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"The Christian Answer"

Under the above title Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, President of Union Theological Seminary of New York City, has edited and Charles Scribner's Sons have published a small but significant book that is attracting wide attention and which, it is safe to say, will be much discussed in days to come.

This book is unusual by reason of the fact that it is the product not of an individual but of a group which has been meeting for ten years and which includes among its thirty-eight members a considerable number of those reputed to be among the top-leaders of religious thought in America today. Dr. Van Dusen tells us in his Introduction that "ten years ago some twenty-five men and women—most of them teachers of religion, a few of them administrators and pastors—came together to consider issues of common concern in the interpretation of Christian faith for our day." He tells us further that its members were "deliberately chosen to embrace a wide sweep of theological and social outlook" and that "over the years, their discussions have canvassed the whole range of problems of Christian faith."

As time passed, we are told, that this "Theological Discussion Group" sensed such a consensus of conviction among them both as to the "character of the crisis which grips contemporary culture and the essential answer of Christian faith to this crisis" as to undertake what had been envisaged as a possibility from the beginning, viz., "some corporate writing." When this stage had been reached they asked four of their members (later increased to five) to prepare preliminary statements that would make articulate this consensus of opinion. These preliminary statements, after being subjected to detailed scrutiny by the entire Group, were returned to their writers for redrafting. After this had been done, the statements were again criticized by the Group as a whole and then re-committed to their authors for further revision. From that point, the work was completed "through consultations and interchange of manuscripts among the five writers."

While we are warned against supposing that all the members of the Group can be held responsible for the book in detail, or even that each of the writers agrees with everything that the others say, yet we are told that the book is "the fruit of a long and intimate corporate struggle to find the meaning of Christian faith for our time" and that "each chapter broadly reflects the convictions of all the collaborators." The book contains nothing, strange to say, to indicate that any of the Group take basic exception to its contents.

The book contains five chapters entitled successively, "The World Situation," "Christianity and Its Secular Alternatives," "Central Christian Affirmations," "Christianity and Society" and "Christianity and the Christian" and written respectively by Professor Paul J. Tillich of Union Theological Seminary in New York City, Professor Theodore M. Greene of Princeton University, Professor George F. Thomas of Princeton University, President Edwin E. Aubrey of Crozier Theological Seminary and Professor John Knox of Union Theological Seminary.

The members of the Group, apart from those already mentioned, whose corporate thinking finds expression in this book follow in alphabetical order: Roland H. Bainton, John Coleman Bennett, J. Seelye Bixler, Leslie Blanchard, Paul J. Braisted, B. Harvie Branscomb, Robert L. Calhoun, Adelaide T. Case, Samuel McCrea Cavert, Virginia Corwin, Angus Dun, Herbert H. Farmer, Georgia Harkness, Frances A. Hensen, Walter Marshall Horton, Lynn Harold Hough, John A. Mackay, Cornelius Kruse, Benjamin E. Mays, Daniel A. McGregor, Francis P. Miller, John M. Moore, William Stuart Nelson, Reinhold Niebuhr, H. Richard Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, Douglas Steere, Gregory Vlastos, T. E. Wedel, Robert Russell Wicks, E. A. Yarrow and Alexander C. Zabriskie.

An examination of the membership of this Group will indicate the interpretation to be placed on the

claim that it was "deliberately chosen to embrace a wide sweep of theological and social outlook." Apparently—we have small knowledge of some of the Group—this "sweep" was not wide enough to embrace any representatives of Fundamentalism, so-called, even when taken in the broad sense, characteristic of all the great historic creeds of Christendom, according to which it includes all those who hold that Christianity has a specific content of its own—factual, doctrinal and ethical—that was given it once and for all by Christ and His Apostles and which must be retained if Christianity in the historical meaning of the word is to be retained. The Group was at least confined to Liberals to such a degree that it is small wonder that *Time* magazine, in its issue of September 17, asserts that it has given us "what amounts to a manifesto of liberal Protestantism." If liberal Protestantism is to be identified with Christianity it may be that this book gives "the Christian answer" to "the crisis which grips contemporary culture" but otherwise it would be somewhat strange if it does.

Drs. Tillich and Greene

The opening chapter on "The World Situation" by Dr. Tillich and the first half of the second chapter by Dr. Greene on "Christianity and Its Secular Alternatives" are of a preliminary nature to such a degree that their value is largely independent of the main purpose of the book, which is confessedly to state the essence of Christian faith in contemporary terms. No discriminating reader can read Dr. Tillich's diagnosis of the present world situation, as revealed in man's cultural and intellectual life and as reflected in economic, political and international realms, without gaining a better understanding of the age in which we live. We are disposed to think he deals for the most part with the proximate rather than the ultimate causes of present crisis in world affairs but there is certainly much truth in his contention that "the present world situation is the outcome—directly in the West and indirectly elsewhere—of the rise, the triumph and the crisis of what we may term 'bourgeois society'" and that this bourgeois society has passed from "revolutionary reason" through "technical reason" to "planning reason," the phase in which we find ourselves and which manifests itself in such political and economic conceptions as fascism, communism and the "New Deal." The question which now confronts us, he pertinently asks, is, "How can security and a decent standard of life for all be attained according to the infinite productive power of mankind, without complete mechanization and dehumanization of mankind?" A basic weakness of Dr. Tillich's representation, it seems to us, is that after having explained the present crisis as a result of the elevation of reason as the principle of truth above all forms of authoritarianism he maintains that society must look to this same reason as the

agency for its regeneration. In harmony with this he denies that either Roman Catholicism or Protestant orthodoxy is qualified to meet the situation. Only a liberal Protestantism that is truly "Catholic," we are told (Dr. Tillich has in mind no doubt Protestantism as it finds expression in this book), can meet the needs of the hour.

The first half of Dr. Greene's chapter in which he deals with "contemporary attitudes to religion in general and Christianity in particular" would be hard to surpass. The attitudes with which he deals are those of the ordinary man "overwhelmed by the urgencies and distractions of the passing moment," two types of naturalists—the naïve and the sophisticated, and two kinds of humanists—the anxious and the assured. Dr. Greene's analysis of the views of typical representatives of these attitudes is both informing and helpful and one can only wish that the book as a whole was as good. The same can not be said, however, of the second half of his chapter which deals with the reasonableness of Christianity. This too is characterized by clarity and brilliance but it suffers throughout by reason of the fact that the "Christianity" whose reasonableness it seeks to commend is that which finds expression in this book as a whole. Even if he were successful in showing the reasonableness of this Christianity—we do not think he is—it would not follow that Christianity rightly so called is a reasonable religion, as we hope to make clear.

The Body of the Book

The body of the book is devoted to a restatement of the central Christian affirmations and their social and personal implications. Dr. Thomas deals expressly with the "Central Christian Affirmations," Dr. Aubrey with their social and Dr. Knox with their personal implications. This means that the core of the book is to be found in the chapter by Dr. Thomas. Some consideration of this chapter supplemented by references to the other chapters will, therefore, serve to indicate the conception of Christianity that underlies and pervades this book and so enable the reader to judge as to the degree to which it has rightly been entitled "The Christian Answer."

The Supernatural

The discriminating reader of this book will soon discover that it contains no recognition of the supernatural in the form of the miraculous. Dr. Greene in the one section of the book dealing explicitly with the "supernatural" identifies it with belief in God and the human soul. The writers of this book are theists but while all Christians are theists all theists are not Christians. We are Christian in our thinking only as we believe that the supernatural God has intervened supernaturally in the affairs of this world to save sinners from the guilt and corruption of sin.

It is within the sphere of the miraculous, in fact, that we come face to face with that which is most distinctive of Christianity. All attempts to provide us with a non-miraculous Christianity have failed and will continue to fail because here the choice is not between a miraculous and a non-miraculous Christianity but between a miraculous Christianity and no Christianity at all. And yet not only is the word "miracle" not to be found in the full index of this book but we have looked in vain for the idea itself. How carefully it is avoided is indicated by the fact that Dr. Greene speaks of the phrase "resurrection of the body" in the Apostles' Creed as a "poetic phrase" and that Dr. Thomas suggests that the *resurrection appearances* were spiritual rather than physical and that the story of the empty tomb arose as an attempt to account for them.

