

PROFESSOR J. GRESHAM MACHEN

His Life and Defence of the Bible

by

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CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF PROFESSOR MACHEN

During the past few decades the attention of the English-speaking theological world has been focused especially upon Prof. Machen. This may be ascribed to several factors, but undoubtedly was chiefly due to the fact that Machen so vigorously defended the old Reformed Faith during an age of apostasy and doubt. Machen was an exponent and defender of the orthodox truth. He was the most militant assailant of modernism. He captured the attention of all Christendom because, as a general of the Christian forces, he was not satisfied with a defense of the walls of Zion, but he also dared to lead his forces to attack the strong-holds of modernism in the way of offensive warfare. His chief contribution to Christianity is in the field of apologetics. In this field he labored with persistent determination and to this cause he devoted his supreme interest. Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney says of him,--"he was the greatest theologian and defender of the christian faith that the church of our day has produced. More than any other man of our generation, Dr. Machen tore the mask from the face of unbelief which parades under the name of modernism in the Christian church."¹

You ask, what kind of a man was this Prof. Machen: Undoubtedly many of the readers have never had the privilege of meeting him while he was still alive. Chief among his characteristics was his iron determination and his uncompromising stability. He had positive convictions concerning what he thought was right and true, and cost what it may, from these convictions he would not budge,--no, not if even the whole world would unite in opposition

¹ Cf. The Presb. Guardian, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 189.

to him. He regarded modernism as an enemy of Christianity, as unchristian and as a movement diametrically opposed to everything that can be called Christian. He looked upon it as a paganistic philosophy which, if allowed [to] go on unchecked, will not only undermine the faith of the Christian church, but must lead to doubt and bottomless skepticism. He told his students, to dare to take a positive stand and not shrink back when the occasion arises. "Far easier it is to curry favor from the world by abusing those whom the world abuses, by speaking against controversy, by taking a balcony view of the struggle in which God's church is engaged. But God save you from such neutrality as that! . . . God save you from being so heartless, so unloving and so cold; God grant instead, that in all humility, but also in all boldness, in reliance upon God, you may fight the good fight of faith."²

This steadfastness of character radiated forth from his whole personage. He was stoutly built, with black hair, bright dark eyes, from which shone forth a mingled look of resoluteness and of kindness. He was a true scholar and that could be detected from his whole bearing. His step was quick and firm. He spoke with positive accents. He was not eloquent in the common sense of the word, but because of his deep earnestness, he often moved the students who eagerly sat at his feet. When addressing the church assemblies and pleading the defense of the old Christian faith, many hearts were moved and many souls were stirred. His conviction, because of its simplicity and humility, was contagious. Those with whom he made contacts, went away from his presence with new ideals, new aspirations and new determination to fight the good fight of faith. His manner of living was plain and common. With his students he was familiar. On the seminary campus one could often see a group of students around him. At times he would speak of the prevalent problems which the church faced, but often too he would be telling his familiar jokes. On the so-called "Stunt-night," "Das," as he was called, would often entertain the "Boys of the Seminary." Even though his jokes had often been heard before, he would repeat them in such a way that they were new every time they were told. The students would applaud and laugh. "Das, tell us another one,--tell us the one about the penny," and Machen, with a broad smile upon his face would start out with another story. He was always ready to entertain and he was always ready to help his "boys." No wonder that he was so loved and admired by the students. He would eat with them at their table, talk with them on the campus, and walk in their company on the street. In one word, he was one with them. He was not married and so he spent his time with his students.

² Cf. The Good Fight of Faith, sermon preached in Pr. em. Mar. 10, 1929, p. 16.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is not to give a mere enumeration of the facts of his life, but is rather to emphasize the molding influences which contributed to the making of this great personality. A true biography must, therefore, be genetic. Personalities must be seen in their genesis and growth.

MACHEN'S PARENTAGE. Machen's ancestors came from England and Wales. He hailed from a devoutly religious family. His grandfather from his father's side was an elder in what is now the New York Ave, Presbyterian Church in Washington. His grandfather from his mother's side was Judge J. J. Gresham. He was an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Macon.

Prof. Machen's father's name was Arthur W. Machen who was born in Washington, D. C. After Machen's father graduated from the Harvard Law School in 1851 he settled in Baltimore where he practiced law continually till the time of his death.³ This occurred in Dec. 19, 1915. He was a very successful lawyer. When he came to Baltimore he had no property whatsoever and inherited none to speak of afterwards. All that he had, therefore, came from his profession. He was an elder in the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church of Baltimore. This is the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., or Southern Presbyterian Church. Above all Machen's father was a profoundly Christian man. He was a man of wide reading and earnest meditation upon the sacred things of holy Faith. He was not of an emotional type but his Christian experience was rather "a quiet stream whose waters ran deep." He was not a superficial ascetic but rather an earnest consecrated Christian. He was very faithful in the observance of the means of grace and attended church twice every Sunday and every Wednesday evening without fail. His services as an elder were characterized by a similar faithfulness.

