressed in the Westminster Standards is the one and only system of doctrine contained in the Bible. It maintains, in fact, that there are other systems of doctrine that have as good a right to maintain that they have been derived from the Bible as the system set forth in the Confession of Faith and Catechism of the Presbyterian Church. Such an opinion is, it is almost needless to say, in flat opposition to the conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is inconceivable that God Himself should be the author of mutually opposed systems of doctrine. That, of course, does not worry *The Christian Century* as its view of the Bible is thoroughly modernistic. Those, however, who believe not only that the Bible is the Word of God but that the one and only system of doctrine that it teaches is that set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms will appraise the matter quite differently. They will agree with *The Christian Century* that "for those who have hitherto held the Westminster doctrines as the system of truth taught in the Scriptures to hold them still but only as one of

the systems which men have devised out of materials drawn from that source is a step so long that it may fairly be called a stride." But they will hold that it is a stride—a long stride—not in the right but in the wrong direction.

We are grateful to *The Christian Century* for what it has done toward clarifying the doctrinal significance of the "Plan of Union."

A FRIENDLY WARNING



THE editor of this paper is well disposed toward the United Presbyterians. A large part of his early education was received at Tarkio College where he had as his classmates such well-known United Presbyterians as H. H. MARLIN and WILLIAM MURCHIE. He owes a special indebtedness to Dr. J. A. THOMPSON, president-emeritus of Tarkio College, whom he acknowledges as one of the major influences in his life. His own father was reared in the United Presbyterian Church (N. Y.) so that he himself was doubtless saved from being a United Presbyterian only by reason of the fact that there was no United Presbyterian church in that part of the Middle West to which his father went as a young man.

In view of what has been related, it might be expected that the writer would be heartily in favor of the proposed merger of the United Presbyterian Church with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., with which he is connected. As a matter of fact, however, he is opposed to it, and that because, in his judgment, the consummation of this merger would not be for the best interests of either of these churches.

He does not think it would be for the best interest of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. because, as he pointed out in the last issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, he believes that the terms of union not only involve a serious lowering of the doctrinal standards of the Church, but that they would be creative of a situation in which it would be relatively easy further to amend them in the direction of Modernism. Doubtless some of his United Presbyterian friends will not admit that the terms of union involve any lowering of the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Even DR. GORDON MACLENNAN, whose view of what the consummation of this merger would mean for the United Presbyterians is very much in accord with the writer's, does not seem to agree with him at this point (see *The Presbyterian* for Feb. 8th and *The Christian Union Herald* for March 17th). He can only say that in his judgment Professor JOHN MURRAY and DR. MACHEN, among others, has made this clear—a judgment in which even *The Christian Century* concurs as may be learned from an adjoining editorial.

The writer is more particularly concerned to point out, how-

methods of ecclesiastical procedure, and that they did not mean to endorse loose doctrinal statements, or indifference to such statements. I know of several signers who confessed to me their great regret at having signed the Affirmation, with the subsequent implication as to their beliefs. But what inspired the Affirmation was the ringing declaration of the General Assembly that the great doctrines mentioned and commonly called the "Five Points" are now, ever have been, and ever must be, cardinal and essential doctrines of the Presbyterian Church, and of Catholic Christianity.

The Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, Section 8, says "The Old Testament and the New Testament being immediately inspired by God and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic." But according to the Auburn Affirmation the General Assembly of 1923 in asserting that the writers of the Holy Scripture were kept from error, spoke "without warrant of the Scriptures or of the Confession of Faith."

The Confession of Faith, Chapter 8, Section 4, says of our Lord's Resurrection, "On the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered." This,

according to the Auburn Affirmationists, is only a "theory," and not an essential doctrine of our Standards. Again, the Confession of Faith, Chapter 8, Section 2, says, "The Son of God did take upon him man's nature, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance." This again, according to the Affirmationists, may be regarded as a mere "theory" as to the Incarnation.

The Confession of Faith, Chapter 8, Section 5, again says, "The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself hath fully satisfied the justice of his father." This again, according to the Auburn Affirmation, is but a "theory."

