

CHRISTIANITY TODAY



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

SAMUEL G. CRAIG, Editor

H. McALLISTER GRIFFITHS, Managing Editor

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

AUGUST, 1935

\$1.00 A YEAR EVERYWHERE

Vol. 6

No. 3

Entered as second-class matter May 11,
1931, at the Post Office at Philadelphia,
Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Editorial Notes and Comments

THE ATTEMPT TO CRUSH WESTMINSTER SEMINARY

THERE is reason to think that an organized attempt is being made to crush Westminster Seminary by making it impossible for its graduates to be installed as pastors of Presbyterian churches. The statement is made on good authority that DR. VANCE, Moderator of the last Assembly, asserted at Cincinnati in the presence of others that it is planned to have a key man in every presbytery, whose responsibility it will be to see that every effort possible is made to prevent Westminster graduates from being licensed, ordained, or installed. This assertion attributed to DR. VANCE, however, merely confirms what there was already ample reason to believe, viz., that in a considerable number of presbyteries there are selected men to whom has been assigned the duty of making it difficult, if not impossible, for Westminster graduates being placed in charge of churches within their bounds. As yet, relatively little success has attended these efforts because of the demand there has been for the type of men that have studied at Westminster. At the present time there are probably proportionately fewer of the graduates of Westminster without charges than those of any other seminary. At the same time they have not been without success—notably so in some instances—and such success as has attended these efforts has apparently emboldened their sponsors to think that they can attain a much larger measure of success in the future. At any rate we think it unquestionable that an organized attempt is being made to prevent Westminster graduates from obtaining churches with the ultimate end in view of crushing this institution.

This attempt to crush Westminster Seminary is not made on the ground that its graduates are, as a rule, poorly equipped for the work of the ministry. It is even widely admitted that its graduates as a class are conspicuous for their scholarship and their evangelical zeal. Neither is it made on the ground that Westminster Seminary is not under ecclesiastical control. If such were the case those who are responsible for it would be equally zealous to prevent the installation of graduates of Union Seminary of New York City, for that Modernist institution is as little under ecclesiastical control as is Westminster. There can be little doubt, it seems to us, that the dominant reason for this attempt to crush Westminster is the fact that its trustees and faculty and, for the most part, at least, its graduates are opposed to the Modernism and indifferentism that are so rampant in the Presbyterian church of today.

The means most generally employed to keep presbyteries from receiving Westminster graduates is to try to make it appear that no man should be received who is not willing to vow undying allegiance to the boards and agencies of the church. It should be obvious to all, however, that strict insistence on this condition would exclude all worthy men from entering the ministry of the

Presbyterian church. No one who places loyalty to God above loyalty to men can possibly give a blanket promise to support the boards and agencies of the church not merely as they are now operated, but as they may be operated in the future. Even if it be granted for the sake of argument that these boards and agencies, as at present constituted and operated, are one hundred per cent. sound, it would still be true that any man, no matter from what seminary he may have graduated, who vows undying loyalty to the decisions of church councils as a condition of entering the ministry, proclaims to the world that he is unworthy of the office to which he aspires. That apart, it should not be overlooked that presbyteries act in an unconstitutional manner when they insist on loyalty to the boards and agencies of the church as a condition of reception to their membership. The unconstitutionality of such an act was reaffirmed by the last Assembly when it declared *judicially* in the Blackstone-Kauffroth case that "a Presbytery cannot be required to add to or modify the Constitutional requirements for licensure."

