

PROFESSOR J. GRESHAM MACHEN

His Life and Defence of the Bible

by

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CHAPTER IV

WHAT MACHEN DEFENDED IN HIS APOLOGETICS

It will be observed that in this second section there is a transition. In the preceding chapter we have discussed the method of his apologetics, but here we shall take up the contents of his apologetics, or what he especially defended. In this chapter we hope to limit ourselves to three subjects: 1. Machen's defense of the Origin of Paul's Religion; 2. Machen's defense of the Belief of the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth; 3. Machen's defense of other Doctrines. The reason we begin with the first two is because Machen himself singled them out as the main objects of his defense. Undoubtedly his books, "*The Origin of Paul's Religion*," and "*The Virgin Birth*" show us Prof. Machen at his best. From his numerous articles which appeared in the *Princeton Theological Review* and other papers, it appears that these two subjects engaged his primary attention. We shall, therefore, begin with his defense of the Origin of Paul's Religion.

MACHEN'S DEFENSE OF THE SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN OF PAUL'S RELIGION.

The great question here is, what is the origin of Christianity? This question is important because from its answer we learn to know whether Christianity is based upon objective facts or is just a manner of life. In recent years it is the custom to center the question as to how Christianity came into being around Paul. The testimony of Paul is a fixed starting point in this controversy, because all serious historians agree that the major Epistles of Paul are genuine. Machen says we can also approach the problem of the origin of Christianity by going to the Gospels. But here our attention is directed to Paul.

That Paul's influence was great for the spread of Christianity no one can doubt. This can be ascribed to the influence of his life and of his Epistles. So Paul placed his stamp upon subsequent generations. When the pointed question is asked, what was Paul's contribution to this Christian movement, Machen replies, it was for Paul to lay down the great principles upon which the Gentiles were to be admitted into the Christian church. It is true that Jesus' teaching also included the Gentiles, -- for example His great commission, -- but the principles of admission, namely whether they were to be circumcised or not, whether they were to observe the ceremonial laws, etc., were established in the course of God's special revelation through Paul.¹

THE RELIGION OF PAUL. The question arises, what was the religion of Paul? To this Machen triumphantly replies, -- a redemptive religion. It was not founded upon ideas of God, but upon that which had recently happened, namely Jesus' death and resurrection. For Paul, Jesus was a divine Being who existed before His earthly life, lived a human life of suffering upon earth, died upon the Cross for the sins of those upon whom the curse rested, rose again from the dead and is ever present with His church through His Spirit.

Modern historians look upon this differently. The religion of Paul for them was only the deification of a man who had lived but a few years before and had died a shameful death.²

It is admitted that Paul regarded Jesus as the Divine object of his faith. Now the question is, from where did Paul receive this lofty conception of Jesus? How account for this faith of Paul? To this question, four answers are given.³ 1. The Supernaturalistic answer which says: Paul regarded Jesus as Divine, because Jesus was Divine. 2. The "Liberal" answer: Paul's religion is derived from Jesus, but his theology is taken from the categories of his time. Paul was a true child of his time, which considered Jesus as divine, but his religion comes from the historic Jesus. His theology is of no importance, but his religion is permanent. 3. Paul's religion was derived from Judaism. 4. Paul's religion was derived from paganism.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION IN REGARD TO PAUL. In order to answer the question proposed, as to the origin of Paul's religion, much depends upon the source of information. Machen refers to two sources: 1. Paul's major Epistles, which are accepted as genuine by the modern scholars; 2. The Book of Acts. In regard to the book of Acts, there is some question as to

1 Cf. Orig. of Paul's Rel., 1936, p. 21.

2 Cf. Holtzmann - quotation by M. in Origin. of P's Rel., p. 22.

3 We refer the reader to chap. 2, where these four answers are discussed a bit more in detail.

whether it can be regarded as a trustworthy source. The question centers around its authorship. Especially the Tübingen School asserts that it could not have been written by Luke, the companion of Paul.⁴ On the other hand, an eminent scholar as von Harnack says that it was written by Luke, the companion of Paul. Harnack comes to this conclusion because of the overwhelming evidences that point to that conclusion. Machen desires to establish a fixed starting point in his contention over against the modern scholars, that Paul's religion is based upon the death and resurrection of Jesus. The major Epistles are accepted as genuine, therefore concerning these there is no debate, but concerning the book of Acts there still exists some doubt. Therefore, Machen first takes up the objections raised against the Book of Acts.⁵

The main objection to the Lucan authorship of Acts is based upon the contradiction which is thought to exist between the Book of Acts and the major Epistles of Paul. The Epistles of Paul are regarded as a recognized authority, and, therefore, if there is a contradiction the Lucan authorship of the Book of Acts must be discarded. For a detailed account of these objections and Machen's answers, we refer you to his book, page 71ff. Only a very brief and, of course, incomplete summary can be given here. The argument was especially developed by Baur and Zeller and their associates of the "Tübingen School." Baur maintains that there was originally a conflict between Paul and the original apostles, which he especially thinks to find in the Epistles of Galatians and Corinthians, which emphasize the complete independence of Paul with reference to the pillars of the Jerusalem church, and his continued opposition to the efforts of Jewish Christians to bring the Gentiles into subjection to the Jewish law -- efforts which must have been supported to some extent by the original apostles.⁶ This conflict continued till about the middle of the second century according to Baur. Finally a compromise was made, and the book of Acts especially shows that now the two parties, viz. of Paul and of the original Apostles together with the Jerusalem church, were again at peace. It is true that the criticism of Baur and Zeller is no longer accepted as a whole, but it is still influential, since the comparison between Acts and Galatians especially, which concerns the Apostolic Council of Acts 15, is still often thought to be unfavorable for Acts.

Does a comparison between Acts and the Pauline epistles show disagreement between them? We do not deem it necessary to go into this question in detail, partly because the influence of the Tübingen School is disappearing rapidly and also because it is not directly connected with our subject. Machen's apologetic attack upon the Tübingen position in regard to the book of Acts is convincing. For a more detailed discussion of this

4 Cf. Chap. II.

5 Cf. *idem*, p. 34.

6 Cf. *idem*, p. 37, 38.

question, we refer you to Machen's *Origin of Paul's Religion*, page 71ff. Here we are shown in detail how different attempts have been made to prove the supposed disagreement between the book of Acts and Paul's so-called accepted Epistles. Upon careful scientific grounds, we are shown that all of these attempts at proving disagreement between them have utterly failed.

THE THREE HYPOTHESES AS TO THE ORIGIN OF PAUL'S RELIGION.

THE LIBERAL HYPOTHESIS. According to this hypothesis the religion of Paul is derived from the liberal Jesus, but his theology is expressed in the categories which were used at that time. His theology therefore has nothing to do with the historical Christ. Paul's theology is separated from the historical Christ. Paul, according to this theory, "was an unauthorised intruder whose thought and influence must be eliminated before we can secure a just view of Jesus and a true appreciation of His religion."⁷ According to the naturalistic account, Jesus was a great and good man who came after His death to be regarded as divine. Before His death He was looked upon as man. The transition was mainly brought about by Paul. Machen refutes this with the following arguments: 1. Paul regarded himself to be a disciple of Jesus, and based his whole life upon what Christ had done. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." It is without question that this Christ is the Jesus of Nazareth. "Thus the testimony of Paul is plain. He regarded Christ as Lord and Master, and he identifies the Christ fully with the Jesus Who had lived but a few years before. This testimony must be faced and invalidated by those who would find the origin of Paul's religion elsewhere than in Jesus of Nazareth."⁸ Machen also refers to 1 Cor. 2:12 where Paul speaks of the Lord of Glory being crucified; and to Phil. 2:10-11 where the Lord of Glory lived the life of a servant on earth, and Jesus, the man Who had recently lived in Palestine, was to be worshipped by all in Heaven and on earth.⁹ Thus Machen proves that Paul was a disciple of the historical Christ.

Machen proves in the second place that Paul's religion is derived from Jesus by stating that Paul's friends regarded him to be a disciple of Jesus. Baur was one of the outstanding advocates of the view that Paul and the friends of Jesus were in disagreement. In the foregoing material we have seen that Machen refutes this. Besides that already mentioned, appeal is also made to Gal. 2:2 and 6 where James, Peter and John are called "those who seemed," and in verse 6 "those who seem to be something." In Gal. 2:9 the

⁷ Cambridge Biblical Essays, p. 331.

⁸ The Origin of Paul's Religion, 1936, p. 18.

⁹ Idem, p. 118.

same persons are spoken of as "those who seem to be pillars." In reply to this, Machen admits that there is indignation expressed by Paul in these words, but the indignation is directed against the Judaisers who falsely appeal to them. "It must be remembered that what Paul in Gal. 2:1-10 desires most of all to prevent is the impression that he is appealing to the Jerusalem apostles as to a higher instance. He is not basing the authority of his preaching upon any authorization that the apostles gave him; he is not saying that he has a right to be heard because those who were the pillars of the church endorsed his message."¹⁰ Even if the original apostles should have differed from Paul in regard to questions pertaining to the Mosaic law and the Heathen converts, it is more than plain that there was never a hint of any difference of opinion between them concerning the person of Christ. "The really astounding fact, which emerges from all discussion of the apostolic age, is that the Pauline conception of the person of Christ, whatever may be said of the Pauline doctrine of Gentile freedom, was never criticized by the original apostles. Indeed, as far as can be seen, it was never criticized even by the Judaisers themselves."¹¹

Machen further states that Paul's religion was derived from Jesus because Paul had abundant opportunity to receive information concerning Jesus' life.¹² This is shown by stating: 1. that Paul spent his youth in Jerusalem. 2. Paul was in Jerusalem at the time of the persecution and therefore knew of Jesus. 3. Paul was with the disciples in Damascus. 4. Paul spent 15 days with Peter and James in Jerusalem three years after his conversion. 5. Paul associated with Barnabas who according to Acts was a member of the primitive Jerusalem church. 6. Paul associated with John Mark who certainly came from the Jerusalem church; for the house of his mother is mentioned as a meeting-place for the Jerusalem disciples in the account of the escape of Peter from prison in Acts 12:1-17. This Mark was often in company of Paul as can be seen from Col. 4:10 and Philemon 24. 7. The conference between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders of Gal. 2:1-10, whether it be the same as the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 or not, naturally gave Paul knowledge of Jesus. 8. According to the book of Acts, Paul was accompanied by Silas, who was called Silvanus in his Epistles. He also came from the Jerusalem church, as we read in Acts 15:27. 9. Andronicus and Junas, who are mentioned in Rom. 16:7 as having been "in Christ" before Paul, were most certainly primitive disciples.

Another proof that Paul's religion was derived from Jesus, Machen finds in the agreement existing between Paul and Jesus which extends even to those elements in the Gospel account of Jesus which are accepted by the modern critics. Machen here refers to the same conceptions of both

¹⁰ Idem, p. 131.

¹¹ Idem, p. 129.

