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## A STEP TO AVOID

**W**HAT was the really decisive step in the long downward march of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. into its present condition of hopeless corruption? Was it the union between the Old and New Schools in 1869? Was it the union with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church so ruthlessly forced through in 1905-1906? Was it the decision of the General Assembly in 1910, refusing to sustain the complaint against licensure of certain Union Theological Seminary students? Was it the return of the Modernist-indifferentist forces to full power in 1925 after the brief interruption to their rule which had been caused by the moderatorship of Dr. Clarence E. Macartney? Was it the destruction of the orthodox Princeton Theological Seminary in 1929 and the substitution for it of the very different institution which now occupies the old buildings and bears the old name?

Well, any one of these events might perhaps lay claim to the unenviable distinction.

But we are inclined to think that another event may also conceivably lay such claim. The more we review the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the more we are inclined to think that perhaps the really decisive step in the downward path was the adoption of the amendments to the doctrinal Standards of the Church in 1903.

We hold that grave view of the amendments for two reasons.

In the first place, the amendments are bad in themselves. Mr. John Murray has shown that very clearly in the last number of *THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN*. Even in themselves, and quite without reference to the

purpose for which they were adopted or the results that came from them, they do tend to obscure the great central Reformed doctrine of the grace of God.

In the second place, these amendments are shown to be disastrous by their effects in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Their evil effects have been manifest throughout the entire subsequent history of the church, and they became manifest with particular clearness just after the adoption of the amendments. The amendments were the decisive factor in the accomplishment of a very disastrous church union, the union between the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Just consider for a moment the situation which prevailed between 1903 and 1906, when the union was being accomplished. Here were two churches. One of them, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., had a distinctly Calvinistic creed; the other, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, had an equally distinctly anti-Calvinistic—namely, Arminian—creed.

Well, those two churches came together on the basis of the doctrinal standards of one of them—the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Did that mean that the Cumberland Presbyterians, formerly holding the Arminianism so plainly set forth in their creed, repudiated that Arminianism and returned to the Calvinistic fold? No, we are afraid it meant nothing of the kind. The Cumberland Presbyterians who came into the union were very careful not to say that their uniting with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. meant any such essential change in their doctrinal convictions. What they did say, in effect, was that the 1903 amendments to the Standards of the

Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. brought those Standards into such essential harmony with the Cumberland creed that the obstacles to organic union were removed.

The truth is, the amendments were so worded as to catch in the church-union net two classes of persons. In the first place, they caught the orthodox party in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. That party interpreted the amendments as not modifying essentially the Calvinistic character of the Standards. In the second place, they caught the large indifferentist element in the Cumberland Church. They were held by that element to have tempered the supposed harshness of the Westminster Confession of Faith and so to have brought it into essential harmony with the Cumberland creed.

Was there ever a more wretched compromise, even in the history of modern indifferentist church-unionism?

But what shall we now do? Shall we, when we come to adopt the doctrinal Standards for The Presbyterian Church of America next month, have anything to do with such ambiguous excrescences upon a truly Biblical creed as those which are found in the 1903 amendments? God forbid! If we do that, we are planting the deadly seeds of indifferentism and decay in the very heart of our church's life. Instead, let us stand firmly, without compromise or ambiguity, on the basis of the great system of doctrine that the Bible contains—the great system of doctrine that is set forth in the Westminster Catechisms and Confession of Faith.

### A HARD CHURCH TO GET OUT OF

**T**HE gentlemen in control of the ecclesiastical machinery of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. seem to be rather difficult to please.

When we were in that church these gentlemen told us that if we did not agree with their policy we ought to get out. Certainly that was the general impression that was given as to their attitude. "If you do not like our Board of Foreign Missions," they said in effect, "you have a perfectly good remedy; you can simply withdraw from our church and be in a church whose agencies you can conscientiously support."

Well, we have now done as they desired. We have withdrawn from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

One would think that they would rejoice in this solution. One would think that they would rejoice in getting rid of the "troublemakers" at last. They might conceivably state, in recording our departure, that we have departed under sentence or under charges; but surely the departure itself would have to be recorded,

and recorded with satisfaction on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities.

Very different is what has actually happened. We are put down in the recently published *Minutes* of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. with asterisks or other marks of distinction opposite our names to indicate the divers penalties of suspension from the ministry, temporary suspension, or deposition purported to have been inflicted upon us. Now the strange thing is that in many of these cases the dates of the purported infliction of the penalties, as shown in the *Minutes*, are not only subsequent to the time when we severed our connection with the church purporting to inflict them, but also subsequent to the time when we united with another religious body, The Presbyterian Church of America. Moreover, we continue to receive summonses to appear before these judicatories and notices of their meetings, exactly as though we were still members of them.

One may well wonder just exactly what the theory is on the basis of which these strange things are done. Is the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. some kind of penal institution in which people are kept against their will? We formerly had a different notion regarding it. We thought it was a purely voluntary organization in which a man remained just so long as he could conscientiously do so. But apparently we were wrong. Apparently there is written up above the doors of this church the words: "Leave liberty behind, you who enter here. You may enter or not as you please, but once having entered you remain forever."

But stop a minute. Is it really true that on this theory a man may choose even whether he will *enter* this church or not, to say nothing of getting out? That may well be doubted. On the contrary, the next step will logically be for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to place people on its rolls entirely without any volition on their part. Any citizen may awake some fine morning to find himself enrolled as a minister in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.—perhaps because in accordance with some "religious trade agreement or monopoly with respect to the Protestant religion" (see the last issue of *THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN*, p. 261) it may have been determined that he belongs in the "Presbyterian U.S.A." sphere of influence rather than in the church to which he innocently thought he belonged. Well, why not? Is there any really essential difference between putting a man on a church roll against his will and keeping him there against his will when he has definitely stated that his connection with that church is at an end? We confess that we can detect none. One of these two things seems to us to be just about as preposterous as the other.

# Come Out and Be Ye Separate

Our Testimony to Christians in the  
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

By the REV. J. OLIVER BUSWELL, JR., D.D.  
President of Wheaton College



Dr. Buswell

WHEN I stepped out of the old ecclesiastical connection and into the new my sensation was that of a person stepping out of a stuffy room into the fresh air. My first exclamation came involuntarily as an expression of joy and gratitude for vigorous fellowship in the proclamation of the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!" (Ephesians 1:3.) Our hearts are glad and our faces are set forward to the task of proclaiming the gospel in the dark places of the earth, free from the entangling alliances of modernist ecclesiastical machinery.

Are we faithful shepherds? Paul commanded the elders of the church at Ephesus to "shepherd (not merely feed) the church of God" because of the fact that "grievous wolves" were coming from the outside and traitorous leadership was going to develop from within. (See Acts 20:28-30.) We have sought to obey this command. We have warned the flock for many years of the wolves and the false leaders. Things have at last come to such a pass that those who place the word of man above the Word of God have gained control of the fold in which the sheep should have been protected. What would faithful shepherds do under such circumstances? We believe we have done the only logical thing. We have erected another shelter, The Presbyterian Church of America, in which the sheep may take refuge. We believe that we still have a duty toward the sheep who remain in the fold which is now under the control of an anti-Christian regime. Let us refer briefly to several different classes of these.

## "We Have Just Begun to Fight"

To those who say, "We will stay in

and fight," several remarks may be appropriate. (1) We believe we have had more experience than you in fighting Modernism in the church. We have frequently and emphatically appealed to you for your suggestions as to the way in which the wolves of Modernism should be fought off. We have often heard you say, "We agree with your principles but we do not like your methods." We have always answered, "What methods do you suggest?" and your answer has always been silence.

(2) We do not deny the sincerity of some of those who now say that they will fight Modernism within the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., but in regard to others we have serious misgivings. We observe a prominent person, now making a show of "holy boldness" against the enemies of the faith, who when put in a position where he had to vote one way or the other, voted to depose the Rev. Carl McIntire from the ministry! It is difficult to see how the claim of fighting off the wolves can be sincere on the lips of such a one.

(3) Not a few of those who loudly protest that they will "stay in and fight" are now bitterly persecuting some of the sheep who have taken refuge in the new shelter. To these we would say that if our methods are wrong, they are at least now outside of your ecclesiastical horizon. We sincerely hope, brethren, that you will soon begin to attack the wolves instead of the sheep, but we are afraid that instead of attacking the wolves you are actually following the leadership of those leaders from within who are assisting the wolves in the destruction of the flock.

## "Our Labors Are Confined to Our Local Parishes"

There are many men who sincerely love the Lord who are not wide awake to the issues of the times and who really believe that within the field of the local church they can serve Christ and win souls to Him without being responsible for the affairs of the de-

nomination as a whole. To these we would remark: (1) You have a definite responsibility for the church as a whole by virtue of your ordination vows and by virtue of the clear teaching of the Scripture. You have solemnly promised to contend for the purity of the church regardless of all persecution which may arise on that account. You are under command of the Scripture to do what shepherds ought to do in the face of the wolves and the false leaders.

(2) Your Protestant liberties are gone. You will very soon find that your testimony in your own local church is no longer that which it has always been under the true Presbyterian form of government. In the isolated communities of northern Wisconsin a group of courageous pastors were disciplined for no other offense (remember, these things are matters of record) than that of uniting together with Christian leaders of other denominations to conduct an independent young people's Bible camp. The fact that souls are being saved, lives transformed, young people induced to undertake full-time Christian service in this Bible camp, makes no difference. A presbytery has ordered Presbyterians to withdraw their support. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has upheld the decision to suspend from the ministry one who is guilty of such an offense. Threats have been given with increasing virulence. Attend a presbytery meeting and vote for Protestant doctrine and Protestant liberties and see what happens. General Assembly stated in 1934 that if you do not support the Boards and agencies of the church to the utmost of your ability you are as guilty as one who refuses to come to the Lord's table. Have you forgotten those blasphemous words, and their clear implication for the local church? How long do you suppose you will be able to designate your gifts for those only who preach the gospel, under the Board of

Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.?

### Young Men Seeking Ordination

At the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, I made the statement that a young man who accepts ordination by a presbytery dominated by the ecclesiastical policy of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is guilty of either base falsehood or gross folly. We believe that no one could deny that it is the policy of the present ecclesiastical regime in that denomination to require candidates for ordination to promise adherence to the Boards and agencies of the church whether they, the candidates, believe these Boards and agencies to be loyal to the Christian faith or not. Any young man who states in one sentence that he believes the Bible to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and states in another sentence that he will be loyal to the Boards and agencies of the church regardless of his private opinion of their loyalty to the Word of God, is either basely false or profoundly foolish.

It is of the very essence of Protestant missionary endeavor that our giving and our serving must be spontaneous and voluntary. It is true that a certain set of Boards and agencies have been erected constitutionally to serve for the denomination as such, but it is also true that when these Boards and agencies were erected it was agreed that their erection would not in any way interfere with the liberty of Presbyterians in serving and giving to other agencies. The denominational agencies, according to true Presbyterian principles, must merit the confidence of the people in order to secure their support. "The quality of mercy (missions) is not strained," according to secular opinion. According to inspired Scripture our giving must be "not of necessity."

It is of the very essence of true Presbyterian theology that the Bible is not only infallible but is also perspicuous so that it is the immediate authority for every Christian. It is of the very essence of the true Presbyterian form of government that the church is not a legislative body, that the law of the church is given in the Scriptures, and that the functions of church courts are only ministerial and declarative and cannot bind the consciences of men by virtue of their

own authority. If they attempt to do so then, by true Presbyterian doctrinal standards, it is a sin to obey their decrees. Therefore when you promise to support the official Boards and agencies of your denomination regardless of your opinion of their loyalty to Christ, you are putting the word of man first and the Word of God in a subordinate position.