In connection with these attempts to keep the graduates of Westminster from being received by presbyteries, it is usually alleged that the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions is a child of Westminster Seminary. This is done for the purpose of transmitting to Westminster graduates whatever prejudice may exist against the Independent Board. It is even alleged that to license or ordain a Westminster graduate is to approve, in some degree, of the Independent Board. This allegation is not only false, but also obviously unfair, irrespective of the question of the wisdom or legality of the Independent Board. It obtains superficial support from the fact that two of its eight professors and five of its twenty-nine trustees are members of the Independent Board. As a matter of fact, however, there is absolutely no official relation or even any identity of interests between these two organizations. Approval of the Seminary does not necessarily involve approval of the Independent Board or *vice versa*. It may be true that most of the members of the Independent Board approve of the Seminary, but it is by no means true that all the faculty and trustees of the Seminary approve of the Independent Board. There is no more reason, *per se*, why a graduate of Westminster Seminary should withhold approval of the boards and agencies of the church as they are at present constituted and operated than the graduate of any other seminary. Nothing could be more unfair than to seek to saddle Westminster graduates with any and every prejudice that rightly or wrongly exists against the Independent Board.

The judicial decision of the last Assembly which declared that presbyteries may not add to or modify the Constitutional requirements for licensure also affirmed that presbyteries are under "a solemn contract with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to see that the Constitutional requirements are fully complied with." None the less it cannot be intelligently denied that this contract is treated by many of the presbyteries as a scrap of paper. Take, for instance, the action of the Presbytery of Morris and Orange

The Comfort of the Scriptures

By the Rev. David Freeman, Th.M.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Cor. 8: 9.)

AN AMAZING grace this. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is beyond human comprehension.

Is it realized how rich He really was? All His riches He possessed with the Father before the world came into being. He was full of all riches.

All holy creatures loved and adored Him. Hear what Isaiah saw when he beheld His glory: "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

It was from all eternity the will of God that every creature should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. The brightest seraphs bowed down before Him. The highest angels found their chief joy in always beholding His face. He was their Creator. Every holy creature loved Jesus with his whole heart and strength. Was this not a treasure for Him to prize? Who can tell what infinite joy this love to Him afforded?

Besides, His Father loved him. This is the truest of all riches. In Prov. 8: 22, 30 we read: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. Then I was by him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

None ever enjoyed the Love of God as Jesus did. It is true, God loves the holy angels, and He loves believers with the same love with which He loves Christ. Still there is an infinite difference between love of the Father to believers and Christ. Believers can only contain but a few drops of the love of God, but Jesus could contain all the infinite ocean of the love of God, for His bosom was infinite. He only could contain an infinite love in all its fullness. He was rich in the full outpouring of the Father's love from all eternity.

Whatever of power, glory, riches, blessedness, the Father had, dwelt with equal fullness in the Son; for He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

But being so rich He became poor. He left the hallelujahs of the heavenly world for the manger at Bethlehem. No angel bowed before the infant Savior who was all the while God. The world knew Him not. Ah! what a change was here, from the infinite joy of His Father's love. Instead of wanting nothing, He became a helpless child, in want of every-

thing. Later, few believed in Him—He that was adored by myriads of heaven. The hills and valleys heard His cries and bitter agony. He that was God over all, blessed forever, could say, "I am a worm, and no man."

How could He become poorer than he became in His death? Once every face was veiled before Him; now rulers deride Him, soldiers mock Him, thieves rail on Him. Once God loved Him without a cloud between, now there has gone over Him a stream of infinite wrath. *This was poverty.*

What did he do this for? "For your sakes," for those "without strength," for the "un-

godly," for "sinners," and for "enemies" He did this.

Is this not good news for the most wicked of men? Only believe. Who is there that cannot trust his salvation to such a one as the Lord Jesus? Can so rich and glorious a being fail if through faith he undertake our salvation?

Not to come to Christ is to despise His grace and to sin against the love of God.

"Ungrateful sinners! whence this scorn
Of God's long-suffering grace?
And whence this madness, that insults
The Almighty to His face?"

Letters to the Editor

[The letters printed here express the convictions of the writers, and publication in these columns does not necessarily imply either approval or disapproval on the part of the Editors. If correspondents do not wish their names printed, they will please so request, but all are asked kindly to sign their names as an evidence of good faith. We do not print letters that come to us anonymously.]

Disgraceful Doings

To the Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY:

SIR: On June 17th the Presbytery of Philadelphia, urged on by Dr. J. B. C. Mackie, of Northminster Church, refused ordination to Mr. Clark Evans, of the Grace Presbyterian Church, because he held unconstitutional the mandates of the General Assemblies of 1934, 1935, in re the Boards of Foreign Missions, and could not pledge conformity.

