

March 1, 1948.

To my friends, the Directors of Covenant House,

The purpose for which The Orthodox Presbyterian Church was founded was "to continue what we believe to be the true spiritual succession of The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A." It was supposed that persons entering the new church honestly approved its aims and wished to further its purpose. In view of this it is distressing to hear frequent attacks on our American Presbyterian heritage and to see the increase of Sectarianism.

There are many evidences of this Sectarianism. Three or four years ago, it will be remembered, the Sectarian party was branding Arminianism as "another Gospel". The Rev. Richard W. Gray wrote some excellent articles maintaining the Scriptural position against the claims of the Sectarrians. About the same time a speaker at the Quarryville Conference declared that Arminianism is worse than Modernism. The speaker has not been invited to speak there since that time, for the Quarryville Conference aims to teach what the Bible teaches. More recently The Presbyterian Guardian (June 25, 1947, pages 184-185) published, apparently with approval and certainly without its notorious dissents, a speech which refers to the "forces of Modernism and the equally dangerous foe of Arminianism." All this is unscriptural Sectarianism.

Modernism is dangerous because it denies the infallibility of the Bible. It is dangerous because it denies the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. Modernism is dangerous because there is no possibility of eternal salvation from sin for one who accepts these modernistic denials. Modernism is dangerous because it leads to hell.

Arminianism accepts the Bible, preaches the vicarious death of Christ, and believes in the Resurrection. All sincere Arminians are predestinated, all persevere in grace, and are perfectly sanctified in heaven.

We hold that Arminianism misinterprets the Scriptures on some important points. But, to put it mildly, it requires a singular lack of theological discernment to hold that Modernism and Arminianism are equally dangerous.

Another set of evidences that the Sectarian party in the OPC has in effect repudiated the Scriptures is their actions to impose a phenomenalistic skepticism on the church. Part of this evidence was made public in a paper entitled, The Philosophy of the Complaint, which I circulated about a year ago. This paper should be studied again. Since that time, additional evidence has come before us.

The spokesman for the Sectarian party at the last Assembly asserted that the human mind is incapable of receiving any truth. No one among the sectarian party rose to object to that assertion. They raised many objections and questions when the present writer spoke. But by silence they accepted what their chosen spokesman had to say.

Mr. Hamilton in one of his speeches repeated the statement of the soctarian spokesman. He quoted him as saying that the mind of man never gets any truth at all. Still, no one of their party made any objection to this quotation. The spokesman himself did not object.

At this point I rose to ask Mr. Hamilton a question. I asked, "Are you not misrepresenting the opposite position when you say that they deny we can know any truth at all?"

Mr. Hamilton replied that he was not conscious of misrepresenting them. He had heard their spokesman say just that, viz. that a man can never have any truth. And if the spokesman wished to correct him, he could do it now. Instead of correcting Mr. Hamilton, the spokesman approved the quotation.

This shows conclusively that the un-Presbyterian, un-Scriptural, soctarian party in our church has adopted a non-Christian phenomenalist skepticism.

Obviously they have little concern for Truth.

We Presbyterians in the OPC hold the truth in high regard. We believe that the Bible is true. And not only do we believe the Bible is true; but we believe that when we read the Bible, we come to know the truth. Maybe the Soctarians believe that the Bible, unroad, is true; but they hold that the human mind can never know any truth whatsoever. Then, may I ask, what good is the Bible?

This philosophical skepticism works itself out in action and policy. When the Complaint was presented to the Presbytery of Philadelphia in the autumn of 1944, the complainants were informed that it contained several false statements. That they were so informed is a matter of record in the papers of that Presbytery. And the Presbytery expressed its opinion that it would be unwise to publish and circularize the Complaint.

If the complainants had had a regard for truth, they would have examined and altered the false statements, or at least they would not have published them. But with the information before them that the Complaint contained false statements, they deliberately decided to publish and circularize it. This shows little regard for the truth.

But if the human mind, in particular theirs, cannot know the truth, perhaps on their theory it makes little difference what is published. It is not surprising therefore that with the false statements they also published slander and personal vilification.

They used phrases such as, unblushing humanist, vicious independence of God.

In the absence of truth, perhaps personal attack is a satisfactory substitute.

It is not only in the Complaint that the Sectarian party has made its personal attacks on the Presbyterians. At the last General Assembly one speech explicitly attacked the character of Mr. Hamilton. In view of Mr. Hamilton's noble service on the foreign field for twenty years, this personal attack on his character is outrageous. But of course, if the human mind cannot know the truth, we cannot know that such tactics are outrageous.

Following the General Assembly and following Mr. Hamilton's resignation as secretary to the Christian Education Committee, that Committee sent out a letter which managed to create the impression that Mr. Hamilton had incurred financial obligations for the Committee without its knowledge or approval. This is the sort of thing that one would expect as the practical result of skepticism.

The most amazing thing of all is that the majority of the General Assembly voted to put the machinery of the church in the hands of these sectarian skeptics. True Presbyterians, like Dr. Davison, Dr. Strong, Mr. McCroddan, were forced off the church's committees - forced simply because it is impossible to work with sectarians who use the tactics outlined above.

Of course the General Assembly has the legal right to choose who shall administer the affairs of the church. But inasmuch as the Sectarian party won such a victory - inasmuch as the General Assembly, after seeing clearly that it was faced with the definite choice between the two parties, chose the skeptics, there comes a question that we must ask and answer:

Is it worth while to expend more energy trying to maintain the purpose for which the OPC was founded? Is there any hope in continuing with a group who prefer skepticism and slander to truth? Can we not better bring the truths of the Bible to human minds more effectively in some other connection?

These are hard questions. The answers may be harder. But answers must be given shortly. Some of our friends have already decided.

Cordially yours,