

CHRISTIANITY TODAY



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

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Published monthly by
THE PRESBYTERIAN AND
REFORMED PUBLISHING CO., Inc.
501 Witherspoon Bldg., Phila., Pa.

MID-FEBRUARY, 1934
Vol. 4 No. 10

\$1.00 A YEAR EVERYWHERE
Entered as second-class matter May 11, 1931, at
the Post Office at Philadelphia, Pa., under the
Act of March, 1879

Editorial Notes and Comments

STATEMENTS BY DRS. STEVENSON AND McNAUGHER



WHILE reserving discussion of the proposed merger of the Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian Churches for future issues, a word should perhaps be said now about statements that have recently been issued by two of the most prominent members of the Joint Committee on Organic Union.

The significance of DR. McNAUGHER's statement—he is president of the Faculty of the United Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Pittsburgh—lies in the interpretation he places on the retention

in the Plan of Union of *The Confessional Statement* as "an historical interpretative" statement of the United Church. "Its clear recognition," he writes, "as having interpretative character scarcely lessens its influential value as an exponent of Reformed theology. . . . It will remain permanently in the foreground as a teaching symbol." This statement by DR. McNAUGHER, it will be seen, is in full harmony with the view expressed by DR. MACHEN in the last issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY as to the place that this far-from-sound Confessional Statement will have in the United Church, if the merger is accomplished.

DR. STEVENSON's statement, while informing, is characterized by a looseness of expression that is surprising on the part of the chairman of the Committee that represents the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in this matter. We refer especially to what he writes about the "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith," adopted by the General Assembly of 1902, and the Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church adopted by its presbyteries in 1925. His allusions to these are certainly confusing if not flatly misleading. After stating that the purpose of the United Presbyterians in adopting the "Confessional Statement" was the same as that which led our Church to adopt the "Brief Statement," viz., "to instruct the people and to give a better understanding of our doctrinal beliefs," he goes on to say that the difficulty occasioned by the fact that the "Confessional Statement" had been adopted by the presbyteries of the United Presbyterian Church "was happily solved by the willingness on the part of the United Presbyterian members to give to their Confessional Statement the same status as our Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith." Such is not the case. As a matter of fact, what the Plan of Union does is rather to give the "Brief Statement" the same status as the "Confessional Statement," i.e., the status of a document that has been adopted by the presbyteries. As matters now stand, the "Brief Statement" merely has the standing of a deliverance of the General Assembly. If, however, the Plan of Union goes through, it will have a status similar to the amend-

ments that were made to the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1903 and the Declaratory Statement adopted at the same time. In that case, both the "Confessional Statement" and the "Brief Statement" will have the status of "Historical Interpretative Statement," formally adopted as such by the presbyteries; and this will mean, if DRS. McNAUGHER and MACHEN are right—we think they are—that they will be more or less authoritative interpretations of the Westminster Standards in the United Church. Before we can judge as to the wisdom or unwisdom of the Plan of Union, it is imperative that we know what it involves. DR. STEVENSON's statement scarcely furthers such an understanding.

"A FRIENDLY STATEMENT"



THE Presbytery of Chester recently adopted, by a unanimous vote, what it terms "a friendly statement" to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. That statement may be found in our news columns.

While called a "friendly statement," we are not sure that the Board of Foreign Missions was particularly elated by its arrival. It proceeds throughout on the assumption that many have lost confidence in the Board's loyalty to the gospel and that it is imperative that the existing situation be remedied if there is to be that "restoration of confidence" that will lead "many" Presbyterians again to turn their missionary gifts into Presbyterian channels. The things which are mentioned as necessary before confidence can be restored to "the minds, the hearts and the purses" of many of the members of the churches of Chester Presbytery—no doubt the same holds good of most other presbyteries—are not things of minor importance; rather they are all things of major importance.