Even more than to his father, Machen acknowledges his great indebtedness to his pious mother. Miss Mary, or as she was usually called by her friends, Minnie Gresham, was born in Macon, Georgia, in 1849. She lived there till her marriage to Machen's father in 1873. His mother was a woman of rare ability and of immanent piety. He repeatedly refers to her in terms of warm admiration and deep-seated affection. His writings abound with references to the faithful training he received from his praying mother. One illustration will perhaps suffice to bring this out. Speaking of the present-day

³ For this section the author gratefully acknowledges the information received of Prof. Machen's brother, Arthur Machen, attorney of law in Baltimore, and the autobiographic sketch of Machen in "Contemporary American Theology", 1932, p. 245 ff.

ignorance in the modern church, he says, "now I had it fairly straight when I was young, not by attendance upon any sort of school, not by the operation of elaborate schemes of paedagogy, but by half an hour with my mother on Sunday afternoons at home. I could tell you the kings of Israel in order. The kings of Israel are easy because they are all bad but I could tell you just which ones of the kings of Juda were good and which were bad, at a tender age."⁴ In his autobiographic sketch Machen again has warm praise for his mother. He tells us that she was especially a lover of poetry and of nature. During his boyhood days he and his mother would often roam the wide mountains, the woods and the fields. He writes, "I suppose it is from her that I learned to escape sometimes from the heartless machinery of the world, and the equally heartless machinery, alas, of church organisation nominally dedicated to Christ, and refresh my soul with the friendliness of the hills." What Machen admired most of all was [his] mother's deep love for God. He writes, "to her God was all in all, and her access to God she found only through the new and living way that the Scriptures point out. I do not see how anyone could know my mother well without being for ever sure that whatever else there may be in Christianity the real heart of Christianity is found in the atonement of Christ."⁵ The faculty of the Westminster Theological Seminary states,--"the home in which he was reared was a home of culture and refinement, but first of all a home of childlike faith. In that faith of his childhood Dr. Machen continued to live and in the joy of the sufficiency of that faith he died."⁶

MACHEN'S YOUTH. Already as a boy Dr. Machen was a great lover of nature. He and his brother Arthur would climb the White Mountains around their home. This fascination for the hills stayed with him during all his life. His brother tells us that, "he was a great walker and mountain climber, and even the Summer before he died he did some difficult climbing in the Canadian Rockies. . . . He had climbed the Matterhorn, and other difficult peaks in Switzerland and in Tirol. He was a member of the American Alpine club . . . he had a large collection of books on mountaineering." During the latter years of his life he wrote a pamphlet on mountain climbing in which he expresses his profound admiration for the Creator of this great universe.

In Baltimore Dr. Machen attended a private school which was purely secular. "In it," he states, "I learned nothing about the Bible or the great things of our Christian faith." This he had learned from his mother. In his home training the Shorter Catechism was not omitted,--"I repeated it perfectly, questions and answers, at a tender age; and the divine revelation of which

4 Pamphlet. "Is the Bible Right About Jesus" p. 6, 1927.

5 Cont. Am. Th. 19293 p. 248.

6 Cf. The Presb. Guardian, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 187.

it is so glorious a summary was stored up in my mind and heart."⁷

At the age of seventeen years he entered the Johns Hopkins University as an undergraduate student, and in 1901 he received his Bachelor of Arts degree. His brother Arthur writes, "he lead his class throughout his entire collegiate course." After his graduation he took a post graduate course for one year in Greek under Prof. D. L. Gildersleeve whom Machen regarded as one of the foremost classical scholars that America has yet produced.⁸

Machen's contact with Prof. Gildersleeve greatly stimulated his love for the Greek language and gave him the first incentive for the study of the New Testament. He began to aspire to that "far more important field" than the study of Plato and other Greek works. During the following summer he pursued his study of Greek in the University of Chicago.

MACHEN AS STUDENT IN PRINCETON SEMINARY. Machen entered Princeton Seminary in the Fall of 1902. In this he was encouraged by Dr. F. L. Patton who was just coming to the Presidency of the Seminary. Anyone acquainted with the works of Dr. Patton will immediately detect the apologetic note which runs through all of his writings. Dr. Patton's supreme interest was centered upon the defense of the Reformed Faith. This he considered to be of primary importance. Even in his teaching of the Systematic Theology, the apologetic side of the subject received more than usual emphasis.⁹ Dr. Machen loved and admired him.

During his Seminary life he also felt himself especially attracted to William P. Armstrong, the head of the New Testament department of Princeton. Dr. Armstrong afterwards became his most intimate friend. He always regarded Armstrong to be a modern university man of the highest type, who knew how to apply modern methods of criticism to the New Testament. Machen says, "he could arrive to a result confirmatory, and not destructive, of the trustworthiness of the New Testament books."¹⁰

When Machen speaks of Warfield his love and admiration knows no bounds. Warfield's influence on him as an Apologist was decisive. From Warfield he learned "that consistent Christianity is the easiest Christianity to defend, and that consistent Christianity . . . the only thoroughly Biblical Christianity . . . is found in the Reformed Faith."¹¹ Because Dr. Warfield left

7 Cont. Am. Th., 1932, p. 248.

8 Cf. *idem*, p. 249.

9 Cf. Inaugural address of Patton, in *Pr. Theol. Rev.* 11 of Jan. 1904, p. 14.

10 Cf. *idem* p. 253.

11 *Idem* p. 254.