¹² Cf. idem, p. 137.

concerning the Kingdom of God, the Fatherhood of God, and the doctrine of Grace.¹³ Finally Prof. Machen points us to the fact that in the very center of Paul's life, religion and theology are blended together. The great theological passages such as 2 Cor. 5, Gal. 2, Rom. 8, reveal the very center of Paul's life. Not the details of Jesus' life therefore, but the redemptive acts of death and resurrection are at the very center of Paul's religion.

THE JEWISH DERIVATION HYPOTHESIS. Now the question arises, was Paul's religion derived from contemporary Judaism? This view was advocated by Wrede and Bruckner.¹⁴ It maintains that Paul's conception of the heavenly Christ is derived from the pre-Christian Jewish conception of the Messiah. The Pauline conception of Christ is, therefore, firmly in Paul's mind long before his conversion. All that was necessary was the identification of that Christ, whom Paul had believed in for a long time, with Jesus of Nazareth. Thus Paul's conversion did not bring any change in Paul's Christology.

Two forms of the Jewish Messianic expectation has generally been distinguished: the one is that the Messiah was to be the earthly king of David's line; the other is that the Messiah was to be a heavenly being already existing in heaven. This twofold line of thought is claimed to be found in the Jewish Apocalyptic literature, especially in the "Similitudes" of 1 Enoch, 4 Esra, and in II Baruch. To this Machen replies: Even if it is evident that the Messianic Jewish expectation was both transcendent and earthly, it must first of all be remembered that these features are also found in the canonical Books of the Old Testament. Attention is especially called to Isa. 9 and 11 where the Messiah appears clearly as a supernatural person. If, therefore, Paul before his conversion believed in the existence of a heavenly supernatural Messiah, he was faithful to the Old Testament. Machen however seriously questions whether the pre-Christian notion of the Messiah was really the source of Paul's Christology in his Epistles. It may be questioned whether Paul before the conversion held the apocalyptic view of the Messiah or was even especially interested in the Messianic hope. In all of Paul's letters there is not the least evidence of any literary dependence upon the apocalyptic literature of the Jews in regard to Christology. Paul never uses titles such as "Son of Man," "Elect One," or "Righteous One." On the other hand it must also be admitted that the terminology which Paul does use is not found in the Jewish Apocalypses.

But even if Paul before his conversion believed in the apocalyptic Messiah, then still his Christology is unexplained. In the first place, in the apocalyptic Messianic conception there is a difference from Paul's conception of Christ; because the doctrine of an activity of the Messiah in creation, like that

13 Idem, p. 161ff.

14 Cf. idem, p. 173.

which appears in 1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:16 is not found in the Apocalypses. In it the Messiah was conceived of as pre-existent but not as with God in creation. In the second place, there is no trace of a warm personal relationship which exists between the believer and the Pauline Christ. The heavenly Messiah of the Apocalypses is an unapproachable being; whereas the risen Christ of Paul is a person Whom Paul loved and had fellowship with. The third difference between the Pauline Christ and the apocalyptic Messiah concerns the very center of the Pauline Christology, viz. Christ's Deity. The deity of the Messiah is never found in the Apocalypses, but it does run like a thread through all Paul's Epistles.

Windisch¹⁵ admits that the comparison fails. He, therefore, tries to find Paul's Christology in the Jewish doctrine of "Wisdom." In Proverbs 7 "Wisdom" is celebrated in lofty terms and is said to have existed before the creation of the world. Machen's answer is that "Wisdom" is here boldly personified in a poetic way. But she is not regarded as a real person separated from God. Windisch believes that the figure "Wisdom" will supply the two lacking elements in the Pauline Christology which are not found in the Jewish Apocalypses, viz.: "wisdom," according to the Jewish belief, like Paul's Christ, is active in creation; in the second place "Wisdom" in Proverbs 8 is represented as entering into the wise man and in Eccl. the wise man is the mouthpiece of "Wisdom." Therefore, Windisch believes that he has found the origin of Paul's relationship to Christ. Windisch also appeals to a passage in 1 Enoch 49:5 where the spirit of Wisdom dwells in the "elect One." This is then compared with 1 Cor. 1:24 and 30 where Christ crucified is called the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, and to have become to the believer Wisdom, Justification, Sanctification and Redemption.

Machen answers that such a conclusion is entirely unwarranted. "The inclusion of 'Wisdom' in a considerable list of what the Son of Man possesses or of what Christ means to the believer, far from proving that 1 Enoch or Paul identified the Messiah with the hypostasized Wisdom, rather proves, if proof be necessary, that they did not make the identification."¹⁶ So the figure of "Wisdom" in the Jewish literature and the Pauline Christ belong to an entirely different circle of ideas. Windisch's theory could only hold true if Paul had that conception of Wisdom before his conversion. Machen seriously doubts whether the pre-Christian Messiah was ever identified with Wisdom in the Jewish mind. Upon the affirmative answer to this question depends the whole theory of Windisch.

THE PAGAN DERIVATION HYPOTHESIS. Can the origin of Paul's religion be considered as a product of the syncretistic pagan religions of the Hellenistic

¹⁵ See footnote of Machen in idem p. 199.

¹⁶ Idem, p. 203.

age? This hypothesis is often connected with the one just discussed. So for example, Bruckner maintains that Paul's Christology is based upon the Jewish conceptions of the Messiah, and this Jewish Messianic expectation is again based upon a wide-spread pagan myth of a dying and rising saviour-god.¹⁷ So Bruckner agrees with the modern school that Paul's religion is based upon paganism, even though it be indirectly. On the other hand most of those who find direct connection between Paul's Christology and paganism are willing to admit important influences upon Paul from Jewish Messianic expectations. The exact division between the Jewish derivation hypothesis and the pagan derivation hypothesis is therefore very difficult.

MACHEN'S ANSWER TO THE PAGAN DERIVATION HYPOTHESIS. In the first place we are told that this view faces an obvious difficulty in that the sources of information about these pagan religions are much later than Paul. For example, the words of Firmicus Maternus, "be of good courage, ye initiates, since the god is saved; for to us there shall be salvation out of trouble."¹⁸ Here a connection is sought between the resurrection of the god and the salvation of the believers, -- or with Paul's "dying and rising with Christ," but it is of the 4th Century A.D.

"Three fundamental elements in Paul's religion have been derived from Graeco-oriental syncretism: First, the complex of ideas connected with the obtaining of salvation; Second, the sacraments; Third, the Christology and the work of Christ in redemption."¹⁹

Before refuting these three phases of the hypothesis, Machen calls our attention to two facts: (1) it has not been proven that these pagan religions to which claim is made existed in this form at the time of Paul; (2) it is difficult to see how any pagan influence could have entered into Paul's life because Paul was a Pharisee with strong monotheistic conceptions and educated at the feet of Gamaliel. Machen then refutes the three above mentioned contentions.

In regard to the first one, viz., that the complex of ideas connected with the obtaining of salvation in Paul is derived from Paganism, we are told that it is connected with the name of R. Reitzenstein.²⁰ He claims that Paul uses terms which are derived from Hellenistic mystical religions and with these terms went ideas. Therefore Paul's vocabulary is derived from it. In the mystical religion of Paul's day Reitzenstein says "Gnosis" did not mean knowledge acquired by a process of investigation or reasoning but knowledge that came by immediate revelation from God. This immediate

17 See footnote of Machen in idem, p. 211.

18 See idem, p. 237.

19 Idem, p. 262.

20 See footnote, idem, p. 262.

revelation is given in the mystery cults, by mystic vision which formed a part of the experience of the initiation. The man who received such a "Gnosis" was far above other people in that he was deified. This he also claims to find with Paul. Also according to Paul, "Gnosis" is a gift of God and produced by the divine spirit. It is true that Paul avoids the term of deification but this must be ascribed to the Jewish habit of thought.

Machen's answer to this is very convincing. "But this conclusion is reached only by doing violence to the plain meaning of the Epistles. 'Gnosis' in the early church (including Paul) as von Harnack well observes²¹ is not a technical term . . . In 1 Cor. 12:8 it appears not by itself, but along with many other spiritual gifts of widely diverse nature. Gnosis, therefore, does not stand in that position of prominence which it ought to occupy if Reitzenstein's theory were correct."²² We need not go to the mystery religions to explain the nature and importance of Gnosis with Paul, we find it in the Old Testament. Here already it is far more than an intellectual achievement, -- it is a gift of God and involves the entire emotional nature.

Reitzenstein also claims to find similarity between Paul and pagan religion in Paul's use of the word "Spirit." So for example in 1 Cor. 2:14-15 the "spiritual" man is contrasted with the "psychic" man. The spiritual man, it is claimed, has the spirit of God, and the psychic man has only the human soul. The spiritual man, according to Reitzenstein, has no soul, but has the divine spirit according to Paul.²³ To this Machen replies that this is entirely unpauline since Paul clearly teaches that the human soul continues to exist even after the divine spirit has entered it. "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God," Rom. 8:16. Here "our spirit," says Machen, clearly means "our soul" and is expressly distinguished from the divine Spirit.

HYPOTHESIS THAT PAUL'S "IDEAS" ARE DERIVED FROM PAGANISM. But if the terminology of Paul is not derived from the terminology of the mystery religions, Bousset says, his fundamental ideas certainly must be traced to paganism. It is claimed that the entire outlook of Paul, regardless of language used, was derived from the mystical piety of the Hellenistic age. From here Paul received his pessimistic estimate of human nature which lies at the very foundation of his teaching. To this Machen answers: "the Hellenistic age, like Paul, recognized the need of redemption; Salvation, it was believed, could not be attained by unaided human resources, but was a gift of higher powers . . . both Paulinism and the Hellenistic mystery religions were religions of redemption. But there have been many religions of redemption, in many ages and among many people, which have been

21 See Machen's footnote, idem, p. 263.

22 Idem, p. 263.

23 See Machen's footnote, idem, p. 266.

entirely independent of one another."²⁴

It is also claimed by the critics that if dependence on the part of Paul cannot be proved from the doctrine of depravity as such, it certainly does appear in the form in which the doctrine appears, because the Pauline usage of the term "flesh" denotes that in which evil resides, and agrees with the Greek notion of the evil of matter, which appears in the Orphic sects and in Plato and his successors. According to Plato the body is evil because it is material.

Against this contention Machen comes with a very clear cut refutation. We are first told that Paulinism is quite different from the dualism of the Hellenistic age in that evil with Paul does not reside in matter as such. In the second place there is a far more fundamental difference between Paul and paganism as to the so called pessimistic view of man. Paul views human depravity in its ethical character. In the Hellenistic age the consciousness of need and inadequacy was not clearly connected with right or wrong; in Paul inadequacy is essentially consciousness of sin.

There is also no similarity between Paul and paganism when it comes to the means of redemption. A dependency upon this point is necessary to explain the origin of Paul's religion in this way. Even the longing for redemption was different in the mystery religions from that of Paul. In the mystery religions it is man-centric; with Paul it is theo-centric.

This difference is connected with another significant fact, viz. Paul's "forensic" view of salvation. Salvation according to Paul not only means to be saved from the power of sin but also from its guilt. The word "justify" does appear in the hermetic corpus, -- but as Reitzenstein himself observes, it there means "to make righteous" and not "to declare righteous." Reitzenstein however adds that the same meaning is found in Rom. 6:7. Machen shows by overwhelming evidence that this interpretation is erroneous.

