

April 2023

The Lighthouse

J. Gresham Machen

by Jim Misner

On Wednesday nights we have been examining the life and work of J. Gresham Machen, a champion for Biblical truth in the early 1900's. Machen (1881-1937) was one of the most significant figures in the evangelical church throughout the 20th century. His Biblical vision of the church and Christianity is critical for us today because of the challenges that we face in our contemporary culture.

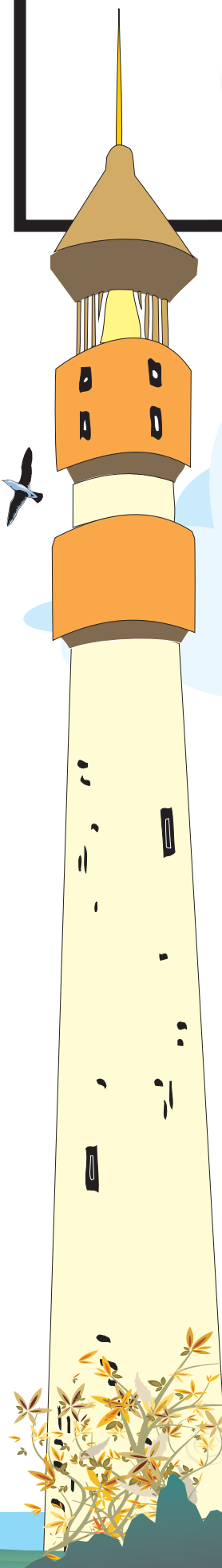
Machen was raised in a Christian home which included careful instruction in the Westminster Shorter Catechism and a commitment to memory of questions and answers. To this, Machen later attributed his love of the noble traditions of the reformed faith as expressed in its classic symbols contrasted with the meager creeds of mere "Fundamentalism." (Stonehouse, J. Gresham Machen, a Biographical Memoir, p 40).

He continued his undergraduate studies at John Hopkins University where he continued to excel academically. He finished a year of graduate study at Johns Hopkins and attended summer school at the University of Chicago, taking courses in banking and international law.

On August 17, 1902, he wrote, "I am still very doubtful about studying economics. I wish that instead of thinking about these special fields, I were lead to something eminently regular - like practicing law. The ministry, I am afraid, I can't think of." (Stonehouse, p 59).

Shortly after this letter was written, Machen met with Reverend Harris Kirk, pastor of Franklin Street Church. He was encouraged to enroll at Princeton Seminary. He enrolled at Princeton in the fall of 1902.

The conservative character of Princeton theology was described as follows: "New Princeton Seminary, it should be said, never contributed anything to the modifications of the Calvinistic systems. She went on defending the traditions of reformed theology. She simply taught the old Calvinistic theology without modification...Princeton's boast, if she had reason to boast at all, is her unswerving fidelity to the thinking of the reformers." (Stonehouse, pp 61-62).



At a celebration at Princeton in 1872, Dr. Charles Hodge said, "They were not given to methods or new theories. I am not afraid to say that a new idea never originated in this seminary. The theological method was very simple; the Bible is the Word of God. That is to be assured or proved. If granted, then it follows, that what the Bible says, God says. That ends the matter." (Stonehouse, p 62). While at Princeton, Machen was taught by faithful Bible scholars such as B. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, and Geerhartes Voss. These men came from Christian Reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Following graduation, Machen traveled to Europe to study in Germany to focus on his development as a scholar, teacher, and writer. In Germany he was confronted with and somewhat influenced by the higher criticism taught by the German scholars. Upon his return to Princeton and to resuming his teaching responsibilities, he shared his concerns with his mentors at Princeton. Dr. George Van Gronigin, my professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theology Seminary, said they advised him, "Teach your students what we taught you." He faithfully carried out his calling, and his faith was revitalized and strengthened. Thus, the foundation which Machen had received at Princeton along with encouraging letters from his mother restored his faith in the Calvinistic and reformed tradition. Needless to say, overcoming these challenges to his faith, prepared Machen for the unique problems that were ahead of him.

