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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.
501 Witherspoon Bldg., Phila., Pa.

MID-NOVEMBER, 1933
Vol. 4 No. 7

\$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 3, 1879

Editorial Notes and Comments

"EXTREME FUNDAMENTALISTS"



HIS paper is often spoken of as the organ of the "extreme fundamentalists" in the Presbyterian Church. At times the phraseology is varied and it is spoken of as the organ of the "extreme conservatives." In either case there is an attempt to convey the impression that this paper is the organ of the narrowest and most reactionary element in the Church. While we are not greatly concerned over the fact that men apply these epithets to us, especially since we are confident that the contents of

this paper from month to month supply any needed refutation as far as our readers are concerned, it may not be out of place to make one or two remarks about them.

In the first place, this paper is not an organ of "Fundamentalism" unless it be understood that the word is used in its broad sense as an antonym of the word "Modernism." In that sense we are "Fundamentalist" and rejoice to be classed as such. "Modernism" in any of its consistent forms of expression, we look upon as a form of religious thought and life that lacks everything distinctive of real Christianity. This means, therefore, that when employed in this broad sense the word "Fundamentalist" includes all those who hold to the Christianity of Christ and His apostles, as it found expression in the Bible and as it has found more or less adequate statement in the great historic creeds. It is true, of course, that the word is often used in a narrower sense as when it is used, for instance, to designate those who belong to the World's Fundamentals Association and who regard the brief creed of that or some similar organization as adequate. We have great sympathy for "Fundamentalists" in this less inclusive sense of the word and rejoice in their testimony to the Bible and the Gospel it contains. In our judgment their testimony is not so much false as inadequate. It seems to us that we stand for all they stand for and more. Be that as it may, what we stand for is the Reformed Faith as it has found expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith. We stand not merely for the five doctrines in that Confession that the Auburn Affirmationists have denied or declared unessential, but for that Confession as a whole. In all heartiness and sincerity we have accepted that Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture. In our judgment it is not a narrow, one-sided expression of the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture that meets us in the Westminster Confession of Faith; rather it seems to us the fullest and most adequate statement that has as yet come from the hand of man of all that enters into the substance of and gives content to the religion we profess and

which must be conserved if Evangelical Christianity is not only to persist but in some measure to conquer the world.

It is hardly necessary to add that we regard ourselves as "extreme conservatives" as little as we do "extreme fundamentalists." We do not object to be called "conservatives." We admit the charge. What we deny is that the genuine "conservative" is a reactionary or stand-patter. Rather we claim that "conservatism" is a condition of true progress. The trouble with the so-called "progressive," as a rule, is that he does not discriminate between motion and progress. Moreover, it should be remembered that while the "conservative" thinks of Christianity as a "deposit," as a faith "once for all delivered to the saints," he thinks of it at the same time as a dynamic, as an energizing force in human life. The Christ in whom he trusts is not an inert Christ and the Christianity he professes is not a quiescent thing, but an omnipotent energy that will continue to turn and overturn until all the promises of God are fulfilled. It would be more accurate, we think, to call us consistent conservatives. That, at least, is what we seek to be. It is a consistent body of truth, not a hodge-podge that meets us in the Westminster standards.

IS THE INDEPENDENT BOARD "CONSTITUTIONAL"?



Press reports are to be credited, DR. JOHN MCDOWELL, Moderator of the 1933 General Assembly, has apparently been making a tour of the country proclaiming "that the Presbyterian Church is a constitutional church," and strongly hinting, if not directly stating, that the organizers of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions are violating the provisions of that constitution.

It is hardly likely that anyone of intelligence will fail to see the irony in this sudden concern on the part of the Modernist-indifferentist coalition (as expressed by DR. MCDOWELL and others), for the constitution of the Church. That constitution has been trampled underfoot of Modernists for a generation, while their indifferentist friends have stood by dangling their bonnets and making no protest. Whenever modernists have been challenged for this, their cry has been "Liberty! Liberty! let us have liberty in the Presbyterian Church!" This is neither the time nor the place in which to expose the speciousness of their desire for doctrinal license, although asked in the sacred name of liberty. All that is needed at the moment is to remember the fact.

Now that Modernists and indifferentists find themselves in a (perhaps temporary) majority in the courts of the Church, what then? Where is the loud cry for "liberty"? We listen for it in vain. The "tolerance," the "liberalism," the "sweet Christian charity" of other days has quietly drifted to the limbo of forgotten things. So far as the Modernist-indifferentist coali-

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The Function of the Chair of Practical Theology

By Professor R. B. Kuiper

The inauguration of the Rev. R. B. Kuiper as Professor of Practical Theology in Westminster Theological Seminary took place in the chapel-room of the Seminary on Tuesday, October 24th. No public inauguration service was held; but at the meeting of the Board of Trustees, and in the presence of Trustees, Faculty and Students, the professor-elect read and signed the pledge prescribed by the Constitution of the Seminary. He then spoke briefly as follows.