The Deity of Christ

Since the book contains no recognition of the supernatural in the form of the miraculous, it is not surprising that it commends to our attention a purely human Jesus. It is true, of course, that its authors think highly of Jesus but we have found nothing that indicates that in their opinion He exceeded the bounds of the human. He is represented as "the redemptive power of God incarnate in a perfect man" but He is nowhere represented as God Himself in human form. The two-nature theory of the person of Jesus, as it finds expression in the Chalcedonian formula and the Christian creeds in general, is rejected. The union of the divine and the human in Jesus is said to be not a metaphysical but "a moral and spiritual one." "The exaltation of Christ by the early Christian," we are told, "was not meant as a speculative dogma about a second God but as a solemn and grateful affirmation that the one and only God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." In this connection it is worthy of note that the personal pronouns referring to Jesus Christ are never capitalized as they uniformly are when referring to God.

In view of the book's conception of Jesus, it was to be expected that it would commend a Unitarian rather than a Trinitarian conception of God. This it does. It is true that it does not reject the Trinitarian view of God in so many words, but it does so in effect by commending a purely modal Trinity, what in the history of the Christian Church has been known as the heresy of Sabellianism. "There are not three subjects or centers of consciousness in God," we are told, "there is one Personal Being who exists and manifests Himself in three eternal aspects or functions." The reason why Christians have confessed the Trinitarian view of God, we are further told, is that "the activity of God as Creator and Ruler of the world appears different from His activity as Redeemer of mankind in Christ and that both appear different from His activity as the in-

dwelling Spirit which inspires the lives of those who put their trust in Him." This means in effect that God is three in about the same sense that a man is three who is at the same time a statesman, an artist and a philanthropist.

It will be seen that Jesus Christ is not represented in this book as a proper object of worship. There is no recognition of His true deity, no affirmation that He is One in whose presence it becomes us to say, "My Lord and my God." It rejects the faith of the Church Universal as to the person of Christ as it finds expression in the words of our Shorter Catechism: "The Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever."

The Atonement

There is something else, however, equally essential to genuine Christianity, that finds no recognition in this book. We refer to the fact that such Christianity is a religion of redemption in the sense that it offers salvation from the guilt of sin through the death of Christ as a satisfaction to divine justice. Theories of vicarious satisfaction or penalty with respect to the death of Christ are explicitly rejected. His sufferings are spoken of as vicarious but we are told that they have "an analogy in countless lives of sacrificial love which had redemptive power over others." We are told that there is no need of a substitutionary atonement because "God is willing to forgive the sinner if he will only repent." Dr. Thomas approaches the Governmental theory of the atonement when he affirms that the death of Christ was a demonstration against sin, lest it be supposed that "the justice of God can be set aside as if it were of no account, or that the love of God can accept sinful men as if they were not sinful" but he expressly denies that God had to be propitiated or appeased by a blood sacrifice (p. 122). Back of this rejection of the death of Christ as sacrificial, it is almost needless to say, is an inadequate view of sin. The writers of this book have considerable to say of the corruption of sin but there is no real recognition of the guilt of sin. Naturally if no guilt attaches to sin there is no need of atonement. Then Dr. Knox may be right in representing the Parable of the Prodigal Son as containing the core of Christianity and in affirming that "the essence of the Christian Gospel is simply that God is waiting to receive and restore us." But if guilt attaches to sin, as it does according to the teaching of the New Testament and the great creeds of the Church, something more is needed than repentance. The object of Christian faith has never been Christ *simpliciter* but always Christ crucified. The deity of Christ is indeed an essential doctrine of Christianity—from the very first Christians have worshipped Him as God—but it is not the only essential. It has always been confessed,

and not only confessed but placed at the very center of the Christian confession, that apart from His sacrificial death He would not be qualified to be our redeemer. With Paul the Church Universal has proclaimed as the most important fact of all that Christ died for our sins. Every great branch of the Christian Church has assigned to His death, regarded as an expiatory sacrifice, the place of primary importance. Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics and Protestants in general have at least been united in accepting the Cross as the symbol of Christianity and in singing the praises of the "Lamb that was slain."

It is not surprising that the authors of this book, occupying as they do an essentially Unitarian point of view, should think that while to suppose that Christ received unmerited punishment in order that we might receive unmerited forgiveness may be fitted to exalt the love wherewith Christ loved us yet that it detracts from our conception of God as a God of love and mercy. No representation could be more opposed to the truth as the Church as a whole has conceived it. Christians in general have never reasoned, God is love and therefore there was no need of an atonement. Rather they have reasoned, God is love and therefore He provided an atonement. Trinitarians do not suppose that some outside influence was brought to bear upon God to lead Him to love sinners. Rather they believe that it was God Himself in the person of His Son who became incarnate for us men and our salvation. Hence they have never admitted for a moment that those who deny that there was any need of an atonement to remove obstacles in the way of the exercise of the divine mercy have a loftier conception of the love of God than those who hold that Jesus by the sacrifice of Himself removed such obstacles. They have opposed the former idea not because it embodies too lofty a conception of God as a God of love but because it has too low a conception of the love wherewith God loves us. "Assuredly," in the words of Warfield, "it is impossible to put anything like their real content into those great words, 'God is love,' save as they are thrown out against the background of those other conceptions of equal loftiness, 'God is light,' 'God is righteousness,' 'God is holiness,' 'God is a consuming fire.' The love of God cannot be apprehended in its length and breadth and height and depth—all of which pass knowledge—save as it is apprehended as the love of a God who turns from the sight of sin with inexpressible abhorrence, and burns against it with inexpressible indignation. The infinitude of His love is illustrated not by His lavishing His favors on sinners without requiring an expiation of sin, but by His—through such holiness and through such righteousness as cannot but cry out with infinite abhorrence and indignation—still loving sinners so greatly that He Himself provides a satisfaction for their sin adequate to meet these tremendous demands."

Revelation and the Bible

It was not to be expected, in view of its anti-supernaturalistic conception of the origin and continuance of Christianity, that this book's view of revelation and the Bible would be in harmony with what was the all but universal view of those calling themselves Christians until the spread of what is known as liberalism or modernism within relatively recent times. It tells us, it is true, that God has revealed Himself in many ways, particularly in "the individual and corporate experiences recorded in the Bible, culminating in man's encounter with the historical Jesus and continuing in the recorded testimony of the Christian Church" (p. 71). It should be noted, however, that while revelation is represented as mediated by historical events yet it is held that we understand these events, none of which are represented as miraculous, only as they are interpreted by "prophets" in the exercise of their natural faculties. Biblical revelation is spoken of as "special" but not represented as different in kind from "general" revelation. Scorn is poured on the notion that the Bible is infallible with some not only unsympathetic but uninformed allusions to the "fundamentalists" added. The authority of the Bible is represented as lying wholly in its "inherent validity" and we are urged to exercise discrimination, to employ our critical judgment in using it. God, we are told, is continually guiding the Church into new truth. (See especially pp. 97-99.) The book is utterly blind to that for which the Church of the ages has primarily valued the Bible—to wit, as the book that contains a trustworthy record of the mighty deeds that God has wrought for the salvation of men—deeds that culminate in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—plus an authoritative interpretation of them.

If space permitted reference to some of the other shortcomings of this book might be made, such as its representation of Christian faith as belief based on inconclusive evidence (p. 76) and its putting the cart before the horse when it represents Christian doctrine as secondary to Christian experience (p. 134), but to criticize further would seem from the historical Christian point of view like trying to slay the slain. We would not be understood as alleging that the book is wholly without value for the discriminating reader but we submit that any book, whatever its merits, that contains no recognition of the supernatural in the form of the miraculous, more particularly a book that does not recognize both the deity of Christ and that He bore the sins of men in His own body on the tree, has no right to be regarded as a specifically Christian book in any proper meaning of the words. To enumerate the "Central Christian Affirmations" without mention of the deity of Christ and His atoning death is like staging *Hamlet* without anyone to play the part of the Prince of Denmark. This means that we are so far from supposing that this book gives us *the* Christian an-

swer to the world's need that we are rather disposed to deny that it gives us even a Christian answer.