Machen's commitment to the Scripture and the traditions of the reformed faith taught to him and embraced by him brought him into direct conflict with the liberal, man-centered direction of the mainline Presbyterian Church which was led by individuals such as Pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of New York City, and missionary Pearl S. Buck. She was the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries to China and author of the award winning book, "The Good Earth". She was an elder in the mainline Presbyterian church in the North, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUSA). In 1861 the Southern Church had left the denomination.

In his efforts to maintain a Bible based missionary effort, he had established the Independent Missionary Board, which brought him into direct conflict with the mainline, liberal denomination. In 1936, he ultimately left the denomination to establish the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which is founded solely upon Scripture. During this period of conflict, Machen left Princeton to establish Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

He was called home by the Lord on January 1, 1937, having died of pneumonia. His valiant fight to uphold Biblical truth contributed to physical weakness that contributed to his death. Ned Stonehouse, his first biographer and colleague, called him "Valiant For Truth" in reference to Machen's courageous character.

Why is this important? We fight similar battles today in the Church of Jesus Christ. The issues today might be a bit different, but the foundation is the same - Scripture! It is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice. Sola Scriptura!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

2 Peter 1:20-21 "Knowing this first of all that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Grace and Peace,
Jim

*Please be in prayer
for our
missionaries...*



Dear friends and family,

This week we received some terrible news. My dad, David Jones, discovered he has pancreatic cancer. It has already spread to his liver and the doctors do not think it is curable. After nearly 45 years of overseas ministry, he has flown back to America to be with family. In the midst of this difficult time, we are comforted by the steadfast love of our Savior. My father's love for Jesus has been a constant in my life from my earliest memories, and he continues to praise and love his Lord and Savior faithfully, in spite of this disease. Both my parents are truly living out their faith boldly and we are so very thankful for their examples.

Bonnie, the children, and I will be flying back to America to be with him while he is still healthy. We leave on Monday. My brother, Ian, and his family will be traveling a few days after us, so please pray for their flight as well.

Please pray for Dad as he starts exploring treatment options in America. We serve a mighty and loving Father, and He can heal this disease if it is His will.

Pray that God will bless this time as my siblings and our families come together to be with my parents.

God bless,

Evan, Bonnie, Charlotte, Lucas, and Aidan

John and Cathy Rug

Mission to the World - Chile



Here in Chile we often hear....ohhhh....it's March. There is sort of a collective moan and an eye roll when this is said. What's wrong with March? Nothing, it's a perfectly good month! But school starts in March (cue student moans) school enrollment and tuition fees must be paid, as well as books purchased, uniforms tried on to see if they still fit, new shoes, new back packs, supply lists which each course requires parents to provide (cue the parental moans) Now add the fact that each March a "Permission to Circulate" tax must be paid by every car owner as well as the obligatory insurance (actually only about \$10 USD which basically covers the burial costs of someone if they are killed in an accident which you caused) and you can see why March is considered a "Perfect Storm" of expenses. (The rest of us older folks moan...but that's because the days are getting cooler and our joints are aching more!)

Unfortunately, there are some moans and eye rolls around the CEMIPRE board. Last week someone stole all the copper plumbing from the water meter up to the building....extra expenses. Now we are looking into installing surveillance cameras to be able try to avoid similar activities as well as possibly the installation of some barbed wire above the gates.

Some disgruntled ex-employees have raise unjust complaints against CEMIPRE, and rather than go through a long and costly court battle, we had to come to a settlement. BIG EYE ROLLS and moans there!

But March is also when things get "back to normal". CEMIPRE has begun clases for the visually disabled. We are thrilled to have several university students doing their internships with us. We have Occupational Therapist, Audiologists, and sometimes Psychologist students which opens up so many new opportunities to serve!

Our church plant Iglesia la Trinidad de Con Con is also gearing up for the new year. Activities such as youth group, university group, women's Bible study breakfast, one-to-one discipleship, and men's activities are all beginning. We see so many ways the Lord has blessed the church while we were in the states. So many new faces, several new babies, and recently friends finally adopted the little girl they have been praying for a long time. John was blessed to be able to baptize our granddaughter Beatriz Joy as well as 2 other babies.