To the "Auburn Affirmationists" the statement of the Confession of Faith as to the Scriptures "Kept pure in all ages," does not mean "Kept free from error"!

Let all United Presbyterians remember that this Affirmation was signed by 1200 ministers, more than a tenth of those on the roll of the Presbyterian Church, and more than all the ministers now in the United Presbyterian Church.

(Concluded on Page 19)

The Theology of Dr. Mackenzie

A Rejoinder by Dr. Van Til

[The Editors publish herewith the rejoinder of Dr. Van Til to Dr. D. Mackenzie's criticism of the review of his book, "Christianity—the Paradox of God." The Review appeared in our February number and the communication of Dr. Mackenzie in our March issue. The Editors believe it unwise to prolong the discussion indefinitely. Therefore they will permit Dr. Mackenzie to reply further in the next issue, if he so desires. As is customary in such discussions, Dr. Van Til as the first writer will be allowed to reply to whatever Dr. Mackenzie may write, if he so desires, also in the May issue. Then the correspondence will be closed.]



IN his reply to my criticism of his book, *Christianity—The Paradox of God* (CHRISTIANITY TODAY, February, 1934), Dr. Mackenzie falls back on certain theological distinctions which, he says, he took for granted, since his general theological position was well known. Thus, for example, he would make it appear as though I were criticizing him for such an innocent thing as using the term "chance" in everyday life with reference to the unexpected for us rather than for God, or for such a praiseworthy thing as pointing out that "chance" if really entertained as a serious concept, should be removed from a Christian's vocabulary.

I propose, therefore, first of all to go back to Dr. Mackenzie's well-known writings in order to see whether they warrant his present conclusion. My judgment is that they do not. On the contrary, it was to some considerable extent because of the nature of the background with which these well-known writings of Dr. Mackenzie furnished me, that I felt compelled to make the criticism contained in my review.

The writings referred to are chiefly five articles in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* entitled "Ethics and Morality" (Christian), "Free Will," "Libertarianism and Necessitarianism," "Synergism," and "Transcendentalism."

It will be noted that all the articles in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, to which I confine myself here, deal with subjects in which a definite position would, in the nature of the

case, have to be taken on the chief issue between Calvinism and Arminianism, as well as between the Christian and the non-Christian solutions of the problem of free will.

In these articles Dr. Mackenzie quotes from several philosophers but makes very little use of the literature of the great Reformed theologians. We are prevented from thinking of this neglect of Reformed theology as incidental, inasmuch as the content of the articles is opposed to Reformed theology in the whole of its spirit and approach as well as in its specific teaching.

THE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

In the first place, the Reformed theologians have made the concept of God as absolute in all His attributes determinative for the whole of their theology. God has revealed Himself as absolute in all His attributes. This God-concept is fundamental and the man-concept must be adjusted to it.

That Dr. Mackenzie does not agree with this Reformed approach appears only too clearly. In his article, "Free Will," he says: "Can God's sovereignty be reconciled with such freedom of choice as we require? It cannot if God's absoluteness be asserted without qualification; then the moral life becomes unintelligible. Butler has warned us against speculating on how God ought to reveal Himself. We ought rather to find out how He has revealed Himself. So God's absoluteness must be approached from experience. The defect of Augustinianism and Calvinism is that they start from a knowledge of God's

absoluteness above experience, deduce logically from this his eternal decrees, and so explain individual experience. We must start from experience, however, and, doing so, the problem is to reconcile God's absoluteness in grace with man's freedom." (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VI, p. 126.)

We see from this quotation that Dr. Mackenzie, together with the Arminians, has taken for granted that if the absoluteness of God be maintained without qualification, the moral acts of man are meaningless. Thus he has conceded to the opponents of Christianity that the *apparently* contradictory is the *really* contradictory. He has reasoned as though that which man cannot fully understand must be really contradictory.

To do this one must start with human experience as something ultimate. That Dr. Mackenzie does not hesitate to do this, the quotation shows. He definitely sets his position which starts from "experience" over against the Reformed position which makes the concept of God the determining factor in its theology. So far from following Butler's advice not to ask how God ought to reveal Himself but simply to ask how God has revealed Himself, Dr. Mackenzie felt himself compelled, by virtue of his un-Biblical ideal of comprehensive knowledge, to say that God cannot remain absolute while man has freedom.