Its authors hold, no doubt, that they have as good or even a better right to call their religious views Christianity than we do. That is true only if they can show as good or better historical warrant for using the word to designate their views. This, we are sure, they cannot do. They can, no doubt, show a

certain historical continuity between their views and historic Christianity. But as John Macmurray rightly says in the opening chapter of *The Clue to History* "historical continuity is no guarantee of spiritual continuity." We submit that neither Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin nor Wesley, were they living today, would look upon this book as an authentic expression of Christianity.

Certain Proceedings of the 175th General Assembly with Comments

The 157th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. convened in the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Minneapolis on May 24, 1945. Inasmuch as the Assembly had been reduced in size to conform to the ruling of the Office of Defense Transportation that not more than 388 persons could attend from areas more than fifty miles from Minneapolis, the church, one of the most commodious in the denomination, was more than adequate in size and equipment to meet the Assembly's needs. The opening session was confined to worship, a sermon by the Moderator and the observance of the Lord's Supper. The theme of Dr. Vale's sermon was "God's Hand on the Whirling Clay" and his text Jeremiah 18:6; "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand."

Dr. William B. Lampe Elected Moderator

The afternoon session of the first day was devoted, as usual, to the election of a Moderator by the Assembly sitting as a whole and of the members of the Standing Committees (the Moderator appoints the chairmen of these committees) by the electing sections (sitting separately) into which the Assembly is divided under its Standing Rules. According to the Standing Rules the Assembly is divided into 22 electing sections and the more important of the Standing Committees consist of 45 members including the chairman and the less important of 23 members including the chairman. This year, however, in view of its reduced size, the Assembly was divided into 14 electing sections and all of the committees made to consist of 15 members—seven ministers and seven elders plus the chairman appointed by the Moderator.

The names of three ministers were placed before the Assembly as candidates for the moderatorship. Dr. William B. Lampe of the Presbytery of St. Louis was nominated by Dr. Ralph C. McAfee of the Presbytery of Erie and his nomination seconded by Dr. Edward W. Stimson of the Presbytery of Cincinnati. Dr. Ezra A. Van Nuys of the Presbytery of

San Francisco was nominated by Dr. Jesse H. Baird of the Presbytery of San Francisco and his nomination seconded by Ruling Elder Dr. Charles J. Turck of the Presbytery of St. Paul. Dr. George H. Talbott of the Presbytery of Jersey City was nominated by Dr. Lester H. Clee of the Presbytery of Newark and seconded by Dr. Karl F. Wettstone of the Presbytery of Wichita Falls. By vote of the Assembly, the seconding speeches were made in the reverse order of the nominating speeches—in our judgment an unfair arrangement inasmuch as it gives the man first nominated the benefit of both the first and the last speech while the man last nominated has the disadvantage of having the speeches made in his behalf follow one another immediately. Just why the Stated Clerk should always throw the weight of his influence in favor of this arrangement is something that needs explanation.

Only two ballots were required to secure an election. On the first ballot, of the 314 votes cast Dr. Lampe received 142, Dr. Van Nuys 91 and Dr. Talbott 80. On the second ballot, of the 315 votes cast, Dr. Lampe received 159, Dr. Van Nuys 82 and Dr. Talbott 74. Dr. Van Nuys then moved and Dr. Talbott seconded a motion to make the election unanimous, which was done.

No doctrinal issue was raised or at stake in connection with the election. Dr. Lampe and Dr. Van Nuys were both nominated by Auburn Affirmationists and while neither of Dr. Talbott's sponsors were Auburn Affirmationists yet he himself in previous years has placed the names of Auburn Affirmationists in nomination as candidates for the moderatorship. It may be added that Dr. Lampe was a member of the Permanent Judicial Commission when it condemned Dr. J. Gresham Machen and others for not having obeyed the notorious Mandate of the 1934 Assembly against the members of the Independent Board for Foreign Missions. All three candidates are pastors of whom there was much that is commendable to be said and which their sponsors utilized to the full. It has not been often that the

nominating speeches have been so universally good. In the judgment of many the commanding lead which Dr. Lampe assumed on the first ballot, and which virtually assured his election, was what was said concerning his interest in the Board of Pension Fund situation. Thus what in the judgment of many, including apparently the Special Committee of five laymen authorized by the 1943 Assembly to investigate the Pension Fund situation, should have militated against his candidacy inured to his favor. There is small doubt that this committee of prominent businessmen, none of whom had had any connection with the Board and its operation, had Dr. Lampe among others in mind when it placed the following paragraph in its report:

"We would be derelict of our duty to the Church if we did not add at this point a word of Christian admonition. It is important, we believe, that members of our great Church should adopt a more constructive attitude toward the Board and its work and discourage ill-informed and destructive criticism: We deplore under any circumstances the circulation of anonymous and ill-founded rumors. Men and women of the calibre of your Board members, serving freely for love alone, deserve the confidence of us all and, if criticism is forthcoming, it should be in a direct and constructive spirit—anything else is unworthy of us as Christians and as brethren working together in the cause of our Master."

We are not deploring his election. It may be that Dr. Lampe was the best qualified for the position—we are certain that none of the others could have surpassed him in the ability and fairness with which he presided over the Assembly—but we are not disposed to think that he was entitled to be elected because of any service he has rendered the beneficiaries of the Pension Fund.

Proposal to Change Method of Electing Moderator

The Presbytery of Ebenezer overtured the 1944 Assembly "to direct the General Council to take under consideration the entire matter of the method of election of a Moderator and to report back to the 157th General Assembly." In answer to this overture, which was approved by the 1944 Assembly, the General Council in its original report as given in the Blue Book recommended that Standing Rule No. 7 (which has to do with the method of electing a Moderator) be amended so as to provide that a Nominating Committee consisting of the Moderator and his four nearest living predecessors shall present three nominees to the Assembly with statements, not over ten minutes in length, setting forth their qualifications for the position; and that immediately following the reading of the third statement the Assembly proceed to an election. This original report not only provided that the names of the nominees be not divulged until placed in nomination and forbade any other information or comment but expressly denied

the privilege of presenting other nominees from the floor.

The storm of criticism of the General Council's original recommendation—a recommendation which, if adopted, would have placed the election of a Moderator in the hands of five men (who could even practically assure the election of a particular man by nominating one well-known and two comparatively unknown men or by a more favorable statement in behalf of one of its nominees)—was evidently such that the Council, realizing that it must be modified if it was to have any hope of being adopted, presented it to the Assembly in a greatly revised form. In its revised form it provided that the Nominating Committee consist of the Moderator and his next living predecessor together with five representatives from the five areas into which the Church is divided according to Standing Rule No. 1 providing for the rotation of the meetings of the Assembly. What is more, it provided that additional nominations might be made from the floor.

When the matter came before the Assembly the Rev. Samuel Allen Jackson of the Presbytery of Boston offered a substitute motion to the effect that "this Assembly go on record as favoring the continuance of the present method of electing a Moderator." After debate this motion was defeated by a close vote—a vote so close as to indicate that there was small chance of the General Council's recommendation receiving the necessary two-thirds vote. Following some discussion the Rev. Merle L. Edwards of the Presbytery of Denver moved that "this entire matter be laid on the table until there is a full meeting (900 or so commissioners) of the General Assembly." As a motion to table is not debatable the vote was put immediately. A standing vote was necessary to determine that the motion had carried. Before the vote was taken, Mr. Edwards was asked by the Moderator if he would be willing to modify his motion in such a manner that the matter would be referred back to the General Council. This, however, he, wisely we think, refused to do.