### The Uninformed

To all those who love the Lord but are ignorant of the issues in the denomination, we must explain why we have found it necessary to leave the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and to form another denomination, through the agency of which it is hoped the Reformed Faith and the Presbyterian (Scriptural) form of church government may be preserved.

(1) We have separated from the old organization not alone because there is Modernism in the church. For years there has been tolerated within the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. the teaching of "another gospel" which is not a gospel. Volumes of evidence of this fact are available, if anyone sincerely wishes to inquire. This has not been a whispering campaign. What we have had to say has been said openly and in printed form over our signatures, but we must make it very clear that we have not left the church in which we were brought up, because a certain amount of Modernism has, against our protest, been tolerated therein. During those years we remained within the denomination, seeking to be as faithful as we could to our vows to maintain the purity of the church.

(2) Nor have we left solely because Modernism was propagated by the Boards and agencies. We have presented to all who will examine the evidence a mass of material conclusively showing that for years the Boards and agencies of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. have tolerated and propagated "another gospel" which is not a gospel. Nevertheless it is not because, in addition to sending out some sound missionaries, the Boards were sending out others who denied the faith; it is not because the Boards and agencies tolerated and propagated Modernism that we have found it necessary to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. We remained within the church and did all we could possibly do to purify the church and bring it back to the

Word of God and its constitutional standards.

### Comity and Co-operation

(3) Again, our separation took place not only because of non-Christian relationships of comity. Our Lord prayed not that we should be taken out of the world but that we should be kept from the evil one. There are some relationships with non-Christian or anti-Christian organizations which are wrong and compromising. Against these we have always protested. For the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to take money given for the spread of the gospel and give it for the support of institutions which tolerate communistic, anti-Christian, and immoral teaching is, we hold, very wrong. There are, on the other hand, certain relationships of comity with secular or non-Christian institutions which are clearly recognized in the New Testament. Our Lord engaged in the ordinary social relationships with those who were ungodly and sinful in the extreme. Paul discusses the question of a Christian business man attending the trade guild banquets. It ought to be understood that a person does not compromise his Christian testimony when he, without doing that which is sinful, meets the world in its ordinary business and secular activities. We have not withdrawn from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. because our Boards and agencies maintained these ordinary and necessary relationships of contact with secular or non-Christian organizations. We have not even made a criticism on this point.

For example, if a student takes certain courses in Hebrew or in Greek in a non-Christian or anti-Christian theological school, and if that student then becomes converted and enrolls in an orthodox theological seminary, his Hebrew credits are perfectly acceptable on a purely secular academic basis. There are certain business and educational relationships between schools and seminaries which come distinctly within the classification of those things countenanced and approved by our Lord and by the Apostle Paul.

If I should send a letter to twenty or more of your neighbors stating that you "probably" stole the automobile which now stands in your garage, when I know that there is no such probability, I should be bearing

false witness against my neighbor. Similarly, if I should say that a Princeton professor in participating in an academic procession in a modernist school had "probably" conveyed greetings to false teachers in the manner forbidden in II John, verse 10,—if I should make such a statement while knowing full well through my familiarity with academic affairs that there really is no probability that the greeting was of the kind forbidden by the Scripture,—if I should make any such statement under any such circumstances, I should also call that bearing false witness against one's neighbor.

(4) Nor was our action due to any opposition to denominationalism as such. It is my personal opinion that many of the prominent Protestant denominations have departed far from the faith. I am not familiar with the problems and polity involved in all of these cases, but I sincerely regret that officialdom in many of the denominations seems to be given over to compromise or to false doctrine. Nevertheless I do not share the opinions of those who oppose denominationalism as such. I feel that through the generations past the great denominations have exerted a steadying influence. I have the heartiest sympathy for independent local work as an emergency or a temporary transition measure, or as a type of work fitting peculiar local circumstances. Nevertheless I feel that many of the splendid local independent churches and missions which we observe today are very likely to draw together in a type of fellowship which will really amount to that which prevailed under the orthodox denominational system. As for myself, I believe it is right for me to worship the Lord in company with a group of people who have a widespread communion and who recognize local groups in many places as belonging to the same church. Those of us who have united with The Presbyterian Church of America are members of a "denomination." We believe that the Presbyterian form of government is Scriptural and ought to be perpetuated. As a representative or republican type of government, it has maintained for many generations great stability both in faith and in practice throughout the church.

#### The "Mandate"

(5) Specifically we were compelled to separate because of the final apos-

tate commitment of the Syracuse Assembly. Up to the time when the General Assembly in 1934 by virtue of its own authority and without pretense of scriptural basis for its illegal acts, ordered us to resign from a certain independent mission board, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had not by any legal act renounced its primary allegiance to the Word of God and to the doctrinal standards derived therefrom. Just as loyal American citizens have recently resisted certain socialistic, unconstitutional legislation and appealed to the Supreme Court, so we resisted unlawful action and appealed to the judicial processes of the church. The offense of which we were accused was refusing to obey the "mandate" of the General Assembly, which in its own words claimed to be based upon the authority of the Assembly and not upon the Word of God or the Constitution of the church. Every court of the church in which our cases were tried, as an incidental matter, upheld the right of a Presbyterian minister who had denied the inerrancy of the Scripture and had stated that the virgin birth, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection, and the miracles of our Lord, are mere non-essential theories,—upheld, I say, the right of a minister who had taken such a position to sit in judgment upon us. Furthermore every court, as a direct and main matter of business, decreed that we must obey the "mandate" of the General Assembly, that because of an assumed ecclesiastical authority we must resign from The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. When the General Assembly, constituted as a court and sitting in regular judicial procedure, upheld the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission and pronounced guilty of offenses those who had disobeyed the illegal mandate of men in the interests of the Word of God, then the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. ceased to be a church in whose communion we could conscientiously remain. That body is now, through a protracted official process of judicial action, definitely committed to an apostate position.

I believe that one may rightfully remain within a church just as long as it is positively committed to the Word of God and the faith once for all delivered to the saints. I believe, however, that as soon as a church falls into the hands of the wolves and

the false leaders so that by official action that church is clearly committed to an anti-Christian position, it is the duty of every true believer in Christ to renounce that jurisdiction and to find fellowship for himself and refuge for the flock for which he is responsible in another assembly.

I am not sufficiently familiar with the recent history of the great Protestant denominations to give many illustrations. I am, however, reasonably familiar with at least one parallel case. I know a minister who entered into fellowship with an individual church whose testimony in the local horizon was orthodox. Later the denomination to which that church belonged officially committed itself to an organic union with the Universalist denomination. Although that organic union was not consummated, he felt that he could not remain within the denomination even in a local communion as long as that decision stood as an official denominational act. Within a short time that denomination actually consummated an organic union with a body whose historical position was definitely Unitarian. The local church after long deliberation definitely decided to remain within the denomination. My friend found it necessary with his family to seek other affiliations.

I believe also the same principle ought to apply to the local church when the denomination is not officially disloyal to the Word of God. One may remain and give his testimony as long as it is possible to keep the organization true in its witness. There is no perfect church to be found anywhere, but there is such a thing as essential loyalty to the Word of God. When, however, a local church gets into the hands of those who are disloyal to the Word of God, I believe it is the duty of a believing Christian to find fellowship in another assembly.

We ought to consider the illustration of the milk for our children. The milk delivered at our house had a strange taste one day some years ago. My wife protested and investigated, and learned that the taste came from the odor of fresh paint which had been used in the separator room. The taste did not continue, the milk was essentially good. On another occasion tiny splinters of red wood appeared in the butter. It was discovered that a new redwood churn had been purchased. The matter was promptly

attended to. The butter was good and all went well thereafter. However, on another occasion, milk was delivered in a sour or semi-sour condition and the bottles gave evidence of improper washing. After one protest, sour or semi-sour milk was again delivered and the bottle containing supposedly clean milk was found to have clots of chocolate milk still clinging to the inside. This was a very different situation. My wife changed milk companies with immediate and permanent

effectiveness! Why should we be less careful for the spiritual diet of our children than for their material food?

We believe that the government of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has been seized by the Modernists and the inclusivists. That denomination, after a long and painful judicial process, by final action has given supreme authority to the word of man rather than the Word of God. We believe it is time for Bible-believing Christians to find fellowship in another assembly.

which state your case declare that it was not a doctrinal issue at all, but a matter of church government and of church discipline. But I fear the representation given in these documents has not proved convincing to the public. As far as you were concerned it certainly was a doctrinal issue through and through. The secular press reported it to be a fight of fundamentalism against Modernism. Religious weekly periodicals of liberal stamp have likewise considered it such. And even the Presbyterian ministers, who recently met at Pittsburgh, could not rest satisfied in the representation of these official documents, but called attention to the doctrinal issue which was underneath it all. This case will not go down in history as a squabble over matters of church government. But history will write it down as a battle of militant Calvinism against militant Modernism, coupled with religious indifferentism.

Not everything that transpires in such a conflict will be reason for the giving of thanks. There will be much that will be cause for regret. It will be a matter of regret, I suppose, that you must now leave behind in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. many associations which you had come to cherish. It will be a matter of regret that, in your struggle for the defense of the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession, it was not Calvinism but Modernism that won the day in the ecclesiastical court. It will again be a matter of regret to you that several Christian brethren in that church, of whom you might reasonably have expected that they would join you in combating the common foe, either have never enlisted in the battle or have stopped halfway. And I can imagine there will be regrets for some of the possible mistakes you will have made, certainly for things which, if you were to do them over, you would have done differently. But whatever regrets you may have there never can be any reasonable regret, but on the contrary humble gratitude to God, that He has counted you worthy to defend His cause against Modernism in an hour of crisis such as this.

But the reason for thankfulness is even greater. I dare say it extends also to the establishment of the independent organization of Westminster Seminary and of The Presbyterian Church of America, with which

## Thank God and Take Courage

By the REV. H. HENRY MEETER, Th.D.  
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The following article is the first part of the address delivered at the opening of Westminster Theological Seminary on September 30th. The rest of the address will appear in the next issue of "The Presbyterian Guardian."

*"And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage" (Acts 28:15).*

THE story is familiar. The apostle Paul, in his defense of the Christian gospel, is nearing the capital of the empire as a prisoner in bonds. Brethren from Rome have come out to Appii Forum to greet him and to offer him their encouragement and sympathy. Whereupon we read: "Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage." With you there are in spirit present today many Christian friends of various denominations and schools, among others of the Christian Reformed denomination and of Calvin College and Seminary, whose unofficial spokesman I may consider myself to be. We are here to extend the hand of Christian sympathy to you, and to offer you our encouragements in the struggle for the defense of the Christian gospel, in which you are engaged. We hope that our sympathy with you in your battle for the truth will inspire you, like Paul, to thank God and take courage.

Lest these expressions of sympathy and words of encouragement be nothing more than an empty gesture, permit me to state the reasons why we believe you may thank God and why you may take courage. (1) There is

very good reason for this, when you reflect upon your past history and consider the nature of the cause in which you have been engaged. (2) There is also good reason when you direct the eye ahead and observe the opportunities for success which lie before you in the future, if you gauge the possible success of your cause by the success which attended similar causes of note in the history of Calvinism. And (3) we believe there is equally good reason, judging from the favorable time in which your movement is launched.

### I.

Not every cause in which men may choose to be engaged is deserving of thanks to God. We do not consider any success which the Nazis at present may be having in establishing a religion for Germans only as supplying reason for gratitude to God, nor any which the Russian communistic leaders may have in their attempts to establish atheism in their country. Even where causes are worthy, the reasons for gratitude will differ widely. You have been engaged in battling for a cause. It is a worthy cause. It is a great cause. It is a cause that gives reason for profoundest gratitude to God. It is the cause of the Christian gospel, of Calvinism, or if you will, of consistent Christianity, against modern religious liberalism.

