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CHRISTIANITY TODAY



||| A PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL DEVOTED TO STATING, DEFENDING
AND FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD |||

SAMUEL G. CRAIG, Editor

H. McALLISTER GRIFFITHS, Managing Editor

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Editorial Notes and Comments

AN UN-OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN



THE opening issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY stated that it "will not only be free of all ecclesiastical control but its editors will be free to determine its character and policy according to their convictions." There has been no change in the situation since the statement, just cited, was printed. We mention this because apparently there are those who have gotten the impression that we are more or less of an official spokesman for Westminster Theological Seminary and the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Such is not the case. Neither of these organizations are in any wise responsible for what appears in our columns. It is true that Westminster Seminary has our whole-hearted support and that we view hopefully the newly organized Board for Foreign Missions. But that does not mean that we exist to further their interests. We are just as free to criticize them as we are to criticize any other organizations—and will not hesitate to do so if the occasion, in our judgment, requires it. It should be remembered, moreover, that approval or disapproval of one of these organizations would not necessarily involve approval or disapproval of the other. As we understand the matter Westminster Seminary sustains no closer relations to the Independent Board for Foreign Missions than Princeton Seminary does to the official Board of Foreign Missions. Be that as it may, CHRISTIANITY TODAY is a publication that sustains no official relations with any other organization.

A NEW PRESBYTERIAN WEEKLY?



THE PRESBYTERIAN ADVANCE of February 22nd gives publicity to the fact that "definite and earnest movement is on to establish a new Presbyterian weekly." The occasion of this otherwise premature publicity is the fact, frankly stated by its editor, that *The Presbyterian Advance* is itself facing discontinuance because its income from subscriptions and contribution is no longer sufficient to meet the costs of publication. It had been tentatively decided to discontinue *The Advance*, we are told, at the end of February, but when it was learned that an effort was being made "to start a new paper, somewhat different, but standing for the same principles and spirit which *The Advance* has sought to manifest" it was decided to continue *The Advance* "until the outcome of the new effort is definitely known." In case the effort is successful *The Advance* "stands ready to turn over to it its list and 'good will'." We are told that most of the sponsors of this proposed new paper

are in New York and Philadelphia but apart from that we are left in ignorance as to their identity.

We cannot say that we share the eagerness of the editor of *The Advance* to have the new paper established but that is only because this new paper, if established, will be modernistic in character. In our judgment there is no legitimate place for such a paper in a Church that is definitely committed to the Bible and the Westminster Standards as is the Presbyterian Church. No doubt, if the new paper is established, it is planned to make it an even more effective organ of Presbyterian modernism than *The Advance* has been. This means, it seems to us, that those who still hold in all earnestness and sincerity that the Bible is the Word of God, and as such the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and who think that the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism contain the best summary of its teachings yet penned by man, should redouble their efforts to maintain our heritage and to pass it on undiminished to those who shall come after us. CHRISTIANITY TODAY stands ready to be used more fully for the furtherance of this end. In order that it may do so, however, additional funds must be supplied us. We are in no immediate danger of being forced to discontinue but we lack funds for anything like adequate promotion work. CHRISTIANITY TODAY is not operated for private profit; in fact, is so organized that it cannot be. We have no hesitation, therefore, in urging those who are in sympathy with our efforts to aid us by special contributions, in as far as they are able, and in any case to do what they can to bring the attention of the paper to others. What we want more than money is more subscribers. In fact, we want more money mainly because it will help us to get more subscribers. We are confident there are many thousands who would appreciate CHRISTIANITY TODAY who as yet are ignorant of its very existence. Extra copies will be sent free to those willing to place them in the hands of possible subscribers. Please help us to lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes (Isaiah 54:2).