Now it is perfectly true that Dr. Mackenzie here and in other connections *also* says that he wishes to maintain the absoluteness of God. He *also* says, in the article referred to, that human experience must not be taken as ultimate. But it is in this *also* that the difficulty lies. Dr. Mackenzie's articles resemble in form the writings of idealist philosophers who write volume upon volume to prove that the pragmatist is wrong in saying that the Universe, inclusive of God and man, is wholly subject to time and change, and then at a critical juncture maintain that time is, after all, an aspect of existence as a whole. Thus, though they emphasize the fact that God is eternal, they, in effect, subject Him to time also.

If, as Dr. Mackenzie himself correctly says in his article on "Synergism," the "supreme regulative principle of Calvinism is the sovereignty of God" (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XII, p. 162), one cannot *also* begin from "experience" in order to adjust the absoluteness of God to it.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

Our criticism on the starting point of Dr. Mackenzie's theology is further justified by the fact that he does actually reject Calvinism in some of its particular and distinctive doctrines. He does not especially discuss the "five points of Calvinism," yet where he does mention any of them he shows clearly that he does not believe them.

Speaking of the synergistic controversy as a whole, Dr. Mackenzie says: "The synergist fought against a view of God which made Him in the case of some men the obstacle to salvation, withholding His grace from some, and making remedial provision only for some; and in this the synergist was right" (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XII, p. 164).

Here Dr. Mackenzie in the first place rejects unconditional election. He speaks of it only in its negative aspect, *i. e.*, with respect to those who are lost. On this point he expressly denies what the Westminster Confession expressly affirms in Chapter III, Section VII, when it says: "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice." This section teaches: "That as God has sovereignly destined certain persons, called the elect, through grace to salvation, so he has sovereignly decreed to withhold his grace from the rest; and that this withholding rests upon the unsearchable counsel of his own will, and is for the glory of his sovereign power." (*Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, p. 107, by A. A. Hodge; cf. also A. A. Hodge, *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*, article, "Predestina-

tion," and B. B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*, article, "Predestination.")

In the sentence we have quoted above, Dr. Mackenzie not only rejects unconditional election but limited atonement as well. He says the synergist was right in rejecting the doctrine which holds that God made "remedial provision only for some." Here Dr. Mackenzie rejects the Westminster Confession when it says: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." (Chapter III, Section VI.) Of this section Dr. A. A. Hodge says: "All the purposes of God, being unchangeable, self-consistent and certainly efficacious, must perfectly correspond to the events which come to pass in time. He must have predestined to salvation those and those only who are, as a matter of fact, saved; and he must have intended that Christ should redeem those and those only who are redeemed. God's purpose in the gift of Christ cannot be in any respect in vain." (*Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, p. 107.)

We need not point to further details, though it can be shown that Dr. Mackenzie rejects efficacious grace as well as unconditional election and limited atonement. Enough has been brought forth to indicate that he will appeal in vain to writings of A. A. Hodge such as his *Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*, and *Outlines of Theology*, in order to prove that his own thinking is essentially Reformed. Dr. Mackenzie in his reply to me has merely referred to C. A. Salmond's book, *Princetoniana*, which is a collection of disconnected student class-notes, to the neglect of Hodge's well-known works.