It is true the official documents of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

this school is closely affiliated. There are some brethren in the faith whom you held dear, men who have in a measure sympathized with you or even aided you in the battle against Modernism, but who have been unwilling to defend the cause to the extent of leaving the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Your action in leaving the denomination and in establishing a separate church and school is characterized by them as schismatic, as sectarian, as something that should have been avoided at all cost.

In reply, it will be readily admitted that sectarian, schismatic movements in the church are contrary to the genius of Calvinism. There are some groups in the Christian Church, notably the Anabaptists of Reformation days and many Independents and Undenominationalists of today, who apparently think nothing of starting a separate church organization because of any slight doctrinal difference or even for no doctrinal difference at all. But Calvinists are not so minded. While they do believe that the unity of the church lies not in the external organization but in the spiritual realities, in the one spiritual body, the possession of the one Spirit, the one hope, the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, and the one God and Father, yet they hold that that spiritual unity should find expression in outward church union wherever such is possible on the basis of the Word of God. Calvin sought this type of union with the Zwinglians, with the Lutherans, with the Church of England. He would even have been willing to unite with the Roman Catholics, as his participation in the religious conferences of the day testifies, had such been possible on a sound Biblical basis. Calvin wrote some stirring lines in *The Institutes*, vehemently condemning the separatistic tendencies of the Anabaptists. Likewise, Dr. Abraham Kuyper, a more recent champion of the Calvinistic cause, wrote in stern denunciation of the separatistic movements of his day. And I make bold to say that all of you who have been engaged in the struggle for Calvinism would agree with every line which either Calvin or Kuyper have ever written on this subject.

The question to be determined is not whether we should not strive for union of the Christian Church as much as in us lies, wherever such is possible on a sound Biblical basis. The

question is *whether certain conditions ever exist, and exist in the present instance, when independent organization is justifiable and even demanded.* An examination of the history of Calvin and Kuyper, I believe, will reveal unmistakable evidence that in their judgment such conditions do exist, in fact that the conditions which they have indicated as being just cause for separate organization cover precisely such cases as the present one.

Let us examine the history of Calvin. In the same context of *The Institutes*, in which Calvin had written the memorable lines condemning schismatic movements (Book IV, Chapter 1, Paragraphs 12-15), he first starts out (in paragraph 12) to make clear under which conditions separation from a church is permissible, and becomes a duty. Separation from a church may not take place, so he writes, just because the church may be chargeable with many faults, not even if some of these faults concern minor points of doctrine, such as whether the souls of saints at death go immediately to heaven or not. But there are some doctrines, Calvin tells us, which are "so necessary to be known, that they ought to be universally received as fixed and indubitable principles, as the peculiar maxims of religion; such as, that there is one God, that Christ is God and the Son of God; that our salvation depends on the mercy of God and the like" (p. 233). When men deny these cardinal doctrines, it is Calvin's mind that such a church society should be rejected. Now it is precisely some of these doctrines that Modernism, which is admittedly in the saddle in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., denies. Modernism denies that Christ is God and the Son of God. Modernism denies that our salvation depends upon the mercy of God.

However, if it should be affirmed that these modernist beliefs, while held by some who are in control in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., are not the official doctrines of the church, and as long as the church has not officially affirmed such doctrines we have no right to separate, Calvin would disagree. For Calvin himself had separated from the Roman Catholic Church, which had not denied these doctrines in its confessions, though it did deny salvation by the mercy of God in many of its practices. So far is Rome from denying

these doctrines in its confessions that Dr. Abraham Kuyper could state in his lectures on Calvinism that, in the conflict with Modernism, "Rome is not our antagonist, but stands on our side, inasmuch as she also recognizes and maintains the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Cross as an atoning sacrifice, the Scriptures as the Word of God, and the Ten Commandments as a divinely-imposed rule of life" (*Stone Lectures*, Edition 1931, p. 276). Yet Calvin, knowing that the Roman Catholic Church had not denied these cardinal doctrines in its confessions but only some of them in practice, knowing too that no satisfactory reform was to be expected from within the church, separated himself from that institution. Calvin did not believe that the Roman Catholic Church had to be completely apostate before it would become his duty to separate. Calvin always held to the belief that there were several in the Roman Catholic Church who were still Christian. But when the church officially was of such nature that, with respect to the cardinal doctrines, there was no hope for satisfactory reform, Calvin considered it was his duty to separate from that institution. In the face of Calvin's own history it ought not to be difficult to determine on which side in the present controversy Calvin's sympathies would lie. Calvin would be on your side!

Let us examine another close parallel to the present movement, the one of Dr. Abraham Kuyper and his followers in the Netherlands. We have a good account of this movement in an article by the learned Dr. Herman Bavinck, written for the *Princeton Theological Review* of 1910. When liberty of doctrine was conceded in the Dutch Reformed Church of Holland, in other words when it had adopted its inclusive policy, the adherents of the Confession divided into two parties. The one group entered into no conflict with the Boards, but only with unbelief. Their desire was to maintain the Dutch Reformed Church, avoid all strife, and above all not to separate from the church. The other group came in time under the leadership of Dr. Abraham Kuyper. It took the position that these Boards were themselves unlawful, anti-Reformed, opposed to the confessions, and to be withstood. If necessary, in order to be loyal to the confessions, the members of the church ought to

oppose the ordinances of the synodical authorities. At a meeting of this group at Frascati Hall in Amsterdam it was decided that, if the church authorities demanded anything contrary to the confessions, they would sever connections with these church authorities.

The crisis came when in 1886 the Consistory of Amsterdam, under the leadership of Dr. Kuyper, refused to submit to an order of the church board to supply testimonials of good moral conduct to modernist members by baptism of the church of Amsterdam who were refused full membership in the local church, and sought to become members through some neighboring modernist church. The result of this refusal was that the consistory, Dr. Kuyper included, was suspended by order of the provincial Board and dismissed from office. This action was later sustained by the

synod. It was then that twenty thousand members of the church at Amsterdam separated with their consistory, and together with seventy churches in other parts of Holland were organized into a new denomination. Judging from the close parallel to your movement it does seem as though the history of Dr. Kuyper's *Doleantie* has been repeating itself in the annals of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in the year 1936. The great Calvin, and that able champion of Calvinism, Dr. Abraham Kuyper, have in circumstances similar to yours felt themselves obligated to organize new churches and schools in defense of the gospel. In view of that fact you may today, as you reflect upon the establishment of Westminster Seminary and of The Presbyterian Church of America, thank God and take courage.

(To be concluded)

## Have the Auburn Affirmationists Forgotten Their Appeal to Charles Hodge?

By the REV. FRANK HAMILTON

THE signers of the Auburn *Affirmation* of 1924 have always contended that its chief purpose was "to safeguard the unity and liberty of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A." Indeed, in a supplementary note to the Affirmation, published by a Conference Committee in the same year, several statements of Charles Hodge were cited in the interest of this worthy purpose.

In view of the fact that the recent decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission involved destruction both of the unity and of the liberty of that organization, one wonders why there has not been a protest from this quarter. Even the presence of four signers of the Affirmation among the seven ministerial members of the Judicial Commission, including Dr. R. H. Nichols who was a member of the Conference Committee, failed to prevent the wiping out of the great liberties which Charles Hodge enunciated. Let us note the appeal which was made to the writings of Dr. Hodge:

"The subject of the authority of the deliverances of General Assemblies was dis-

cussed by Dr. Charles Hodge in articles in the Princeton Review of July and October, 1865. There will be no difference of opinion as to Dr. Hodge's loyalty to the Presbyterian Church or his competence to expound its law. His discussion was occasioned by an action of the General Assembly of 1865 concerning matters of civil right and duty; but from his words it will be seen that he held that the authority of the deliverances of General Assemblies 'on all points of truth and duty,' to use his own language, is constitutionally limited.

"Dr. Hodge speaks as follows:

"It is an axiom in our Presbyterianism that the General Assembly can make no law to bind the conscience. It cannot alter by adding thereto or detracting therefrom the constitutional terms of ministerial or Christian fellowship. Those terms are laid down in express words in our Form of Government, which we are all bound to obey. Assent to the truth or propriety of the deliverances or testimonies of the Assembly is not one of the terms prescribed. . . . We have no security for liberty of conscience, no protection from the tyranny of casual majorities, if the principle be once admitted that the Assembly can make anything beyond what the constitution prescribes, a condition either of admission into the ministry of our church or of continuance in it. This is too plain to be questioned.' (Princeton Review, vol. xxxvii. p. 508.)

"The Assembly, of course, has the right to express its judgment and give instructions on all points of truth and duty. So has every Presbytery and every minister or Christian. But such judgments have only the authority due to the advice or opinions of those from whom they proceed. They have no legal force on any man's conscience or conduct. . . . The Popish doctrine of the infallibility of church courts does not suit Americans. It is high time that these simple principles of religious liberty should be clearly announced and openly asserted.' (Princeton Review vol. xxxvii, p. 510).

"The next question is, What is the authority due to the deliverances of our ecclesiastical judicatories, and specially of the General Assembly. As to this point we do not believe that there is any real difference of opinion among true Presbyterians.

"1. It is admitted that church courts are not infallible. "All synods or councils," says our Confession, "since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both." If not a rule of faith or practice, acquiescence in their deliverances cannot be made a term either of Christian or ministerial communion. . . .

"2. If the deliverances of ecclesiastical bodies be not infallible, then there must be a judge of their correctness, and a standard by which that judgment is to be formed. The judge is every man who chooses to exercise the privilege. If Paul recognizes the right of private judgment, even in reference to the preaching of an apostle, or of an angel from heaven, surely this will not be denied with regard to the acts of any body of fallible and sinful men. The standard of judgment is, of course, the Holy Scriptures. Our Confession tells us the decrees and determinations of councils are to be received only when "consonant to the word of God." As an exposition of the word of God, admitted as authority among Presbyterians, we have our Confession of Faith and Form of Government, which constitute our ecclesiastical constitution.' (Princeton Review, vol. xxxvii, pp. 647-8.)

"Any action of the Assembly in contravention of the compact contained in our Constitution, is of no binding force. [Here follow examples illustrative of this principle]. . . . But if the Assembly should assume the prerogative of altering the terms of ministerial communion in our church, it would be an arrogation of a power which does not belong to it.' (Princeton Review, vol. xxvii, pp. 649-50.)

"Yet every member of the Assembly would, on reflection, readily admit that it is the right, not only of subordinate ecclesiastical bodies, but of the humblest member of the church, to express in respectful language their judgment on the acts of our highest court. This is a privilege which we all claim, and which we all freely exercise, and which no Presbyterian ever will give up.' (Princeton Review, vol. xxxvii, p. 507.)

"Dr. Hodge opposes 'the Assembly's making its own deliverances the test of



orthodoxy and loyalty,' and goes on to say, 'We are persuaded that not a member of the body, when he comes calmly to consider the matter, will hesitate to admit that the Assembly, in so doing, transcended its power,' (Princeton Review, vol. xxxvii, p. 507, p. 508.)

"In its words concerning the authority of the deliverances of General Assemblies, the Affirmation merely states the plain principles of the law of the church. It is submitted that Dr. Hodge and the Affirmation hold exactly the same position on this subject."