THE PROPOSED MERGER WITH THE UNITED PRESBYTERIANS



IT is with mingled emotions that we view the proposed merger of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and the United Presbyterian Church of North America. We hold the United Presbyterians in high esteem. In our opinion, as a group they are more soundly Evangelical and probably more soundly Calvinistic than those who constitute the more common variety of Presbyterians. We believe, therefore, that the merging of these two churches would result in a single church in which there would be a somewhat larger proportion of truly Bible-believing Christians than exists in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. at the present time. Hence we could well wish that the pro-

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sented as having obtained a "sense of well-being," of having become "clean" through confessing her sins to those she had wronged (pp. 120-121) with no mention of the cross of Christ or the regenerating activity of the Holy Spirit. We do not know as that any members of the "Oxford Groups" have expressed approval of this book, but unless they condemn it as in effect a libel of their teachings it seems to us that it confirms the judgment expressed by Dr. N. B. Stonehouse in his article entitled "Buchmanism and the Gospel" in the January issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY to the effect that the gospel of Buchmanism is other than the Gospel of Christ.

Perhaps something should be said about the charge of intolerance that this book makes against the Southern Presbyterian Church for not permitting men like Dr. Roderick to occupy its pulpits. If what we have said about the book is even approximately true, this means that its author holds that a church established for the worship of Almighty God and instruction in the Christian religion according to the Westminster Standards is sinfully intolerant if it does not allow individual ministers to preach their own gospel (p. 94) even though their gospel be quite other than that taught in said Standards. The mere statement of such a position is its sufficient refutation. Suppose a paid lecturer of the Association for the Advancement of Atheism should be converted to historic Christianity. Is it supposable for a moment that this Association could be justly chargeable with unwarranted intolerance if it refused to permit this paid lecturer to preach such Christianity under its auspices? To talk about suppression of free thought in this connection (p. 164) is merely an attempt to confuse the issue. The Church makes no attempt to prevent a man speaking "the truth as he sees it" (p. 171), but in as far as it is loyal to its Great Head it will not allow a "gospel which is not another" preached under its auspices. Men are as free to preach what they regard as truth as the winds are to blow, but why they should think that their liberty is curtailed because they are not permitted to be paid for preaching it under any and all auspices, we are quite at a loss to understand. Liberty of speech is gained at too great a cost if gained at the price of honesty.

It is natural, no doubt, that Dr. Jacobs should picture his heroes as superior in courage, honesty and intelligence to those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that the system of doctrine taught in the Bible finds its best expression in the Westminster Standards. The former may be the equals of the latter as far as courage and honesty are concerned *if*—but only *if*—they forsake the Presbyterian Church in all its branches. If, however, such men as the Dr. Roderick of this story remain, or even attempt to remain, in the Presbyterian Church, we think they are conspicuously lacking in both courage and honesty. That as a class they are intellectually the superiors or even the equals of orthodox Presbyterians we do not admit. The Dr. Roderick of this story does not impress us as a man of great intelligence or as one who is intellectually alive in any marked degree. Had he been, he would hardly have said after having passed his fiftieth year, "I have never really believed in anything, in anybody, or in myself" (p. 80). Not only that, but he would not, under the influence of a callow theological student, a movie actress and a superficial popular preacher, have embraced as "new" a type of religion that is no longer honored by leaders of religious thought. Men like Dr. Roderick to the contrary notwithstanding, the orthodoxy they condemn is and, we are sure, will continue to be a vital factor in the religious life of mankind long after the "religion of Jesus" they commend has only an historical interest. Be that as it may, it is our contention that the greater our knowledge and the stronger our powers of thought the more probable it becomes that we will accept the Bible as the Word of God and the Westminster Confession of Faith as setting forth the system of doctrine taught in God's Word. It is, in our opinion, little more than buncombe to allege that the fact that men

reject the Reformed Faith is evidence that they are "brilliant thinkers, well educated; in fact, too well educated" (p. 99).

