



COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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March 3, 1980

DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

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Dear Gordon

Thank you for your patience. We have now moved and I have time for important things.

I appreciate your analysis very much. My reactions are on the accompanying sheet. I read the overture and your analysis together; hence, the comments move back and forth between them. None of my suggestions is major, but I am a little hesitant to go as far as you in condemning the whole presbytery. I am writing to some of the people out there for more information, esp. the breadth of commitment.

On another aspect, perhaps you have heard that Boice has met with a committee of our Philadelphia presbytery, pursuant to joining later. The issue will be decided by the congregation on Palm Sunday.

I feel a little uneasy about asking the members of California presbytery to withdraw. Seems to me that's a judicial procedure, but I do agree that they must face up to the implications of their vote.

It was good to see you last month. Thank you again for lunch.

Cordially

PS I have written Smallman expressing my feelings about the last meeting of our committee. I hope we can do better at our next meeting.

MY SUGGESTIONS

(Report 9³)

"Many tears" for unbelief and disobedience are more evident in Scripture than those for disunity.)

24

you repeat it

"beside the point" should be explained. This is a major objection to separation.

Acts 19:9 was separation from synagogue not from a church? What kind of separation here? Paul did not wait for correction or reform which may have been possible.

27

face no unexplained fineness when John mixed apostasy as possible.

Rev. 2, 3 needs more detail lest we fall into the same trap as the Overture did - unsupported generalizations.

Yes, the faithful will become corrupted: "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" 1 Cor. 5.

28

If you can make it stronger, fine!

We must make clear that fellowship does depend on doctrine. The Thessalonians "turned from" idols to serve God. Machen believed liberalism was not Christianity. Today people question this, hence deny the need for separation. They think a liberal may be saved despite his doctrine, hence they fear to condemn a brother. The truth is, we can only deal with what a person says, not what he may be despite his assertions.

(Report 10²)

How do we determine the "Church universal"? Is it the World Council, the UPUSA, the PCUS? Who is aloof from whom? Was not membership in the IB unacceptable to the old USA church? Is not refusal to ordain a homosexual unacceptable to present liberal leadership? Is it "indifference to the stumblings" etc., when we "go without the camp bearing His reproach?"

(Report 10³)

What was the "official creed" of the leaders of Israel? They didn't believe Moses (John 5:46f); some denied the resurrection (Matt. 22:23); they were Satan's children because they believed his lies (John 8:44).)

83

". . . it seems that some in the California Presbytery may have become . . . "

11² (and Report 10⁶)

A minister has many duties. He must ask more than, do I have "freedom to preach"? He must ask, can I serve God with all my heart, which includes exposing the unfruitful works of darkness, disciplining incestuous people, calling false teachers anathema, and not being yoked with unbelievers.

116
Some St. L. churches? 1. narrowness? 2. don't know?

a ticklish point. We need to document this point. Most of T. Roland Philip's congregation is now RP. Barnhouses people have not yet at least "come under the control of liberal pastors." It would be interesting to examine the present situation of people who were pastored by those who resigned from the IB.

(Report 114)

Joseph of Arimathea - did he return to the Sanhedrin after the crucifixion?
Are Calvin's remarks directed to those within the RC? Or are they directed to Protestants faced with secondary issues?
Did Calvin believe the RC was a "communion of the saints"?

Supernumerary figures refer (approximately) to areas on each page. 1 = top 10 = bottom.

Dr. John W. Sanderson
Covenant Seminary.

March 28 1980

Dear John,

You wrote your letter on March 3. I just cannot keep up with time. Milton was sure stupid when he said time travels on leaden feet.

Now as for your suggestions: 2⁴ I would be glad to have you alter this, and anything else. I took it that Paul at Ephesus, unlike his conduct at Corinth, thought that the congregation was in the power of unbelieving Jews and that he must leave them.

2⁷ does not seem to me an unsupported generalization; John viewed this particular case in which he judged that the church would or might become apostate, and be spewed out of Christ's mouth. I am everywhere willing to have you make improvements, in substance or in form.

2⁸ repeat the sentence above.

8³ I have inked in this phrase (some), though this itself allows a doubt as to the denomination as a whole; though it would be better to say, that if the Synod does not face this challenge, the denomination as a whole is deteriorating.

11⁶ A ticklish point? How so? What about Second Pres. and ~~Fourth~~ Ninth Pres. in Indianapolis? Bethel and Bethlehem in Phila? And others in Phila. Are there not some in St. Louis you could mention? I am not familiar with Oklahoma City, or even Chicago. Do you know what is the case with Macartney's church in Pittsburh? And MacCleans? (Was that his name -- the pastor of the Wnanmaker church in Phila, who went to Littsburh. Then there are the old UP churches .. Princeton, Ind. There must be a large number of such instances, but I do not know them. Volga, S.D. ?

As for my conclusion. I did not condemn the ~~whole~~ whole Presbytery individually. I condemned those who voted in favor of the Overture. You refer to proposing a judicial procedure. This is a possibility. But before going to that much trouble, and it would be a trouble, I merely suggested that those in favor of the Overture withdraw. There is nothing illegal in such a suggestion. It is an appeal to their consciences, if they realize their action is subversive. However, I am not insistent on this suggestion. What do you wish to offer. Let me see it. No doubt it will be an improvement over mine. And I hope it would be more likely to gain the support of the Synod.

Will you then take the time and trouble to amend my document. My ambitions are solely for the preservation of the purity of our denomination.

Cordially