The Conference Committee thus states that the stand taken by Professor Machen and those condemned with him was correct:

That the General Assembly can make no law to bind the conscience;

That it cannot add to nor detract from the Constitutional terms of ministerial or Christian fellowship;

That every Christian has the right to express his judgment on all points;

That acquiescence in the deliver-

ances of the General Assembly cannot be made a term either of Christian or ministerial communion;

That the decrees and determinations of councils are to be received only when "consonant to the word of God";

That any act of the Assembly in contravention of the compact contained in our Constitution is of no binding force;

That if the Assembly should assume the prerogative of altering the terms of ministerial communion in our church, it would be an arrogation of a power that does not belong to it;

That it is the right of the humblest member of the church to express in respectful language his judgment on the acts of our highest court;

That Dr. Hodge opposes the Assembly's making its own deliverances the test of orthodoxy and loyalty, and the Assembly in so doing transcended its power.

## Dr. Angus on the Presbyterianism of the Future

TRUTH AND TRADITION, by S. Angus, M.A., Ph.D., D.D., D.Lit., Professor in St. Andrew's College, University of Sydney. Angus and Robertson, Ltd., Sydney, 1934. Second Edition.

**T**HIS "plea for practical and vital religion and for a reinterpretation of ancient theologies" is the author's defense against charges of heresy which have been brought against him in The Presbyterian Church of Australia. In view of recent efforts to re-open the case, a review is timely now, even though the book was published more than two years ago. It is instructive, too, as an effort to appropriate the name of Presbyterianism for a conception of religion that is in violent contradiction with Presbyterianism in the historic meaning of the term, and may serve to explain the attitude of the Modernists in this country who refuse to relinquish the name of Presbyterianism.

The author candidly admits that his point of view is in irreconcilable conflict not only with the distinctive doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, but even with the evangelical tenets of Protestantism and with the common doctrines of historic Christianity. The church, he contends, must get "beyond noisy Nicea and contentious Chalce-

don and predestinarian Westminster to relearn its message in Galilee . . ."

### The Deity of Christ

The deity of Christ he describes as a dogma which has nothing essentially to do with Christianity (pp. 2f., 15ff.), and as being "unknown both to Jesus himself and to the Christianity of the first century" (p. 55). But he enthusiastically favors assigning "Divinity" to Jesus:

"Out of deeper motives than loyalty to Christian tradition; out of personal appreciation of his character as God-revealing we must in all sincerity call Jesus divine and assign to him Divinity of the highest order, not as a dogmatic honorific title, but as the only adequate symbol of that quality of life which calls forth the Divine in us and draws us to the Father" (pp. 30f.).

Commenting on the sinlessness of Jesus, he says that this doctrine does not form an element of his "thought-world" (p. 30); that his attitude to Jesus is not one of "admiration over the absence of qualities in Jesus' life which are present in mine" (p. 34); and that the doctrine cannot be justified historically because "such barriers were not set up by Jesus who broke down every partition and dividing wall between men and himself . . ." (pp. 36f.).

### Salvation

The mutual exclusivism of Dr. Angus' "Christianity" and historic Christianity is also observed in his remarks about atonement:

"Some are deeply concerned about a doctrine of Atonement by propitiation or expiation, which is to me as unethical as it is unnecessary" (p. 13).

"Our God today requires not the offices of a mediator or priest, not even the offices of our Divine Lord, to give Himself to us freely and immediately in all our sin" (p. 101).

"We cannot conceive salvation in the terms and exclusivism of our Standards. Salvation is represented too sacerdotally and too much with reference to escape from the wrath and curse of God. . . . Thinking men no longer believe in the wrath and curse of God and seek no rescue from it. They no longer believe in a final spectacular Judgment Day nor fear the torments of eternal hell. . . . Today the term salvation has—properly speaking—to be cast aside as belonging to an earlier and immature conception of God and of human personality. Instead of seeking salvation from the imaginary evils enumerated above, men today seek the fulfillment of personality in the positive qualities of moral and spiritual life and in faith in the unseen things that fade not away with our passing lives . . ." (pp. 105f.).

### The Resurrection of Jesus and Ours

The fidelity of Dr. Angus' to Christianity and to Presbyterianism may also be judged by his attitude towards the resurrection of Jesus and the doctrines of eschatology:

"In some quarters there is much concern about the reanimation of the body of Jesus and an empty tomb. I would reassert what I have written elsewhere that our Christian faith did not take its rise in a graveyard outside Jerusalem, but in the divine personality of the Prince of Life" (p. 103).

The article of the Apostles' Creed about the resurrection of the body "lies entirely in the region of speculation, belongs to Jewish eschatology and is a guess about a remote future . . ." (p. 115). "It is pathetic to hear at Christian burial or cremation the bodies of Christian dead being committed . . . 'in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection,' when the resurrection life belongs to this side of death as a present experience of being raised in and with Christ" (p. 129).

"Such a conception as that of a, or the, last Judgment Day, cannot maintain its place in religious thought" (p. 131).

### Sin and Grace

His hostility towards the specific doctrines of Calvinism as expressed in the Westminster Standards is patent:

"And in the Shorter Catechism which, by mistaken reverence is still taught to

some of our children, they are informed of the corruption of their whole nature . . . and our children are further informed that all mankind are under God's wrath and curse (Qs. 18, 19)" (p. 83).

"Neither science nor morality can find place for an historic fall." The fall is an "Old Testament and Rabbinic doctrine . . . a conception with which Jesus never once operated" (p. 86).

"The most elementary ethical conception of love will render it impossible to accept a God who, out of his sheer good pleasure from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, while the others not elected cannot be saved. Is it not time that we frankly repudiated the awful unethical doctrine of predestination even though it is a familiar Scriptural doctrine?" (p. 81).

"I can make no truce with the vindictive and arbitrary God of our historic Confession" (p. 100; cf. p. 127).

### What Is Presbyterianism?

How then—if he repudiates all that Presbyterianism has stood for in the past—can a man claim to be a good Presbyterian? The answer of Dr. Angus appears to be found in his distinction between the "dead Presbyterianism of the past" and the "living Presbyterianism of the present" (p. 53). The Presbyterian Church, he declares, must be viewed, as man was viewed by Aristotle—not by "what he is, but by what, by his nature, he has the power of becoming. . . . Presbyterianism cannot be pushed back into either a remote or a near past and kept there by legislation. While it continues a *living* Church it must, like other Churches, keep ever on the march toward the City of God" (p. 65). Dr. Angus evidently regards himself as a true Presbyterian because he hopes that some day Presbyterianism will adopt his views of religion. If Dr. Angus' hopes should ever be fulfilled, the Presbyterianism of the future would include several strange elements:

First, it would have given up the distinction between the Creator and the creature in its adoption of a philosophy of Divine Immanence. His denial of Theism finds remarkable expression:

"Little progress in the reconstruction of Christianity can be made until . . . the dualism of the human and the divine disappears in a full intellectual recognition based upon a religious experience of the fellowship of our spirits with the Father of spirits" (pp. 132f.).

He further objects to "a strongly external doctrine of the Holy Spirit" which "assumes a distinction between

the working of our spiritual nature and the working of a Holy Spirit outside of ourselves" (p. 87).

Moreover the Presbyterianism of the future would have rejected the conviction that Christianity is grounded in the unchanging character of truth in favor of the view that Christianity is an experience by which every doctrine must be tested (pp. 3, 61). The pragmatism of Dr. Angus is shown further in his declaration that the "theories" like the deity of Christ, His sinlessness, etc., are "matters of disputable religious value . . ." (pp. 58f.). Consistent with this point of view revelation is reduced so as to

become a phase of religious experience:

"What is revelation except man's learning under the Divine Spirit the truth of things?" (p. 102).

"The Church has never yet . . . been able to make out a convincing case for reasonable men why the thinkers of the past should become normative for the thinkers of today, or account for the strange conduct of the Holy Spirit in delivering in some classic period a fixed quantum of Revelation . . ." (pp. 122f.).

Evidently Dr. Angus has moved far from the conviction that the Bible is "the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

Finally, the "living Presbyterianism," in appealing only to the "teachings and spirit of Jesus"—not to Paul and the Westminster Divines (p. 54)—would find itself in the uncharted sea of arbitrary and fanciful historical criticism. Dr. Angus has the old Liberal confidence that he can remove the kernel from the husk, and he accepts as much of the Gospels as he can harmonize with his conception of what Jesus must have been and taught. The rest he passes over in silence or rejects as having been a product of the dogmatism of the early church. An example of the former is found in his silence concerning Jesus' teaching about hell; of the latter his treatment of Mark 10:45. If the development of this "living Presbyterianism" should follow in the future the course which has been charted by Gospel criticism, it is likely to change from an easy-going confidence in its hold on Jesus to an abysmal skepticism.

The value of the work of Dr. Angus lies in the fact that he shows that there can be no peace between the Christianity of Westminster and his "living Presbyterianism." He has no faith in the compromises effected by moderate revisions and declaratory statements:

"Old creeds ought to be allowed to stand intact and accepted in gratitude as honest attempts of their particular day to preserve and formulate the truth . . .

"So the Confession of Faith from Westminster is a consistent and logical whole. . . . It cannot be taken to pieces and then put together on a new plan" (p. 77).

From his point of view nothing less than a drastic restatement of Christianity will satisfy. From ours historic Christianity is true, and is not affected by time. —N. B. S.

### New Radio Series

By Dr. Machen

ON Sunday, October 11th, the Westminster Seminary Hour begins its third year of broadcast. The hour is 4 to 4:30 P. M., over station WIP (610 kilocycles). The Rev. Professor J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D., will again be the speaker.

For the past two seasons Dr. Machen has been speaking on the general theme, "The Christian Faith in the Modern World." He has been presenting the Christian view of God, the Bible, Jesus Christ and man. Thousands have listened to these discourses and have been instructed and built up in the faith.

This year he will discuss the important subject of salvation, beginning with the doctrine of the atonement. Every Christian within the reach of station WIP will want to hear these arresting, informing and scholarly expositions.

Will you not be kind enough to bring these radio broadcasts to the attention of your friends, so that a large audience will greet Dr. Machen for the first hour.

# Studies in the Shorter Catechism

By the REV. JOHN H. SKILTON

QUESTION 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

ANSWER. *Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.*

## LESSON 1

THE Westminster Shorter Catechism, completed in 1647 by the distinguished Westminster Assembly, established by Parliament in 1643 "for the settling of the government and the liturgy of the Church of England, and clearing the doctrine of said Church from false aspersions and interpretations," has been found by many Christians to provide majestic, concise, clear, and above all, accurate answers to many vital questions of faith and practice. The answers the Westminster Shorter Catechism offers are reliable only as they are not the mere opinions of men but are faithful statements of the truth that God has made known. Accordingly it is wise for us, as we study the Catechism, to consider carefully the scriptural proofs of the statements made.

### The Chief End of Man

In asserting that the chief end of man is to glorify God the Catechism properly recognizes the scriptural teaching concerning the excellency of God, and the relationship that should exist between Him and all who would live according to His will. Man could have no higher end than to glorify the all-glorious Creator, upon whom he is dependent for life and every other good thing. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Romans 11:36).

It is, of course, impossible for man to glorify God by adding anything to His eternally perfect glory of Being. The fourth question of the Catechism should make this clear: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Man may, however, glorify God by recognizing the perfection of His glory and by testifying to His excellence. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me" (Psalm 50:23). Man may glorify God by repenting of his sins

and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and by obedience to the revealed will of God.

Whatever other ends of man are recognized as permissible, they must all be regarded as not distinct from the chief end or out of harmony with it. The various legitimate pursuits of this life which may be considered lesser ends of man should really be directed by man to the glory of God. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

Genuine abiding enjoyment of God comes only to those to whom the Holy Spirit applies the redemption purchased by Christ. See question 29 and 36. When we are regenerated we can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion

for ever" (Psalm 73:25-26). All those who are led by the Holy Spirit to glorify God must enjoy Him. And our enjoyment of God can have no end. None can separate us, in this life, or at death, or at the judgment, from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39; Matt. 25:46; I Thess. 4:17).