such a marked impression upon Machen's apologetics, it may be well to acquaint our readers a bit more in detail about Warfield's Theology. It has been well said that, "if we wish to put a proper estimate upon Dr. Warfield's work we must fully understand his theological position, and the key to that position is his unfaltering belief in the inspiration of the Old and New Testament."¹² Dr. Warfield held and taught the great doctrines of the Reformed Faith in their integrity. "Dr. Warfield was one of the three masters of the Reformed Theology who was not only loyal to its teachings but also active in its defense, the other two being the late Dr. Kuyper and his successor Dr. Herman Bavinck, both of Amsterdam. . . . He had an exact knowledge of the New Testament Criticism and Exegesis. In his wide linguistic equipment he had the key to the world's best theological literature."¹³ This high regard for Warfield was also shared with Prof. Dr. Casper Wister Hodge in the following tribute,--"we think today of Dr. Warfield, . . . whose recent death has left us bereft of our leader and of one of the greatest men who has ever taught in this institution. I would pause a moment to pay a tribute to his memory. . . . At the time of his death, he was I think, without an equal as a theologian in the English-speaking world. With Doctors Kuyper and Bavinck of Holland, he made up a great trio of outstanding exponents of the Reformed Faith. His loss is simply irreparable."¹⁴

It must be remembered that Dr. Warfield occupied the chair of "Didactic and Polemic Theology." It is, therefore, not by chance that he stressed the value of Apologetics. The question now arises, what was Warfield's view of apologetics? Warfield states, "It is the distinction of Christianity that it has come into the world clothed with the mission to reason its way to its dominion. Other religions may appeal to the sword, or seek some other way to propagate themselves. Christianity makes its appeal to right reason, and stands out among all religions, therefore, as distinctively 'the apologetic religion'. Face to face with the tremendous energy of thought and the incredible fertility in assault which characterises the world in its anti-Christian manifestation, Christianity finds its task in thinking itself thoroughly through, and in organising not its defense only, but also its attack."¹⁵ In his article on "Apologetics" Warfield writes: "it is . . . the function of Apologetics to investigate, explicate, and establish, the grounds on which a theology as science or systematised knowledge of God is possible, and on the basis of which every science which has God for its

12 Cf. Art. by F. Patton on Dr. Warfield, Pr. Th. Rev. July 1921, p. 372.

13 Cf. idem p. 385.

14 Cf. Hodge's Inaugural address on the occasion of his induction into the chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology in Pr. Th. Rev., 1921, p. 1.

15 Cf. Warfield's Introduction to "Fundamental Apologetics" by F. R. Beattie, p. 26.

object must rest, if it be a true science with claims to a place within the circle of sciences. It necessarily takes its place, therefore, at the head of the department of theological science and finds its task in the establishment of the validity of that knowledge of God which forms the subject matter of these departments; that we may then proceed through the succeeding departments of exegetical, historical, systematic, and practical theology, to explicate, appreciate, systematise and propagate it in the world . . . What apologetics undertakes to establish is just this Christianity itself--including all its 'details' and involving its 'essence'--in its unexplicated and uncompressed entirety, as the absolute religion. It has for its object the laying of the foundation on which the temple of theology is built and by which the whole structure of theology is determined. It is the department of theology which establishes the constitutive and regulative principles of theology as a science; and in establishing these it establishes all the details which are derived from them by the succeeding departments, in their sound explication and systematisation.

. . . Though faith is a gift of God, it does not in the least follow that the faith which God gives is irrational faith, that is, a faith without cognisable grounds in right reason. We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in Him,--not even though it be rational. Of course mere reasoning cannot make a Christian; but that is not because faith is not a result of evidence, but because a dead soul cannot respond to evidence. The action of the Holy Spirit in giving faith is not apart from evidence, but along with evidence,--and in the first instance consists in preparing the soul for the evidence . . . Apologetics applies to Christian men the systematically organised basis on which the faith of Christian men must rest. . . . But it is necessary for the vindication of his faith to reason in the form of scientific judgment, that the ground upon which it rests be explicated and established . . . What is undertaken to do is systematically to set forth his knowledge of God as the object of rational contemplation."¹⁶

Now, you ask, was Machen true to his teacher in his apologetics? An examination of his works gives us an unequivocal affirmative reply. In Machen's autobiographic sketch he states definitely that he is in entire agreement with Warfield in this regard.¹⁷ Upon this foundation which was laid by his great teacher, Machen proceeded to build his apologetic structure. In his discussion of "Knowledge and Faith" he takes as his starting point the following quotation from Warfield,--"revelation has as its proximate end the production of knowledge."¹⁸ Repeatedly he declares that

16 'Studies in Theology' by Warfield, 1933, p. 4.

17 Cf. Cont. Am. Theol. p, 254, 1932.

18 Cf. Art. 'Faith and Knowledge' in 'The Fourth Biennial Meeting of the Conference

knowledge is not only an integral part of faith but must be regarded as its very basis.¹⁹ Machen also states that the Holy Spirit often uses a reasoned defense of the inspiration of the Bible to bring men to Christ.²⁰ He further asserts that the philosophy and the historical foundations of our religion are sufficient to produce faith.²¹ He also teaches that "when the fact of sin is recognised and when to this recognition is added a fair scrutiny of the historical evidence then it must seem thoroughly reasonable to believe that Christianity is true. Anyone whose mind is clear, no matter what his personal attitude may be, we think, must accept the truth of Christianity."²² Throughout his works he maintains the primacy of the intellect.²³ In his autobiographic sketch Machen says that "the Christian religion . . . requires and is capable of scholarly defense."²⁴ Our purpose here is not to give a detailed discussion of Machen's apologetics. This will appear in a subsequent Chapter. What we have endeavored to indicate is that his apologetic approach is definitely influenced by the teaching of Prof. Warfield.