The main argument made in behalf of a change of method is that it would avoid politics in the election of a Moderator. It is by no means certain, however, that it would have this effect. If the nominating committee repeatedly failed to nominate a man whom a group of some size desired to elect as Moderator, it is quite likely that he would be nominated from the floor after a campaign in his behalf surpassing any yet known. A basic objection to the Council's proposal is that the Assembly would have no advance knowledge of the nominees and thus would be compelled to vote without any adequate opportunity to weigh the relative qualifications of the candidates. How could it be possible for a commissioner to act on other than a snap judgment on the basis of ten-minute verbal statements concerning the candidates? We are disposed to think that if such a method were adopted the names of the nominees

and the statements of their qualifications should be included in the Blue Book. This would not only give the commissioners ample time to decide between them but also ample time to decide whether they wanted to make a nomination from the floor. While the make-up of the nominating committee in the revised form of the Council's recommendation is much to be preferred to that in their original recommendation it is unfair by reason of the fact that one of the areas from which five of its members would be chosen has 60 per cent of the membership of the Church. It may be added that we see no good reason why the Moderator and his immediate predecessor should be members of the nominating committee—unless it be desired to maintain something like a dynasty in the control of the Church. All in all we think it better that the Church endure its present ills in the matter of electing a Moderator rather than flee to those that might result from the proposed change of method.

Certainly if the method is to be changed the present method should be supplanted by something better than what the General Council proposed. Something like the following, we are sure, would be an improvement over its proposal. Let there be a Nominating Committee of Six plus the Moderator as ex officio chairman but without vote. Let two of these members be chosen from the area having 60 per cent of the membership of the Church by the commissioners to the previous Assembly before it adjourns and one from each of the other five areas in the same manner. Provide that there be but one nominee by the Committee and that no one be nominated with less than four votes in his favor but permit other nominations from the floor. Provide that the Nominating Committee makes its selection from the Church at large. Despite statements by a Stated Clerk to the contrary we do not believe that there is anything in the Constitution requiring that the Moderator be a commissioner and if there is the provision could be repealed. A nomination by a committee so constituted would, we feel sure, command the approval of the Church at large and be practically equivalent to an election.

Pension Fund and the War-Time Service Fund

While these two matters originated independently and were studied separately yet, inasmuch as they were bound together in the end, it seems well to report them under one head. It will be recalled that the 1943 Assembly while it commended the Board of Pensions "for the care and thought it has given the problem of formulating a sound and prudent investment policy and the progress it has made toward establishing a secure financial structure during the past year" yet realizing, in view of the large number of overtures it had received relating to the Pension Fund, that matters connected therewith had not been settled to the satisfaction of many of its members

voted to instruct the General Council to appoint a special committee "composed of five qualified laymen, competent and experienced in the field of insurance, investment law, accounting and administration" with authority "to review the entire Pension Fund situation, the administration of the Service Pension Fund and the organization of the Board."

It will be recalled also that pursuant to the Assembly's instructions the following outstanding businessmen, none of whom had had any connection with the Board of Pensions, accepted appointment on this committee: William Speers, president of James McCutcheon of New York City; Frederick Russell of Binghamton, N. Y., president of the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company; Louis C. Weiss of Cleveland, Ohio, resident partner of Ernst and Ernst, Certified Public Accountants; Harry T. Wade of Indianapolis, Ind., vice-president and general manager of the Standard Life Insurance Company of Indiana; and Frank P. Shepard, vice-president of the Bankers Trust Company of New York City.

This committee made an interim report to the 1944 Assembly in which it expressed its "full hope and expectation" that it would be able to present a final report to the 1945 Assembly. In this the committee was not disappointed. Its report as presented to the Minneapolis Assembly must have been highly gratifying to the Board of Pensions in view of the criticisms to which it has been subjected, for it asserts: "We have formed a high opinion of the Board, its Christian spirit of devotion to the Church and its servants, and of its competence and effectiveness in handling the intricate problems, both of a business and of a human nature." While the Committee reported that an increase of reserves amounting to \$7,120,000 is needed to make the Fund actuarially sound, if the Board is to continue to meet its obligations under existing conditions, yet it places the blame for this (apart from the fact that approximately \$2,000,000 of the original \$15,000,000 pledged to the Fund was never paid in) not on mismanagement but on "changed economic conditions and lowered earnings" plus the fact that its beneficiaries are living longer than was originally anticipated. It points out that when the Pension Plan was adopted actuarial reserves were computed on the basis of an assured earning of 4% on investments and with the expectation that they would range between 5% and 5½%. The situation now, however, is such that practically all life insurance companies have revised their actuarial computations on annuities to a 2½% basis. Believing that the Pension Fund should be no less conservative in its determinations in order that the future benefits of its members be not jeopardized the Special Committee reported that \$7,120,000 is required as of March 31, 1944, to put the Pension Fund on a sound basis in view of the benefits contemplated. It recommended, therefore, that steps be taken to raise this additional amount.

In the meantime the War-Time Service Commission, in addition to raising \$1,368,368.00 to meet current needs (\$114,368.00 above the quota assigned) had been busy determining the reconstruction and rehabilitation post-war needs of the Church. The 1943 Assembly had instructed it to "study the problem of reconstruction, both at home and foreign, and recommend to the General Council a plan for enlarging the nature, functions and responsibilities of the Commission in this regard." The 1944 Assembly, sensing that the end of the war was near, authorized the War-Time Commission "to proceed immediately to analyze the post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation needs of the Church, to assemble the best available estimates of the financial obligations of such post-war needs, and to formulate plans for securing these funds." On the basis of months of study and conference the War-Time Service Commission reported that a fund of not less than \$24,750,000 was needed for reconstruction and rehabilitation purposes at home and abroad and recommended that the Church undertake the securing of this amount.

It will be seen, in view of what has been related, that the Assembly had before it recommendations to raise approximately \$32,000,000—a sum which in the estimation of nearly every one seemed too great to attempt to secure and yet with both the Special Committee on the Pension Fund situation and the War-Time Service Commission insisting that they could not get along with less than the amount they had asked for. The General Council recommended the postponing of the attempt to raise capital funds for the Board of Pensions until the completion of the campaign for the War-Time Service Commission with the understanding that there be added to the War-Time Service Fund the sum of \$1,250,000 to assist in carrying for a five-year period the requirements of the Board of Pensions—and thus that an attempt be made to raise approximately \$26,000,000. This proposal, however, was unsatisfactory to the Board of Pensions largely because it was fearful that the financial situation might be such following the raising of the War-Time Service Fund that it would be impossible to raise the funds absolutely needed if the Pension Fund was to remain actuarially sound without reducing its obligations to its beneficiaries.

Had the matter come before the Assembly with each of the committees insisting that their needs be met, it is impossible to say what would have happened. However, this did not happen as after many hours of conference the two committees were able to agree on a compromise to which they gave their consent if not their full assent—a compromise that was presented as an amendment to the recommendation of the War-Time Service Commission as modified by the General Council by Dr. George H. Talbott, a member of the War-Time Service Commission (and seconded by Elder Fred D. Russell, a member of the Special Committee on the Pension

Fund Situation) in such an eminently clear and cogent manner as to secure the almost immediate approval of the Assembly. What is more the vote was practically unanimous inasmuch as the only negative vote came from a commissioner who thought the Church should attempt to raise the full amount originally requested, viz., \$32,000,000. Dr. Talbott's motion as approved follows:

"That the report of the Wartime Service Commission be amended in the following particulars:

"(1) That the total sum to be raised be \$27,000,000.

"(2) That of the total sum, \$23,320,000 be designated for the agencies represented in the post-war rehabilitation and restoration work, and \$3,680,000 for the Board of Pensions.

"(3) That each year for a period of three years there be inserted in the regular benevolence budget an additional amount of approximately \$300,000 for the Board of Pensions, the exact amount to be determined by the Budget and Finance Committee of the General Council on the basis of figures submitted by the Board.