What we are at a loss to understand is how the members of Chester Presbytery can suppose that the mere removal of what it calls "the principal obstacles" in the way of restoring full confidence in the Board will accomplish that result as long as the present personnel of the Board is retained. In our judgment there must be a house-cleaning in the Board before anything like full confidence in the Board on the part of thousands of Presbyterians can be restored. A board under which the things complained of by Chester Presbytery could take place is hardly a Board that can be trusted to carry on the foreign missionary enterprise of the Church with clear and strong emphasis on "the final, all-sufficient, revealed, and exclusive Gospel of salvation through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Something more is needed than a mere acknowledgment of wrong in the past and a promise to be good in the future. Such proposal reminds us of a passage in the radio speech that MR. LAGUARDIA, Mayor of New York City, made on the evening of February 1st, to wit: "The head of

Westminster Seminary After Five Years!

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

Professor of Old Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary



WHEN Westminster Seminary was started in the summer of 1929 grave misgivings were expressed with regard to the advisability and practicability of the step which was then taken. Even some of those who were fully aware of the significance of the reorganization of Princeton Seminary, who understood that it meant the muzzling of its witness by the ecclesiastical machine, doubted whether the starting of such a seminary as was proposed could or should be undertaken. Union Seminary had broken away from ecclesiastic control a generation ago for the purpose of being definitely modernist; and it had been eminently successful in its aim. But could a seminary organized independently of such control for the purpose of remaining conservative, of holding faithfully and boldly to the historic faith of the Presbyterian Church in the face of the present modernist drift,—could such an institution prosper? Was so hazardous an undertaking really necessary?

A tentative answer to this question was given when the new Seminary was organized in the summer of 1929 and began its work with a faculty of eight members, four of whom had been teaching at Princeton at the time of the reorganization, and with fifty students, half of whom had followed their professors into the new school.

A more convincing answer is given by the record of the years that followed. In the spring of 1930 the new Seminary was incorporated with a governing board of thirty-three men, the majority of whom belonged to the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., although the Southern Presbyterian Church and the Christian Reformed Church were also represented. The first class was graduated with thirteen men. The three classes which have been graduated since bring the total of graduates up to forty-nine. In addition to the regular three-year course, a graduate year of study was provided at the beginning of the second year of the Seminary's life and twelve students have received the graduate certificate. When all those who have studied at the Seminary for a longer or shorter period are included, the alumni of Westminster now number about a hundred. The increasing influence of the Seminary is further shown

by the fact that while in its first year thirty colleges and thirteen states were represented, the present student body comes from forty-three colleges and twenty-three states.

Of the graduates of the Seminary all but two are in the pastorate or in missionary work: thirty-three are in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), seven in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, two each in the Southern Presbyterian Church, and the Northern Baptist, one each in several other evangelical denominations, and eight on the foreign field.

Several have large churches, with about a thousand members. Most of them have made modest beginnings. But whether it be to small or large congregations they are preaching the Word and winning souls for Christ. The enrollment of the Seminary for the current year is eighty-four; twenty-two of these are seniors and four are graduate students.

This simple statement constitutes an impressive demonstration of the fact that there are students who want to study at Westminster and that there are churches which want pastors who have done so. This is most gratifying.

The reasons that students come to Westminster are various, but the most important is this: they believe in the stand which the Seminary is making for intelligent and aggressive orthodoxy in an age of intellectual indolence and cowardly compromise in matters of Christian faith and practice. They know that

Westminster Seminary stands for a Bible-believing, Bible-knowing and Bible-proclaiming ministry—for intelligent, informed and enthusiastic contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They are men of conviction when they come and they leave with their convictions deepened and their "faith of childhood" not destroyed, but strengthened, matured and informed, the faith of men of Christian stature and experience. They know that creedless Christianity is no Christianity at all, and while some of them are not members of the Presbyterian and Reformed family when they come, those who enter the Presbyterian ministry, as most of them do, are convinced and prepared to maintain that the Westminster Confession of Faith sets forth the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture.

Some of these students make no small sacrifice in order to come to Westminster and their enthusiastic loyalty is a



The Rev. Oswald T. Allis, Ph.D., D.D.

constant inspiration to their teachers. For after all is said the final test of the worth of a theological seminary is the kind of men that it sends forth into the Lord's vineyard. Westminster Seminary is ready to stand or fall by that test. She is preparing men to enter the Presbyterian ministry who are loyal to the Standards and loyal to the Word. Whether they are and will be loyal to ecclesiastical authority depends and will depend upon the loyalty of that authority to the Standards and the Word, to which it and they are alike committed.

As to the needs of the Seminary, they are few and simple.