CHANCE

The un-Reformed character of Dr. Mackenzie's theology appears still more definitely in his use of the concept "chance." He brings in the main philosophical concepts of Bergson, the great pragmatist, not for criticism or for acceptance with qualification, but as a help toward the solution of the baffling problem of freedom. For Bergson, fatalistic naturalism and the Reformed conception of the plan of God are equally obnoxious, inasmuch as both oppose the idea of something absolutely new coming into the world. Over against all "finalism," Bergson sets his notion of the dynamic nature of life, which to him means that the absolutely new can be produced by man. Now Dr. Mackenzie uses this concept of the dynamic nature of life as a starting point to which the absoluteness of God must be adjusted. To quote: "Bergson tries to show that it is the neglect of this dynamic nature of life that makes the whole difficulty of freedom; and for philosophy and theology the greatest task at present is to outline a theory of reality and of God that, starting from this fact, can give us some reasonable view of nature below us and God above us." (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 906.) With this as a background and the actual words of Dr. Mackenzie's book I quoted in my review, it would not seem to be an unfair conclusion that one must be in doubt where Dr. Mackenzie's sympathies lie. He has himself definitely and in unequivocal terms rejected specifically Reformed doctrines and has, to say the least, expressed his full sympathy with Bergson's notion of the "dynamic nature of life" which involves the very reverse of the Reformed philosophy of history. Dr. Mackenzie cannot deny that Bergson's philosophy implies the notion of the changing God. Nor can he deny that he has expressed the utmost sympathy with the basic concepts of Bergson's philosophy. He cannot now dismiss the whole matter by saying that when he spoke of Christ changing the changeless God, he, of course, meant nothing more than what all orthodox theology means when it says that in the economy of redemption God revealed Himself more fully from time to time. Dr. Mackenzie's well-known writings seem at the most critical juncture to swing at least as far to the pragmatist as to the Reformed view of reality.

Still further, it seems that Dr. Mackenzie has clearly felt

that from the orthodox, or certainly from the Reformed side, objection would be made to his views on this very ground that it brings in the Bergsonian idea of something absolutely new not only for man but also for God. After stating *his own view* of the relation of man to God by saying that God's "unchangeable nature gives independence to our dependence" he says, referring to his own view: "The great objection to this view is that we get something 'de novo.'" (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 907.) The exact point here is that something absolutely new *for God* as well as for man is spoken of. No one could possibly object to something new *for man*. The whole problem discussed is that of the relation of man's freedom to God's absoluteness. It will not do for Dr. Mackenzie now to brush all this aside and say that *of course* he meant the new, or "chance" *for us* and not for God.

We observe that so far from apologizing for the concept "chance" or from showing that he has not taken it in the ordinary, accepted sense of the opposite of the plan of God, he definitely accepts it as such and that as the only *escape* from the mystery of man's freedom in relation to the plan of God. To quote: "We need not be afraid of those who cry 'chance.' For there is so much unreason and absurdity, so much cruelty and evil in the world that we welcome even 'chance' if it opens a door to their abolition. That this could be possible without the dangerous gift of free power we cannot conceive. But so imperative is the need of betterment that even this dangerous method is welcome." (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 907.) Dr. Mackenzie cannot say that he has put the word "chance" in quotation marks in order to indicate that he does not necessarily agree with its current meaning. If he did not accept it in its essentially non-theistic meaning, if he did not accept it as something genuinely new for God, there would be no point in introducing it as a solution for the difficulty of man's freedom in relation to God's absoluteness. Dr. Mackenzie cannot, after telling us that he is opposed to specifically Calvinistic doctrines, complain that I have unjustly called him an opponent of Reformed theology. So also Dr. Mackenzie cannot, after telling us that he has accepted chance as an escape from the problem of a changeless God and human responsibility, complain that I have unfairly fathered the doctrine of "chance" upon him.

Needless to say, Dr. Mackenzie's position cannot be harmonized with the Westminster Confession's statement that "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass . . ." (Chapter III, Section 1). It is needless also to say that Dr. Mackenzie's position cannot be said to be similar to that of A. A. Hodge who, in discussing the same problem that Dr. Mackenzie discusses, says: "The free actions of free agents constitute an eminently important and effective element in the system of things. If the plan of God did not determine events of this class, he could make nothing certain, and his government of the world would be made contingent and dependent, and all his purposes fallible and mutable." (*Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, p. 94.)