HYPOTHESIS THAT PAUL'S VIEW OF THE SACRAMENTS WAS DERIVED FROM THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS. We are told that baptism and the Lord's supper of Paul are influenced by the mystery religions. This contention depends partly upon the supposed nature of these sacraments and partly upon the mere fact of the presence of sacraments in the religion of Paul. In regard to the nature of the sacraments, it is maintained that with the mystery religions there was also an absolution of one kind or another and some sort of partaking of sacred food. The contention is that with Paul as well as with the mystery religions, the sacraments themselves convey blessings. To this

²⁴ Idem, p. 274.

Machen correctly replies that this is a misconception of Paul's doctrine of the sacraments, since salvation with Paul depended upon the simple acceptance of the offer contained in the message of the Cross and not upon the use of the sacraments apart from faith.

HYPOTHESIS THAT "THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST" WITH PAUL IS DERIVED FROM THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS. This view is supported by Bousset and many contemporary scholars. According to Bousset the primitive Christians looked upon Jesus as the Son of Man, the mysterious person mentioned in the Jewish Apocalypses who would finally come upon the clouds and usher in the Kingdom of God. That belief, according to Bousset, did not involve Jesus' Lordship. This title was first applied to Jesus by the Christians of Antioch and its community and is derived from the pagan gods of the mystery religions.

Machen answers that there are special indications which point to the fact that the title "Lord" was already present at Jerusalem. One is found in Gal. 1:19 where Paul speaks of "James, the brother of the Lord." This is in connection with a visit to Jerusalem 3 years after his conversion. The natural inference is that "the brother of the Lord" was a designation applied to James in Jerusalem. This indicates that the title "Lord" was already current in the Jerusalem church. Reference is also made to 1 Cor. 16:22 where we read "Maranatha" which is Aramaic and means "the Lord cometh." Why was the Aramaic word used in a Greek letter? The natural supposition is that it was so used in the Aramaic speaking Jerusalem church, and that Jesus was designated as "Lord" in Palestine.

The question now may be asked: Why was Jesus called Lord if the term is not derived from the Hellenistic cults? To this Machen replies that this term undoubtedly is derived from the Greek Old Testament, since the LXX uses the term "Lord" to translate the "Jahwe" of the Hebrew text. This is important because Christianity was first established among the readers of the LXX.

HYPOTHESIS CONCERNING JESUS' DEATH IN PAUL. Bousset says that Paul's interpretation of Jesus' death was derived from contemporary pagan religion, since certain Hellenistic gods, Attis, Adonis and Osiris, are represented first as dying and then as being resuscitated. The reason may be that all were vegetation-gods whose death and resuscitation represented the dying of the vegetation in autumn and its renewal in spring. It is said that the parallel between this and Jesus is striking since Paul represents Jesus as dying and coming back to life again.

Against this conception already J. Weiss, who otherwise is in sympathy with

the school of comparative religion, has applied 1 Cor. 1:23 where it is said that Christ's crucifixion was "to the Gentiles foolishness." This proves that the Gentiles were not so familiar with the conception of a dying god, as Bruckner assumes, because then the Cross would not have been foolishness to them.

Machen further urges that even though the early prevalence of the heathen conception of a dying god were established, then yet the dependence of Paul is unproven. For Paul's conception is totally different. One difference is very obvious; because the Pauline Christ died voluntarily and for the sake of men. Paul says "he loved me and gave Himself for me." The pagan gods on the other hand are overtaken by fate. Another difference is, -- the death and resurrection of the pagan gods is a matter of the cult, whereas the death and resurrection of Christ is a fact of history. The story of Attis, for example, is told in different ways and the Attis worshippers are not at all concerned about establishing an authentic account of the death and resurrection of the god.

Finally Machen concludes, -- "Here lies the profoundest difference between Paul and contemporary religion. Paulinism was not a philosophy; . . . on the contrary it was an account of something that had happened . . . And the facts could be established by adequate testimony. The eyewitnesses could be questioned, and Paul appeals to the eyewitnesses in detail. The single passage, 1 Cor. 15:1-8, is sufficient to place a stupendous gulf between the Pauline Christ and the pagan saviour-gods."²⁵ Machen concludes by stating that the Pauline Christology was not derived from the liberal Jesus, nor from Judaism or paganism, but from Christ Himself. "It was founded upon the historical Jesus." But the historical Jesus upon whom it was founded was not the Jesus of modern reconstruction, but the Jesus of the whole New Testament and of Christian Faith; not a teacher who survived only in the memory of his disciples, but the Saviour Who after His redeeming work was done still lived and could still be loved."²⁶

MACHEN'S DEFENSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

The historic Christian church always accepted the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. The belief that Jesus was born without a human father, being conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary was always present in the church. Machen first considers the origin of this belief. Only two kinds of explanation are possible. In the first place, the belief can be

²⁵ Idem, p. 316.

²⁶ Idem, p. 317.

explained as being based upon fact, viz. that Jesus was born of a virgin. Or in the second place, it may be held that the belief arose in some other way and is not based upon fact but upon an error. Machen considers it his task to examine these two explanations in detail. He divides this defense of the Virgin Birth in two sections. In the first place he deals with the hypothesis that the belief in the Virgin Birth is founded upon fact. In the second place he deals with the hypothesis that the belief in the Virgin Birth is founded upon an error.

I. BELIEF IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH BASED UPON FACT.

Machen begins here by showing that this belief was already firmly established in the church at the close of the second century. One of the earliest documents which contains this belief is the Apostolicum (The Apostles' Creed). The form of it was produced in Gaul in the 5th and 6th centuries. But this form was based upon an old Roman baptismal confession which was used in the church in Rome. The use of the creed by Tertullian and Irenaeus pushes the date back to the middle of the 2nd century. At this time, therefore, the belief in the Virgin Birth was contained in the creed of the Roman church and belief in it was confessed by every convert before baptism. This fact is important because: 1. No strange and new doctrines could be incorporated in such a creed. 2. The central place held by the Roman church makes it probable that what was believed by the Roman church was also believed by the church in general. 3. The character of the creed shows only the essentials of Christ, -- viz. the Virgin Birth, suffering, death, etc. were mentioned. It was, therefore, already there regarded as one of the essential facts of Christ.

Machen appeals to other early witnesses for this belief, viz. that of Justin Martyr of about the middle of the 2nd century. He regarded the Virgin Birth to be fundamental and defended it against the Jewish and pagan objections. Mention is also made of Aristides who in his "Apology" dated about 140 A.D. regarded the belief in the Virgin Birth as significant. Also Ignatius who was martyred not later than 117 A.D. regarded this fact as being important.²⁷

THE BIRTH NARRATIVE AN ORIGINAL PART OF LUKE. The Virgin Birth is attested in two of the New Testament books, Luke and Matthew. The value which is placed upon the testimony of Luke of course depends upon the view which one holds of this Gospel. Obviously we cannot discuss the critical questions here in detail. Only it must be remembered that there is an increasing tendency among scholars of widely different opinion to accept

²⁷ See "The Virgin Birth," 1930, p. 6.

the traditional view that both Luke's Gospel and Acts were written by Luke the physician, the companion of Paul. Because of the overwhelming literary evidence supporting this view, such scholars as Prof. von Harnack of Berlin, Prof. C. C. Torrey of Yale and Prof. Eduard Meyer, despite their rejection of the whole supernatural contents of the book, accept the traditional view of the authorship.

If the third Gospel was really written by Luke, then its testimony concerning the birth of Jesus and other events which it records of Palestine must surely be received with the greatest possible respect. If Luke-Acts was actually written by Luke, the companion of Paul who includes himself in the "we-sections" of Acts, then at every point where the "we" occurs the author was present himself. We can so trace the movements and relationships of the author. From this we observe that Luke was with Silas who came originally from the Jerusalem church. The "we" also brings the author in contact with James the brother of the Lord, who was also connected with the Jerusalem church according to Acts 21:18. Moreover Luke was in Palestine at the beginning of the 2 years which Paul spent in prison at Caesarea, and at the end of the 2 years' imprisonment he is again in Palestine, because he then sails with Paul to Rome. It is therefore plain from these "we sections" that the author spent much of his time in Palestine where he had abundant opportunity to obtain information about Jesus' Birth.

The Virgin Birth narrative is found in the first two chapters of the Gospel. The question has been raised by the modernist whether these first two chapters belong to the original gospel of Luke. In answer to this Machen says that the hand of the author is very clearly evident in this section. The fact that Luke is the author of the first two chapters has been convincingly established by many eminent scholars. In 1816 Gersdorf, after careful examination of this section, discovered that a great number of Lucan words and usages, -- that is, words and usages only found in Luke's writing and not in other New Testament Books, -- are contained in this section. In later years Zimmermann and Harnack, after engaging in a similar process, came to the same conclusion. The Lucan authorship of the birth narrative is also established by the fact that there is a complete unanimity among all the witnesses to the text in favor of including Luke 1:5-2:52 in the original third Gospel. The section is included in the earliest gospel harmony, Tatian's Diatessaron of the 2nd century; it is definitively attested to by the Muratori canon, and it is found in all the Greek MSS of the Gospels and in all the versions.

Against this conclusion especially Hilgenfeld has brought an objection. He claims that the statement of Acts 1:1 where we read, -- "the former treatise have I made O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus began to do

and to teach," -- which undoubtedly refers to the Gospel, excludes the birth narrative, because the things which Jesus began to do and to teach do not belong to the birth record. He claims that Luke's gospel begins with Chapter 3:21 where we read of Jesus' baptism and of the fact that Jesus "began to teach." He finds support for this view in Acts 1:22; 10:23 f.; 13:23 f. These passages, it is said, establish the baptism of Jesus as "the beginning" in the life of Jesus and thus as the beginning of the things Jesus began to do and to teach which is mentioned in Acts 1:1. To this Machen replies that the baptism of Jesus truly did mark a beginning in His Messianic work because it designated his entrance upon His public ministry. But the words used in Acts 1:1 only refer to the main contents of the gospel. It should also be observed that in Acts 1:1 no starting point in the works and deeds of Jesus are mentioned.

THE PALESTINIAN CHARACTER OF THE BIRTH NARRATIVE. Machen next proves that this Lucan birth record has distinctively Palestinian characteristics. He does this for two reasons: 1. Because according to the narrative these events took place in Palestine, and in this way the authenticity of the narrative is established. 2. Because the higher critics have desperately attempted to show that this birth narrative is of pagan origin. By establishing its Palestinian character, Machen forces the higher critics to show how a pagan idea could be inserted in such a strikingly Jewish and Palestinian record.