Mr. Chairman, Trustees, Faculty, and Students:



COUNT it an honor, a great honor, the greatest honor of my life to be associated with so scholarly and so godly a group of men as that which constitutes the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. However, that was not my reason for accepting the Board's invitation to the chair of Practical Theology. I did so in hopes that, by collaborating with my distinguished colleagues in the defense and propagation of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, I might contribute something, were it only a little, to the honor of Him who is not served by human hands as though He needed anything and yet is pleased to employ such earthen vessels as are we in His service.

Allow me now to disclose in part my conception of the task of the incumbent of the chair of Practical Theology at this institution and in this day. It goes without saying that the brief statement which I am about to make is in no wise intended to aspire to the dignity of an inaugural address. In the very few moments at my disposal I cannot treat my subject with anything approaching comprehensiveness. All I can hope to do is to say a few important things pointedly. Let me add that I shall state the case by way of contrast and yet positively.

One of the chief causes of the present decadence of the Church of Christ lies, without a doubt, in the decadence of preaching.

Not a few so-called ministers of the gospel have had the temerity to strip the gospel of its supernaturalism. They deny the Saviour's supernatural birth, His supernatural resurrection, the Deity of His Person, and consequently supernatural salvation. This is "a different gospel which is not another." Here the scathing denunciation of the Apostle Paul applies: "But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any other gospel than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."

Others there are, and they are very numerous, who preach an inconsistent, an attenuated, an adulterated supernaturalism. They say, for instance, that God has indeed made salvation possible for all men by the death of His Son on the cross, but that it remains for the individual sinner to make salvation actual in his case by the voluntary deed of faith and self-surrender, of which every man is abundantly capable. They teach that God offers man a chance to be saved, not that He saves; more precisely, that God gives to every human being the opportunity to save

himself. They forget that faith is a gift of sovereign grace, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. They deny the emphatic teaching of Holy Writ that, while man is, to be sure, a responsible being, salvation from beginning to end is the work of God.

And then there are those who sincerely mean to preach the full gospel of the grace of God and yet somehow fail to declare the whole counsel of God. Perhaps they "ride a hobby," stressing one truth at the expense of many other important teachings of the Word. Or mayhap they are so greatly worried lest they preach "over the heads" of their hearers that their sermons become an insult to the intelligence of God's people. Instead of providing solid meat for the saints, they serve only milk for babes, greatly diluted milk at that, and in doses of perhaps two or three teaspoonfuls a week. They are afraid to bring exegesis and systematic theology into the pulpit. Because the preacher in the pulpit fails to teach, the people in the pews remain ignorant. Besides, the splendid custom of former generations of preachers to indoctrinate the covenant youth through catechetical instruction has gone almost entirely by the board. The inevitable outcome is with us: for want of knowledge the Church is perishing.

I consider it the solemn duty of the chair of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary to teach young men, called of God to the ministry of the Word, to preach that gospel beside which there is no other, the supernatural gospel of Him who declared: "I am the way and the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me," and whose Name is the only one under heaven that is given among men wherein they must be saved; to proclaim this gospel in unadulterated form, in crystalline purity and clarity; to declare the whole counsel of God without fear or favor, in order that lost sinners may be brought to the foot of Calvary's cross and the people of God, built up in their most holy faith, may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Another potent factor in the decadence of the Church of today has to do with the government of the Church.

The basic Biblical principles of Church Government are being lost sight of and often are actually denied. They may be said to be two in number. The formal principle of Church Government is the authority of Holy Writ. Its material principle is the absolute monarchy of Jesus Christ over His Church.

From these principles it follows that Christ's will as expressed in His Word is law for the Church, and His will alone. No man or group of men, no church council,

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The Comfort of the Scriptures

A Devotional Meditation

By the Rev. David Freeman, Th.M.

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matthew 28:20.

HOW these parting words of the Lord have been cherished by His disciples in all ages! No less are they held dear now.

The Lord and Saviour who redeemed us has not left us. He is as near to us as He was to those with whom He companied.

In our Great Deliverer we have a Great Keeper. Our life continues to be His care. He has not left us to make out as best we can.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," we often say, but the new difficulties appear to be too much. They worry us. Many a surging sea the Lord has brought us safely over but the new experiences of hunger and thirst and weariness seem to baffle us and appear to be too much for God.

How weak is our trust and feeble our confidence! Can the Lord forget His own? Sooner can a woman forget her sucking child than the Lord can forget those who trust Him.

May we say that God hath forgotten to be gracious? Not if we "remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

Let us with the Psalmist talk of God's doings and we shall see His salvation before our eyes.