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Memorize the answers to the first question of the Catechism and study the Scripture proofs: Romans 11:36; I Cor. 10:31; and Psalm 73:25-26. Study the first two questions of the Larger Catechism.
2. Select several hymns that glorify God and that express the joy of the believer.
3. In what respect are the answers contained in the Westminster Shorter Catechism of value to us?
4. Can genuine joy be found apart from God? How can we enjoy God?
5. What relationship is there between glorifying God and enjoying Him?

## LESSON 2

### The Source of Certainty

Unbelievers may be able to speculate as to the answer to such a question as "What is the chief end of man?"; but only Christians can give with assurance the correct answer, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The Christian has found the truth, not because his intellect surpasses that of unbelievers; but because the Spirit of truth has opened his eyes, which were once blinded by sin, and has permitted him to see the poverty and chaos of human speculation and the sharply contrasted certainties of God. He speaks with assurance because he knows he has the authority of an all-knowing God behind him.

The theories of life held by unbelievers are based on assumptions that defy reason and that make it logically impossible for a man to be sure of anything. Non-Christian systems of thought without exception imply or assert two devastating propositions: (1) That the living and true God

### A New Series of Studies

WE ARE pleased to present on these pages the first two lessons of the series of studies on the Shorter Catechism which we announced as a regular feature for the coming season. The author, the Rev. John H. Skilton, joins with us in expressing the desire to suit them to the needs of young people's groups, for whom they are primarily designed. Any suggestion which the readers may wish to make, with a view to increasing the usefulness of these studies, will be gratefully received. Mr. Skilton may be addressed directly at the Second Parish Presbyterian Church, Portland, Maine.

does not exist and that the universe exists independently; and (2) that the mind of sinful man is the final judge of truth and that man can obtain "valid and certain knowledge" without the special revelation that God has given and without the work of the Holy Spirit in man's soul.

Those who most boldly employ the anti-Christian method of our times and bring most clearly to light the underlying principles of all non-Christian thinking, say that they are satisfied to assemble the "facts" of life and to draw inferences of truth from them. If there be a God, they demand, let Him show Himself through the "facts" of life that they collect. If He does not accept their challenge and reveal Himself in the ways that they stipulate, they will have none of Him—they can do without Him. But have they in any way, the believer inquires, justified their making the assumption that facts can be discovered and accurately interpreted without being related to God, that the mind, with no thought of God, can interpret facts aright? Have they proved that there is no need to believe in God unless arbitrary investigations, based on naturalistic assumptions, make the need apparent? The Christian replies with an emphatic No! If God—the God revealed in the Bible—exists, then nothing can be understood apart from Him and His revelation. To justify the assumption that God does not exist and that facts can be truly understood apart from Him the unbeliever is obliged to *prove* that God does not exist. But is it possible to do that? Does he really know that there is not a God who alone knows all things and without whose revelation of valid and certain knowledge those who are finite and sin-blinded can know nothing? He, of course, does not know this and he cannot know this. He would have to be infinite himself—even God—to *prove* that God does not exist. It is therefore impossible to *disprove* Christianity.

But if the unbeliever is unable to prove God non-existent, he is no better able to prove that the "facts" that he has gathered are of any real, ultimate value, that his method leads to any certainty at all. It is amazing to hear the non-Christian speak with confidence of "facts," "assured results," and "sustained hypotheses." Of course, practical knowledge of a sort,

"bare facts," may be obtained by all men; but no fact can be rightly understood and interpreted (in the way necessary to support the contentions of non-Christians) unless its relationship to all other facts past, present, and future is known. No fact is independent of its final interpretation. A scientist may speak dogmatically about the fact "man" without relating that fact to all other facts or to God. Some of his statements may have practical value. But, as Dr. Cornelius Van Til has pointed out, if there is a judgment day in the future for man, a fact of which the scientist is unaware, the fact of the judgment would so greatly modify the interpretation which the scientist has placed on man as to render his "findings" about man misleading.

But do non-Christians have the full knowledge necessary to make their statements of more than "practical" value at the most? Do they really know all the facts of the past? Do they really know when, how, and whether the universe came into being? Have they anything more than unsubstantiated theories concerning the origin of life? Do they know all the facts of the present? Do they know what facts the future will bring forth? Do they know how long the universe will continue? Do they know that all of their present conceptions, unlike some of those they formed a few years ago, will be unmodified by time?

They know none of these things and they cannot know them. They have made the unreasonable assumption that the universe and their experience are independent and interpret themselves—and they have nothing but question marks for their conclusions. Because they do not know *all* they cannot be sure that they know *anything*. Sir James Jeans, the distinguished scientist, at the end of his fairly recent book, "The Mysterious Universe," makes the following admission: "Who knows how many more times the stream of knowledge may turn on itself? And with this reflection before us, we may well conclude by adding, what might have been interlined into every paragraph, that everything that has been said, and every conclusion that has tentatively been put forward, is quite frankly speculative and uncertain. . . . Our main contention can hardly be that the science of today has a pronouncement to make, perhaps it ought rather to be that science should

leave off making pronouncements: the river of knowledge has too often turned back on itself."

A woman who had labored against Christianity was on her death bed. Her unbelieving acquaintances, fearing that at the end she would renounce her infidelity, urged her to "hold on to the last."

"Yes," she said, "I have no objection to holding on; but will you tell me what I am to hold on to?"

An unbeliever who was present was so greatly impressed by this revelation of the inadequacy of unbelief, that he did the only wise thing. He abandoned his unreasonable position. Christianity invites all who are outside the fold of truth similarly to abandon the uncertainty of unbelief, to choose God instead of chaos. She directs all men to the valid and certain truth which God out of His omniscience reveals, and invites them to see facts in their relationship to God, the all-wise. She teaches men the only way to find their chief end.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. *What are some of the views of the chief end of man held by unbelievers?*
2. *Are all non-Christian religions in basic agreement? Discuss.*
3. *What effect does Christianity have on a man's thinking?*
4. *What effect does a man's view of God have on his life?*
5. *Is certainty possible?*
6. *Will God be glorified in all that occurs on the day of judgment?*

### New Church Formed at Quarryville, Pa.

**T**HE Faith Presbyterian Church of Quarryville, Pa., was, on September 6th, organized by those who left the so-called Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. with their pastor, the Rev. Franklin S. Dyrness. The congregation is composed mostly of former members of the Chestnut Level Church who have been joined by a group from Lancaster's Memorial Presbyterian Church.

A property has already been secured and plans are under way for a new church building. The church now has 72 members but attendance generally exceeds a hundred. The congregation has voted unanimously to join the Philadelphia Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church of America.

# Against the Lord

A Meditation on the Second Psalm

By the REV. DAVID FREEMAN



Mr. Freeman

**T**HE world knows only too well of revolution and rebellion, but it even now is not fully aware that it is in a state of revolt against God. The underlying reason for this is that the mind of man, of and by itself, is at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7).

So it was in David's day. Foes within and without were arrayed against David, who was set up by God to rule His covenant people. This was not an engagement of arms against a mortal man but it was against God.

In opposing and fighting against God's servants, the powers of this world are directing their violence against God. Whatever is done to the people of God is done to Him, for He identifies himself with His people. When they are hurt, He is hurt. In persecuting God's servants the persecutors will deny that they are fighting against God. Yea, they often think they are doing God a service. Few men openly profess themselves rebels against God. They rather cover their sin by presumptuously boasting that God is on their side. Yet all the while they are determined by righteous or unrighteous means to cast down the kingdom of God. We have witnessed such a spectacle in recent days in the treatment ministers have received at the hands of men who boast of their allegiance to God. Let such men be aware of the righteous judgment of God that hangs over them.

David's kingdom is to be understood as but a shadow of Christ's kingdom, for David was made king in order that he might represent the Redeemer. Thus to be against Christ is to be against God. So the apostles interpreted this psalm, and there is no better commentary upon the import of the words of Scripture than Scripture itself. When the wrath of man was set against the first believers in Jesus, they looked to God in prayer, mindful of the words uttered in this place by

David. They saw in the way in which they were treated one of the repeated fulfillments of rebellion against God. It was against the Lord and against His Christ that rulers and men stood up when they opposed the work of the gospel. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."

To the children of God, the opposing power of men is often terrifying, but when they take refuge in God, then are they not afraid for they know that God is meet for all of His enemies. His unchangeable decree should sustain our faith amid the troublous storms of the world. God's plan and purpose cannot be frustrated by the apostasy of men. He is pledged to maintain to the end His Son's kingdom because He is Himself the founder of it.

The enemies of the Lord are left without excuse. They have the witness of God and of His servant against them. In divers ways God has shown himself worthy of obedience. By miracles and mighty works through His Son, and through the ones whom He has sent into the world to proclaim His message God makes known the obedience He requires of men. And even though it be made known by others it ceases not to be Christ's word.

How can it be said that Christ has a kingdom now when the nations of this world pay no heed to His word? But is it not true that the Holy One of Israel has a people for His name from all climes and nations of the earth? Does He not now work mightily in the saving of sinners everywhere? True, it is still a world lying in wickedness, but can any creature including Satan take away from His sovereignty? Be men ever so rebellious and throw away the bands of His righteous rule, yet they cannot take away or annul God's authority and power.

Who can fight against God and win? If a man is not for Christ and His

gospel then he is against Him. They are, however, sure to fall unless they bow beneath His sceptre. He who will not bow in submission must fall beneath His rod. God's justice is not extinguished by His mercy. In a parable our Lord said, "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." He shows himself to be a gentle shepherd to the meek and obedient, but He is armed with power to destroy kings and their armies that are against Him, in the day of His wrath.

The "terrors of the Lord" are for purposes of persuading men to submit while pardon is possible. Now is the day of the Lord if men will hear His voice. After death is the judgment. To the impenitent there is held out nothing but righteous doom. While redemption is the beginning of the work of the Son of God, judgment is the end of it.

Every man knows that he ought to know, love and trust God. Whether he does so or not, or feels unable to do so because of his sinfulness, yet he knows God will require obedience from him. Does he try to render what God requires in himself? Then he is doomed from the start for man has no righteousness to commend himself to God. How then shall he give to God the homage and worship that He requires? The Father said of the Son, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Only in the Son can we be pleasing to Him. He is the only way to the Father. To deny the Son is to deny the Father.

God acknowledges as subjects, and reckons to be on His side, only those who acknowledge themselves to be sinners devoid of all glory before God, and incapable of entering by their own strength and their own merits into communion with the Father, who cry for mercy and grace at the foot of the cross, and expect nothing in earth or heaven except His personal and powerful mediation. Those only are for Christ. The rest are against Him.

## The Sunday School Lessons

By the REV. R. LAIRD HARRIS

**October 18th, The Spoken and the Written Word. Acts 17:1-15, I Thess. 2:1-12.**



Mr. Harris

**T**HE whole lesson text should certainly be studied in connection with the preparation for this week. Unfortunately the four verses omitted in the Westminster Quarterlies are the very verses which tell how Paul in his missionary preaching appealed directly to the written Word. It tells in verse two how on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, *i.e.*, our Old Testament. And from the prophecies contained in the written Word he alleges the gospel, "that it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is Christ." (Acts 17:3 R.V.)

Paul had left Philippi after his scourging and miraculous deliverance and now undaunted he proceeds to preach the same gospel in the same way at the next few towns. Thessalonica was the next stop of any length and there he preached for at least three weeks in the synagogue. It would be well for the teacher to notice that we can learn a good bit about these short stops of Paul by turning to the epistles he wrote to these communities after he left. A study of Paul's stay in Thessalonica is very incomplete without a study of the two epistles he wrote to them. We also know very little of Paul's second visit to Thessalonica (Acts 20:1-4). But the conditions in the church there are reflected somewhat in his epistles which we should learn to sandwich in between the pages of the book of Acts.