"(4) That at the end of the three-year period designated above, the General Assembly shall determine whether to raise the balance of the fund set forth in the report of the Special Committee on the Board of Pensions, or to continue such annual payments from the benevolence budget as may be necessary in the judgment of the Budget and Finance Committee of the General Council upon recommendation of the Board of Pensions."

It will be seen that while the action of the Assembly was a compromise it was somewhat more of a victory for the Board of Pension Committee than for the War-Time Service Commission or the General Council. The action taken when fully carried out will provide the Pension Fund with \$3,680,000, a little more than half of the sum requested. It provides, however, for the balance of the need reported by the Special Committee through contributions to the regular benevolence budget of the Church at the rate of \$300,000 a year for a period of three years at the end of which the General Assembly shall determine whether to continue amortization at this rate or to launch a campaign for raising the remainder. However, it provides only \$23,320,000 instead of \$24,750,000 for War-Time Service Fund, i.e., \$1,430,000 less than the amount requested. This means that the expenditures outlined as imperatively needed by the War-Time Service Commission will have to be scaled down approximately 5.8 per cent—unless the contributions from the churches should exceed \$27,000,000, as is to be hoped.

Report of Special Laymen's Committee

It will be recalled that a Special Committee of the Lay Members of the General Council presented a report to the 1944 Assembly in which it recommended the following four goals: (1) Education of the Church membership in the spiritual and financial needs of the Church, (2) Sunday-school advance to a goal of 1,500,000 by 1948, (3) Progress toward Church Union and (4) a benevolence goal of \$10,-

000,000 for the year ending March 1948, and that after approving this report the Assembly authorized the appointment of a committee of twenty-one laymen plus certain advisory members "to co-operate with the clergy and the various agencies of the Church" in implementing the four-year program proposed with its four goals. This committee, of which Dr. Charles J. Turck was chairman, reaffirmed these four goals and added a fifth, viz., Full participation in raising the Post-War Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund. In addition this committee recommended that "the General Council be authorized to adopt and execute such plans as may be necessary to establish in every presbytery a Laymen's Group, which shall be a permanent body to co-operate with the presbytery in advancing the total program of the Presbyterian Church in local, state, national and world levels" and that "the General Assembly adopt a church-wide visitation of every Presbyterian Church to inform, enlist and inspire the laity in loyalty to the total program of the Presbyterian Church, and that Laymen's Groups be widely used in these visitations."

Church Paper

A further recommendation of this Special Laymen's Committee was that the General Council be authorized to "establish a Church paper primarily for adult laymen on an adequate financial basis." The recommendation of the committee included the following details: (1) that the paper be managed by a Publication Committee consisting of two ministers appointed by the General Council and eight laymen selected from the Church-at-large, two of whom shall be appointed by each of the following: The Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of National Missions, the Board of Christian Education and the General Council; (2) that the Boards mentioned utilize the paper for promotional purposes as far as practicable and contribute to the cost of the publication such sums as they severally deem proper in view of its promotional value and that they study the advisability of merging their present publications in the new publication and (3) that a fund not to exceed \$50,000 in any year be provided for five years to meet the anticipated deficit of the publication with the expectation that the maximum sum would not be needed after the first two years.

When the recommendation of the Laymen's Committee came before the Assembly Dr. William T. Hanzsche of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, who it will be recalled was the capable editor of the Presbyterian Magazine—an official paper that was discontinued in 1933—offered the following substitute motion:

"That the Moderator appoint a committee of nine, composed of ministers and laymen and lay women, the majority of the laymen being men now engaged in publication, newspaper, magazine, or advertising work.

"That the committee study and explore the whole field of modern journalism and publicity.

"That this committee report to the meeting of the General Council in October next a definite plan of procedure and of action for the establishment and publication of a Presbyterian church paper, and that this committee continue its duties further if necessary in the judgment of the General Council.

"That the General Council then be empowered, if it deem wise to name a permanent publication committee representing each area and interest of the Church, its appointment being limited in terms and classes according to our usual procedure, the General Council to decide when this committee shall proceed with the publication of the paper.

"That this General Assembly authorize a two cent addition to the per capita apportionment, which shall be designated for this particular purpose and which shall become operative, at the discretion of the General Council, towards the publication of the proposed church paper.

"That the Boards and Agencies of the Church merge as many of their present publications as possible with this church paper and utilize it and compensate it proportionately for promotional publicity."

Dr. Hanzsche spoke briefly in favor of his motion and as no one opposed it—evidently it was satisfactory to the Laymen's Committee—the Assembly approved it unanimously. The past experience of the Church, as we interpret it, does not speak loudly in favor of an official Church paper. Such a paper must in the nature of the case be doctrinally colorless or reflect the views of the party dominant in the control of the organization of the Church. In the first instance, it will please nobody and in the second instance it will displease all those not in sympathy with the majority group in the Church. In the latter case, it is too much to suppose that the minority will contribute willingly to its support. No doubt there are those who would have us believe that there is now doctrinal unity in the Church, but it is difficult to believe that any informed person really thinks that such is the case. A much stronger case could be made in behalf of an official Church paper if ours were as united a Church as are most of those churches which publish official papers. The situation being what it is, it is highly questionable whether the paper proposed will prove a success.

Conscientious Objectors

The Special Committee on Presbyterians in Civilian Public Service which was created by the 155th General Assembly to assure Presbyterians in Civilian Public Service of their Church's "continuing fellowship and care toward them," to inform the churches of "the situation related to Presbyterian Conscientious Objectors" and "to promote ways of raising funds" to meet their needs, reported that 221 Presbyterians have accepted assignment to Civilian Public Service since October 1940 and that 151 were still in such service on March 31, 1945. It called attention afresh to the fact that from the beginning not only have no wages been paid these men but that with the exception of those "on de-

tached service" they are obliged to pay or at least are charged \$30 a month for their living expenses. As many of these men are unable to meet these charges and as Presbyterians have not as yet come to their assistance in any adequate way, a serious financial situation exists which has thus far been met to a large degree by the Friends, Brethren and Mennonites—these groups having spent some \$5,000,000 within the last four years to meet the cost of food and clothing for men in Civilian Public Service, over \$55,000 of which was for Presbyterians. The Committee estimates that possibly \$10,000 has been contributed by Presbyterians for this purpose through agencies other than the General Assembly but believes that the Presbyterian Church is under moral though not legal obligation to pay these groups not less than \$45,000. In the meantime this "unpaid item" is steadily increasing due to the fact that our contributions as a Church (approximately \$20,000) are not keeping pace with the monthly costs for food and clothing for members of the Presbyterian Church in the camps.

In the light of this situation and our Church's repeated affirmation of the right of conscience and fellowship in Christ, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly authorize the appropriation of \$15,000 from un-allocated funds of the War-Time Service Commission. This precipitated a sharp debate concerning the wisdom of such action, it being the feeling of not a few that many would not contribute to the War-Time Service at all if they thought that any part of it went to the support of conscientious objectors. As a result a substitute motion that the Committee "be empowered to collect a special fund to be raised from the churches for this purpose, and that no moneys be taken from the War-Time Service Fund" was passed by a close vote.

Later the Assembly unanimously approved the following recommendation relative to this matter:

"Reaffirming the petition that all men in Public Service Camps should receive remuneration from the Government commensurate with the 'works of national importance' to which they have been assigned, this General Assembly recognizes the amounts of expenses already incurred on behalf of Presbyterians in these Camps, and paid by the Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and American Friends, as a moral obligation of the Presbyterian churches.

"Looking toward the early payment of this obligation, this General Assembly urges all presbyteries, sessions and pastors to present to their people such facts and appeals as shall be issued by the Special Committee on Presbyterian Conscientious Objectors in Civilian Public Service Camps.

"Suggestions as to what methods may locally be decided upon include:

"1. Circulation of the literature from the Special Committee to the full mailing lists of local churches, with a covering letter from the session.

"2. Presentation of the cause at a public service of worship.

"3. Allocation of undesignated funds from the local benevolence treasury.