It is Dr. Jacobs' contention that "the movie can be made the most powerful agency for good on earth" (p. 236). Clearly this statement as understood by Dr. Jacobs includes the notion that the movie can be made the main agency in spreading true religion since he regards religion as the world's most vital need (pp. 214-215). The measure of our agreement with this notion will be determined by the measure of our agreement with his notion of what the essence of the Christian religion is. If the Christian religion is essentially a way or manner of life and if all that man needs is noble ideas and ideals, it is conceivable that the movie offers the best means of commending these ideas and ideals to the world of which we have any knowledge. But if the Christian religion be not merely a manner of life but a life based on a message—a message that has to do with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in the New Testament meaning of those words—and man needs in addition to ideas and ideals relief from the guilt and power of sin in and through the God-man, it is utterly impossible to commend what is most essential to this religion by means of the movie, that, in fact, it cannot even be attempted without sacrilege. This is not to say that the movie may not be made a potent factor in shaping the culture and civilization of the future, but it is to say that it can never become a real substitute for the Bible and a witnessing Church. Here as elsewhere our basic difference with Dr. Jacobs has to do with the question, What is Christianity? What he regards as Christianity is something diametrically different from what we call Christianity. If what he calls Christianity is true, what we call Christianity is false.

We regret the necessity—provided we were to write about this book at all—of writing as we have written. Sufficient justification would seem to be afforded if it be true, as we think it is in a case like this, that "perfect candor is perfect kindness" (p. 20). Dr. Jacobs was the youngest as well as one of the most brilliant of his class. He is therefore still a relatively young man. This encourages us to hope that further thought will lead him to come to himself, that long before reaching the end of the road he will be found feeding his soul not on the husks of Liberalism, but on the fatted calf of evangelical Christianity.

An Important Archaeological Discovery

By the Rev. Prof. Oswald T. Allis, Ph.D., D.D.



AT Khorsabad, in the vicinity of ancient Ninevah, a discovery has recently been made which is of great interest to Bible students. It is a cuneiform tablet which contains the names of the ninety-five kings of Assyria whose combined reigns cover a period of about fifteen hundred years (cir. 2300-750 B. C.). The special value of this tablet lies in the fact that it is perfectly preserved and gives the length of the reigns of these kings as well as their names. It should therefore furnish the material for an exact chronology of this long period which begins several centuries before the time of Abraham and extends to the birth of Hezekiah. A good deal is already known about the chronology of this period from other sources. But the material hitherto discovered has been both fragmentary and incomplete. Just how far the new tablet will confirm the more or less tentative conclusions which have been already arrived at with regard to the chronology of the early period and to what extent it may necessitate the revision of some of them will not be known

until the tablet has been carefully studied. In any event this discovery is one of the most important that have been made in the field of ancient chronology since Rawlinson published the Eponym Canon in 1866. Chronology is the backbone of history; Assyrian chronology is the backbone of the history of Western Asia. Its importance for the Old Testament is obvious. Since this discovery was made by the expedition of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, it was a fitting and gracious act on the part of the Iraq Government to permit Professor Breasted to bring it to this country temporarily. It is to be hoped that its publication will take place in the near future.

Cooperation with the Boards and Agencies of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

By the Rev. Roy L. Aldrich

Minister, Central Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Michigan



UCH emphasis is being placed these days upon the duty of loyal Presbyterians to support the official boards and agencies of the denomination. As a loyal Presbyterian minister, I desire to point out why such support is not forthcoming from me or from the church that I serve.

My ordination vows were taken without mental reservation. I "believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice." I promised sincerely "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church; whatever persecution or opposition may arise on that account."

The Word of God teaches that Christians are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. It teaches further that we are to have no official fellowship with the man who denies the doctrine of Christ.—II John 9-11. In other words the Bible teaches that to support either morally or financially, any organization, institution, or individual not believing the gospel, is a betrayal of Christ. I have tried to observe this principle and I have tried to co-operate with the boards and agencies of my denomination and behold the result. I am now an ecclesiastical anarchist.