Finally, we note that after thus accepting the chance concept as an asylum to which he may resort in time of need, Dr. Mackenzie does make an obviously sincere effort to harmonize his teaching on this subject with the church's doctrine of the changeless God. He says, "Nor need we be concerned that thus the peace of the absolute is destroyed. The only Absolute for which Christian men care has, if certain tales be true, sacrificed His own peace and more to make it possible for men to obey their conscience and be fellow-workers with God." (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 907.) Now Dr. Mackenzie cannot say that of course he meant no more than that God revealed Himself redemptively. The question he is discussing is not merely ethical, but also metaphysical, *i. e.*, one having to do with the nature of reality. Dr. Mackenzie is definitely seeking to outline a "theory of reality" in order to find a solution for the baffling problem of freedom. If there is to be a

point to the argument, if the fact that the "Absolute" has "sacrificed His own peace and more" is to help us to see how we may believe in God and also believe in chance, these words must be taken as teaching a change in the very Being of God.

It is this strain of thought in Dr. Mackenzie's well-known writings that unfortunately forbids one to think that of course he has taken for granted that the essence of God remains unchanged when he speaks of Christ's work as being, above all, that He has changed for man the unchangeable God.

It appears from what we have said about Dr. Mackenzie's theology that it seems to be built up of two mutually contradictory motifs. Dr. A. A. Hodge speaks of the two motifs that lead men to construct their theological systems, when he says: "Instead of our doctrine of foreordination being the same with the heathen doctrine of fate, it is its absolute opposite and only alternative. We are shut up to a choice between the two—either a fatalism which results from mechanical coercion, or a fatalism which results from a mindless and purposeless chance, or an all-controlling providence of a heavenly Father who in the exercise of his own personal freedom has made room for ours. All thinkers who understand themselves know that they run along one or other of these lines." (*Popular Lectures . . .* p. 160.) Dr. Hodge virtually identifies "fate" and "chance" and takes refuge in the all-embracing providence of God. Dr. Mackenzie virtually identifies "fate" and the absoluteness of God and takes refuge in chance. To be sure, he *also* takes refuge in God, and this shows that he seeks to do what Dr. Hodge says can never be done. Dr. Mackenzie tries to combine the absolute rationality of God and the absolute irrationality of chance. We are quite willing to believe, on the present testimony of Dr. Mackenzie, that this is not intentionally done but this does not remove the fact that in the articles discussed the confusion prevails.

AGNOSTICISM

In the preface to his book, *Christianity—The Paradox of God*, Dr. Mackenzie tells us that certain convictions "lie deep at the heart" of all he wishes to say. These convictions deal largely with the recognition of mystery in physical science, in psychology and in theology. Speaking of science, Dr. Mackenzie says: "Here we can say, with Kierkegaard, that paradox is not a concession but a category of thought. Mystery, in short, is not at the margin of knowledge, but at its centre, and must be recognized there" (p. 6). Again in connection with his discussion of the recognition of mystery in psychology he repeats Kierkegaard's words that paradox is not a concession but a category. With respect to theology he says he welcomes the recent emphasis on paradox because of its recognition that God is "infinitely greater than our best categories."

In all this we note that Dr. Mackenzie has, to say the least, no great desire to distinguish his position from that of recent scientific agnosticism. Now we may rejoice that science today is not, generally speaking, materialistic and mechanistic but it cannot be denied that it is thoroughly agnostic. The issue here is far deeper than the recognition of the fact that man cannot fully understand even the simplest of things. Christians have always held that we cannot fully comprehend God and they may most heartily believe that we cannot fully understand the circulation of the blood. But this is not what science means today when it says that mystery is not only at the margin but at the centre of human knowledge. Science today, generally speaking, assumes that the universe is ultimately mysterious. When science speaks of the recognition of mystery at the heart of human knowledge it does not mean that, of course, God knows all. It does not figure with God in its interpretation of facts at any point.

HERBERT SPENCER

When we read the book itself in order to see whether Dr. Mackenzie has helped to set Christian thought in opposition

to the recent form of scientific agnosticism we are again disappointed. Dr. Mackenzie says: "We do not find fault with Herbert Spencer for dwelling on the mystery and so casting his vote in favour of agnosticism. His error was not in being agnostic, but in not being agnostic enough—his very agnosticism became dogmatism. He should not have separated off the Unknowable into a special compartment, for the simple reason that it cannot be so separated. It haunts us, penetrates us, and interpenetrates like the air we breathe, and clarity may be another name for superficial simplification" (p. 26).