This second verse of Acts 17 and also I Thess. 2:13 tells us what Paul preached. He preached the Word of God. From the Scripture reading it appears that "The Written Word" alone might be the better title, for Paul even submitted his apostolic witness and his personal eye-witness to the test of Deut. 13:1-4. The Scriptures of Jewry were the Word of God and Paul appealed to them as to a

touchstone for truth. He had a message of his own to be sure. But so convinced was he that the Word of God is always true that his appeal was to the Bible of their day, our Old Testament.

And it is this very Old Testament which is mostly bitterly attacked today. For years theological seminaries in this country and abroad have taught that Moses had nothing to do with the writing of the Pentateuch, though Jesus Himself acknowledged his authorship (Mk. 7:10). Hear what Dr. Henry S. Coffin said when the General Assembly reiterated the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture: "The Bible is not without error . . . the Scriptures do not teach a physical resurrection." (*The Presbyterian*, Sept. 20, 1923, p. 10.) All the Auburn Affirmationists echoed the chorus.

The apostles took a different view of the matter. To them the Bible was valuable because it was true, and their message was given with conviction because they knew it to be the truth

(Acts 4:20). Now we today, if we would expect to have the apostles' success, should hold that Book in the same high estimation. Let us notice that the New Testament is as truly the Word of God as the Old. In II Peter 3:16 the same word "Scriptures" (*graphai*) is applied to Paul's writings as is here applied to the Old Testament. If the apostles were alive today they would certainly be classified as Bible-believing Christians. From the first, Christianity has been a book religion. And though we may be despised as "Bibliolaters" we will continue our trust in the objective, infallible, authoritative Word of God.

Of course this lesson teaches also what the gospel is. It is salvation through the suffering and risen Messiah foretold through prophetic and priestly and kingly offices by the whole Old Testament. But it seems to me there is here this greater lesson that, after all, this message which we preach and teach is the eternal truth.

The religion of feeling represented by Schleiermacher and yesterday's liberals says that of course the Bible is not true but still one must come to church and hold candle-light services, for it makes us weep and we feel good. The Roman Catholic doctrine of "The living church" finds sympathizers in our major denominations who say that only some parts of the Bible are true but if you will listen to the authority of the church assembled you may forget about the authorship of the Pentateuch. The Barthians of today likewise will not bow to the Bible as true in all its parts and to be received in its entirety "because it is the Word of God" (Confession of Faith, 1:4). Against all these modern doubts and false emphases comes the comforting solid teaching of Paul contained in I Thessalonians, which even the modern critics admit is from the pen of the apostle: "when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." (I Thess. 2:13.) Here is our confidence. Luther had a "mighty fortress" because he knew his God was real. Paul could take his floggings and preach again, because he knew he was right about it all. And we will preach and witness with zeal when we *know* that the Gospel is true, that the opposite is as false as Satan, and that it is a matter of life and death what our hearers do about it.

### Free Literature for the Sunday School

**F**ROM a reliable source The Presbyterian Guardian has learned of an offer of lesson helps for the period from October to December. Those who are interested may address their inquiries to the Instructor Publishing Co., Zeeland, Michigan. In addition to The Instructor, a magazine devoted to the senior and junior groups, the company publishes a leaflet for the smaller children and study helps for teachers. These helps which follow the International Lessons are recommended as being marked by fidelity to the Word of God.

### October 25th, Christianity as Love. Acts 18:1-17; I Cor. 13.

The title of our present lesson is hardly agreeable with the Scripture readings. It is quite evidently chosen as expressive of the Corinthians passage, but the passage in Acts does not seem to be very closely related. In fact it speaks of love no more than did the previous chapter which was assigned for October 18th. "Paul at Corinth" would have been a better title. Still the lesson assigned is I Cor. 13 and it behooves us to study this much-misused passage to see its real significance. I disagree with the thought expressed in the topic. It would suggest that Christianity is love and indeed many have not hesitated so to preach. They quote Christ's two commandments (Mk. 12:29-31) and cite from the Sermon on the Mount and say that if we live a life of love surely we are Christians of the first water, and it matters not what we believe as long as we love all men. The queer thing is that they are almost right. If they live a life of absolute love to God and man, and if they keep the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount with minute precision they will enter heaven without fail. But is it not plain that this is not Christianity? It is legalism. Such a message must be preached against the background of the white holiness of Almighty God. People who say such things declare that they are as holy as He and therefore they have no need of a Saviour. To love the Lord and one's neighbor is indeed the law of God, but it is no gospel to comfort and to save a lost and dying world. Christianity is not law. Least of all is it this highest law of Love, but rather it is salvation by the grace of God through faith in His shed blood (Acts 20:28).

We follow Paul from Thessalonica and Berea, where there was a price put on his head, down to the sophisticated city of Athens. We cannot study his sermon on Mars Hill. He preached faithfully Christ and the resurrection and some were converted even there. But when he came to Corinth alone (Silas and Timothy being still in Berea, Luke in Thessalonica) surely he was ready for God's gracious vision: "I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." (Acts 18:10.)

Paul entered Corinth in "weakness

and fear and in much trembling." The epistles written much later tell us what were the developments there. We have a long letter from the church at Rome to this Corinthian church written about 95 A.D. Paul's two letters, both written from Ephesus on the third missionary journey, give us many of the details of church organization and worship which we lack in the case of the other apostolic churches. And the situation was not all rosy. There were many cases of sin and of open disbelief which troubled both the Corinthians and Paul, and against these he bears testimony. It is particularly instructive to notice how Paul deals with practically every case by recalling the offenders to the great verities of the gospel message. There was a church fight. It was not so serious a cleavage as the old Tübingen school would make out. It was not "another gospel" as was preached in Galatia. But any church fight is serious enough and every one should be healed by Paul's remedy recalling them to nothing but "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). Likewise the case of fornication and their complaisance was rebuked with I Cor. 5:7 "Purge out the old leaven . . . For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Again the disorder at the Lord's Table was not silenced with any weak attempt at compromise, but by an appeal to the heart of the gospel in the solemn words of I Cor. 11:25 "This cup is the new testament in my blood."

In the same way the famous 13th chapter was written to correct an abuse. It is part of a larger discourse (Chapters 12-14) and should not be studied or taught apart from that context. There were some among the Christians at Corinth who were boasting of their spiritual gifts. There were several of these spiritual gifts, some miraculous, some probably not so. A list is given in I Cor. 12:7-10. They were good in themselves and Paul himself claims to have at least some of them. But if we must boast, it is most absurd of all to boast of these things which are not ours, but God's! Therefore in Chapters 12 to 14 Paul shows their sin, admonishes them for the future, and tells how the gifts are to be rightly used not for self-exaltation, but for the service of God.

Now we see what the passage means. All gifts are useless unless exercised with a right spirit. To express

it in the spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism, the right motive is essential to a good work. What is Paul's definition of love (vs. 4-7) but Christian humility coupled with Christian discernment of evil, and Christian patience? The love here referred to is doubtless that strong tie that binds Christians to one another, being first bound to God. Modernists have no monopoly on love any more than on tolerance as shown by the recent trials and judicial decisions. We are not commanded to receive a heretic as our brother by this passage; we are commanded to reject such (Tit. 3:10). But those who are bought with the same blood of our Lord, with whom we shall unite around the throne of grace, those we are commanded to treat with special forbearance, patience and Christian charity.

### Dr. Edmund B. Chaffee

**D**R. EDMUND B. CHAFFEE, widely-known as one of the leaders of the most radical group of ministers in the so-called Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., died suddenly on September 15th while addressing a Conference of Social Work in Minneapolis. He was, since 1921, Director of Labor Temple of New York City, an institution which sought to interpret the church to labor and labor for the church. There he became known for his crusades for "social justice" and his espousal of radical causes.

When *The Presbyterian Tribune* was founded in 1934, he became its editor. An editorial of several months ago protesting against Cardinal Hayes' views of the Old Testament, as expressed in his sermon on birth control, brought the charge that Dr. Chaffee was unfaithful to his vows as a Presbyterian minister. In this editorial Dr. Chaffee had said that the God of the Old Testament was a Deity of myth and legend. The charge of infidelity led his colleagues in *The Presbyterian Tribune* to defend him by restating the view of the Bible which is found in the Auburn Affirmation, a document which Dr. Chaffee had signed. These associates declared that there were hundreds of Presbyterian ministers who joined with Dr. Chaffee in holding the Bible as a "revelation of God," as "inspired by God," and as "infallible" but who refused to regard every statement as factually accurate.

## PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERY ADOPTS RESOLUTIONS, ADDS SIX CHURCHES

### Issues Reply to Recent Action of Old Organization

**T**HE Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Presbyterian Church of America on September 22nd received six churches and one minister. They are: the churches at Athboy and Meadow, S. D.; Kirkwood, Pa.; Faith Church of Quarryville, Pa.; Northeast Church of Philadelphia, Pa.; and the Knox Church of Washington, D. C. The Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine, Independent Board missionary to Japan, was added to presbytery's rapidly increasing roll.

The following important recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Ministers was adopted:

"The Committee recommends, after a study of the cases referred to it, that ministers from all churches except the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., unless personally known to a considerable number of presbyters, be expected to appear personally before the presbytery for an examination before being received. This recommendation is based upon the necessity for adequately ascertaining the motive, theological position and usefulness of the applicant which it seems impossible to do without a personal appearance. . . ."

Concerning certain recently publicized efforts to prevent "deposed" ministers from exercising the functions of their office the presbytery adopted this very significant resolution:

Having heard reports to the effect that the body known as the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the body known as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has addressed certain public officials to the effect that certain ministers now belonging to The Presbyterian Church of America have been deposed from the ministry by the aforesaid Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and are not therefore entitled to perform marriages or conduct funerals, be it resolved by this Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Presbyterian Church of America that the Moderator and Stated Clerk of this Presbytery be authorized and directed to communicate with the proper civil authorities to inform them of the following facts, not as a matter of obligation but as a matter of information:

(1) That The Presbyterian Church of America, which came into being on June 11, 1936, is a sovereign religious body, organized upon the historic doctrinal and

ecclesiastical principles of Presbyterianism.

(2) That The Presbyterian Church of America is a religious society possessing and recognizing as such a valid ministry of the gospel. These ministers are authorized by the principles of this Church and by virtue of their membership in its judicatories, to perform all acts and do all things pertaining to ordained ministers of the gospel, both religious and those civil acts which the laws of this commonwealth authorize to be done by ministers of religion.

(3) That the members and officers of The Presbyterian Church of America, some of whom were formerly connected with the body known as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and some of whom were not, are not now connected with or accountable to any other religious body than The Presbyterian Church of America. Any and all acts taken against members or officers of this Church by any other church are null and void as lacking all jurisdiction. Every religious society is entitled to set forth the whole system of its internal government, and those connected with it are responsible to its government and judicatories alone.

(4) That any and all so-called "depositions" by the body known as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. against ministers of this church were performed *after* said ministers had severed all connections with the body named, and had no more accountability to it.

(5) That The Presbyterian Church of America, as a voluntary religious association, enjoys and claims the protection of the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, particularly as found in Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as the laws of the United States and other states, guaranteeing to its ministers the full rights and privileges, civil as well as religious, belonging to clergymen of religious bodies generally.

(6) That the Presbytery calls to the attention of those concerned the attached resolution of the First General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church of America, the supreme judicatory of our church, relating to this matter, passed on June 12, 1936, and found on page 11 of the attached minutes.

