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CHRISTIANITY TODAY



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

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The Question of the Hour: An Editorial



MORE than once in the history of nations and churches, issues in themselves important have suddenly and dramatically given rise to other issues of such tremendous moment, that the new have come to overshadow the old. That is happening now in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The issue concerning Foreign Missions is a great issue—let no mistake be made about that. Yet, it is the evident intention of the bureaucracy now dominating the machinery of the Church to compel support of the official Board of Foreign Missions and to use force against those who have established an Independent Board. Thus a new issue, that of Christian liberty, has arisen. And with it the Church must now answer a question which will determine her future.

The question is simply this: Who is to be the master of the conscience of the Christian man? God or men? When a minister stands up in the pulpit, whose minister is he to be—the minister of men or a minister of Christ? To whom does the minister go for his authority? The moment you make a man pledge to support a board or agency—any board or agency, no matter how good it is now—whatever its policies may become in the future (on the plea of loyalty or any other plea), that moment you have created a slave—a man who cannot call his soul his own. For this man's conscience has abdicated in favor of the consciences of other men. The ordination vows of a minister do not pledge support to the future policies of successive General Assemblies, much less the policies of the Boards, the creatures of those Assemblies. To ask a man who has sincerely taken his ordination vows, who is completely loyal to the Bible and the constitution of the Church, to pledge support to an agency that he himself believes not to be loyal to the Word of God, is to ask a fearful and a monstrous thing. This is true even if the man is mistaken. The instant that the Presbyterian Church (or any other church) decrees that the Christian conscience must be bound by boards, agencies, courts of the Church, or any thing beside the Word of God, then that Church ceases to be an abode of free men, ceases to be a truly Protestant Church. And no matter how vigorous or large such a church may seem now, if it sets up its own authority as binding on men's consciences in the place of the Word of God, it will surely die as a Church of Christ.

All these things ought to be recognized not only by those who do not have confidence in the Board of Foreign Missions, but also by those who do. They should see clearly, looking down the corridors of the years to be, that if they introduce the principle of compulsion in support and giving, in order to meet

the challenge of a temporary emergency, they will be cutting the very spinal cord of missionary and benevolent giving. The Presbyterian Church has behind it a great record as a truly liberal church. By whom was that record made? By slaves who toiled at the crack of the taskmaster's whip? No—it was made by the voluntary, free outpouring of gifts of the plain man and woman—men and women whose hearts were inflamed with love for Christ and those for whom He died. Nothing less than this motive will maintain a great volume of gifts over a period of years. And if Christian people do not believe that any particular agency will spend their money in the way they want it spent, the remedy is not to threaten and coerce these donors, but to see to it that the agency involved is so reformed and so administered that the question of confidence need never again be raised.

These are the counsels of prudence and foresightedness, which the General Assembly of 1934 would be well advised to consider. Doubtless other counsels will be urged upon the commissioners. They will be told that loyalty to the Church and its law demands the suppression of those who believe the whole policy of the Board of Foreign Missions to be not loyal to the Word of God, and who have, whether wisely or unwisely, yet clearly within their constitutional rights, established their own voluntary, independent agency. The commissioners should resolutely refuse to be stampeded by the excitement of the moment or by the misdirected zeal of those who think they do God's service in making support of the agencies of the Church a matter of compulsion and not of free will. If they are so stampeded in their anxiety to save a Board they may succeed in wrecking and disrupting a whole Church. For there are hosts of persons in the Church who, while they may not as yet be concerned about the Independent Board, will rise in indignation to fight for their liberties if short-sighted counsels prevail, if in the hysteria of an hour, the General Assembly sets itself up as an authority to bind men's consciences, coordinate with the Word of God. No Christian but wants Christ in His Word to be the master of his conscience; no Christian truly aware of what Christian liberty means, but will resist to the death any attempt to make the will of other men the master of his conscience. Let the commissioners ponder carefully the great pronouncement of the Westminster Divines as to liberty, and as they read, let them remember that these words, in Chapter XX of the Confession of Faith, and not Assembly deliverances, are the law of the Church: "God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey

by 170,000 to 200,000 children each summer; **Dr. Harold S. Laird**, minister of the First and Central Church, Wilmington, Del.; **Prof. R. B. Kuiper** of Westminster Seminary; the **Rev. Chas. J. Woodbridge**, General Secretary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions; the **Rev. James Blackstone**, the **Rev. Otis D. Fuller** and Messrs. **Robert** and **William Strong**.

Dr. H. McA. Robinson Elected By Board of Christian Education

IN its annual session, closing April 18th, in Philadelphia, the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., elected the **The Rev. Harold McA. Robinson, D.D.**, general secretary to succeed **Dr. William Chalmers Covert**, who retires because of age in October of this year. **Dr. Robinson** is at present the administrative secretary of the Board.