"The Presbyterian Committee on Presbyterians in Civil-

ian Public Service Camps is authorized to publish a report of results by churches at the close of the calendar year, 1945; and to continue their efforts until the full amount needed shall have been raised."

Church Co-operation and Union

The Department of Church Co-operation and Union did not figure very largely in the last Assembly. It reported that no formal negotiations are in progress except those with the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. In the case of these it reported "progress" but offered no evidence that there is any likelihood of an early union with either of these Churches. As regards the Episcopal Church nothing definite will be known until the meeting of the General Convention of that Church in the fall of 1946. In the meantime, however, the Committees from the two Churches are endeavoring to formulate a more workable basis for union. As the outcome of a three-day meeting last December, it was reported by Dr. Coffin in behalf of our Department, that a proposed basis for union much larger in scope than earlier proposals has been reached—a proposal that envisages not merely the union of two Churches but of all the Reformed Churches. It was at least assuring to have him say that "we have consented to nothing that does not put our ministry on an absolute equality with that of the Episcopal Church" and that "we will continue only on that basis." He expressed the hope that this proposed plan of union will be put into final form this coming winter and sent out for study and discussion. In the case of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, it was stated that further study of the Plan of the Drafting Committee, already distributed throughout the two Churches is being made. Additional joint meetings, however, will be necessary, so it was reported, before a revised plan is ready for distribution. The Department reported "an ever-increasing spirit of fellowship and unity existing in these negotiations and growing evidence in understanding and support throughout both Communion"—a representation that does not altogether agree with the increased activity on the part of those who in the Southern Church are opposing the proposed union. Needless to say, the fact most stressed in the South as indicating the doctrinal unsoundness of the Northern Church is its election of Dr. Coffin as Moderator in 1943 with full knowledge of his doctrinal views. And yet it was urged by his sponsors that Dr. Coffin's election would serve to further the union of these two Churches!

Presbyterian Church of England and the Continental Protestant Churches

By authority of the General Assembly the Moderator and Stated Clerk sent the following self-explanatory cablegrams:

To the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England:

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., expressing deep sympathy at your loss of life and office property (by a German V-2 bomb) appropriates \$10,000 to help rebuild office.

To the Protestant Churches on the Continent:

Dear brethren:

The 157th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, meeting at Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 24th-30th, 1945, was moved by reports of the suffering and loss which your Church has endured in the tragic years of war.

Your Churches and their people have been on the hearts and in the prayers of our people during all the long months when but little information could reach us. And you are on our hearts and in our prayers anew as we learn of what has happened.

By a history-making decision, this General Assembly is launching a campaign for a fund to be used in post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Church, including the Church in Europe.

We are instructed to extend to you sincere fraternal greeting, and to assure you of the abiding love and concern of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Peacetime Military Conscription

As was to be expected there was a sharp division of opinion over this matter. A motion to delete all reference to peacetime military conscription from the report of the Standing Committee on Social Education and Action was offered and received no small support. A substantial majority of the Assembly, however, rejected it. The recommendations of the Committee as adopted follow:

We believe that the American people can be trusted to reach a decision more in keeping with their own and the world's good in the sober light of a later time than under war conditions. But we recognize that both within and without official life there are those with equal sincerity who press for an immediate decision. Therefore, both the times and the issue itself call for continued study and alertness to action.

Your Committee therefore recommends:

1. That General Assembly reaffirm without prejudice its conviction that congressional action upon a postwar policy of peacetime military conscription should be deferred until after the war.

2. That General Assembly urge the peoples of our churches to study and to be alert to express their considered opinions in the light of these and other considerations: (1) The needs for military manpower for the present war are fully provided for by existing legislation. (2) National security is sought by all. The issue concerns the means for achieving it. This decision must be reached in the light of the full context of military, social, economic, political, international, educational, and religious considerations. (3) Peacetime military conscription must be judged solely as preparation for and as a security measure against possible future wars, and not in the light of need for health, discipline, citizenship education, and similar matters. These latter are of admittedly vital importance, and about them the Christian Church is and should be profoundly concerned. But a democratic society has civilian and voluntary resources, through church, home, school, government, and

other institutions more suitable and adequate to cope with them. (4) As the Presbytery of Pittsburgh declared: "History demonstrates that peacetime military conscription does not protect a nation from unjust attack," nor does it assure military victory either to the aggressor or the attacked nations. (5) By peacetime military conscription a nation seeks security through unilateral action, rather than through collective responsibility and action envisaged in the anticipated international organization. (6) Attitudes and character formed by growth in Christian living are indispensable national resources for the enduring fabric of democracy and lasting peace. The traditions and conditions of military life do not contribute toward these resources in any measure comparable to the Christian education of youth as found in home, church, youth groups, summer conferences, institutions of higher learning, and the atmosphere of normal community life.

3. That General Assembly declare its support of greater study and more effective measures by the Church, and public and voluntary groups, toward the total needs of the nation's youth in health, character, and training for democratic citizenship.

4. That General Assembly express its earnest hope that the Government of the United States will use its good offices for international agreement on the elimination of national peacetime military conscription.

Proposed Amendment of the Form of Government

It will be recalled that the 1943 Assembly sent down to the Presbyteries an overture that proposed amendments of Chapters XIV, XV, and XVI of the Form of Government—chapters which have to do with candidates for the ministry and their licensure as well as the election, ordination and installation of ministers—but that it was defeated by a close vote, so close that it lacked but two votes of receiving approval. The occasion of its defeat, as every one will admit, was its proposal to make the second of the questions put to candidates for ordination read as follows: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will of your own initiative, make known to your presbytery the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination now?" We have italicized the addition to which exception was taken and which was the occasion of the overture's defeat. We never attached any particular importance to this proposed addition because it seems to us that any minister who would remain in the Church without this addition to the ordination vow would also remain in it despite such an addition, inasmuch as it merely states, brings out into the open, an already existing obligation. It turned out, however, that those who do not like to be explicitly reminded of this obligation every time a minister is ordained were sufficient in number to bring about the defeat of the overture as a whole.

Following the announcement that the overture had been defeated the matter was referred to the Department of Church Co-operation and Union with instructions "to present to the next General Assembly a report either in the form of overtures amending the Form of Government or of other recommendations." In obedience to those instructions the Department recommended that the same overture, slightly revised, but without the addition to the ordination vow cited above, be sent down to the Presbyteries; and their recommendation was approved by the Assembly. It is safe to say that as revised this overture will meet little opposition.

Miscellaneous

Most of the time of the Assembly was, as usual, devoted to the reading and consideration of the reports of the Standing Committees on the Boards and Agencies of the Church plus the reports of Special Committees. As printed in full in the Minutes of the Assembly they call attention to much that is encouraging along with some things that are discouraging in the life of the Church. Our space does not permit anything like a consideration of the reports on National and Foreign Missions, Christian Education, Social Education and Action, Pensions, Theological Seminaries, not to mention the reports of the Special Committees on Theological Education, Religious Radio, Camp and Church Activities, Pastoral Relocation and Evangelism, not to mention others. Their recommendations as adopted—in some instances somewhat revised—are for the most part commendable apart from their lack of concern over doctrinal matters. It may be pleasing to think not only that doctrinal unity exists throughout the Church but that it is a unity that accords with its doctrinal standards but so to suppose is to shut our eyes to facts so plain that he who runs may read.

The Special Committee on the Intermediate Catechism, of which Dr. Earl Douglass is the chairman and of which Prof. Hugh T. Kerr and the Rev. Richard T. Gettys are the other representatives from the Church-at-large; Rev. Edward B. Paisley, Miss Maude-Louise Strayer and Rev. Eugene C. Blake the representatives from the Board of Christian Education; and Prof. J. Hudson Ballard, Mrs. Albert D. Frost and the Rev. Jesse Herrmann the representatives from the General Council, asked to be continued with the expectation that a complete report will be submitted to the next General Assembly. It may be added that the Moderator took upon himself, without any authorization by the Assembly, to add the names of Miss Marie Brogden and Mrs. Kenneth Johnson to the committee as Advisory Members. Inasmuch as the purpose of the proposed catechism is adequate catechetical instruction of the youth of the Church in the basic doctrines and practices of the Christian faith, the final report of this committee

will be or at least should be awaited with widespread interest and concern.