The following arguments prove the Jewish nature of the narrative: 1. A thorough-going "parataxis" which prevails throughout the narrative. We have here in the most part short independent sentences, generally connected with the conjunction "and". For example, "there was a priest by the name of Zacharias and his wife . . ." This is strikingly Jewish. 2. A second Hebrew characteristic is seen in the thorough-going use of parallelism which is so characteristic of Hebrew style and is often found in Hebrew poetry. This especially appears in the hymns of Mary and Zacharias. 3. The Semitic character is also evident from the vocabulary and the details of the phraseology. The influence of the Hebrew and the Aramaic appears throughout the narrative. 4. And finally the Semitic character of the narrative can also be seen in the thought-content. The first two chapters of Luke are decidedly pre-Christian in thought and in spirit. Here we have a bit of Old Testament incorporated in the New Testament.

THE HYMNS OF LUKE 1. Harnack claims that these hymns were originally composed by Luke himself, because the whole structure of the Magnificat as well as of the Benedictus reveals Gentile authorship. To this Machen answers that Harnack must, in order to prove the Lucan authorship, exhibit by concrete example (a) the likeness of these hymns to undisputed works

of Luke, (b) their unlikeness to non-Lucan hymns. This Harnack is unable to do. Machen then proves conclusively that Luke could not have composed these hymns. 1. There is in the first place a striking parallel between the sentence-structure of the "Psalms of Solomon" which is admitted to be Semitic and the Hymns. Here we therefore have an example of Semitic Poetry, and it disproves what Harnack maintains, viz. that it is contrasted with Semitic poetry. 2. The parallelism between the Magnificat and the Song of Hannah in the Old Testament also strikingly shows that this song is of a Hebrew nature. 3. The contents of the hymns also bear out the same fact. There is nothing in the hymns which can be construed as an allusion to Christian doctrine or later details of Jesus' life. This would certainly have been the case, had the hymns been composed after the resurrection. From this Machen concludes that Mary and Zacharias must have been the authors.

The fact that the birth narrative is distinctly Palestinian in character is of great importance. It shows that the Virgin Birth was narrated not merely in Gentile Christian documents, but also in the country which was the scene of the narrated event. It is also important because many modern scholars who reject the fact of the Virgin Birth suppose that this whole idea was derived from pagan sources. But if that hypothesis be accepted the question immediately arises how such a pagan idea come to be attested by the most Jewish and Palestinian portion of the New Testament. The Palestinian Judaism was passionately opposed to all pagan influences. How then could such a pagan idea find a place in such a narrative? "The question is really unanswerable; and in order to answer it, many modern scholars have had recourse to a truly desperate expedient -- they have maintained that the Virgin Birth was not originally contained in the Palestinian narrative found in the first two chapters of Luke, but has been inserted later into that narrative by interpolation."²⁸ This interpolation hypothesis has been held in two forms: (a) the more radical form asserts that the Virgin Birth was interpolated into the completed Gospel, and (b) a more cautious form states that although the words attesting the Virgin Birth formed an original part of the Third Gospel, they did not form an original part of the Palestinian source which Luke was using in the first two chapters but were interpolated by Luke into this source which he closely follows.

THE INTERPOLATION THEORY. Machen would look upon this Interpolation Theory from two points of view: 1. "The first point of view concerns the sense in which the supposed interpolation is to be called an interpolation. A threefold division is here possible. In the first place, the interpolation may be regarded as an interpolation into the completed Gospel. . . . In the second place, the interpolation may be regarded as an interpolation made

²⁸ The Bible Today, Dec. 1924. Art. "The Virgin Birth" by Machen, p. 76.

by the author of the Gospel himself into a Jewish Christian source which elsewhere he is following closely . . . In the third place, the interpolation may be regarded as an interpolation made by the author himself, not into a source, but into the completed Gospel . . .

The second point of view in which a classification is possible concerns the extent of the supposed interpolation. Whether the interpolation is to be regarded as an interpolation into the completed Gospel by a scribe, or into the source by the author of the Gospel, or into the completed Gospel by the author of the Gospel, how much is to be regarded as interpolated?"²⁹ In regard to this there are especially three views. The earliest and most common view states that verses 14 and 15 of Ch. 1 are interpolated. This view was first advanced by Hillmann in 1891. It has since been advocated by Usener, Harnack, Zimmermann, Schmiedel, Pfeleiderer, Conybeare, Loisy, etc. A second view was advanced by Kattenbusch and defended by Weinel. It says that only the words "seeing I know not a man" in Luke 1:34 are to be eliminated. A third view states that not only verses 34 and 35 but also verses 36 and 37 were interpolated.

TWO ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT THE INTERPOLATION THEORY. The first argument that has been adduced to bolster up this interpolation theory is of a general character. It states that the rest of the birth narrative runs very smoothly after Luke 1:34-35 are eliminated. It is perfectly compatible with a birth of Jesus simply as a son of Joseph and Mary. The second argument used to support the interpolation theory is to the effect that the bulk of the narrative does not contain it and is even contrary to it. Three kinds of arguments are used in favor of this: 1. It is said that the narrative traces the Davidic descent of Jesus through Joseph and not through Mary, -- therefore, Joseph was regarded as the father. 2. Joseph is actually spoken of in several places as the father of Jesus, and Joseph and Mary are called His "parents." 3. There is attributed to Mary in certain places a lack of comprehension, which it is said it would be unnatural if she knew her son was conceived by the Holy Ghost.³⁰

With regard to the first argument, viz. that the rest of the narrative is perfectly smooth and easy after Luke 1:34-35 are eliminated, Machen replies by first pointing to Luke 1:26 where we read, "and in the 6th month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a Virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the name of the Virgin was Mary." Here Mary is twice called "Virgin", therefore also this verse implies the supernatural birth. In the second place, reference is made by Machen to Luke 2:5, "to be enrolled

29 The Virgin Birth of Christ, 1930, p. 119-120.

30 Cf. idem, p. 135.

with Mary who was betrothed to him, being great with child." Also this implies the Virgin Birth because otherwise the phrase "being great with child" would certainly be derogatory to Mary's honor; but this cannot be intended here. He also refers to Luke 3:23, -- "being as was supposed, the Son of Joseph." This implies that Jesus was not really the son of Joseph. From these above facts it is plain that the whole narrative presupposes the Virgin Birth.

Concerning the second argument, which claims that the bulk of the narrative does not contain the Virgin Birth, Machen first answers the objection raised against it because of the Davidic descent of Jesus through Joseph and not through Mary. This objection depends upon the interpretation of Luke 1:27. Do the words "of the house of David" refer to Joseph or to Mary? Machen believes they refer to Joseph. Now how could the Davidic descent be traced through Joseph if Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus? In answer to this Machen calls attention to the fact that the Jews looked upon the adopted fatherhood far more realistically than we do. Reference is here made to the Levirate marriage. According to the Old Testament law, when a man died without children his brother could take his wife and raise up an heir for the dead brother. Evidently the son is regarded as belonging to the dead man in a way which is foreign to our ideas. F. C. Burkitt says that the word "beget" in the genealogy of Matthew does not indicate physical paternity, but the transmission of legal heirship. Therefore when this genealogy closes with "Joseph begat Jesus," it does not indicate that the author did not believe in the Virgin Birth. Machen also calls attention to the fact that Joseph stood in a far closer relationship to Jesus than is the case with ordinary adoption. The child Jesus was much closer to Joseph than is the case with ordinary adoption; since Joseph alone could assume the rights and duties of a father towards Jesus. There was no other human father.

The second argument, viz. that Joseph is actually spoken of as the father of Jesus and that Joseph and Mary are called "parents" has been refuted by the foregoing. In Luke 2:48 we read "the father and I have sought Thee." Here Machen says, it would have been unnatural for Mary to mention the Virgin Birth in the presence of her son. But even the other occurrence of the term "father" in Luke 2:33, and of the term "parents" in verse 41 could be used on Semitic grounds to describe an ordinary adopted relationship. If that be so then it certainly can be used to describe the unique relationship between Joseph and Jesus.

The third argument maintains that the Virgin Birth is impossible because of Mary's puzzled attitude toward Jesus. How could she be surprised, it is asked, if she knew the supernatural birth from the beginning. In answer to

this Machen shows himself to be a keen psychologist. Such objections, he urges, reveal a woeful lack of appreciation of the delicate character of Mary. "These modern advocates of mechanical consistency seem to suppose that Mary must have been regarded by the original narrator as being a person of coldly scientific frame of mind, who, when she went through the wonderful experience of the supernatural conception, proceeded to draw out the logical consequences."³¹

MACHEN'S REFUTATION OF THE INTERPOLATION THEORY OF LUKE 1:34 AND 35. We are first told that the strongest argument against it is found in the total impression that the narrative makes. Suppose it is read without verses 34 and 35. How disorganized it then becomes from beginning to end. The truth is that the child whose birth is prophesied by an Angel and greeted by a choir of Angels, is inconceivable as a child of earthly parents. Machen refers us in the second place to Luke 1:45, "blessed is she who has believed, for there shall be a fulfillment of the things that have been spoken to her of the Lord," -- if Mary had not in what precedes given expression to her faith, this verse is entirely out of place. We are also referred to Mary's visit to Elizabeth. This also presupposes a Virgin Birth. In Luke 1:36 we read, "and behold Elizabeth thy kinswoman, she also has conceived a son in her womb," -- and in verse 39, "and Mary arose in those days and went to the hill-country with haste." Why did she go at all if verses 36 and 37 are also interpolated as the third interpolation theory suggests?

In regard to the second interpolation theory of Kattenbusch and others, that only the words "seeing I know not a man" of verse 34 are interpolated, Machen replies in the first place by showing that this hypothesis does not accomplish what it undertakes, viz. to remove the supernatural conception from Luke 1:34 and 35. In these verses we read that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." The truth is that in verse 35 the human father is out of sight. In the second place Machen remarks, if the words "seeing I know not a man" are removed, the parallelism with the annunciation to Zacharias is destroyed. Zacharias asks, "whereby shall I know this?" Machen also objects that if these words are removed, then that which remains is altogether too abrupt, viz. "How shall this be?" This question does not prepare us for the answer of the Angel if "seeing I know not a man" is removed. He also finds an argument against the interpolation theory in the contrast which is found between the two narratives. One annunciation was made to Mary the mother and the other to Joseph the father. Why such an important place given to Mary if she was not in a special way the mother of Jesus? The narrative certainly does not display any predilection in favor of women as over against men.

31 Cf. idem, p. 131.

Another reason for believing that the miracle is trustworthy is found by Machen in the relation between the two accounts, which is one of climax. John the Baptist was born of aged parents but Jesus was born in a far more wonderful way.

THE INFANCY NARRATIVE IN MATTHEW. Here the Virgin Birth is told with a plainness that leaves nothing to be desired. Hillmann says that Mt. 1 and 2 were interpolated; whereas Hilgenfeld argues that Mt. 1:18-2:23 is an interpolation and that the words in Mt. 3:1, "In those days cometh John the Baptist," do not refer to their sojourn in Nazareth which is related in Mt. 1:18-2:23 but refers to the close of the genealogy and mean "in the days of Jesus" as distinguished from other generations. Machen answers this by saying that the "in those days" of Mt. 3 requires that something in the nature of a narrative should go before. This requirement is not satisfied with the genealogy.

