

[1964. Luther and Rome. Christianity Today 27 Mar.]

Luther and Rome

Dr. Norman V. Hope, the distinguished professor of church history at Princeton Theological Seminary, seems to be totally unaware that his argument... is an extended example of begging the question.

The official doctrinal standards of Princeton Seminary say, “such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters.” The same standards also say, “The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the Church, and the claim of any man to be the vicar of Christ and the head of the Church, is unscriptural, without warrant in fact, and is a usurpation dishonoring to Christ.”

The original standards, still held by denominations of greater doctrinal fidelity, state clearly, “There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that anti-christ, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.”

Dr. Hope’s article simply assumes, without giving any evidence, that the Roman Catholic organization is a Christian church. But the Apostle Paul argues that a profession of faith in Christ is absolutely useless, if the person trusts in circumcision, the treasury of the saints, prayers to Mary, and the bowing down before idols.

What the eminent professor describes as a decided turn for the better in the relations between “two branches of the Christian faith,” is not to be explained, as he does, by the policies of Hitler and Stalin, but by the decline of the “true reformed religion” to a point at which Romanism can be regarded as a branch of the Christian faith.

Gordon Clark

Professor of Philosophy

Butler University
Indianapolis, Ind.