From the ecclesiastical machinery of the Church, its boards, agencies and courts, the Seminary asks no favors, only fair play. It is willing, more than willing, to have its graduates stand on their merits; and unless unfair and unlawful means are taken to exclude them from Presbyteries and pastorates within the Presbyterian Church, the record of the past four years indicates that they will win their way and that the Lord will own and bless their labors and make them fruitful in His service. To all lovers of true liberty, of the freedom of the Gospel, Westminster Seminary appeals against the tyranny of organized authority, whether it be that of a majority or of a minority, over the hearts and consciences of men, in violation of the Standards of Presbyterianism and the teachings of the Word.

To all those who believe in the things for which Westminster Seminary stands, for which she is loved and for which she is hated, Westminster appeals today for continued and cordial support. She is encouraged to do so by the response which has been made to past appeals. Like many far older and richer institutions she is carrying on in a period of great depression and uncertainty. One of the clearest signs of God's hand in her affairs, is the fact that the Seminary was started, when it should have been started, if it was to be started at all, immediately after the reorganization of Princeton. Had cautious counsels prevailed the Seminary would not have been started before the depression; and, humanly speaking, it would have been impossible to start it after the depression got really under way. Through the generous support of its loyal friends the Seminary has not merely existed, it has grown: fifty—fifty-five—sixty-three—seventy-five—eighty-four, the increase in enrollment is the most obvious measure of that growth. The Seminary is also out of the "red": it has never been in the red. This is remarkable. It gives reason for thanksgiving and praise to God for His abundant mercies. But if the Seminary is to keep out of the red; far better stated, if it is to grow, if it is to do to the full the work that ought to be done, it needs not only to keep the support of all its present friends but to add to their number. Money is needed for endowment and equipment. But the most urgent need is for current expenses. These are kept as low as is compatible with good work. But no educational institution can run of itself, least of all a theological seminary. A few large gifts would ease the burden greatly. But more important are the many small ones by individuals

or by churches, gifts which are the expression of prayerful, ardent devotion to a great cause.

What the future may have in store we do not know. If, as many hope and as we would all fain believe, the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and other denominations whose standards commit them to loyalty to God's Word, can yet be brought back to that loyalty which is in many instances an empty word, the larger the number of men who go forth from Westminster, the surer and the speedier will be the realization of this hope. If the time is near at hand when division will prove to be the only escape from unworthy and sinful compromise, then the conservatives in the Church will have in Westminster Seminary, in its alumni, its students, its faculty, its friends, a great rallying centre, the nucleus of a continuing Presbyterian Church.

The future is in the hand of God. It is not for us to solve its problems in advance. It is for us to maintain and proclaim, and to aid to the utmost those who are maintaining and proclaiming, the pure Gospel of the grace of God, that this priceless heritage, which has been preserved for us even at the cost of blood and tears by the faithful who have gone before us, may be kept by us and handed on, uncorrupted and unimpaired, to the generations that may come after us until He comes.

Laymen's Missionary Report, 60 A.D.

By the Rev. Charles Granville Hamilton
Rector of St. John's Church, Aberdeen, Miss.

[This arresting and original satire was first published in *The Living Church* and is reprinted by permission. When it appeared in that publication it was signed "The Laymen's Committee." The author, the Rev. C. G. Hamilton, has sent us the list of names appended to the letter.]

The Laymen's Committee, sponsored and financed by the generosity of the Church of Laodicea, has just released its far-reaching findings. All first-century minded thinkers who are not in bondage to the remote past and to literalistic conceptions of religion will find solace and strength in its stirring words. To rethink missions is the supreme task of all who would meet the problems of today.

The report strongly emphasizes the poor quality of personnel which so hinders progressive work.

"The idea of sending ignorant Galilean fishermen as messengers in this intellectual age is absurd," said the report. "These men of no scholarship, scarcely literate, lacking in grace of manners and person, prone to petty bickerings, are totally unequipped to face the intelligentsia.

"They are very credulous peasants with no special background and are utterly scorned by the rich, powerful, and learned citizens and scholars through whom alone our message can be extended.

"And a 'convert,' with all the implications thereof, who calls himself by the nickname of 'Paulos' is probably the worst of these products of indiscriminating selection. A