The new secretary of this Board, which deals with the whole educational work of the Church, including 53 colleges and work at 47 university centers, has held the office of administrative secretary since 1927. In that office he has been responsible for executing all plans for the presentation of the work of the Board to the church, for the preparation and administration of the Board's budget, and for the administration of the educational policy and program of the Board in all its departments.

Dr. Robinson was born in Shelbyville, Mo. He was graduated from Park College, in his home state, in 1901, and received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1904. He did graduate work at the seminary from 1909 to 1911, on his return from studying at the University of Leipzig, Germany. In 1919 he received his Doctor's degree from Lafayette. Before becoming connected with the organization in 1919, when he took the position of secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sunday School Work, **Dr. Robinson** held pastorates in Milroy and Germantown, Pa., and was professor of Bible and college pastor at Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. He has written much religious education material and is author of a book entitled "How to Conduct Family Worship."

The financial situation of the Board is reported to be considerably improved. While contributions from the churches were still below those of the preceding year, the percentage of decrease for the latter part of the year closed March 31st was much less than in the earlier months. The Board closed the year without adding to the deficit occurring in the two years preceding and which made necessary heavy retrenchments in personnel and expenditure.

Rev. William Lindsay Young, LL.D., has been elected director of the Department of Colleges, Theological Seminaries and Training Schools to replace **Dr. Frederick E. Stockwell**, who died last year. **Dr. Young**

Heads Education Board



The Rev. Harold McAfee Robinson, D.D.
Braintrustee of the Board.

has been connected with the Board of Christian Education as director of the Department of University Work since 1929.

The Southern Presbyterian Church

By the Rev. Prof. Wm. Childs Robinson, Th.D., Columbia Theological Seminary

Shall We Keep the Faith?

ACCORDING to news items appearing in the religious press the **Rev. Donald H. Stewart** who was twice refused admission to West Hanover Presbytery on account of his modernism is undertaking the pastorate of the University Church at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This item raises several questions. Has **Mr. Stewart** changed the views he so emphatically re-affirmed before West Hanover Presbytery? Did the Presbytery which dismissed him satisfy itself as to his doctrinal soundness; that is, did it observe the requirement of the Constitution of the Church and examine into his reported unsoundness as required in paragraph 183 of the Book of Church Order? Did the Presbytery which received him for the North Carolina work satisfy itself as to his doctrinal fitness to renew the ordination and installation vows? The reports of the former examination indicated that **Mr. Stewart** accepted religious experience as his rule of faith rather than the Scriptures as set forth in the first ordination vow.

While the pamphlet issued and now being circulated by **Dr. Wm. M. McPheeters** was called forth by the actions of Arkansas Presbytery, it is a message which other presbyteries need to hear and heed. It is not too

much to say that every presbytery and every presbyter ought to reconsider the solemn truth of the ordination vows before men and especially before the God of truth. Now as ever an honest man is the noblest work of God. The Book still pronounces its blessing upon the man that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not; and still excludes those who make and love the contrary. *Rev. 22:15.*

Standing in the shadow of eternity the eighty-year-old Southern Prophet, **Dr. Wm. M. McPheeters**, has issued a clarion call for a more faithful observance of the third and the ninth commandments—for truth and the keeping of vows made to the Holy God. Will the Church of today hear this word and gird herself to keep the faith before man and before God; or will she stone another prophet and leave it to the generations to come to build him a monument? *DECATUR, GA.*

Denver and Vicinity

By the Rev. H. Clare Welker, Th.M.

DENVER Presbytery met in the Central Presbyterian Church, Denver, the **Rev. Martin E. Anderson, D.D.**, pastor, on April 17th. The Women's Presbyterial met in the same church on the same day. The two bodies assembled at 9:30 for an opening devotional service at which the sermon was preached by the retiring moderator, the **Rev. Benj. F. Judd**, pastor of the North Church, Denver. The **Rev. A. W. Liggett**, pastor of our churches at Idaho Springs and Georgetown was elected moderator for the new year. A crowded docket of business occupied the attention of the presbytery. The following were elected commissioners to the General Assembly: ministers, **Martin E. Anderson** (Central Church, Denver), **G. Henry Green** (South Broadway Church, Denver), **Garrett S. Tamminga** (First Church, Golden). Elders, **H. A. Davis** (Central Church, Denver), **Dr. A. J. Murray** (First Avenue Church, Denver), **Harry Bashford** (First Church, Wray).

An abortive attempt was made to vote blanket approval of the Boards of National Missions, Foreign Missions and Christian Education, and to discourage the diversion of benevolent funds to other agencies. Lack of time at the moment the matter was first presented prevented its immediate discussion and it was not brought up later. The naivete of those who advocate such actions is apparent when one stops to consider that in spite of the fact the report of the Appraisal Commission of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry has been repudiated both by the General Council and the Board of Foreign Missions, four members of the three boards mentioned above are voluntarily serving as members of the National Committee for the Presentation of the Foreign Missions Inquiry. Those members are the following: Foreign Missions, **Elder Alfred E.**