We have no doubt heard of the man who died trying to bear the burden of three days with the strength of one. There are many who die of the troubles they fear.

Not until we come right up to the impassable river does the Lord enable us to go over. God shall then cut off the tide that might overwhelm us. Not before then. But then a complete deliverance is certain. It has never been otherwise for the people of God.

"Lo, I am with you always," is a promise that cannot fail, for He who made the promise is vested with all power in heaven and in earth. Faith always lays hold upon the promises of God.

How useless were those fears after we have seen the goodness of the Lord. They robbed us of peace and hindered our growth in Christ. Those fears were only Satan's snares to make us halt in our journey to the Celestial City.

Every misgiving and doubt has no foundation in a world over which the God of Jacob governs. He has revealed Himself as a God of refuge to His people.

God is always a very present help in a time of trouble.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

The Function of the Chair of Practical Theology—Concluded

has the right to subtract from the law of Christ or to add to it. Rules and regulations made by the Church itself and not based directly upon the law of Christ may or may not be conducive to good order, but never may they bind the conscience. This is the great principle of Christian Liberty in which the Reformers of the sixteenth century gloried and for which our forebears were willing to give their life-blood. The same principle will have to inspire us if we are to contribute aught toward the reformation of the Church of today whose glory is so rapidly departing.

One of Christ's laws for the Church I shall name. It is the law of Church Discipline. He has commanded the Church, after loving and patient but fruitless admonition, to banish from its midst such as lead ungodly lives, to be sure, but also those who teach ungodly doctrines. The apostles were wont to obey this law and so was the Church of succeeding ages in the brightest periods of its history. But what is the Church doing today? Instead of expelling teachers of false doctrines it frequently elevates them to positions of honor and influence. Besides, in order to swell its membership it has welcomed into its communion large numbers of men and women and children who have hardly so much as the semblance of a claim to Christianity. Small wonder that the faithful are sighing: "Ichabod!" Small wonder that the world has largely lost its respect for the Church and that the Church is rapidly losing its self-respect! Small wonder would it be if He who stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, out of whose mouth proceeds a two-edged sword, and whose voice is as the voice of many waters should presently remove many a candlestick from its place!

I consider it the sacred duty of the chair of Practical Theology to acquaint the future ministers of the Church with the law of Christ for the Church and to bend every effort toward making them enthusiastic for wholehearted and exclusive obedience to this law.

The fiery Savonarola once flung this stinging indictment at the leaders of the Church: "In the primitive Church the chalices were of wood, the prelates of gold; in these days the Church hath chalices of gold and prelates of wood." Who will deny that this description applies in large measure also to the Church of our day?

May God give us ministers, not of wood, but of gold. Better than that, may He give us ministers who, like Stephen of old, are full of faith and the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and to demand recognition of the kingship of Christ over

the Church which He bought with His blood.

May He give to us a part, be it only a small part, in the preparation of such men for so glorious a task.

And when we sigh, as is certain to occur often: "Who is sufficient for these things?," may our heart ever reply: "Our sufficiency is from God."

The Ark in the Temple of Dagon—Continued

a ministry not confined to non-Christian peoples, it is the imperative responsibility of Christianity to each generation of its own adherents. It is equally imperative as an objective in rearing children in the Christian home. Each child must be so guided and trained that he by his own choice enters the gateway of the Christian faith and personally shares in its experiences and convictions."

"Thus when Christians approach Jews, it is not at all with the notion that they are heathen or followers of a false faith, but as a people with whom we have much in common, whose heritage we share. We approach them on the same basis as other members of the Christian community, or even as our own children." (Italics mine.)

"No real Christian seeks to separate the Jew from his past or his people, or to rob him of his heritage. He has no desire to build up the Church or his particular denomination at the expense of the synagogue. His chief desire for his Jewish brethren is the return of the long-lost child to Israel, the recognition by His race of the greatest Jew of History. Under His leadership will surely be written the grandest chapter in Israel's glorious history."

"It should also be said that while Christians are convinced that they have a contribution to make to their Jewish neighbors, they are well aware that Jews also have contributions to make to Christians. They cannot but remember the lasting obligations they are under from the ancient Jewish past for their Scriptures and the Christ. *But Jews have a later heritage of religious experience and idealism* which it would be to the great profit of Christians to share. And when we look around us and see the tasks which belong to us in common and feel the impact upon us of a materialistic civilization, we are in full accord with the desire of Dr. Lazonby that some way may be found to go forth unitedly in the Name of God to call people to repentance, and to His service. If the pathway has not yet been discovered, it will doubtless be revealed in time to men of good will who are unremitting in their search and who loyally follow the Great Shepherd of the Sheep."

How refreshing to turn from this labyrinth of confusion and uncertainty to the sure and positive and unhesitating words of the Apostles and early Christians in their