Against all the hypotheses which are advanced to prove that Mt. 1 and 2 are interpolated, Machen places the following objections: In the first place this is disproved by the unanimity of the documentary attestation. All the manuscripts contain the chapters. It has been claimed that the Sinaitic Syriac MS with its strange reading of Mt. 1:16 contradicts this conclusion. The translation is "Jacob begat Joseph. Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus that is called the Messiah." It is claimed that the words "Joseph begat Jesus" disproves the Virgin Birth. Machen however shows conclusively that the word "begat" by no means always refers to physical paternity. We have seen in the foregoing that it can refer to legal heirship. Such is the case here. Matthew shows (1) that Jesus was the heir of David through Joseph, and (2) that He was a gift of God to the house of David in a far more wonderful way than if He had descended from David in an ordinary manner. Thus even though the Syriac text is followed in preference to Cod. Vaticanus and Cod. Sinaiticus, the Virgin Birth is by no means denied.

A second argument against this interpolation theory is found in the stylistic characteristics of these chapters. A marked affinity is noticeable with the rest of the Gospel. This was already established by Gersdorf.³²

Machen then establishes conclusively that this narrative as well as that of Luke is strikingly Jewish. Four reasons are given: 1. Here as in Luke we find great simplicity of sentence structure. 2. The contents reveal a complete understanding of Jewish feeling and custom as is seen especially in the way the betrothal is treated. 3. Much Old Testament prophecy is cited. 4. The genealogies reveal a thoroughly Jewish characteristic.

³² See footnote of Machen, *idem*, p. 172.

REFUTATION OF THE SUPPOSED CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN MATTHEW AND LUKE. 1. Usener claims there is a contradiction because the divinity of Christ is attested in Luke by the Angels and in Matthew by the appearance of the star in the East. In Luke the new-born Messiah receives his first adoration from shepherds, and in Matthew from the Magi. Machen answers: there may have been more than one attestation to his divinity and also more than one adoration. 2. It is also objected that Joseph's home in Matthew is Bethlehem and in Luke it is Nazareth. The answer is here: Matthew by no means denies that the original home of Joseph and Mary was not Nazareth but Bethlehem. The residence in Judea can well be understood since He is the promised king of David's line and the ancestral home was Judea. 3. Another contradiction is thought to be found in the fact that according to Matthew the annunciation came to Joseph and according to Luke to Mary. The obvious answer is that it might have been given to both. 4. It had also been objected that Luke's narrative leaves no place for the Magi and their sojourn in Egypt forty days after the birth in Bethlehem. We read of the presentation in the temple, and this it is claimed would have been impossible because of the wrath of the king. Machen answers that the difficulty seems to arise from Luke 2:39, "and when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord they returned unto Galilee to their own city Nazareth." This however does not mean that they returned immediately to Nazareth before they made their flight to Egypt.

Another serious question of harmony between the two birth narratives is thought to exist in the two accounts of the genealogies, viz. Mt. 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. How in particular could the father of Joseph be Jacob in Matthew and Heli in Luke. Some have said that Luke's genealogy is of Mary, and that Jacob is the father of Joseph whereas Heli is the father of Mary. Machen does not agree with this solution. He says the most probable answer is that Matthew gives the legal descent whereas Luke gives the physical descent. We have already seen [that] the word "begat" may mean legal descent. Machen further explains that Joseph is "son" or heir of Heli by his marriage to Mary. If Mary is Heli's daughter and has no brothers, then she would become an heiress according to Num. 27:1-11, 36:1-12.

REFUTATION OF HYPOTHESIS THAT BIRTH NARRATIVES ARE CONTRADICTED BY SECULAR HISTORY. As the Birth narratives are compared with secular history, two points have been considered to offer difficulty: 1. The massacre of the infants at Bethlehem; 2. The census of Quirinius. It is said that the massacre of the infants is not mentioned by Josephus and therefore unhistorical. The answer is, -- even though this be so, we know that such an act is entirely in harmony with what we know of Herod during his declining years. Herod's putting to death of his own children and wife, and

his plan, which was interrupted by his death, of butchering all the leading citizens of Jerusalem, corresponds exactly to the killing of the infants of Bethlehem.

The census of Quirinius has not entirely been cleared up. The objection is that this "decree" is not mentioned elsewhere. To this Machen replies, -- there is abundant evidence to show that Augustus was greatly concerned with an inventory both as to wealth and to manpower. Therefore the "decree" mentioned in Luke 2, though not mentioned elsewhere, is quite in line with Augustus' doing. But the real difficulty comes in the words, "this happened when Quirinius was governor of Syria." The problem is to find a census during the rule of Quirinius over Syria and before the death of Herod the Great, who still lived when Jesus was born. Herod died at 4 B.C. Saturninus was governor from 9 B.C. to 6 B.C., and from 6 B.C. to 4 A.D. Varus was governor of Syria. Machen thinks it likely that Quirinius, who was military king of Syria while Varus was governor from 6 B.C. to the death of Herod, had a special commission which included the taking of the census. Another explanation that had been advanced is that the census was begun before but completed while Quirinius was governor. Some have also objected as to the manner in which the census was taken. To this Machen answers that the enrollment took place in accordance with a Jewish method by which family relationships determine the classification of families.

REFUTATION OF HYPOTHESIS THAT THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS' CONTEMPORARIES CONTRADICTS THE VIRGIN BIRTH. Different objections have been raised. In Mt. 13:55 the contemporaries say, "is not this the carpenter's son?" Hence they did not know of the Virgin Birth. To this the answer is that undoubtedly Mary kept all these things to herself. The same consideration holds true in regard to the brothers of Jesus, who at a certain period according to John's Gospel did not believe on Him. An objection has also been found in Mark 3:21 and 31 where it is said, "Jesus' friends went out to lay hold on Him for they said that He is beside Himself." The expression translated "His friends" really means "those who came from His home" or "His people." Now in verse 31 we read, "there came His mother and His brothers and standing without, sent to Him, calling Him." The argument is that the "friends" or "those of His home" are said to be the same as His mother and brothers; therefore Mary believed He was "beside Himself," which would contradict the Virgin Birth. To this Machen answers that it is by no means certain that "His friends" of verse 21 are to be identified with "His mother and brothers" in verse 31. A passage of considerable length lies between the two verses. If the author wanted to identify the two, he would have used different language. But even though "His friends" are the same as "His mother and brothers" in verse 31, then still there is no denial of the Virgin Birth, since Mary's faith was often

subjected to severe trials. It should also be observed in this connection that what Jesus says to His mother here is not at all derogatory language used against His family, but an exaltation of the spiritual relationship between Him and believers.

In John 1:31 we read of John the Baptist saying "and I knew Him not." Here some have also thought to find a contradiction. How could John the Baptist be ignorant of Jesus if Luke's reference is correct. Here Machen answers, -- it is well possible that John had no contact with Jesus during the interval of 30 years. It is however also possible that here the word "knew" must be used in a profoundly spiritual sense. A similar conclusion has been reached in regard to Mt. 11:3, Lk. 7:19, -- "Art Thou He that should come," etc. It is said that John's question militates against the account of Jesus' Baptism and of the Virgin Birth. Here a little reflection removes the difficulty. The right view is: Just because John's expectation of Jesus was so high, he is now perplexed.

Another objection against the Virgin Birth is thought to be found in the fact that the opponents of Jesus did not begin to slander Him and Joseph and Mary. Machen replies that the supernatural birth need not give rise to slander because: 1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, far from Nazareth, therefore perhaps the details were not known in His home community. 2. Joseph was regarded as a "just man." 3. Joseph undoubtedly did everything possible to avoid exposing Mary to slander.

REFUTATION OF THE HYPOTHESIS IN REGARD TO THE SILENCE OF THE REST OF THE N.T. The silence of Mark and John has been appealed to. Machen replies in regard to Mark, it must be remembered that his purpose was not to give the details of Jesus' life but to describe His majesty. Besides, Mark must have received his information from Peter who testified what he had seen; naturally the Virgin Birth is omitted. In regard to John, Machen answers that the real key to this Gospel is found in the words "we have beheld His glory." The word "beheld" is not confined exclusively to the spiritual meaning. The book has for its purpose to record the direct personal testimony of the author regarding what was said and done by the incarnate word, as is seen in John 20:31 and 21:24-25. Machen does not believe that John 1:13 refers to the Virgin Birth.³³

Appeal has also been made to the silence of Paul. Some have said that Gal. 1:4 and Rom. 1:3 exclude the belief in the Virgin Birth. In Gal. 1:4 we read of Jesus being "born of a woman." Here Machen replies that Paul's purpose evidently is to present Christ's deep humiliation in that He was in the likeness of us men. Such words as "born of a virgin" would have failed to

³³ See idem, p. 256.

emphasize the similarity between Christ and us. In Rom. 1:3 [we read], "concerning the son, who was born not of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God in power . . . by the resurrection of the dead." In this passage it is argued, Paul connects the higher nature of Jesus with the resurrection and not with the birth as he would have done had he believed in the Virgin Birth. Machen answers that according to Lk. 1:35 Jesus was indeed "Son of God" before the resurrection. Paul undoubtedly believed the same, but here He is declared to be the "Son of God" in power by the resurrection.

Paul's silence in regard to the Virgin Birth can easily be explained according to Machen by the fact that this doctrine was not at all debated at this time. There is an extraordinary unanimity in the church during the time of Paul regarding the Person of Christ. It is certainly true that Paul is not called upon to defend his lofty conception of Christ in his Epistles.

II. IF THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS NOT FOUNDED ON FACT, HOW DID THE IDEA ACTUALLY ORIGINATE?

If the testimony of the Gospels is rejected, what is to be put in its place? The consideration of this question constitutes the second main division of Machen's treatment. If Jesus had no supernatural birth, how can we explain the fact that this account is found in the New Testament record?

THE JEWISH DERIVATION THEORY. We have seen that both narratives of the New Testament are strikingly Jewish in character. Some scholars, therefore, have tried to find the origin among the Jews. Different arguments are used to support this hypothesis. In the first place it is maintained that there is a similarity between the birth of Jesus and that of Jewish heroes such as Samson, Isaac and Samuel. To this Machen answers, -- the essential difference between all other births and the Virgin Birth is the paternity. With Jesus there was no human father. Besides this, it is altogether improbable that the supernatural conception of Jesus should be derived from Judaism because of their emphasis upon the transcendence of God which certainly does not fit in with the account of the Virgin Birth. Another objection is found in the fact that the Hebrew word for "Spirit" is in the feminine gender. Would Judaism, with the Old Testament background, say that Jesus was conceived by a feminine spirit? We must also remember that in both Mt. and Lk. the Davidic descent of Jesus is traced through Joseph, the nominal father. It is certainly very improbable that the Jews would manufacture such an idea.

Mention has also been made of Isa. 7:14, "Behold a virgin shall conceive,"

to support the Jewish derivation theory of the Virgin Birth. To this Machen replies that there is not the slightest evidence for the supposition that Isa. 7:14 was ever interpreted by pre-Christian Jews as a prophecy of the Virgin Birth. Of course Isa. 7:14 predicts the Virgin Birth, but the fact is that it was never so understood.