Not only Warfield, but the whole atmosphere of the Princeton Seminary undoubtedly contributed to Machen's apologetic interest. It must be remembered that the supreme emphasis upon the field of apologetics has always been one of the marked characteristics of the Princeton Theological Seminary. When the Seminary was first organized the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church resolved to dedicate it to this purpose,--"it is to form men for the Gospel ministry, who shall truly believe and cordially love, and, therefore, endeavour to propagate and defend, in its genuineness, simplicity, and fullness, that system of religious belief and practice which is set forth in the confession of faith, catechisms, and plan of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church. . . . It is to provide for the Church men who shall be able to defend her faith against infidels and her doctrine against heretics."²⁵ That Princeton continued this apologetic emphasis is evident from the inaugural address of Dr. Patton when he assumed the presidency in 1904.²⁶ After Warfield's death Prof. C. W. Hodge struck the same note when he was inducted into the chair vacated by his

of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the U.S. and Canada', bulletin Aug. 4, 1924.

19 Cf. "Faith in God" p. 46, 52, 66, 92.

20 Cf. Address "The Importance of Christian Scholarship" given at Bible League meetings in Westminster, London, June 17, 1932.

21 Cf. "What is Faith", 1935, p. 249.

22 Cf. *idem* p. 134.

23 Cf. *idem* p. 26 and 49.

24 Cf. *Cont. Am. Theol.*, 1932, p. 270.

25 Quoted from Princeton Seminary Catalogue, 1936, p. 4.

26 Cf. *Princ. Theol. Rev.* II of Jan. 1904, p. 14.

predecessor.²⁷ From the above it is more than plain that Prof. Machen's apologetic interest must be largely attributed to the atmosphere of the Princeton Seminary, and that he was especially influenced in this by Dr. Warfield.

STUDENT IN GERMANY. During 1905-1906 he studied at Marburg. His main interests were in the New Testament field of study, and, therefore, he confined his work largely to that department. In Germany it was his aim to acquaint himself with the German thought as much as possible, and so he also attended lectures outside of his immediate field of interest. Mention is especially made of Prof. W. Herrmann, whose lectures he attended. Prof. Herrmann occupied the chair of Systematic Theology at Marburg. Machen states that he wanted to become more familiar with the Ritschlian movement, and, therefore, Herrman especially interested him, because Herrmann was regarded by Machen as one of the representatives of the Ritschlianism at its best even though it is true as Machen observes that "the power of Ritschlianism is deminishing."²⁸ Machen refers to "the contagious earnestness and deep religious feeling" which made Herrmann appreciated and understood by personal contact with him far better than could be done by reading his books.

In the New Testament field Machen attended the lectures of A. Jülicher, J. Weiss, R. Knoph and W. Bauer. During the stay in Germany he regarded Jülicher to be the foremost of these men. In later years, however, Machen changed his mind, in that he appreciated the scholarship of J. Weiss above that of Jülicher. The contact between Machen and Weiss was rather intimate during this time. Weiss invited him to the home and often befriended him in many ways. The general attitude of the German theologians toward the conservative scholars was appreciated by Machen, as there was nothing contemptuous in references to men of entirely different thought.

In Göttingen contact was made with Schürer, Bousset, Heitmüller and Kattenbusch. Bousset stands out among these men as a professor of rare brilliancy and great learning. Machen's admiration for his learning was later increased when Bousset's famous book, "Kyrios Christos" came out in 1913. This work is spoken of as "an original, comprehensive and grandly conceived rewriting of early Christian history," which had not appeared since the time of F. C. Bauer.²⁹ Even though the work of Bousset is admired and appreciated, Machen is convinced that the construction of the whole

27 P. Th. Rev., 1922, p. 13.

28 Cf. Cont. Am. Th. p. 254, 1932.

29 Cf. idem, p. 260.

theory of Bousset is wrong. The refutation of Bousset's views by Machen can be found in his book "The Origin of Paul's Religion."

Machen always reflected upon his stay in Germany with much gratitude. This, he states, was not changed by the European war. His love for the German people and his appreciation for their scholarship is often referred to, even though there is a vast and essential difference between the conclusions reached by Machen and those reached by the scholarship of Germany.