It should be observed here that the meaning of agnosticism in the case of Spencer is that he interprets the universe without reference to God. In this he quite resembles James Jeans. The only difference is that Jeans, together with many other recent scientists, recognizes more definitely an ultimate mystery at the heart of the universe than did Spencer. Now one may hold, perhaps, that the present form of scientific agnosticism is, from the Christian point of view, preferable to the scientific agnosticism of the last century but one cannot say that agnosticism, as understood by science today, is in itself commendable.

We are well aware of the fact that Dr. Mackenzie goes on in this connection to tell us that "Mystery and knowledge are not incompatible, they are complementary" (p. 27). He speaks of Paul's "doxological agnostic cry" when the latter spoke of the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. We are well aware of the fact that Dr. Mackenzie also adds: "The 'Halt' of the skeptic must become the 'Hallelujah' of the saint" (p. 29). Our criticism is that Dr. Mackenzie has not actually in his argument pointed out clearly that modern agnosticism and the theology of Paul are two opposing systems of thought. He has not pointed out that modern agnosticism, whether in its nineteenth or in its twentieth century form, is basically wrong while Paul was right. His fundamental argument seems to be that if Herbert Spencer but became like Jeans he would only need to be supplemented by Paul in order to have the truth. It is in this way that he speaks of rolling Huxley and Wordsworth together and adding the psalmist in order to arrive at the truth.

PARADOX VERSUS POSSESSION

That this is a fair representation of Dr. Mackenzie's thought is definitely seen if we observe that he has set his conception of paradox in contrast to that of *possession*. Speaking of a form of theology which has been too "cocksure of God," Dr. Mackenzie says: "We thought we had domesticated and sociologized Him, ethicized and rationalized Him, until we found that while we His servants were so busy here and there, He had gone; and now our very uncertainty may be an indication that we are getting sure of Him again, sure of Him, not in possession but in paradox. For perhaps only in paradox can we have Him at all, and only in His unknowableness can He be known, and in our longing for His presence is He most truly present" (p. 32). In this connection we should recall that Dr. Mackenzie has set it down as a deep conviction underlying his whole book that *paradox is not a concession but a category*. There would be no point to this if Dr. Mackenzie meant no more than that man, because a creature, cannot comprehensively understand the Creator. Orthodox theology has constantly maintained that man is created in the image of God and that therefore his thought, his "categories," and therefore his "possession" of God are perfectly true and valid, though he cannot exhaust God. Dr. Mackenzie, on the contrary, has virtually set the category of paradox over against "our best categories." We are said to be sure of God *not* in possession *but* in paradox. It is true that Dr. Mackenzie's argument is directed against the false immanentism of modern theology. It is equally true, however, that his argument here would, if valid, destroy the foundation of Reformed theology.

KIERKEGAARD'S PARADOX

This point becomes clearer still if we recall that Dr. Mackenzie

definitely brings in Kierkegaard's conception of paradox. He uses Kierkegaard's phrase that "paradox is not a concession but a category." He sets paradox in definite contrast to "possession." Besides all this, he devotes a section to Kierkegaard and his influence. In this section he does not indicate any disagreement with him. On the contrary, he says: "Kierkegaard is as subtle in his insight into the paradoxical nature of man as Pascal, and as felicitous in his expression" (p. 210).

Now Dr. K. Schilder, in an exhaustive study, *Zur Begriffsgeschichte des „Paradoxon“*, seeks to prove that Kierkegaard introduced a use of the term paradox not current till his time. Dr. Schilder speaks of the change introduced into the use of the word paradox by Kierkegaard as radical because instead of using it to indicate the notion of something unexpected and strange or as something only apparently contradictory he has used it as indicating that human thought is really contradictory. According to Kierkegaard, says Dr. Schilder, the historical or relative precipitates in the form of systematic interpretation, while the eternal or absolute is paradoxical. (Chapter on "Radikalismus der Kierkegaardschen Wendung.") It cannot, therefore, be taken as a serious reply to my criticism when Dr. Mackenzie shows that Warfield has used the term paradox. Calvin also uses it and Scripture uses it in the Greek text. The point in debate is whether the Kierkegaardian use of it is consistent with the Calvinistic use of it. Dr. Mackenzie has expressed great sympathy with Kierkegaard. If Dr. Mackenzie wishes to use Warfield's name he should show that his own use of the word paradox is like Warfield's and that Warfield's use of the term and Kierkegaard's use of the term are similar. It cannot be denied that the only Reformed theologian who has expressed himself fully on this subject has found a radical difference between Kierkegaard's use of the term and the use of the term in Reformed theology. (See also K. Schilder, *Bij Dichters en Schriftgeleerden*, and *Tusschen "Ja" en "Neen,"* on H. Barth's attempt to claim Calvin as his authority.) Till Dr. Mackenzie really shows by an appeal to authorities that his usage of the term paradox accords with Reformed usage, we must argue the matter as best we can.