Some have also referred to the writings of Philo the Jew, who was a contemporary of Jesus, to support the Jewish derivation theory. Philo uses allegorical language in the case of Isaac's birth, which seems to exclude the human agency in the act of begetting. It is said that both Philo and the New Testament writers emphasize the virginity of the mother. To this Machen replies that Philo, when speaking of a virgin birth of a divine begetting in the "De Cherubim" is thinking of the divine begetting of the human soul, or of certain virtues of the soul, but not at all of the divine begetting of flesh and blood of human beings who lived upon the earth.

Conybeare also finds in Philo that the Logos is begotten of God and born of Sophia, which is "Wisdom", who was "an ever-virgin gifted with an incontaminate and unstainable nature."³⁴ To this Machen objects in the first place that the Logos doctrine is not found in the birth narrative of Mt. and Lk. Furthermore that the Alexandrian Logos doctrine is entirely foreign to Judaism and could hardly have found a place in such a Palestinian narrative. The main objection however is that according to Philo there are two representations of the Logos: 1. The Logos as the immanent reason of God; 2. the Logos as the material world. Now it is only the Logos viewed as the immanent reason of God that could at all be identified with the Person of Jesus. But fact is that Philo identifies the Logos with the material universe as begotten of God and born of divine Wisdom. Hence there is no similarity between Philo's teaching and the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

THE PAGAN DERIVATION THEORY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH. Kattenbusch in 1900, after it was anticipated by Pfeleiderer in 1887,³⁵ especially advocated the theory that the idea of the Virgin Birth may have been developed in the early church on the basis of Pauline teachings. It is said that the story of the Virgin Birth with all of its elements was evolved from the elements of Paul's teaching especially by reflecting upon the doctrine of the activity of the Spirit and the connection between Christ and the second Adam. It is unnecessary to refute this theory in detail since Kattenbusch himself realizes its inadequacy and therefore appeals to Isa. 7:14 to support his theory. This has been refuted in the foregoing. The reader can find a more detailed description of the pagan derivation theory in chapter II. Here it will suffice to confine ourselves to Machen's refutation. He proves conclusively

34 Machen's footnote in idem, p. 309.

35 See Machen's footnote in idem, p. 327.

that there is a twofold barrier at the very outset against the pagan derivation theory.

In the first place there was the barrier that separated the early Christians from the pagan world. The early Christianity was tremendously opposed to all paganism and nothing would have been more abhorrent to the early Christians than the introduction of crassly pagan ideas of the begetting of men by the gods into their idea of Jesus. The pagan conception of their heroes being born as a result of the union between their gods and different virgins must have been repulsive for the early church. Such revolting paganism with its many immoral aspects could never have found entrance into the narratives of Mt. and Lk. Prof. von Harnack has emphasized this fact despite the fact that he is not at all interested in the defense of the Virgin Birth.

There is a second barrier that must be overcome. "Even if the supposed pagan idea could have attained a place in the belief of the early church, how could it ever have entered, not into gentile Christian documents, but into the most clearly Jewish and Palestinian narratives in the whole New Testament, particularly into the infancy narrative of Lk.? This question constitutes an insuperable objection, at the start, to the whole hypothesis of pagan influence, unless the interpolation theory regarding the first chapter of Lk. be correct. The hypothesis of pagan influence is absolutely bound up with the interpolation theory."³⁶ Machen then shows that this whole interpolation theory has been proven to be inadequate in the preceding chapters.

Machen also maintains that none of these pagan narratives contain any account of the Virgin Birth. In the pagan narratives the word "virgin" does not even appear. These pagan stories all say that the union of gods with the women who bore children was very much like the sexual union in human life. The stories of the amours of Zeus and other gods were certainly crassly anthropomorphic. But what a gulf that places between the pagan stories and the story of the Virgin Birth. Nothing could be more remote from the minds of the New Testament writers than the carnal lusts which saturate these pagan ideas. There is no hint in the New Testament of any carnal passion of God for Mary.

Machen also reminds us of the fact that in all the pagan stories of divine begetting, Polytheism lies at the very basis. In the New Testament account, however, the lofty Old Testament monotheism with God's transcendency and separation from the world is strongly emphasized.

36 The Bible Today art. Cf. M. on Virgin Birth, Jan. 1925, p. 112.

THE PAGAN-JEWISH DERIVATION THEORY. Some scholars of the "advanced" school of comparative religion have advanced a new hypothesis. They have clearly seen that the idea of the Virgin Birth cannot be ascribed to Jewish derivation. They have also recognized the integrity of the narrative of Lk. 1 and have rejected the interpolation hypothesis; yet they believe that the idea of the Virgin Birth must ultimately be traced to paganism. They claim that even before Christ, the Jews under the influence of Oriental paganism came to believe in the Virgin Birth of the coming Messiah. Thus the belief in the Virgin Birth is derived from Judaism, but a Judaism which had unconsciously absorbed a pagan idea. The idea was so well naturalized that the pre-Christian Jews of the first century had forgotten its pagan origin. Conclusive evidence is then brought against this pagan-Jewish derivation. Everything that is known of the pre-Christian Jewish doctrine of the Messiah contains no mention of the Virgin Birth but is rather contrary to such an idea. Surely it is inadmissible to posit such an idea without positive evidence.

GRASSMANN'S VIEW. Grassmann maintains that the Lucan narrative in ch. 2 is entirely detached from the rest and must be regarded as a legend standing alone. He claims that this legend in its original form had nothing whatever to do with Jesus. The author of the Gospel changed it materially in order to connect it with the story of ch. 1.³⁷

NORDEN'S VIEW. This is very similar to Grassmann's. Norden believes that the birth narrative is borrowed from an Egyptian myth which contains the story of the begetting of the heir to the Kingdom by the god, Amon-Ra. This God is represented as having union with the queen and the result of this union was the conception and birth of the new monarch.

Machen's criticism finds its starting point in the word "Theogamy" used by Norden himself. The Egyptian story of a theogamy, -- of a carnal union of a god with a queen, -- belongs to the very heart of this myth. There is an abysmal gulf between this Egyptian story and the beautiful Virgin Birth narrative of Mt. and Lk.

HANS LEISEGANG'S THEORY. He says that in Matthew's Gospel the words, "she was found with child of the Holy Ghost," should read, "from a holy ghost." Here the claim is made that, according to a popular Jewish belief, fatherhood was ascribed to subordinate spirits. To this Machen answers that Leisegang's view of the Holy Spirit is entirely foreign, not only to the Gospel of Matthew, but to the whole New Testament.

Thus all the modern theories regarding the Virgin Birth have been tried and

³⁷ For Grasmann's detailed view, see Chapter II.

found wanting. It is interesting to observe how Prof. Machen often makes one theory annihilate another. Thus for example von Harnack in advocating the Jewish derivation theory does excellent service in showing how the Virgin Birth could not have originated from pagan sources. On the other hand the advocates of the pagan theory have been equally successful in demonstrating the inefficiency of the Jewish derivation theory. The truth is that, apart from viewing the Virgin Birth as founded upon fact, no satisfactory explanation is possible.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH. Machen concludes the scholarly defense of the Virgin Birth with a beautiful chapter in which he shows its importance. It is significant in the first place because with it stands or falls the infallibility of the Scriptures. It is a question of whether the Bible is true or false. If a myth has come into the Bible at this point, then the authority of the Scripture is gone and some other basis must be found for the Christian doctrine and life. In the second place the Virgin Birth is a test as to one's view of Jesus, whether it be a naturalistic or a supernaturalistic view. These two different views of our Lord are rooted in two essentially different kinds of religion. According to the naturalistic view Jesus was the fairest flower of the human race, but essentially like all other men; according to the supernaturalistic view Jesus is divine. The Son is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity. If one is to determine anyone's position over against this religious issue, he must single out some specific manifestation of the supernatural as the point at which the issue is raised, and this Machen finds especially in the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Machen shows that the belief in the Virgin Birth is also important as such, as without the doctrine of the Virgin Birth there would be something seriously lacking in the Christian's conception of Christ. From it we know that the Second Person of the Trinity took upon Himself our flesh and blood to be our Redeemer. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is an integral part of the New Testament account of Jesus. The New Testament account of Jesus is most convincing, says Machen, when taken as a whole.

From this summary it becomes plain that Machen's defense of this precious truth is thorough and convincing. It is true what different ones have said after reading this splendid defense: "The modernists have yet to answer Machen's arguments."

MACHEN'S DEFENSE OF OTHER DOCTRINES.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD. A great deal of emphasis is placed upon the "theistic proofs" for the existence of God. We have already observed that he regards these proofs as being fundamental to Apologetics. "We are

pleading, in other words, for a truly comprehensive Apologetics which does not neglect the theistic proofs or the historical evidence of the account of Jesus; but which also does not neglect the facts of the inner life of man. The force of such an Apologetics is culminative."³⁸ At another place he calls these "good proofs."³⁹ By God's Common Grace the natural man has the ability to understand these truths.⁴⁰ It is however maintained that this testimony of nature to nature's God comes to different people in different ways. God can be known because He has revealed Himself. But because man's mind is darkened by sin he no longer receives this revelation as he should.

In speaking of God's attributes, he divides them into communicable and incommunicable.⁴¹ Of the communicable attributes he states: "We think of God as having some attributes which we also possess . . . God made man in the image of God, and that is the reason why God possesses some attributes which man also possesses, though God possesses them to an infinitely higher degree."⁴²

Machen is very positive in his Apologetics against Deism and Pantheism. Against the former he places the Biblical doctrine of God's immanence. Far from separating God from His creation, he insists upon it, that God is ever present in the world and governs it through His Providence.⁴³ Against Pantheism he places the Biblical doctrine of God's transcendence. No, God is not identified with the world but exists apart from it. He is not dependent upon the world, but the world is dependent upon Him. "Running all through the Bible is the awful separateness of God from the world. That is what the Bible calls the Holiness of God. The Bible, unlike the pantheist, presents to us a Holy God."⁴⁴ Over against the pantheist he teaches that God is a personal being. If God were identified with the world He would no longer be a personal being. The God of the Bible, however, is not just another name for the Universe. He is not a force or a principle, or a collection of somewhat of which we are parts. He is a Person Who can be worshipped and loved.

THE DOCTRINE OF COMMON GRACE. Although it cannot be said that Machen's writings abound with references to this doctrine, still there are sufficient evidences in his works to warrant the conclusion that he was also positively Reformed in his convictions in regard to this truth. We shall give one striking quotation. In his book, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 1934, page

38 See Pr. Th. Rev., 1926, Art. "Religion, Science and Philosophy," p. 64.

39 Christian Faith in the Modern World, 1936, p. 16.

40 Pr. Th. Rev., idem, p. 58.

41 See Chr. Faith in the Modern World, 1936, p. 121-125.

42 See idem, p. 125.

43 See idem, p. 111.

44 See idem, p. 115.

137 f., he first speaks of the modernists who claim to find some good in the natural man. "We ought to appeal to some latent sense of honor which shows that even criminals possess the remnants of our common human nature. Thus again the evil that is in man is to be overcome not by a foreign good but by a good which man himself possesses.