In which way did this liberal theology of Marburg and Göttingen influence Machen? Several facts must here be stated. In the first place his stay in Germany gave him direct and firsthand information in regard to this liberal movement which he later combated. Machen also states that his studies in Germany gave him a new respect for the Princeton theology. When he came back to Princeton, he appreciated more than ever before the thoroughly scientific methods of the Princeton Seminary. He saw with convincing clearness that great scholars like Armstrong and Warfield had not dodged the real questions at issue, but had presented the liberal views with a conscientious honesty which one must admire and respect. Machen also learned from his stay in Germany the scientific methods which the various critics use against their opponents. He made much use of these himself. One of Machen's keenest weapons against his liberal opponents is to answer them out of the mouth of other liberals. In this way he makes one liberal annihilate the hypothesis of another. But the stay in Germany also influenced his Religion. He tells us that it was here that he faced the greatest spiritual struggle of his life. Not that these doubts had never perplexed his mind before, but now they certainly came to their consummation. In the agony of his soul he faced the question, Is Christianity true or is it false? Is it based upon facts or only upon subjective experience? The outcome of this spiritual battle was glorious. His difficulties were solved one by one. Especially Machen's mother must be credited for giving genuine spiritual guidance to her doubting son in the midst of these dark clouds. When faith was restored to its equilibrium he was better prepared than ever before to face the great task of his life in defending the old faith against the liberal criticism.

MACHEN'S SCHOLARSHIP. When it comes to Machen's scholarship, there is unanimity of opinion which as far as I know has never been questioned by either friend or foe. Prof. Casper Wister Hodge of Princeton says, "I not only loved him as a personal friend, but I regarded him as the greatest theologian in the English-speaking world. The whole cause of evangelical

Christianity has lost its greatest leader."³⁰ The faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary speaks of him as "a great Christian scholar," . . . and "a great defender of the faith."³¹ His profound learning also received recognition in Europe. Dr. Mackintosh writes in the British Weekly³² about his book on the Virgin Birth as being "genuinely learned." Prof. F. W. Grosheide of Amsterdam writes at the occasion of Machen's death, "Machen was given us as a man of great stature, a scholar, a Christian, a man who gave his life for the Reformed Faith."³³ It can be truthfully said that Machen put into practice that which he told others about teaching the youth. He firmly believed that education consists in more than a mere training of the faculties of the mind; it also includes the imparting of information. With a touch of irony he remarks that a great pedagogic discovery has been made, "the discovery that it is possible to think with a completely empty head." Machen often deplored the superficiality of which the American has little reason to be proud.³⁴ Machen not only had a high standard of scholarship for himself but also required this of his students.

TEACHING ABILITIES. Pedagogy and educational psychology were not the fields of his specialization, still his ability as teacher in the classroom was recognized by nearly all of his students. One could not help but love and appreciate him. His students honored him as a father in Israel. His faculty-colleagues lament his death as the loss of a "great teacher."³⁵ His work as teacher took the first place amid all his activities. His personality was contagious, and he knew how to instill a genuine love for the subject which he taught. His detailed knowledge of fact and clarity of exposition caused him to be highly regarded by all his students. His vast knowledge of the Scripture, especially the New Testament, and his thorough acquaintance with the modernistic skepticism of the age made his classroom a center of attraction. His students learned of him to know and to believe the Bible as God's infallible revelation and to preach the full council of God in its integrity and simplicity. Having gone through spiritual struggles himself he approached the students' problems with genuine sympathy. His students regarded him not only as their professor, but also as their friend and brother.

30 Cf. The Presb. Guardian, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 139.

31 Cf. idem, p. 188.

32 July 17, 1930, p. 313.

33 De Heralut, Feb. 11, 1937, No 3083: Dr. Machen was ons gegeven een man van groote statuur, een geleerde, een Christen, een man, die zyn leven gaf voor de Gereformeerde belydenis.

34 Cf. Address "The Importance of Christian Scholarship" given at Bible League meeting in Westminster, London, June 17, 1932.

35 Cf. The Presb. Guardian, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 188.

MACHEN'S BOOKS. Of all of his works the foremost was undoubtedly his brilliant defense of "The Virgin Birth", 1930. He made this miracle the study of a lifetime, because in it the supernatural shines forth in glorious splendor. At this point the naturalist and the supernaturalist part company. In this volume he points out that the belief of the church in the Virgin Birth is a fact no one denies. There are two explanations of this belief: either the Virgin Birth is actually a fact, or it is not a fact and the belief of the church is erroneous. Prof. Machen accepts the Virgin Birth as a fact and states his grounds with careful and reasoned explications, but he also examines the alternative theories in an honest and objective way. This book was published in 1930 and is an enlargement of the Thomas Smyth Lectures which he delivered at Columbia Theological Seminary.

His book, "The Origin of Paul's Religion," 1921, resulted from a series of lectures given at the Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. In this work he vigorously defends the "historic Christianity" as the Christianity of the Church throughout the ages; the Christianity which is found in the major Epistles of Paul, the genuineness of which is admitted by all serious historians. Machen shows that Paul considered his religion to be based upon Jesus of Nazareth, one of his own contemporaries who had recently died a shameful death. If Paul was wrong in that, how then did the religion of Paul arise? Machen elaborately reviews the various hypotheses that have been advanced by liberal scholars to answer this question. With arguments that cannot be scientifically resisted Machen exhibits the inadequacy of all naturalistic hypotheses. His conclusion is that the Jesus upon whom Paul's religion is based is no mere teacher of righteousness but a supernatural Redeemer who came to save his church. The Jesus of Paul is the Son of God, the real Jesus who walked upon the earth.