KANTIAN ANTINOMIES

The root of the whole matter, as far as the conception of paradox goes, lies, we believe, in this fact that Dr. Mackenzie has not clearly distinguished between the apparently contradictory and the really contradictory. Dr. Mackenzie, as we have pointed out, began his argument about the relation of human freedom to God's absoluteness, from experience. This forced him to introduce chance or the irrational as an element in the total situation. This would also naturally lead him to think that the apparent contradictions between God's absoluteness and human freedom are real contradictions. In fact, it was only because he thought of these apparent contradictions as real contradictions that he could introduce the concept of chance at all. If the concept of paradox should mean no more than the harmony of the apparently contradictory it would not help to bring together the discordant elements of his theology.

Now it is true that Dr. Mackenzie has entitled one of the chapters of his book, *Paradox as Apparent Self-contradiction*. Yet, under this innocent flag Dr. Mackenzie has brought in the Kantian concept of a separation between one field, the phenomenal, in which the law of contradiction holds good and another field, the noumenal, to which the law of contradiction does not apply.

Immediately following his statement that "perhaps the day may come also when the scientific view of natural selection and the New Testament doctrine of an election of grace may be seen to be both sides of God's activity, and not the horns of an inescapable dilemma," Dr. Mackenzie says: "The philosophy of Immanuel Kant gave the prestige of that great thinker's name to the *inevitableness of paradox or antinomy in all our thinking*" (p. 81). Then he adds a little further on: "I am

not here attempting to defend all the Kantian antinomies, nor the justification of Hegel's correction—but *antinomies are not antagonisms* either in the knowledge of nature or in the realm of theology" (p. 81). Here it seems plain that though Dr. Mackenzie does not defend *all* the antinomies of Kant, he does accept the Kantian concept of antinomy. Now Kant thought that as far as the understanding is concerned as good an argument can be produced for the proposition that the world has had no beginning in time as for the proposition that the world has had a beginning in time. This illustrates Kant's conception of antinomy. As far as the field of knowledge or science was concerned, Kant held that A and not-A, though contradictory to one another, could be proved by arguments in which no such contradiction is found. From this inescapable dilemma in the field of knowledge, Kant sought refuge in the "noumenal" realm in which we need not be concerned with the law of non-contradiction. It was, according to Kant, with this noumenal realm that religion deals. Accordingly, though the phenomenal is an aspect of Reality as a whole, religion need not be seriously concerned with the law of non-contradiction. In Reality as a whole these contradictions of the realm of knowledge may, after all, each state an aspect of the truth. Reality as a whole is analytic but also synthetic; it is fixed and yet the absolutely new somehow appears.

Over against this Kantian view, as it largely controls modern philosophy, Reformed theology has maintained that God is absolutely rational, so that nothing absolutely new can exist for Him. Accordingly when we face what seems to us to be antinomies, we do not seek refuge in the realm of the irrational where something absolutely new may emerge, with the result that both of our contradictory statements may yet be approximations to the truth. *Reformed theology has never allowed that there is any sphere in which the law of non-contradiction does not operate.* To do that would be to give up its conception

of God who "from all eternity did by the most wise and Holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain(s) whatsoever comes to pass." Thus we maintain that the world has had a beginning in time and we deny that it can, with an equal show of truth, be held that the world has not had a beginning in time. In short, Kantian thought denies while Reformed theology affirms that Christian theism is intellectually defensible.