"Certainly there is a large element of truth in this modern principle. That element of truth is found in the Bible. The Bible does certainly teach that the good that is already in man ought to be fostered in order to check the evil. Whatsoever things are true and pure and of good report -- we ought to think on these things. Certainly the principle of overcoming the world's evil by the good already in the world is a great principle. The old theologians recognized it to the full in their doctrine of 'common grace.' There is something in the world apart from Christianity which restrains the worst manifestations of evil. And that something ought to be used. Without the use of it the world could not be lived in for a day. . . . But there is one thing which it will not accomplish. It will not remove the disease of sin. It will indeed palliate the symptoms of the disease; it will change the form of the disease . . . What is really needed is not a salve to palliate the symptoms of sin, but a remedy that attacks the root of the disease."

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY is held to with a tenacious faith. There is but one God, but there are three Persons in the Godhead. One beautiful chapter is devoted to this precious doctrine. In his exposition of the Trinity, the teachings of Warfield are closely adhered to.⁴⁵ It is shown conclusively how that God's revelation of the Trinity is progressive. It is already revealed in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it shines forth in all of its splendor and of its glory.

In dealing with GOD'S "FATHERHOOD" Machen is very emphatic. He chooses position against the modernistic theology with their supreme emphasis upon the "Universal Fatherhood." "For the plain fact is that this modern doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God formed no part whatever of Jesus' teaching. Where is it that Jesus may be supposed to have taught the universal Fatherhood of God? . . . Surely not in the Sermon on the Mount . . . One passage in the discourse has indeed been urged in support of the modern doctrine: 'But I say unto you, love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you: that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on evil and good and sendeth rain on just and unjust.' Mt. 5:44-45. . . . God is indeed represented here as caring for all men, whether evil or good, but He is certainly not called the Father of all. Indeed it might almost be said that the point of the passage

45 Cf. *Christian Faith in the Modern World*, 1936, p. 128.

depends upon the fact that He is not the Father of all."⁴⁶

Machen is just as emphatic in the denial of the universal Fatherhood of God in his other works. To use his own words: "Jesus does indeed speak much about the Fatherhood of God. But never does He speak of God as being the Father of all men. . . . Our Lord came not to teach men that they were already sons of God, but to make them sons of God by His redeeming work. The Fatherhood of God as it is taught in the New Testament, designates not a relationship in which God stands to all men, but a relationship in which He stands to those who have been redeemed."⁴⁷ We are however cautioned not to forget that in the New Testament there are features "in the relationship of God to all men, which are analogous to the relationship in which an earthly father stands to his children. . . . Thus we are not saying that the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God is untrue, but what we are saying is that far from being the essence of Christianity, it is only the presupposition of Christianity; it is only the starting-point, which the New Testament finds in 'natural religion' for the proclamation of the Gospel of divine Grace."⁴⁸ "Here and there the figure of Fatherhood seems to be used to designate this broader relationship which God sustains to all men, or even to all created beings. So in an isolated passage in Hebrews God is spoken of as 'the Father of spirits' -- Hebr. 12:9 -- here perhaps it is the relation of God, as Creator to the personal beings whom He has created, which is in view."⁴⁹ From these above quotations it is plain that Machen does not come with a positive denial of the universal Fatherhood of God; but we also see that his references to it are vague in that he speaks of it as something "analogous to the relationship in which an earthly father stands to his children." According to Machen the term "Father," when it designates this relationship in its broader sense is, to say the least, highly exceptional.

Much space is devoted to the defense of THE DEITY OF CHRIST. This was done to answer the modernistic denial of this established truth. We are first cautioned against supposing that when the modernist uses the terms "Deity of Christ" and "God," he does not mean the same thing that is generally meant with this phrase. "In the first place, some of them use the terms in what may be called a pantheizing sense; that is, they are willing to call Jesus God, because they hold that all of us are God. They put only a difference of degree, and not a difference of kind between Jesus' Deity and ours. . . . In the second place, other unbelievers use the terms 'Deity of Christ' or the term 'God' as applied to Jesus in what may be called an anti-metaphysical or positivistic sense . . . Where shall we find an adequate object of religious devotion to take the place of that personal creator in

46 See Christianity and Liberalism, 1934, p. 60.

47 See What is Faith, 1935, p. 84-85.

48 See idem, p. 85-86.

49 See Christianity and Liberalism, 1934, p. 61.

whom we no longer believe . . . Why, we find it, they say, in the life of a certain man named Jesus. He was not, of course, the Creator of the world. He was a man like the rest of men. But his moral life can call forth the same reverence as past generations used to give to the supposed creator of the world."⁵⁰ We are then shown by convincing argumentation that Jesus is true God. Many texts are quoted from the Old and New Testament to prove that the Bible does teach the Deity of Christ.

A considerable amount of effort is also spent in defending THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION. Here Machen takes a decisive stand against anything that can be called Pelagianism, with a tenacity that can hardly be surpassed. All lovers of the Reformed Faith must be grateful for this beautiful exposition in his "The Christian view of Man," 1937. He begins by stating that God is a free person in His decrees, yet the actions of God are determined by His own nature. In this connection he also speaks of the fact that God cannot sin. "It is impossible for Him to do wrong because for Him to do wrong would be contrary to His own nature. . . . Never in the very smallest of all His works will He depart one hair's breadth from that perfect standard which the perfection of His own nature sets up."⁵¹ We are then told that all God's actions have a purpose, and the ultimate purpose is always God's own glory. When the question is raised, how far do God's decrees extend? he answers, "Everything, -- everything that happens is embraced in the eternal purpose of God; nothing at all happens outside of His eternal plan."⁵² God's decrees are all-comprehensive. In regard to His decrees concerning the universe, Machen says, "The creation of the world must have as its purpose something that existed before the world was. But God Himself is all that existed before the world was. Therefore the purpose of the world must be found in God."⁵³ In this connection we observe a gratifying theo-centric emphasis in Machen's theology. In speaking of Predestination, Machen devotes much attention in answering the objections which are often raised against this doctrine as well as in removing the misconceptions which are prevalent concerning it. When it is remembered that these discussions upon such doctrines as God's Decrees, Predestination, Objections against Predestination, and the like, were broadcasted to perhaps thousands of willing ears, one begins to realize what a loss was, humanly speaking, sustained by the church when God took this mighty defender of the Reformed Faith to Himself.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN. We are told that God created Man in His image. The usual distinction is made between the image in its narrower and wider sense. Machen believes that man is composed of soul and body. The

50 Christian Faith in the Modern World, 1936, p. 138 f.

51 Cf. idem, p. 17.

52 Cf. idem, p. 29.

53 Cf. idem, p. 47.

theory of trichotomy is rejected as a serious error. The different texts which apparently speak of it are treated more or less in detail, and Machen shows by a somewhat extended exegesis of these Scripture passages that this theory is unbiblical and void of support. Speaking of the soul he says, "it means not only that man has mind or consciousness, but also that his mind or consciousness is a unity. It is not a mere stream of consciousness, but the consciousness of a person. Not merely does thinking go on within me, but it is I that think . . . That the Bible means when it tells me that I have a soul."⁵⁴ In speaking of "soul" and "spirit," reference is especially made to 1 Cor. 2:14 f.

" . . . Does the Bible really teach that the spirit of man is to be distinguished from the soul, or does it teach that the soul of man and the spirit of man are exactly the same thing, called by two different names? I think that the answer to this question is given with particular clearness in . . . the second chap. of the first Epistle to the Corinthians running into the beginning of the third chapter. In that passage Paul repeatedly distinguishes the soul from the spirit and speaks of the man characterized by 'soul' as distinguished from the man characterized by 'spirit.' 'But a soul-man,' he says, 'receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But the 'spirit-man' judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man' . . . What then is meant by the 'spirit-man' or the 'spiritual man'? Why, the thing is as plain as day, the 'soul-man' is a man who has only a human soul, and the 'spiritual man' is the man who, in addition to his human soul, has the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God."⁵⁵ We are then told that this "'spiritual' man is a man who has been transformed by the Holy Spirit . . . and the 'soul-man' is the man who has merely his human soul not so transformed."⁵⁶ Reference is made to this same matter in the origin of Paul's Religion, 1936, p. 265. "In 1 Cor. 2:14-15, the 'spiritual man' is contrasted with the psychic man. The spiritual man is the man who has the Spirit of God; the psychic man is the man who has only a human soul . . . Paul clearly teaches that the human soul continues to exist even after the divine Spirit has entered in. 'The Spirit Himself,' he says, 'beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God' -- Rom. 8:16. Here 'our spirit' clearly means 'our soul,' and is expressly distinguished from the divine Spirit." From the above quotations we may conclude that Machen strictly adheres to the theory of dichotomy. It is also evident, according to Machen's position, that the term 'spirit' cannot be applied to the natural man, but clearly designates that the soul of man has been renewed by the Spirit of God.

Machen's view with regard to the "covenant of works" which he generally

⁵⁴ The Christian View of Man, 1937, p. 161.

⁵⁵ See idem, p. 163 f.

⁵⁶ Idem, p. 165.

calls the "covenant of life," as well as his references to the fall of man, clearly indicate his pronounced Reformed way of thinking. We do not deem it necessary to reproduce his views in regard to these matters in detail. An extended discussion of these doctrines can be found in his "Christian View of Man," 1937, p. 174 ff.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth has already been discussed in a somewhat detailed manner. Under this head we will only call the attention to his defense of the vicarious atonement and of the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

In regard to the vicarious atonement Machen is very clear and explicit. He carefully reproduces the views of the modernist and answers all their objections with a convincing clearness.⁵⁷ It has been objected against this doctrine that it is dependent upon history. It is maintained that the real saving work of Christ is confined to what He does for us now. To this Machen replies that it, of course, must depend upon history if it is to be a Gospel; for "Gospel" means "Good News"; and news means an account of something that has happened. It has also been objected to this doctrine that it is too "narrow." It binds salvation to the name of Jesus, and many have never heard of that name. What we need today is a salvation which embraces all men. Machen replies to this that God comes with a well-meant offer of salvation to the whole world. Christianity demands an absolutely exclusive devotion, and in this demand there is nothing unreasonable. If the way of salvation is "narrow," then the church neglects its mission work. The modernists have also maintained the absurdity for one man to die for another man's sins. To this the reply is, that of course it is absurd. Certainly one man cannot die for another man's sin, and that is why we cling with all our souls to the Christian doctrine of the deity of Christ. If Jesus were not God, He could not be our substitute. Some men have also objected that the vicarious atonement presents a very low view of the love of God, as an angry God is waiting only for a sacrifice to be made. Machen finds it astonishing that such an objection can be made since it totally misrepresents the Christian doctrine of the Cross. The point of the Christian view of the Cross is that God does not wait for the price of sin to be paid by someone else; God Himself in His infinite love paid the price for us, -- God Himself in the person of the Son, Who loved us and gave Himself for us; God Himself in the person of the Father, Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Machen's defense of the bodily resurrection of our Lord, it seems to me, is difficult to resist. Also here he first states the position of the modernist. They believe that Jesus was an ordinary man, a great religious teacher

⁵⁷ Christianity and Liberalism, 1934, p. 118 f.

whose ministry was accompanied by healing. At first the crowd followed Him, but later because of the jealousy of His people He was shamefully crucified. At his death His followers were discouraged and down-hearted, since it meant the destruction of their hopes. Then an amazing thing took place. The undeniable historical fact is that these weak discouraged disciples, shortly after the death of their leader, began the most remarkable religious movement in history. Within three centuries the Roman Empire was evangelized, and the subsequent influence of Christianity upon the history of the world has been incalculable. The question here is, what caused the remarkable change in the disciples, who were first weak and discouraged but suddenly were transformed to become the spiritual conquerors of the world?