In his book "What is Faith," 1925, Machen combats the anti-intellectualism of the modernist Church,--the false separation between faith and knowledge. Here as elsewhere he defends the traditional faith against the idealistic naturalism with a deep and impassioned feeling. Dr. Machen put the crucial issue with a clearness that could not be improved upon. He tells us that we must choose between two mutually exclusive religions: one is the redemptive religion known as Christianity; the other is a religion of optimistic confidence in human nature, which at almost every conceivable point is the reverse of the Christian belief. In this volume he also tells us what faith is according to the New Testament. This book contains a brief compendium of considerable portions of Christian doctrines. Nothing in the book is more telling than Dr. Machen's protest against modern and superficial suggestions that, instead of receiving and resting upon Christ

alone for our salvation as He is presented in the Gospel, we should follow only the "Principles of Jesus" in our lives and in society. One's heart indeed goes out to a writer who so fearlessly defends the old scriptural doctrine of justification by faith.

"The Christian Faith in the Modern World," 1936, is the title of a book containing popular radio addresses over station WIP. In this volume Machen points the reader to a solid foundation for life in the midst of a troubled time. Such a foundation the writer finds in the Bible. The author first speaks about the Bible as the inspired Word of God and vigorously defends the doctrine of "plenary inspiration." Taking the Bible as the Word of God, the author proceeds to present to his readers what God says about Himself, about the deity of Christ, and about the Holy Spirit.

"Christianity and Liberalism," 1935, was dedicated by Machen to his mother. It is the outgrowth of a lecture delivered before the ruling Elders' Association of Chester Presbytery. In this volume Machen answers the question, what is the difference between modern "liberal" religion and historic Christianity. Machen shows that these two religions are essentially distinct. This he proves by a comparison of the teachings of historic Christianity and of modern Liberalism with regard to God, man, the Bible, Christ, Salvation, and the church.

Besides his Theological works he was also the author of "New Testament Greek for Beginners," which is much used as a textbook.

The final volume appearing from the hand of Machen is "The Christian View of Man," 1936. This book was published shortly after the author's untimely death. It is again devoted to an exposition of the Biblical truths that are contained in the Scripture, interpreted according to the Reformed standards. Also here we have a collection of popular Radio addresses delivered on successive Sabbath afternoons during the Winter of 1935. Machen states in the preface that he 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. In this book he preaches that faith to the present generation. The volume contains addresses on God, the decrees of God, Providence, Miracles, Creation, Fall and Salvation. It was completed and sent by the author to the publisher just before his death.

Machen also engaged in writing a series of expository articles for the monthly journal, "Christianity Today" and later in "The Presbyterian

Guardian" which paper he served as editor till the time of his death. All of his works indicate a decisively apologetic trend of thought and reveal him to us as the staunch, fearless defender of the Reformed Faith.

MACHEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS. Dr. Machen's life was full and varied and great in achievements. For twenty-seven years he was connected with the famous Princeton Seminary, first as student and then as teacher and professor. He lived through the fierce ecclesiastical struggle which centered around the reorganization of the seminary. And when the Presbyterian Synod, held at St. Paul in 1929, took decisions with regard to this matter contrary to Machen's deepest convictions, he together with other members of the Princeton faculty organized a new seminary in Philadelphia, known as the Westminster Theological Seminary. He considered this school as a continuation of what he called old Princeton and to its interest he completely dedicated the closing years of his life. Machen felt that the reorganized Princeton would ultimately forsake the teachings of the Presbyterian standards and compromise with modernism.

During this time the famous mission report "Rethinking Missions" appeared which caused bitter strife and finally brought about the ecclesiastical rupture. Already for years he contended against that which he considered modernism in the mission work of the Presbyterian Church. Prof. Machen considered this report to favor the modernistic wing. He brought an overture to classis New Brunswick which was intended for Synod, in which he stated his objections against the Mission Board accusing it of modernism. The synod of 1933 refused to listen to this complaint. Almost immediately afterwards, Dr. Machen with a group of others organized the "Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions" upon the basis of the Presbyterian standards. Machen was the first chairman and continued to function in that capacity almost till his death.

The General Synod of the Presbyterian Church of 1934 decided that membership in the newly organized Mission Board was incompatible with membership in the Presbyterian Church. The Synod regarded this organization as being revolutionary in character and as undermining and being directed against the official ecclesiastical work. Members of the Independent Board who refused to resign were threatened with church discipline. Machen regarded this decision as an attack upon the principles of Christian liberty and obedience to the Word of God because he felt that by this decision the members of the Presbyterian Church were forced to support a mission which he considered to be modernistic. Machen felt that he could not obey. After a long and bitter struggle he was finally deposed

by classis New Brunswick on the 14th of Feb. 1935. Prof. Grosheide speaks of this ecclesiastical trial as a mockery and severely condemned this action of classis.³⁶ Machen appealed to the General Synod of 1936. This synod however sustained the action of classis against Prof. Machen. On the eleventh of June 1936 the Presbyterian Church of America was organized under his leadership. He was chosen as their first moderator. To the end of his life he dedicated his full energy to this new church. We therefore consider Machen's chief achievements to have been: 1. The organization of the Westminster Seminary, 2. The organization of the Independent Board of Missions, 3. The organization of the Presbyterian Church of America.