The seventeen presbyteries of New York, charged with the control of Auburn Seminary and responsible for the election of its directors, addressed a lengthy communication to the last Assembly requesting that "the Board of Directors of the Seminary or a committee of the same be recognized as the official representatives of these presbyteries in their relation to the General Assembly" and that "the Board of Directors be allowed to make an annual report to the General Assembly for its information in the same general form required of the seminaries officially recognized as fully under the immediate oversight of the Assembly, and that the report be transmitted to the General Assembly's Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries for such consideration as that committee may deem appropriate." The communication further requested that "a place as corresponding member be assigned a representative of Auburn Theological Seminary on the General Assembly's Council on Theological Education as is provided in its constitution for such an institution, in order that the work of the Seminary be kept in close harmony with that of the other seminaries of the Church." This communication is fraught with large significance by reason of the fact that for all practical purposes Auburn Seminary is now a part of Union Theological Seminary of New York City. Hence if Auburn Seminary is given official recognition by the General Assembly there would seem to be no good reason why Union Seminary should not receive the same recognition. It looks very much as if this was a side-door effort to secure Assembly recognition for Union Seminary. The communication was referred to the Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries. Its recommendation as adopted follows;

While sympathetic with the purpose of this Communication, the Committee felt that the past status of Auburn Seminary, as an institution which the General Assembly of 1940 had recognized was completely independent from the control of the General Assembly, and the present status of Auburn in its relationship with Union Theological Seminary, raised questions which needed more careful study than our Committee was able to give.

We therefore recommend that Communication No. 24 be referred to the General Council for careful consideration and recommendation to the next General Assembly.

It remains to be seen what recommendation the General Council will make with reference to this request from Auburn Seminary. In our opinion the request should be denied.

No decision was made as to the place of meeting of the next Assembly inasmuch as at that time it was impossible to say what type of Assembly would be possible in 1946. It was voted that the selection of the next place of meeting be left to the officers of the General Assembly with the understanding that announcement would be made as soon as possible.

Concluding Comment

We observed less to criticize and more to commend than in any Assembly we have attended in recent years—not excepting the 1944 Assembly which was more praiseworthy than those of immediately preceding years. We even suspect that it would have expressed itself commendably on doctrinal matters if such things had been under discussion. It seems to be the settled policy of “the powers that be,” however, to keep such matters in the background. No doubt such a policy is fitted to support the fiction that the doctrinal controversies which once divided the Church are a thing of the past and that our Church is now a united harmonious one. It merely results, however, in confining Assembly discussions, for the most part at least, with things peripheral rather than things central to the well-being of the Church. Crying “Peace, peace, when there is no peace” is as little fitted to heal the hurt of God’s people today as it was in the days of Jeremiah. The lack of doctrinal controversy in the Presbyterian

Church at the present time is, if we mistake not, evidence of a deadly Laodicean indifferentism rather than of a united, forward-looking Church. Be the doctrinal situation what it may, the commissioners to the last Assembly determined the issues brought before them, for the most part, in a highly commendable way. While few in number, relatively speaking, they made decisions of large even world-wide significance. While the actions of the 1945 Assembly demonstrate that a small Assembly can be as effective as a large one, they indicate at the same time that something more than a reduced Assembly is needed to make it what our Form of Government contemplates, a truly deliberative body. That something includes, as we have previously insisted, the discontinuance by the presbyteries of the practice of electing commissioners because it is their “turn” without regard to their ability to represent them at the Assembly. Men are elected to legislatures, both state and national, because of the things for which they stand. The same should be true of the General Assembly.

Book Reviews

CHRIST—THE HOPE OF GLORY. By Wm. Childs Robinson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 324 pages, \$3.00.

This book contains the James Sprunt Lectures as delivered at Union Seminary in Virginia by the Professor of Historical Theology in Columbia Seminary in Georgia. It combines in a rare way wide and accurate scholarship with depth and fervor of Christian conviction. We know of no book that sets forth more adequately the richness of the Christian hope and the solidness of the foundation upon which it rests. The book has the sub-title “Christological Eschatology” as an indication of the fact that the Christian hope as envisaged by Dr. Robinson finds its alpha and its omega in Jesus Christ. While he does not find Chiliasm taught in the Bible, in which his thinking is everywhere rooted, he stresses the imminency of our Lord’s return. Whatever may be thought of some of the authorities Dr. Robinson quotes or of certain of his conclusions, we are sure that no Christian can read his survey of the findings of Biblical research and of Christian scholarship on this theme without having his soul stirred through the contemplation of what awaits him. This book contains much sermon material. It is scholarly but not scholastic, and so popular in the best sense of the word.

THEREFORE STAND. By Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Co. 614 pages, \$3.00.

The author of this book is the able editor of Peloubet’s notes and Professor of English Bible in

Moody Bible Institute. It is “a plea for a vigorous apologetic in this critical hour of the Christian faith”—not only a plea for such an apologetic but itself the thing it pleads for. Dr. Smith quotes extensively from the writings both of those without and of those within the organized churches in order to make clear the nature of the attack being made on evangelical Christianity and the extent to which representatives of the Church have recoiled before that attack. The quotations are purposely full and numerous not only to provide adequate support for his representations but in order to meet the needs of all but the few who have access to large libraries. Dr. Smith’s positive apologetic finds its outline in Paul’s address at Athens for he sees in Paul’s apologetic on Mars’ Hill the apologetic that is needed today. Hence he deals most fully with the themes of that address—the creation of the world by God, a righteous judgment to come, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The book is more or less of a thesaurus of what has been written in exposition and defense of these themes. One does not have to agree with everything Dr. Smith says or to hold that his quotations are always the best available—we do for the most part—in order to assert that he has given us an exceedingly valuable book. We wish for it a wide reading in schools, colleges and theological seminaries as well as by ministers and inquiring laymen everywhere. The volume closes with a challenging chapter concerning the immediate task of the Church in view of the existing situation. There are extensive notes and excellent indices.

THE RISE OF THE TYRANT. By Carl McIntire. Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood, N. J. 259 pages, \$2.25.

This book has as its sub-title "Controlled Economy vs. Private Enterprise." The rise of the tyrant will be the inevitable result, its author holds, of the triumph of a controlled economy. Its thesis is that the Bible "teaches private enterprise and the capitalistic system, not as a by-product or as some side line, but as the very foundation structure of society itself in which men are to live and render an account of themselves to God." What concerns Mr. McIntire is the manner in which a controlled economy is being advocated by the Churches, particularly through the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. He quotes from its leaders including its President, G. Bromley Oxam, J. Henry Carpenter, James Myers, E. Stanley Jones as well as from the pronouncements of individual churches showing the extent to which they throw the emphasis upon the side of collectivism similar to that of Russia and against the individualism that is essential to democracy and private enterprise. Mr. McIntire writes in a vigorous and straight-forward manner that commands our admiration even if it does not always win our full approval. While we hold with him that it is wholly unwarranted to speak of the profit motive, competition and private enterprise as unChristian we are not sure but that he comes too near to advocating economic *laissez faire*. Whatever the faults of the book, it is a needed antidote to much that is being commended even in Church circles and we wish for it a wide reading.

LUTHER AND THE SCRIPTURES. By Dr. M. Rue. The Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio. 211 pages, \$1.00.