It is admitted by all serious historians that these disciples were honestly convinced that Jesus was risen from the dead. But what produced that conviction? To this the believer, of course, replies: -- the disciples' belief of the resurrection was based upon fact. The tomb was empty and the resurrected Saviour appeared to them in diverse manners. This explanation is rejected by the modernist. They have substituted the so-called "vision theory" of the resurrected Christ. It briefly comes down to this: the disciples became convinced of Jesus' resurrection by means of hallucinations. They had pathological experiences and actually thought that they saw a risen Jesus. In other words, the contention is that the Christian church was founded upon the hallucinations of the early disciples, instead of the bodily resurrection. The modernist likes to speak of a "spiritual resurrection." They say that Jesus' influence continues even now. It is manifest in the changed lives of His followers.

To this Machen answers, -- "if that supposed event really took place, as the Bible says it did, then the Christian religion is true. If it did not take place, as the dominant vision theory holds, then the Christian religion is false, and a church which professes it is merely an empty shell."⁵⁸

We are then pointed to two things in the New Testament account of the resurrection: 1. The manner of the appearances of the resurrected Christ. Jesus appeared in bodily form and even had table communion with His disciples according to the New Testament presentation. 2. The New Testament also informs us that Jesus' appearances took place at Jerusalem and in Galilee; but the first appearances were at Jerusalem.

According to the vision theory of the modernist, both of these New Testament presentations must be rejected. Instead of a bodily resurrection they have substituted their vision theory. The disciples only experienced

⁵⁸ The Christian Faith in the Modern World, 1936, p. 206.

the appearances. And instead of accepting the New Testament account that Jesus first appeared to His disciples in Jerusalem on the third day after His death, they maintain that these so-called appearances first took place in Galilee. It was here that the disciples thought they saw Jesus. This did not happen immediately after His death, we are told, but weeks after His death. This is done in order that they might evade the problem of the empty tomb. If the appearances took place at Jerusalem immediately after our Lord's death, then, of course, the empty tomb would be investigated by His disciples. If, however, the first so-called appearances took place in Galilee, a long time after Jesus' death, then it is supposed the tomb would not be investigated.

Machen says two things about this hypothesis. In the first place, this Galilean hypothesis does not take away the difficulty because undoubtedly the question of the empty tomb would have been investigated even if the supposed hallucinations had occurred a long time after Jesus' death. In the second place, he maintains, this Galilean hypothesis is not true.

For his refutation he wisely directs the attention to 1 Cor. 15:3, "for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." This passage is appealed to because it is a fixed starting-point in this debate. It must be remembered that this epistle is one of the major Epistles and consequently accepted by all the serious historians as genuine, that is, actually written by Paul. It is generally admitted that Paul means by the information which he "received" relative to the resurrection and appearances of Christ, the information which he received from the Jerusalem church. It must not be forgotten that he spent 15 days with Peter, three years after his conversion. Paul, therefore, is reproducing the view of Peter who was connected with the primitive Jerusalem church, in regard to the resurrection of Jesus.

Some scholars have tried to evade the historical significance of this passage by maintaining that also Paul held to a spiritual resurrection. They claim that Paul nowhere speaks specifically of the resurrection of Jesus. Machen very pointedly refers to the fact that Paul here first speaks of Jesus' burial. This certainly can only mean that the resurrection of Jesus about which he speaks in this connection is a bodily resurrection. Paul tells us that Jesus died, was buried and He rose again. An unprejudiced reader cannot deny the bodily resurrection in this section. From this it is therefore evident that both Paul and the primitive church from whom he received this information believed in the bodily resurrection.

In the second place Machen refers to the words, "and that He rose again the

third day according to the Scriptures." These words demolish the whole Galilean hypothesis which claims that the so-called hallucinations occurred long after Jesus' death. Paul definitely states, "He rose again the third day." Different futile attempts have been made to evade the plain implication of these words.

Finally Machen calls attention to the fact that the resurrection of Jesus was not the resurrection of an ordinary man. If Jesus' resurrection were that of an ordinary individual, it might be doubted; but such is not the case. The New Testament presentation of Jesus is that of a supernatural person from beginning to end. A person who made the most stupendous claims during his ministry, -- claims which place Himself definitely on the side of God. The Messianic consciousness of Jesus can no longer be questioned. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Messiah Who would come again to judge the world. If these claims are true, then Jesus' resurrection really happened. "The evidence of the truth of Christianity must be taken as a whole. The direct evidence for the resurrection must be taken together with the total picture of Jesus in the Gospels."⁵⁹

In this brilliant defense of the Christian doctrine of the bodily resurrection Prof. Machen gloriously defended the traditional conception. It seems to me that his discussion is both logical and convincing and the difficulties which he raises over against the modern interpretation will be impossible to disprove.

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION. In this section the old doctrine of salvation only by Grace received the first emphasis. The modernistic conception of salvation is regarded as a return to the merit-religion of the age prior to the Reformation. The cardinal doctrine of the modernist is that the world's evil may be overcome by the world's good.⁶⁰ Machen points to the only remedy for the removal of sin both as to its guilt and pollution. This he finds in the Cross of the Saviour. We do not deem it necessary to reproduce Machen's views in detail at this point, since he himself declares that in these matters of Christian doctrine he closely follows others.⁶¹ It will suffice to call brief attention to only two facts: In the first place we observe that Machen comes with an emphatic warning against all leanings towards "anti-nomianism," which supposes that according to Paul the law of God as it is set forth in the Bible is no longer binding upon the Christian man. It is shown with transparent clarity that such a view is erroneous and plainly contradicted by the whole Word of God. It is especially out of accord with the teachings of Paul in his Epistles. When the question is asked, does Paul represent the law of God as a thing without validity in this dispensation of divine Grace?

⁵⁹ The Christian Faith in the Modern World, 1936, p. 215.

⁶⁰ See What is Faith, 1935, p. 136 f.

⁶¹ Cf. The Christian View of Man, 1937, v.

his emphatic answer is, -- "not at all. In the second chapter of the Rom. as well as everywhere else in his Epistles . . . the Apostle regards any such notion as the deadliest of errors. . . . Christians are not under the curse of the law; in that tremendous sense they are not under the law but under Grace. Christ carried the just penalty of the law for them. They have moreover within them a new power, the power of the Holy Spirit which the law of itself could never give. But that new power does not emancipate them from obedience to God's commandments. Nay, it enables them to obey those commandments as they could never obey them before."⁶²

In this connection we should also like to call your attention to what Machen thinks of "perfectionism." As long as the Christian is in this dispensation he is not altogether free from sin. Our justification is complete in Christ. But concerning our sanctification it must be maintained that the best Christian only has a small beginning. In Rom. 7 Paul utters the bitter lamentation, -- "O wretched man that I am."⁶³

We believe it is of great importance to remember Machen's warning against the present spirit of anti-nomianism and perfectionism which often goes along with it in the American church world. The wave of undenominationalism with its erroneous conception of "law and Grace" is doing much harm to the Christian church in America. With Machen we believe that this error is very serious since it marks a defection in regard to one of the most cardinal doctrines of our Christian faith.⁶⁴

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH. Under this head Machen especially emphasized the great commission to evangelize the world, which the Lord entrusted to the church. Much stress is placed upon the need of a genuinely missionary church. Machen regards it the calling of the church to bring an unadulterated Gospel to the benighted heathen-world. His criticism of the church in regard to that which Machen thought to be a modernistic program and his establishment of the Independent Board of Mission, are facts which are so well known that they need not be reviewed again.⁶⁵

In regard to the Sacraments, Machen believed that they are signs and seals of the promises of the covenant of Grace. He warns against regarding either Baptism or the Lord's Supper as conveying any spiritual blessings in themselves apart from the disposition of the souls of the recipients.

62 The Christian View of Man, 1937, p. 223 f.

63 What is Faith, 1935, p. 207 f.

64 It is interesting to observe that Machen in his view of regeneration does not distinguish between the conception of the new life and the manifestation of this new life. Likewise in his discussions on faith he fails to distinguish between the habitus of faith and the act of faith. Cf. Christianity and Liberalism, 1934, p. 138 f.

65 See Revelation, June, 1933, Art. The Christian View of Mission.

Salvation, it is argued, is dependent solely upon faith, -- upon the simple acceptance of the offer contained in the message of the Cross.⁶⁶ The sacrament of Baptism had its truest predecessor in the circumcision of the Old Testament, according to Machen. From this it is evident that he believed that infants too should receive the sign of the covenant. Baptism is also called a "sign of the union with the Covenant people." Because of this we read of baptism "into Christ" in the Scriptures. The Lord's Supper is "representative of the death of Christ in our behalf," and also of "our union with Christ."⁶⁷

THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGS. In his conception of the doctrine of the last things Machen again clashes with the modernist. He appeals to Scripture and reason to establish the Biblical doctrine of "Hell" and "eternal punishment." By many convincing quotations he shows that it was exactly the loving Jesus Who spoke about the place of torment. "It is Jesus Who speaks of the sin that shall not be forgiven, either in this world or in that which is to come; it is Jesus Who speaks of the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched; it is Jesus Who has given us the story of the rich man and Lazarus and of the big gulf between them; it is Jesus Who says that it is profitable for a man to enter into life having one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire."⁶⁸

We have already observed that Machen was not a Premillennialist. Neither did he have the fundamentalistic conception of the kingdom of God. He taught that the Bible speaks of the kingdom as being both spiritual and present in this life, over against the materialistic conception of the kingdom which is so prevalent in the American theology today. No, the kingdom idea is not confined to the domain of eschatology. The kingdom is partly present now. Machen establishes this fact by an appeal to many of the eschatological passages of the Scriptures.⁶⁹

This brings us to the end of this brief review. Also from this it is again evident that Machen defended the Reformed Faith. He did not limit himself to any particular doctrines but proclaimed the full council in all of its beauty and in all of its fulness. The whole Reformed system of truth was dear to his heart and he was ever ready to defend it against the subtle attacks of present-day modernism. We may honestly say that Prof. Machen realized his ambition when he stated, "the author believes that the Reformed Faith should be preached, as well as taught in the classroom and that the need for the preaching of it is particularly apparent at the present time."⁷⁰

66 Cf. *Origin of Paul's Rel.*, p. 284 ff.

67 Cf. *The Westminster Dep. Graded Series, Student's text-book, Part 3*, p. 334 f.

68 *The Christian View of Man*, 1937, p. 266 f.

69 See *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, 1936, p. 160 and 161.

70 *The Christian View of Man*, 1937, v.