MACHEN'S INTEREST. Machen's interest was of a very varied nature. They can all be characterized by this one statement, "Yes, I certainly do believe in Christian apologetics; I certainly do believe in the necessity of the reasoned defense of the truth of the Bible, I have felt it to be my duty to engage in it myself."³⁷ In order to give expression to his deepest conviction, he zealously advocated the necessity of Christian instruction in the church, in the home, and in the school. The last article appearing from his hand in the Presbyterian Guardian is entitled, "Shall We Have Christian Schools?" (Jan. 9, 1937). He was a frequent speaker at the annual Christian school gatherings and constantly championed this cause in his articles and addresses.³⁸

Machen was also deeply interested in the mission work of the church. This was not only evident in his continued zeal for the propagation and spread of the traditional truths in the foreign mission fields but also appears in his different publications.³⁹

He believed that these great Reformed principles which he cherished so dearly should be applied to the present world order. Machen speaks of the Christian religion as being social in its communion between man and man. This Christian religion must dominate the family, the state and the social world. He contended that the enormous difference between modernism and Christianity in regard to the attitude toward society is in the fact that Christianity comes with a positive remedy for all the social evils, whereas modernism has no Christianity to apply.⁴⁰ The present sad state of disorder and confusion in modern society is ascribed to sin, and if sin be the cause

36 Cf. "De Heraut," no. 3083, Feb. 21, 1937.

37 Cf. *The Christian Faith in the Modern World*, 1936, p. 65.

38 Cf. *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 3. Cf. *Faith in the Modern World*, 1936, p. 126.

39 Cf. Art. "The Christian View of Missions" in "Revelation" June 1933; and "Notes on Biblical Exposition" in "Christianity Today" Oct. 1932.

40 Cf. *Christianity and Liberalism*, 1934, p. 155.

then only the removal of sin is the remedy. The trouble with the modern methods of improvement consists exactly in that their program will not work. This is simply because they neglect the soul and the relation between man and the unseen world.⁴¹ The defilement of the home, the destruction of personal liberty, the degradation of the moral life,--these and a whole train of other evils besides,--must be laid at the door of "Liberalism." "Do not be deceived, my friends. The notion that it does not make much difference what a man believes, this notion that doctrine is unimportant and that life comes first, is one of the most devilish errors that are to be found in the whole of Satan's arsenal."⁴² There is only one remedy for the disintegration of human relationship and the disruption of the social world order,--it is the rediscovery of the law of God.⁴³ The present administration of President Roosevelt and the prevailing state of affairs is bitterly denounced. "Today we are fast becoming one of the most bureaucratic countries of the world."⁴⁴ The Child Labor Amendment, the Repeal of the Lusk Laws in New York placing private teachers under state supervision and control, the invalidation of the Nebraska language law making literary education even in private schools a crime--"These setbacks to the attack on liberty are, I am afraid, but temporary, unless the present temper of the people changes."⁴⁵

At this point I should like to clear up a misunderstanding in regard to Machen's attitude toward the liquor question. We quote, "No one has a greater horror for the evils of drunkenness than I, or a greater detestation of any current traffic which has sought to make profit out of this terrible sin. It is clearly the duty of the Christian to combat this evil." When he refers to his negative vote relative to placing the New Brunswick Presbytery on record in regard to the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act, he writes, "It is a misrepresentation to say that by this vote I expressed my opinion on the merits of the 18th Amendment or the Volstead Act,--and still less on the general question of Prohibition. On the contrary my vote was directed against a policy which places the church in its corporate capacity, as distinguished from the activities of its members, on record with regard to such political questions."⁴⁶

When it comes to the relationship of "Christianity and Culture," he states that there are three attempted solutions to this much agitated question.

41 Cf. Ch. Faith in the Modern World, 1936, p. 5 ff.

42 Cf. idem p. 97.

43 Cf. The Ch. View of Man, 1936, p. 230.

44 Cf. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Jan. 1933, Art. "The Responsibility of the Church in Our Age", p. 38 ff.

45 Idem, p. 38.

46 Cf. Public letter of Machen on this question in Westminster Sem. Library.

The first two solutions, namely, to subordinate Christianity to culture and thus make, by the elimination of the supernatural, Christianity merely natural and a human product which then becomes a part of culture; and the opposite extreme of separating Christianity from culture entirely, and regarding the culture of the world as a matter of indifference for Christianity,--both of these find no favor with Machen. Since Christianity and true culture are not in conflict, there is fortunately one solution left, and that is, to consecrate culture to the service of God. "Instead of stifling the pleasures afforded by the acquisition of knowledge or by the appreciation of what is beautiful, let us accept these pleasures as the gift of a heavenly Father. Instead of obliterating the distinction between the Kingdom and the world, or on the other hand withdrawing from the world into a sort of modernized monasticism, let us go forth joyfully, enthusiastically, to make the world subject to God."⁴⁷

MACHEN'S CHARACTER.