(7) That the Presbytery states to all interested parties, not as a matter of legal obligation, but as a matter of information, that the roll of ministers of the Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Presbyterian Church of America, is, as of September 22, 1936, as follows: [Here follows the complete roll of presbytery.]

All these ministers are authorized to do and perform any and all acts pertaining to the work of ministers of the gospel, and are so recognized by The Presbyterian Church of America.

Attest:

JOHN BURTON THWING,  
Moderator.  
R. LAIRD HARRIS,  
Stated Clerk.

## SOUTH DAKOTA MINISTER RELIEVED OF PASTORATE, LOCKED OUT OF CHURCH

### Abusive Language Used by Representatives of Presbytery

**O**N SEPTEMBER 16th the Presbytery of Sioux Falls meeting at Salem, S. D., adopted the recommendation of its Vacancy and Supply Committee to terminate the five months' provisional appointment of the Rev. Jack Zandstra to the Bridgewater Church. Mr. Zandstra, a Westminster Seminary graduate, is also the regularly installed pastor of the church at Alexandria.

Presbytery stated, as its reason for the sudden ousting of Mr. Zandstra, that he has been "carrying on the same propaganda at Bridgewater as three other men, Westminster Seminary graduates, who served churches in our presbytery, and brought division and distress in their fields and thereby discredited our church as an organization with the Bridgewater people, also declining to support our denominational agencies."

An elder of the church then told the presbytery that Mr. Zandstra was well liked by the congregation, that they wanted to keep him, that they could see no reason why he should be released. The majority, however, voted for the resolution, and it is reported that one member termed Mr. Zandstra a "thief" and a "robber" in the course of a heated discussion.

The following day, on the way to the prayer meeting which he expected to hold in courtesy to the people of Bridgewater, Mr. Zandstra was approached in front of the church and commanded to hand over the church key. When reasoning proved fruitless he complied. He was then told that there would be no prayer meeting that night, *and was ordered from the premises.*

The session then met with two ministerial representatives of presbytery. They summoned Mr. Zandstra to explain once more his position on support of the Boards. When he complied he was told in no uncertain terms by one minister that he was "a deceiver, a dishonest man." The other minister, thrusting his fist in Mr. Zandstra's face, shouted in a rage that



he was "bullheaded" and "stubborn" and that his only desire was to "bust the church."

Quietly but firmly Mr. Zandstra repeated his refusal to compromise. He was dismissed. Over the protest of the session, who were told to resign if they dissented, announcement was made that a new pastor would be promptly installed and the time of service changed to preclude all possibility of interference from Mr. Zandstra.

On the following Sunday morning presbytery's moderator (and the newly-appointed moderator of the session), the Rev. P. H. Heemstra, attempted to "explain" the issue to the congregation. The result was general befuddlement. That evening, having secured the high school auditorium, Mr. Zandstra addressed nearly 175 persons. Carefully, and with well-documented evidence, he outlined the true picture of chaos and apostasy in the so-called Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and affirmed his intention of promptly resigning. General agreement prevailed in the congregation, and a new church is expected soon.

## "UNITED PRESBYTERIAN" FINDS ISSUE DOCTRINAL

IN ITS issue of August 27th, *The United Presbyterian* declares that The Presbyterian Church of America is on solid ground in its pledge "to be true to the Word of God and the absolute sovereignty of Jesus as Son of God and the giver of life eternal." Its recognition of the doctrinal issue here is in contrast to its consistent opposition to The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions:

"A very considerable element in the church of Christ generally has been disgusted and also seriously alarmed at the growth of Unitarianism in evangelical churches and the boldness and even arrogance with which Unitarians and Universalists, masquerading as evangelicals, have been flouting the cardinal principles of Presbyterianism and overriding and even deriding the same. The new church, The Presbyterian Church of America, or by whatever name it may be finally designated, has determined and so pronounced, that no minister in the new organization can hold his place in that organization, who, either by the written or spoken word, shall engage in the business of stealing from Jesus' head the 'many crowns' which God the Father has bestowed upon Him and with which He has eternally glorified

Him. The church of Christ is sick, and that which has made it sick is the very common type of minister occupying modern pulpits, who, sworn to defend the faith, has undermined it, and who, sworn to hold up Jesus as the Saviour of a lost world, the transformer of human nature into divine nature, the gateway to the kingdom of heaven and life eternal, has dragged Jesus down to the level of Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius or to the level of the leaders of the prevailing cults of our day. Let the apostate church everywhere give back to Jesus the crowns it stole from Him and then let it see the beginning of a new day in the history of the kingdom of God."

## MAHONING PRESBYTERY RISKS OFFICIAL REPRIMAND BY ERASING, NOT "DEPOSING"

### Unique Action Characterizes The Rev. T. H. Mitchell's Removal

MEETING in the First Church of Warren, Ohio, on September 15th, the old organization's Presbytery of Mahoning kicked over the traces and several score of precedents by being very constitutional.

When the matter of action against the Rev. Thomas H. Mitchell of Mineral Ridge, a member of The Presbyterian Church of America, came before the meeting a motion was made that his name be dropped from the roll. Since this was the only correct procedure according to that organization's Book of Discipline the motion to follow it came as a complete surprise; that it was overwhelmingly adopted was little short of astounding.

Only opposition to the action came from the Rev. Wallace T. McAfee, who had previously expressed his hope that the ouster of Mr. Mitchell could be done "on a high spiritual plane." Apparently abandoning the idea of a love-feast, Mr. McAfee hung the usual list of offenses on Mr. Mitchell, introduced a substitute motion and warned presbytery that if it passed the original motion it would run a grave risk of receiving a reprimand from General Assembly. Some observers attributed Mr. McAfee's change of heart to the fact that he had just returned fresh from contact with the office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

This is one of the very few known cases of strictly legal procedure on

the part of any presbytery faced with such a question. It is hoped by many that the office of the Stated Clerk of General Assembly will be lenient in dealing with the recalcitrant presbytery.

## IRISH EVANGELICAL CHURCH GREETES THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

AT THE last meeting of the Council of the Irish Evangelical Church it was unanimously agreed that greetings be sent to the newly-organized Presbyterian Church of America. The proposed message is given below:

The Council of the Irish Evangelical Church sends greetings to the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church of America.

We are your brothers, and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of an apostate church, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Though we have not the word Presbyterian in the name of our denomination, all our ordained office-bearers are required to sign once a year, without equivocation, a declaration of their belief in the doctrines of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster divines.

Previous to June, 1927, we were nearly all members of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, maintaining the truth of the Bible against unbelievers, euphemistically called Modernists. In June, 1927, the General Assembly of that church having voted by an overwhelming majority (707 to 82) in favor of Modernism, we felt that we ought not to remain any longer under its authority.

A number of persons who were with us in protesting against Modernism while we were in the Presbyterian Church, did not come out with us. They said they would continue to fight for the truth inside that church. But their testimony has dwindled away till it is now negligible. So, we fear, will it be with those who were with you, and remain behind in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

We congratulate you on your close association with Westminster Theological Seminary and The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. These are great assets. We are far behind you in both respects, having no theological college, and no foreign mission work that we can call our own. We have, however, very happy relations with the Free Church of Scotland, and send our students to the Free Church College, Edinburgh, where they get sound teaching; and we give

some financial support to missions that are true to God's Word.

No doubt we are, in the eyes of the world, a feeble folk. But we have this treasure, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Brethren, pray for us.

And may the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## CARLISLE BODY "DUSTS" THE REV. R. S. MARSDEN

THE Presbytery of Carlisle of the body known as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at its meeting on September 21st and 22nd, went through the form of "deposing" the Rev. Robert S. Marsden, pastor of the local Calvary Presbyterian Church of The Presbyterian Church of America. Mr. Marsden was formerly a member of the Presbytery of Carlisle but is now a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Presbyterian Church of America. According to press reports, the "deposition" was on the ground that Mr. Marsden "has aligned himself with the fundamentalist faction" of the church.

In commenting on the action of the presbytery, Mr. Marsden issued the following statement:

"I am little interested in what that presbytery happens to do in my case or in any other case, for I am a member in good standing of the Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Presbyterian Church of America and am authorized by that church to perform all ministerial functions both religious and civil. For the Presbytery of Carlisle to presume to 'depose' me is just as ridiculous as if they were to 'depose' a minister of the Lutheran or Methodist or any other church. I have no connection with the denomination which the Presbytery of Carlisle represents, and have no interest in what that denomination thinks about me.

"Actions such as that reported from the Presbytery of Carlisle are simply additional proof that the charges that I have repeatedly made against the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. are true, namely, that the church is apostate, for it seems obvious that none but an apostate church would 'depose' a minister on the ground that he had 'aligned himself with the fundamentalist faction' of a church which is supposed to be universally 'fundamentalist.' Such arrogance and hatred of the gospel which is unconsciously revealed by an action of 'deposing' a member of another evangelical denomination is but a further mark of an apostate church."

## PRESBYTERY OF CALIFORNIA MEETS IN LOS ANGELES, RECEIVES NINE MINISTERS

### Old Organization Continues Repression and Tyranny

MEETING in Los Angeles on September 10th the Presbytery of California of The Presbyterian Church of America convened for its first session. Present were the following ministers and one elder: The Rev. Samuel Sutherland; the Rev. C. S. Kim; the Rev. Milo F. Jamison; the Rev. Martin L. Thomas; the Rev. W. Harlee Bordeaux; the Rev. Edward H. Osborn; the Rev. Donald K. Blackie; Elder J. W. Ludlow. Later the Rev. Lewis H. Jamison, the Rev. Lynn Wade and Elder J. M. Robertson were added to the list of members.

Mr. Blackie was elected Moderator and Mr. Bordeaux was chosen Stated Clerk. Among other interesting matters a resolution was adopted declaring the disciplinary actions of all other religious bodies to be unwarranted interference and of no effect.

Mr. Blackie, erroneously reported "deposed" on August 31st, was actually "deposed" on Tuesday, September 22nd. The spectacle of the Moderator of one presbytery being "deposed" by another seemed to many rather amusing. The old Presbytery of Los Angeles then proceeded to bring charges against Mr. Bordeaux and Mr. Osborn. The report of the Judicial Commission will probably be given at the November 24th meeting of the presbytery.

Meanwhile, as a fitting climax to the work so well begun, Mr. Blackie, together with several others, sponsored a mass meeting in the auditorium of the Church of the Open Door on Sunday, September 20th. An audience of approximately 1500 persons heard the Rev. Charles J. Woodbridge, General Secretary of the Independent Board, speak on the subject, "Why The Presbyterian Church of America has been formed." Said Mr. Blackie, "Never before have I seen so enthusiastic an audience. Since then the presbytery has taken definite action by way of forming new churches in this area. The prospects are certainly encouraging."

## OLD CHICAGO PRESBYTERY FINDS DR. BUSWELL "GUILTY," "DEPOSES" FOR "CONTUMACY"

### President of Wheaton College Sentenced Without Trial

PROCEEDING with the relentless-ness of a juggernaut the old organization's Chicago Presbytery, on September 14th, attempted to depose from the gospel ministry the Rev. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D., President of Wheaton College. The action was without the slightest vestige of validity, since Dr. Buswell had, on June 11th, renounced the jurisdiction of his former presbytery and joined The Presbyterian Church of America. Stated Clerk Dr. Andrew C. Zenos was officially informed of his renunciation on June 22nd.

Despite the rank illegality of proceeding against a minister who had severed all connection with it, the presbytery cited Dr. Buswell to appear and receive the sentence of admonition which had been ordered by the Syracuse Assembly. When Dr. Buswell failed to appear the presbytery set up its toy soldier, leveled the official popgun, and exploded it in the grand Italian manner.