Kantianism and Reformed thought may both say that "antinomies are not antagonisms." For Reformed thought this is true because, if taken in the Reformed sense, antinomies are only *apparent* contradictions which are resolved in God. On the other hand, if taken in the Kantian sense of real contradictions one of the "antinomies" is true while the other is false. For Kantianism this phrase is true because in the totality of things the intellectual or phenomenal realm in which the antinomies operate is, after all, only one aspect of Reality as a whole. *For Kantianism antinomies are not antagonisms because for it truth is relative; for Reformed thought antinomies are not antagonisms because for it truth is absolute.* Kant's position implies an ultimate Irrationalism while Reformed theology is based upon the conception of God as an absolute, self-conscious and therefore wholly rational being.

There can be no peace but only war between these two types of thought. One will look in vain for a clear distinction between these two lines of thought in the writings of Dr. Mackenzie. The main impression created is that he has sought to combine the Kantian-Kierkegaardian and the orthodox-Christian lines of thought, that he has fought to combine the ultimately rational and the ultimately irrational. That was my main criticism. I brought out something of the results of such an effort by pointing to things that lie on the surface. In the present article I have tried to show that the difficulty lies at the very roots of Dr. Mackenzie's theology.

"Indigenizing the Christian Faith"

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(Before publication, the following was submitted in tentative form to two Southern Presbyterian ministers of wide experience in Chinese missionary work. Dr. Henry M. Woods replied: "Your article is a clear, strong statement of the evangelical position, and your criticisms are well founded and entirely proper. Your article is an excellent one and I heartily endorse it." The other minister offered as a unit an evaluation of the book which is too long to include in this article. His letter, which may be had on request, treats of the worth and inadequacies of the book and embodies many of the criticisms hereinafter made.)

"Indigenizing" Christianity

The religious press is welcoming a volume presenting a concrete effort to "indigenize" the religion of Christ in China. The "liberal" *Christian Century* describes this work as a tangible illustration "of the changed sort of missions the laymen's commission was favoring" (Jan. 17, 1934, p. 90). The book is written to aid teachers

"to root Christian faith and ethics into the soil of native ideology and social experience" (Preface ii). The author disavows syncretism (p. ix), as did Professor Hocking of the Laymen's Committee in his remarks at the Jerusalem Congress. However, his "underlying philosophy" is to make a *synthesis* of Chinese aims, principles, methods and materials of moral education with modern aims, principles, methods and materials of Christian education (iv). He suggests that all the indigeneous material which he presents in the book "may be helpfully used as a basis and integral part of Christian education in China" (iv). The author's view of modern education may be seen by his remark that it is congruent with the philosophy of *inter alios* Dewey (viii, cf. emphasis on "functional," p. 62).

Worth

In objecting to the religious teachings and implications of the volume the reviewer has no desire to impugn its scholarship, diligence, or literary excellence. It brings together and catalogues in accessible form much of the best that has been said on

moral and religious themes by the sages of China. Maxims, quotations and stories from the native sources are conveniently grouped for the use of teacher and writer. Much of the material so exhaustively collected and codified *may* be used in a proper manner by missionaries as a point of contact and of approach. However, from the standpoint of Presbyterian faith there is fundamental objection to the way in which this material is used in the volume at hand, and to some of the material itself.

The Rule of Faith

The volume does not affirm the sufficiency of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the rule of faith and life. Instead it provides for "using Indigeneous Materials as well as those derived from the Bible and Christian Experience to foster a consciousness of God and personal relationships to Him," "to understand and appreciate the personality, life and teachings of Christ," "to foster a continuous development of Christ-like character" (including "recovery from sin") . . . "to foster assimilation of the best religious experience of the race as a guide to present experience."

The Old Testament "Hitlerized"

While the Bible is spoken of in this outline and a section is provided in the outline for a discussion of the Old Testament under the proposed chapter on "the best religious experience of the race," this chapter is not

¹Stuart, Warren H. *The Use of Material from China's Spiritual Inheritance in the Christian Education of Chinese Youth*, Oxford Press, 1922.