Has it come to this in the Presbyterian Church that a man is not allowed to have his own opinion?

Why should a good, capable Christian young man be shut out of the ministry because he believes, with many of us, that the General Assembly erred in its deliverances? Mr. Evans is a cultured, scholarly young man, consecrated to the work of preaching Jesus Christ and his salvation to a lost world, with a field in the west asking for his service, and he ready and willing to go and do a sacrificial work. He is sound in the faith, and accepts the Confession and Form of Government heartily. To refuse such a young man entrance into the ministry out of prejudice and bitterness is an act of shameful injustice, too shameful for language to express. The perpetration of such injustice will receive the condemnation of God and men. Satan must be highly pleased that the church itself shuts the mouths of its own witnesses.

No man is in duty bound to obey these mandates of the General Assembly, but rather ought to disobey them and oppose them, because there is not a syllable of constitutionality about them, and because they contravene the inalienable rights of humanity. Any man or set of men has a right to organize a Board of Missions ad libitum, and in free America no man or church has any right to interfere. All men are born with

the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Give an American his rights, and such a right is inalienable and indisputable.

Dred-Scott decisions that contravene human rights cannot be allowed by conscientious men and should be resisted. They may be exacted by brutal force and majorities, but that is tyranny and injustice, the method of the highwayman.

The Supreme Court of the United States has just declared that the Congress has no right to violate the Constitution. The same is true of the General Assembly. It is itself bound by the Constitution of the Church, and cannot make laws by arbitrary mandates. Every Presbyterian knows this to be true, and any such mandate is null and void.

If the Board of Foreign Missions wants the support of the church, all it has to do is to be worthy of it. Good men will always respond to a good cause. But when the General Assembly attempts coercive measures it only defeats its own cause. It is making a sorry mistake in adopting such tactics, and the world will never approve of its action.

Yes, be worthy of the confidence of the church. The grievances complained of have not been remedied. Contrary to much vociferation, constitutional methods have been tried, by overtures to the General Assembly, and they have been ignored. That is what gave rise to the Independent Board—refusal to redress evils. It is meaningless to say: Bring charges of heresy if there be such. How can a man bring charges of heresy against a man in another presbytery? And how can charges of heresy be brought against a whole board for its joint action?

The Moderator of the Assembly was unduly emphatic about what he called "unestablished charges." Is it an unestablished charge that the Assembly over which he presided re-elected to the Board of Foreign Missions some men who are advocates of "Rethinking Missions," and members of the

Modern Missions Movement? We think that is established beyond doubt, and only affords another reason for the existence of the Independent Board. Let the official board wash its hands of such complicity if it wants the confidence of the church.

DAVID S. CLARK.

Genuine Miracles

To the Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

Sir: The best definition of miracle I have ever seen was in the *Presbyterian*, of Philadelphia, before that paper modified its policy. Here it is: "A miracle is an event in the natural world, brought about by the direct act of God, with, or without, the use of natural agencies."

I believe the primary object of nearly, if not all, miracles, is evidential. The secondary object is compassionate. Even these are referred to for evidential purposes. A miracle is wrought by spirit acting on matter. I cannot recall any instance in the Bible where this is not the case. Can any reader of this paper cite an instance?

Often the new birth is called a miracle. There are spiritual laws as well as natural laws. When prayer, which is spiritual, is offered for the conversion of a soul, which is spiritual, it is spirit acting upon spirit, and acts according to spiritual laws. It is, therefore, not a miracle.

The word miracle is used so promiscuously these days that it has lost much of its evidential power; and this is the great essential now needed.

G. M.

A Wrong Emphasis

To the Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

Sir: Few people will deny that we are passing through a period of unusual stress, uncertainty and doubt politically, socially and religiously and of course nearly everyone is wondering why this condition exists and what the reason is for this state of affairs. Many are the reasons given and these are generally based on the fundamental idea each one holds of his own relation to society in general.