Dr. Rue of Wartburg Seminary at Dubuque, Iowa, has rendered an important service in giving us this book in view of the extent to which Luther has been cited as holding a loose view of the inspiration of Scripture. A thoroughly competent scholar he shows on the basis of a first-hand acquaintance with Luther's writing that while he did not regard the Epistle to the Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation as belonging to the canon yet that, while not holding to a dictation theory of inspiration, he did believe in the inerrancy of all that he recognized as Scripture, viz., all the other books of the Bible. Dr. Rue takes up in detail the passages in Luther's writing which have been cited as proving that he held a lax view of inspiration and shows that none of them justify the contention that he ascribed error to Scripture. Some seventy of the pages are devoted to notes intended only for scholars as many of them are in Latin and German. It is interesting to note that the March issue (1945) of the Princeton Seminary Bulletin, published by its trustees, contains a review of this book which implies, if it does not expressly assert, that it is an attempt to revive a view of Scrip-

ture which though it "may have served the cause of Protestant survival in the days of the Counter-Reformation can hardly do more than encourage obscurantism and party spirit in the churches today," despite the fact that its author's conception of Scripture is essentially that of the Westminster Confession of Faith to which they as well as the Faculty of Princeton Seminary are committed by their subscription vows.

SNOWDEN-DOUGLASS SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR 1946. By Earle Douglass. The Macmillan Company. 378 pages, \$1.50.

These expositions of the International Sunday School Lessons fully maintain the high level of previous years. Dr. Douglass continues to subsume his material under three main heads: (1) an exposition of the lesson text, (2) suggested questions and topics for discussion, (3) hints to teachers. Genuinely evangelical in substance they are written from a scholarly background and with a literary ability and zest of spirit deserving of much praise. Small wonder that there has been an increasing demand for them from year to year. Dr. Douglass has been the sole author of these expositions since 1936 and in providing them has been rendering a large service to the Sunday Schools of our land. There are other excellent helps but, whatever other helps Sunday School teachers of upper grade pupils may have, they will do well to possess this book. Especially valuable are its hints to teachers.

FROM SCENES LIKE THESE: LIFE IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY. By Ethel Wallace. Hathaway and Brothers, Sixth and Locust Streets, Philadelphia, Pa. 223 pages, \$2.00.

Here is a beautiful book, an appealing book, a Christian book. I think no higher praise can be given any writing. The sub-title, "Life in a Christian Family" describes perfectly its purpose, its spirit and its content. And the little notice on the jacket, "None of the Characters or Events of this Book are Fictitious" whets the appetite of the reader before he opens the cover. The author, Ethel Wallace, frankly yet delicately opens four doors to the reader, doors into the intimacies, the problems, the joys and the compensations of "life in a Christian family." The first door opens into the life of the past generation; the second into "Things of Yesterday"; the third into the family and Christian view of the first World War, skilfully introduced by a series of letters written by the brother of the author from the battle-front in those days; and the fourth into present-day problems and feelings, under the title, "Things of Today."

The book is filled with the homely, touching, everyday incidents that used to make and that still must make life worth living. There is contact with relatives, "life with Father," appreciation of Mother, visits with Grandma to Wanamaker's Store, the en-

tertaining of summer visitors, trips to Atlantic City, an automobile tour in the early days of cars through the old South. The reader can see himself on every page, either as he is or as he was or as he feels that he would like to be. The religious note is woven into the book naturally, yet with deep conviction; the Bible is held up, through constant and natural reference, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and the appeal and power of the Christian faith underlie all that is written. The author in her Foreword says, "This little book, differing from those which hold up relatives to ridicule, and resembling thousands that could be written, tells of the Christian home in which I was reared. The Bible does not omit the shortcomings of the saints, so I have written of the frailties as well as the virtues of my family. They were not angels, but sinners redeemed by the grace of God."

The power of the Christian family as a work of God is suggested all through this book. Certainly the author has caught the true spirit of the Christian home and has presented it in a most engaging manner. Something like this is sorely needed in these days and the book should find a ready sale and a large circulation. It is a beautiful contribution to the Christian life of America in these times.

J. A. S., JR.

Addendum

[Inasmuch as it has become more or less widely known that Ethel Wallace is the maiden name of the wife of ye editor, he hesitated at first to print this flattering notice of her book fearful lest some might think that he had brought undue influence to bear upon its author. However, not to mention other favorable notices of her book, he is sure that no one will suppose that he has any influence in the councils of the *Christian Century*. Nevertheless the following notice—we print it in full—appeared in its issue of September 19th: "Life with Father has set a pattern for rather hilarious records of family circles. This one is equally intimate, and as well written, but in a wholly different key—genial but serious. Here are children who did not become 'sick of religion because they had so much of it.' They liked and kept it. There are scenes from the life of a family a generation ago, letters from a soldier of World War I, and notes on happenings in more recent times in peace and war. A warm and cheering narrative."]

An Explanatory Statement

The smallness of this issue—sixteen pages—finds its explanation partly in the fact that relatively little happened in connection with the last General Assembly calling for comment but more particularly to the paper shortage. In view of the latter consideration we had to choose between a regular sized issue and distributing relatively few free copies and an issue of this size and sending it to a much larger number of persons. It will be seen that we decided in favor of the latter plan.

The free copies which are being sent to many, as was the case last year, are sent at the expense of the lay members of the Presbyterian Survey and Defense Committee.

PROPHECY AND THE CHURCH

By

OSWALD T. ALLIS

CHAPTER TITLES

1. Millenarianism and Dispensationalism
2. Important Principles of Dispensational Interpretation
3. The Kingdom and the Church
4. Paul's Doctrine of the Church
5. Old Testament Prophecies Concerning the Kingdom
6. Prophecies Applied in the New Testament to the Church
7. The Coming of the Lord
8. The Second Advent Parenthesis and Pretribulationism
9. The Jewish Remnant
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"The most thorough analysis and criticism of 'Dispensationalism' that has thus far appeared"—*Lutheran Standard*.

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The request of James Clarke & Co. of London for permission to publish an English edition of this book has been granted.

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PRE-PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

The New Modernism

By
CORNELIUS VAN TIL

This volume will have as its sub-title "An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner." It will deal with all their outstanding works in such a way as to supply a unified picture of *The Theology of Crisis* movement as a whole. It will pay large attention to modern epistemological debate, as indicated by the terms Criticism, Dialecticism and Existentialism, in as far as it has influenced the Crisis Theologians. It will maintain that those who accept the main tenets of the Crisis Theologians are logically bound to reject the central affirmations of historic Christianity. It is a summons to all those who value historic Christianity, and particularly to those who hold the Reformed Faith, to repudiate *The Theology of Crisis* as essentially modern as over against an essentially orthodox theology.

Dr. Van Til who is Professor of Apologetics in Westminster Theological Seminary is widely recognized as a philosopher-theologian of the first rank. He is joint editor of *Philosophia Reformata* and a contributor to the *Evangelical Quarterly* (London) as well as the *Westminster Theological Journal*. In 1938 he was appointed Professor *honoris causa* of the University of Debrecen, Hungary. It is safe to say that this volume will contain the most searching critique to which *The Theology of Crisis* has been subjected in any language. Permission to print an English edition has already been granted. It will contain more than 400 pages and the price will be \$3.75 per copy.

Christianity Rightly So Called

By
SAMUEL G. CRAIG

CHAPTER TITLES

1. Definitions of Christianity
2. Christianity and History
3. The Essential Content of Christianity
4. Christianity and the Supernatural
5. Christianity, Facts and Doctrines
6. Objective and Subjective Christianity
7. Christianity and Conduct
8. Christianity and the Bible
9. Deformations and Falsifications of Christianity
10. The Truth and Finality of Christianity

"The aim of this book," Dr. Craig will say in his Foreword, "is to distinguish between Christianity and its counterfeits in a manner understandable by the man in the pew as well as the man in the pulpit. Its purpose is exposition, not defense, and exposition only in as far as needed to make clear what Christianity rightly so called is in distinction from what is wrongly so called. While I have tried to write objectively I have made no attempt to represent myself as neutral in the conflict for and against Christianity as I understand it." Approximately 250 pages. Price \$2.00 per copy.

The publication of these books, more particularly Dr. Van Til's, has been delayed by the paper shortage. It is expected that both will appear early in 1946.

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