Even through the moans and eye rolls of March, we see God's provision, love and care for us, ITC and in a special way for CEMIPRE. We have been offered a matching funds challenge. Someone is willing to match donations up to \$5000 for CEMIPRE to be able to hire an Executive Director who would focus on finding local funding. Quite honestly, this is something we desperately need. CEMIPRE is seriously underfunded, and this would be a huge help. Please pray the Lord will bring in those funds before November which is the cutoff date. Please consider if the Lord would have you help us meet that goal.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.

**Donations Address:
Mission to the World
P.O. Box 744165
Atlanta, GA 30374-4165
John and Cathy Rug #16511**

**John's Chile phone: +56 99 243-7867
Cathy's US phone: +56 99 549-9284
Skype number (free call from US to Chile!) (636) 614-1411**

**John's email: jrug.mtw@gmail.com
Cathy's email: cathyrugf@gmail.com**



BIRTHDAYS for APRIL

Elizabeth Moseley 3rd

Norman Bagby 9th

Kay Pringle 15th

Rosemary Bailey 17th

Marilyn Kooienga 17th



Carol Roch 4th

Virginia Horn 12th

Janet Selig 16th

Joan Gauthier 17th

Ken Pennell 29th



Dates to Remember for April

April 1 Men's Breakfast at 8:00am in the Fellowship Hall

April 2 Communion

April 2 Palm Sunday

April 5 Ladies Circle at 9:30am in the church parlor

April 6 Maundy Service at 6:00pm

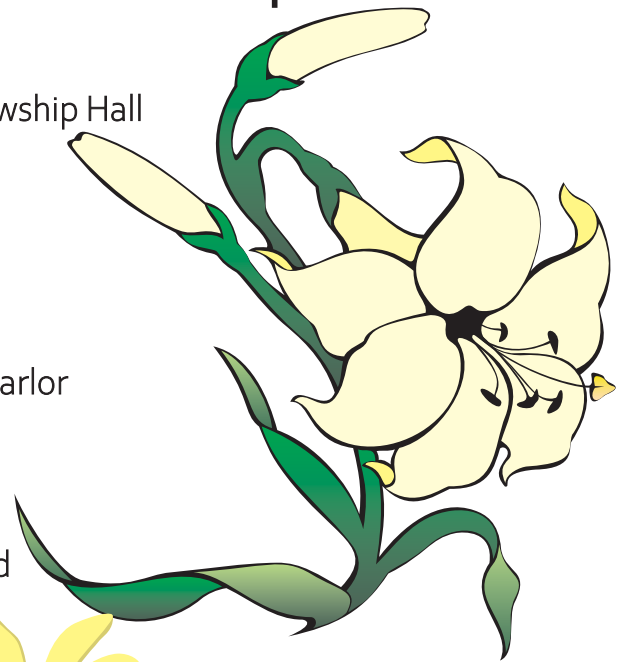
April 7 Good Friday, church office will be closed

April 9 Easter

April 16 Monthly Luncheon after the worship service. Please bring a dish to share

April 17 Deacons Meeting at 5:30pm

April 25 Session Meeting at 6:00pm



New Sunday School Class beginning April 16th.

Elder Aaron Smith will be leading the class.

Topic : The four states of man

Summary: In this class we will study the 4 states of man described in the bible (pre-fall, fallen, redeemed and glorified). We will use several sections from the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as the main resource for the study. We will consider human abilities, the divine image and our relationship to sin/evil in each state.

Length: about 8 weeks.

Join us on Sunday, April 16th for a baby shower for the Women's Resource Center. Along with the monthly luncheon, we will have a speaker talking about the work of the resource center. If you can supply some items for the shower, it would be greatly appreciated. Can't make the luncheon, you may drop off your items to the church office. Items in need are: Diapers size 5,6, or 7, Clothing up to 2 years old (can be gently used), Car seats, pack n play. Also, bottles, lotion, baby powder, etc. Anything you can donate will be used. Call the church office for more information.

All are invited to join us for a baby shower for Ashley Pizzari, Saturday, April 22, 11:00am at the home of Chris Smith. Asking for diapers, wipes and books only. Come for a time of fellowship to celebrate Ashley & Mile's new baby boy arriving in June.