Although it is true that his character has been variously estimated, it remains a fact that this in him has been commended by both his friends and those who radically differed from him on almost every point. Prof. W. C. Hodge loved him as a most dear friend.⁴⁸ His students regarded him not only as their devoted leader, but also as a father in Israel.⁴⁹ His fellow professors in the Westminster Seminary faculty, speak of his death with an impassioned pathos which can hardly be surpassed. To them the loss of their chairman and leader was regarded as simply irreparable.⁵⁰ Pearl S. Buck⁵¹ writes, "I admire Dr. Machen very much, while I disagreed with him on every point . . . It was not in him to trim or compromise, to accept any peace that was less than triumph. He was a glorious enemy because he was completely open and direct in his angers and hatreds. He stood for something and everyone knew what it was . . . we have lost a man whom our times can ill spare, a man who had convictions which were real to him and who fought for those convictions and held to them through every

47 Cf. art. "Christianity and Culture", Pr. Th. Rev. yr. 1923, p. 1 ff.

48 Cf. Presb. Guardian, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 189.

49 Idem Jan. 23, 1937, p. 153.

50 Cf. idem, Feb. 13, 1937, also cf. idem, of Jan. 23.

51 Machen had vigorously [opposed] Pearl Buck as missionary in the Presbyterian Church, especially because of her avowed modernism. Mrs. Buck wrote an art. in Harpers Magazine, Jan. 1933, in which she attacks the Christian faith at its roots, and in an art. in the Cosmopolitan, May, 1933, she writes, "What Christ is materially I do not know, and what if He never lived, what of that? Whether Christ has a body or not, whether He had a time to be born in His life and a time to die as other men have is of no matter now. Perhaps it never was of any matter." On May 1, 1933, Mrs. Buck resigned as missionary and a few weeks later the Presbyterian Mission Board accepted this "with deep regret."

change in time and human thought . . . He was worth a hundred of his fellows . . . who occupy easy places and play their church politics and trim their sails to every wind . . . I wish Dr. Machen had lived to go on fighting them."⁵²

With all the good things that have been said of his character I can heartily agree. While student at the Princeton Theological Seminary,⁵³ I had the privilege of studying under him. Through all the contacts which I might make with him I have learned to love him, not only as a great scholar, but especially also as a humble God-fearing Christian. I feel sure that I share this opinion with practically every student who attended his classes. Many of his best friends do think that at times he acted too hastily, but again this was due to his straight-forward character.

MACHEN'S DEATH. On Jan. 1, 1937, Dr. Machen died of pneumonia in Bismarck, North Dakota. He had received a call to present the cause of his church in Bismarck, N. Dakota. He took sick on the train from Philadelphia to Bismarck. When he arrived at his destination he was taken by car from Bismarck to Leith, a distance of seventy-five miles. During this ride it was evident that he was not feeling well. At Leith he addressed a small crowd, but almost immediately after his talk he was stricken with pleurisy. He could not walk up the steps by himself because of the intense pain. From Leith he was again taken to Bismarck with a car. During this trip he groaned much and was in great agony. He sighed, "I can't die now. I have so much to do." They arrived in Bismarck at 7:15 p.m. During that same evening he addressed the audience which waited for him in the hall at Bismarck. Here for the last time in his life he defended the old faith with an impassioned earnestness. After the meeting he almost collapsed. During that night he seemed to improve and on the following morning plans were made to return to Philadelphia. This plan was, however, changed since the doctor had positively refused to grant him permission to go back under these circumstances. Instead he was removed to a hospital in Bismarck. Here his pleurisy developed into the dreaded pneumonia. In the Bismarck hospital he was ministered to by loving hands and everything was done which was humanly possible to save his life. Conscious of his own alarming condition, Prof. Machen now sent telegrams to his loved ones in the far east. Soon his breath was coming hard and his lungs were beginning to fill up. On Old Year's morning a brother minister spent a very pleasant time with him. Together they prayed and together they spoke of the things of God. He ended by saying, "Sam, isn't the Reformed Faith grand?" The nurse said that he was completely resigned to God's ways, and repeatedly

⁵²Cf. The Presb. Guardian, Feb. 13, 1937, p. 187.

⁵³The author attended Princeton Seminary 1918, 1920, and 1921.

told her, "Let God's will be done." From this time on his strength was rapidly failing him. In his sub-conscious coma he would say, "It is alright." He expressed his great longing to see his brother Arthur and sister-in-law who were both very dear to him. Just as his relatives were coming into Bismarck he breathed his last. His last message was sent to Prof. Jn. Murray of Westminster,--"I am so thankful for active obedience to Christ: no hope without it."

His mortal remains were brought first to Philadelphia and then to Baltimore where he was buried with very simple funeral services at both places.

Machen's voice is no longer heard in the classroom and over the air. His earthly course is run and his active life of service has come to a sudden close. His remains lie buried under the Baltimore sods. Yet his influence continues,--"his soul goes marching on."⁵⁴ His unmovable determination, his unfaltering Christian faith, his deep God-fearing experiences, his vast learning and brilliant scholarship,--all this and much more could be added, must leave an impression upon the age which he served. It is still too early to speak of his influence. His books have had a wide circulation in America, Europe and other parts of the globe. About fifteen hundred students sat at his feet and received his instruction. Countless thousands listened to his radio-hour messages and were inspired by his ministry. God will not forsake His blood-bought Church and the most subtle forces of modernism shall not prevail against her, because she is founded upon the unmovable Rock, and that Rock is Christ. God's way is the best way, even though we with Machen often do not understand it. "I can't die now, I have still so much work to do," but in God's wise providence, his work is done and his labors for the church on earth have come to a sudden close.

54 Cf. Calvin Forum, Feb. 1937, p. 147, Art. by prof. C. Bouma.