The General Assembly continues to recommend that a certain small per cent of benevolences go to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ of America. The church I serve cannot comply with that recommendation because of the definitely modernistic personnel and program of the Federal Council.

A few years ago our Christian education money was given through the Board of Christian Education to a small Presbyterian college. The president of that college visited our church and supplied the pulpit for a Sunday. His messages were typically modernistic, and so the session immediately voted to withdraw support from that college. Now our Christian Education money goes to the Evangelical Theological College of Dallas, Texas, and to Westminster Seminary of Philadelphia—both institutions that stand clearly for evangelical truth.

The Board of Christian Education recommends certain graded lesson materials for the Sunday School. Our Sunday School cannot use these helps (?) because they are either liberal in the theology or lacking in any positive evangelical teaching. Our Sunday School has been forced to go outside of the denomination to find suitable lesson helps.

For the past two years our Women's missionary study groups have had to find their mission study books outside of the lists

recommended by the boards. The books recommended have been either definitely modernistic or lacking in the positive missionary message.

The church I serve has been a generous contributor to National Missions through the Board of National Missions. A large part of this money is spent in the local presbytery to help pay the salaries of a number of mission pastors. One of these mission pastors recently wrote me a letter containing his modernistic confession of faith. Now we shall have to make some other disposition of our national mission money, because we do not have five cents to give to the salary of a man who preaches a different gospel.

Dr. J. Gresham Machen, in his brief, "Modernism and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.," has exposed the modernist activities of that Board. As far as I am aware, the specific criticisms in Dr. Machen's brief have never been answered by any official or representative of the Board of Foreign Missions. Dr. Cleland B. McAfee in his booklet, "The Major Christian Enterprise" in giving suggestions as to how to deal with criticisms of the missionary enterprise, writes on page 18—"Some (criticisms) can be definitely denied. Some things alleged against missionaries and missionary administrative agencies are not true." This statement by the noted secretary would lead one to believe that criticisms so widely circulated as those of Dr. Machen, would be immediately answered if not true. The fact that they have not been answered or specifically denied seems to prove that they are true.

How can wholehearted support be given to the Board of Foreign Missions when part of its work seems to be the promoting of modernism in foreign lands? How can the missionary enterprise even be supported in prayer under these conditions? The Year Book of Prayer suggests that prayer be offered for certain missionaries each day of the year. The list one day may contain the names of true gospel missionaries, but perhaps the next day we are asked to pray for some Christ-rejecting missionary like Mrs. Pearl Buck. To co-operate with the Board we must pray for the Lord's servant one day and for the Devil's servant the next day. The fact that Mrs. Buck has resigned does not alter the situation, as we have no assurance that other missionaries do not hold her views.

The General Council of the General Assembly recently sent a booklet to all pastors containing "A Plan for the Quickening and Enrichment of the Spiritual Life of the Church." Surely, it would seem, all could unite in supporting such a program. However, when we examine the list of books and pamphlets recommended as being helpful "in making the spiritual emphasis more vivid," it is soon discovered that the spiritual advance contemplated is different from anything recommended in the Word of God. The books are written either by modernists or men with no positive Christian message. For example, the book on "Evangelistic Preaching" is written by Dr. H. S. Coffin, a man who doesn't believe in evangelistic preaching as it is taught in the New Testament. Under the heading, "Leadership Training," we find a bulletin recommended which is published by the International Council of Religious Education, a notoriously modernistic organization. A study course called "Our Presbyterian Church" is written by the well known modernist and signer of the Auburn affirmation, Dr. W. T. Hanzsche. To any Bible-believing church or pastor it is evident at once that this plan for spiritual advance is not worth the paper upon which it is printed.

In the face of this continuous and ever-increasing modernistic program of our denomination, we are asked to co-operate with all the boards and agencies. *Is it not about time to ask our boards and agencies to begin to co-operate with the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church?* Either this must happen or the long delayed division in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. will be the only solution of the present complex and unsatisfactory situation.