Word of the action reached Dr. Buswell through the following letter:

PRESBYTERY OF CHICAGO  
September 16, 1936.

Rev. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D.,  
Wheaton College,  
Wheaton, Illinois.

My dear Doctor Buswell:

This is to advise that the action of presbytery in the case of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America against you was taken at the meeting held September 14, 1936, and is as follows:

"The Stated Clerk reported with reference to the Buswell matter that the final judgment of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. vs. the Rev. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., as rendered by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, and confirmed by the Assembly itself, directed the presbytery to proceed with the execution of the judgment of its own Special Judicial Commission and immediately pronounce the admonition on Dr. Buswell. The Stated Clerk read the full text of this action of the General Assembly.

The Stated Clerk then reported the issuance of the citation to the Rev. J. Oliver Buswell to appear at this meeting of presbytery and receive the admonition.

The Stated Clerk also read a letter received from the Rev. J. Oliver Buswell in which he asserted that he renounced

the jurisdiction of the General Assembly and of presbytery.

The Rev. J. Oliver Buswell having failed to appear as cited his letter was brought in evidence as an act of contumacy on his part, and the presbytery proceeded in accordance with Chapter VII, Section 1, of the Book of Discipline to record "judgment without judicial process" deposing him from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church for the offense of contumacy.

The act of deposition was executed by the Moderator in the words of the Book of Discipline, Chapter IX, Section 15, as follows:

"Whereas you, J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., have been convicted by sufficient proof of the sin of contumacy, and by your sin and unfaithfulness have brought reproach on the cause of your Master, we therefore, the Presbytery of Chicago, acting under the authority of Jesus Christ do hereby depose and exclude you from the office of a minister of the gospel and do prohibit you from exercising henceforth any of the powers and duties of that office."

Sincerely yours,

ANDREW C. ZENOS,  
Stated Clerk.

Said Dr. Buswell: "In regard to any and all actions of Chicago Presbytery subsequent to June 22nd I have nothing whatever to say. On that day 'I took passage on the Mayflower.' I am now free to worship the Lord in The Presbyterian Church of America, a truly Presbyterian and American church."

## OOSTBURG PASTOR ANSWERS PRESBYTERY'S STATEMENT

THE Rev. Oscar Holkeboer, who was "deposed" by Milwaukee Presbytery on September 8th, was the subject of a long statement issued by the presbytery on September 10th, and published in the Sheboygan (Wis.) *Press*. Small portions of it are worthy of note:

"... For more than a year, Mr Holkeboer has been committed to a program of severe criticism of the Presbyterian Church, which has been coupled with a rigid censorship excluding most of its constructive work from the knowledge of his congregation.

"For the past six weeks the Presbytery has kept a committee at work on the problems raised by Mr. Holkeboer in an exhaustive effort to discover some basis of co-operation. But at the congregational meeting of August 25th, at which time Mr. Holkeboer's resignation was considered, a majority of the congregation voted down Mr. Kranendonk's motion to work together for six months or a year to preserve the 'brotherhood and unity' of the church.

"It was following the final refusal of Mr. Holkeboer to co-operate in the plan suggested that the resolution dissolving the pastoral relationship was adopted. . . .

"The summary disciplinary action taken in the case of Holkeboer deposing him from the ministry and revoking his ordination credentials was taken under definite constitutional provision of 'judgment without full judicial process' only after Mr. Holkeboer sought to renounce jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church. The judicial committee had recommended and the presbytery had voted to try Mr. Holkeboer with full judicial process, giving him every opportunity to defend himself and prove his case. But rather than face trial in a church court, Mr. Holkeboer renounced jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church. In cases where a minister is not charged or chargeable with any offense the presbytery would simply erase his name from its rolls, but Mr. Holkeboer was both charged with and chargeable with offenses, and the presbytery proceeded to judgment on the basis of offenses committed in the presence of the judiciary. . . ."

Here followed a rehearsal of the so-called offenses, which consisted of his letter of resignation denouncing the apostasy of the organization, the fact that 215 members of his congregation agreed with him, and his refusal to retract. The full text of the sentence was also included in the press release.

On September 19th Mr. Holkeboer's trenchant reply was published. A few outstanding excerpts are here quoted:

"... It was to be expected that presbytery in its 'official statement' would wash its hands of any guilt in the whole affair. But that is not so easily done. Not only Milwaukee Presbytery but the entire Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., is 'put on the spot.' They must explain why throughout the church pastors with their congregations or parts of them are separating from the old denomination. Such separation is a protest against false doctrine propagated within her gates and openly tolerated. They are finding it necessary to explain why men whose doctrinal soundness and moral character are unquestioned are being forced out of the church. Throughout the church there has been a deliberate evasion of the doctrinal issues involved. There is either an effort to 'whitewash' the doctrinal corruption of the church or else it has become a matter of indifference what a man believes. . . .

"Reports from different parts of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. show that in the past few weeks actions against fundamentalists are more intolerant, tyrannical and drastic than ever before. The boasted tolerance of the liberals has vanished into thin air. The political machine of the church is apparently determined to rid itself of any minister who dares to cry out against the evils within the doors of the church. The cardinal sin of the church, namely the teaching of false doctrine, goes on apace under the protection

of the church. My plea is that we become more intolerant of unbelief and more tolerant of the methods used in combatting that great evil. . . ."

With calm and sound logic Mr. Holkeboer then proceeded to refute the charges of insubordination, schism and slander, and prove the truth of his accusations of official apostasy.

The result of presbytery's pogrom is the newly-organized Bethel Presbyterian Church of Oostburg, which already gives promise of a rich testimony and a great future.

## PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERY OF OLD ORGANIZATION "DEPOSES" FIVE MINISTERS

### Attempts to Invalidate All Rights of "Deposed" Men

MEETING on September 21st in the Overbrook Church, whose pastor is Auburn Affirmationist Moderator George Emerson Barnes, the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the so-called Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. staged a life-like imitation of a presbytery deposing five former members. The five are: Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse, Dr. Allan A. MacRae, Dr. Albert B. Dodd, Robert Moody Holmes, and David Freeman.

As last item on a long docket the report of the Special Judicial Commission was read by Dr. William R. Craig of the Gaston Church. It stated that all five ministers had been cited to appear at two meetings of the commission, that none had appeared either in person or by counsel, that a third citation had been ignored after which the commission had "deposed" them. The Moderator calmly ruled that the report of the commission *was* the action of the presbytery, that no debate would be allowed and that no further action was necessary.

Thereupon arose Auburn Affirmationist J. B. C. Mackie to tilt at windmills. He asked that the Stated Clerk notify the Orphans' Court and the Bureau of Vital Statistics that these five ministers were no longer qualified to officiate at weddings and funerals. The fact that large and unfavorable publicity had been accorded a recent similar action by West Jersey Presbytery was no deterrent to the redoubtable Dr. Mackie. The moderatorial

O.K. was promptly given. The response of the Philadelphia Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church of America to this action will be found on page 16 of this issue.

Earlier in the meeting Mr. E. F. George, of Northminster Church, applied for licensure. Dr. Matthew J. Hyndman conducted the examination in theology. Mr. George did not answer without considerable hesitancy and uncertainty. Dr. Hyndman re-framed his questions several times and helped Mr. George as few applicants have ever been helped. According to one observer it was apparent that presbytery was desperately anxious to fill the steadily increasing gaps in its ranks, at the expense of everything but loyalty to the church machine.

## SEES LITTLE HOPE OF REFORM FROM WITHIN

**W**RITING in *The Covenanter Witness* for August 19, 1936, under the title, "Another Presbyterian Church," the Rev. Thomas M. Slater, D.D., reviews the formation of The Presbyterian Church of America and expresses cordial sympathy with it:

"The formation of this new ecclesiastical body will be regarded with feelings either of approval or disapproval, according to what acquaintance we have with the steps preceding this move, or sympathy with the issues involved. Those who favor Liberalism, or whose only ideal of church life is outward unity, may brand this new organization as a mere expression of sectarian conceit or ambition to rule—another variety of the already too-abundant crop of 'Split P's.' The present writer considers it a venture of faith and the most courageous thing that has been attempted during the present era of Presbyterian history. The secession of this group has involved a painful piece of surgery for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and for the seceders. But as I believe time will show, it was either separation or death."

In commenting upon the movement for reform from within, Dr. Slater remarks:

"It is admitted, even by supporters of 'The Presbyterian League of Faith,' that their church has left its 'historic stand' and is in need of 'redemption.' Is it at all likely that a Modernist-driven church on a toboggan-slide toward Unitarianism will at 'some future time' 'swing back' on a course like that? For the fulfillment of this fond hope God's intervention is the only means. His forgiving mercy our only plea, and the unseating of Modernism the

## THE SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of The Presbyterian Church of America will convene in Philadelphia—from November 12th to 15th. It is planned to hold all sessions in the spacious auditorium of the Manufacturers' and Bankers' Club, Broad and Walnut Streets. Delegates and friends are urged to make all arrangements well in advance and to plan to attend every session.

all-essential condition. But can those who continue in organic union with the evil they seek to dislodge have any witnessing power, or long hold their own faith?"

The article concludes with the observation that the way of dissent has evidently met with the approval of God.

It was this way at the beginning of the Gospel when the Hebrew Christians followed Christ without the camp. It was separation that gave power to the Reformation. In those hard times of sifting it was in this way only that our Covenanting Societies survived. These witnesses against Modernism in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. felt they could give their testimony and keep their faith only as they separated from the evils which they condemned but could not dethrone—as God Himself calls all to do in any testimony that He has promised to bless. (II Cor. 6: 14-18.)

## NEW CHURCH FORMED IN MARION, OHIO

**T**HE Covenant Presbyterian Church of Marion (Ohio) was organized on Sunday afternoon, August 30th, as the logical outgrowth of the former chapter of the Covenant Union. Having withdrawn from the First Church of Marion this small but very much alive group began to hold Sunday School and prayer meeting services in the homes of members.

For the services on August 30th they rented the American Legion Hall and invited the Rev. John Clelland of Wilmington, Del., to preach. Seventeen persons attended in the morning, and twenty-five in the evening. At an afternoon meeting the church was formally constituted and two elders, already ordained, were installed.

It is worthy of note that the entire activity of the group has gone forward without any regular ministerial leadership. Commenting on his trip Mr. Clelland said: "I received a real blessing from my visit with these people, and cannot express my admiration for their willingness to take a stand for the sake of our Lord Jesus."

The church expects to affiliate with The Presbyterian Church of America.

## NEW JERSEY PRESBYTERY HOLDS DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

**T**HE members of the New Jersey Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church of America together with about 500 friends met at the West Church in Bridgeton on Tuesday evening, September 22nd, for a time of fellowship. The program began in the afternoon with an informal service in charge of the Rev. Alexander K. Davison of Vineland. After a brief, stirring message by the Rev. M. Nelson Buffer of Haddon Heights, the Rev. Harold S. Laird of the First Independent Church of Wilmington, Del., spoke on "The Victory of Faith."

At the evening service, in charge of the Rev. Clifford S. Smith of the host church, Mr. Laird brought another powerful and effective message on the subject of faith. The Scripture was read and prayer was offered by the Rev. Carl McIntire of Collingswood.

Those in attendance rejoiced at the spirit of oneness and rare fellowship in Christ which was much in evidence through the whole proceedings.

## NEW CHURCH ORGANIZES IN BALTIMORE, MD.

**A** GROUP of 29 elders and laymen met at the Guild Theatre on Sunday, September 27th, to organize St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of Baltimore. Since last July the group has met for regular worship under the able direction of Westminster Seminary student Theodore J. Jansma. Mr. Jansma will continue as stated supply.

Election of elders was postponed. The new church plans to apply to Philadelphia Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church of America for admission in the very near future.