However, we are supposed to be and call ourselves a Christian nation and if this be true then the Bible is or should be the foundation on which we should build our argument for a solution, because all our political, social and religious activities should be inspired and guided by its teachings.

Notwithstanding the fact that we have been warned time and again by God that disobedience meant suffering the penalty we have, in the latter years especially, seemed

to get away from the teachings of His Word and the old so-called Puritanical ideals and have substituted some of our modern ideas and principals of action which do not prove from results that we have made a very wise choice. Now it is natural to enquire what has brought about this falling away from the principals which formerly we felt were so important to our individual and social welfare.

Our guide tells us that the early church made up of the disciples was given the authority and command to go out into all the world and preach the gospel and to no other body was the command given and this was their main business and task. Has she made good? Far from it and herein lies the answer to our present difficulties. Wherein has the church failed? Perhaps the most satisfactory answer would be the mention of some of the present activities of the church and then see if they measure up to the original command of our Lord.

How much of the preaching of today is real gospel preaching and exposition of the Word as it relates to our everyday duties as Christians? We go to church and hear *ethical lectures* on war and politics and sociology and psychology and biography and adventure and discovery and book reviews (some of which some of us don't think worth reading) and honesty in business, and peace and ad infinitum and very little about sin and salvation and a Saviour.

Is this in line with our Lord's command? If the preaching were the kind that really changed men's hearts and so inspired them that they would go out and really live the Christ life more nearly, commendable conduct would result and be the natural outgrowth of the Christ within. We can never expect the church to have real power until the pulpit resounds with real gospel preaching required by the great commission and men are called to repentance or in other words preaching that men are hungering for and would really rather go to hear than play golf. Really a lot of the sermons must be made on Saturday afternoons on the golf links. You can't blame men for not wanting to go to church and hear over again what they have read during the week. It may be said that ministers are catering to the popular demand. That may be in many cases but they went to the seminary and were supposed to learn what they *ought* to do and therefore should teach the church what it *ought* to know.

There is a great dearth of knowledge on the part of church members at large as to their beliefs and duties due largely to the lack of real Bible preaching.

Back in the early part of the nineteenth century Charles G. Finney visited a certain city and there resulted from his preach-

ing a wonderful revival, especially among the better educated class. It is said that 1500 people from a population of 10,000 joined the Presbyterian churches alone and that for several years afterward the courts had very little to do and the jail was practically empty. The gospel in the hearts of men makes good citizens.

The administration of the church at present is far from what it ought to be to properly back up the real preaching of the gospel. There are too many men holding office in the church today that have no real idea of what the church's task is. They do not take a church paper that is really true to the faith so as to keep informed and this class, together with the "hierarchy," are in the driver's seat today and in some instances are using their power in a most shameful manner.

In some cases ministers have taken solemn vows of belief in the basic doctrines of our Presbyterian Church and then signed a statement practically repudiating such belief and then because some of our leaders believe a vow is a vow and insist on common honesty among their brethren are "cracked down" on because they feel the law of the church should be upheld. How can any real power come to the church when such conditions exist?

It would seem that in the Christian Church this ought to have been approached in the Bible way (Gal. 6:1). There is no place for bitterness or dishonesty in the church. If a minister takes a vow to certain beliefs and then changes his mind or repudiates his vow and continues preaching in that church, what has he to say to a business man about honesty in business?

There are so many drives and movements and meetings and conferences and multi-fications of machinery now that we have no time for real helpful church work. Someone has said that our "machinery has swallowed our message." In many instances these organizations or federations require salaried officers and large operating budgets that so drain our finances that the result is our missionaries have to take a cut in their already meager salaries and our mission work has to be curtailed. Too much overhead.

With these conditions *in the church* we can never get much relief from the mess in which we find ourselves. Now, if ever in the world the church ought to be a real help but we are simply reaping what we have sown and until we confess our sins to Almighty God and change our program to be in harmony with His will we cannot expect to be led out of this wilderness.

We cannot serve two masters.

"Them that honor me I will honor."

A LAYMAN.