

L. U. S. C.
Periodical

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

AUG 10 '47

*A Presbyterian semi-monthly magazine devoted to the
statement, defense and propagation of the
Gospel, the faith which was once for
all delivered unto the saints.*

"Entered as second-class matter May 15, 1942, at the Postoffice at Weaverville, N. C., under the Act of October 3, 1879."

Volume VI — Number 8

AUGUST 15, 1947

Library Reading Room
Univ of N Carolina
Subscription \$1.50

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Grant of our own Committee of Education and Publication says that the best place to have an accident is at Chattanooga, Tennessee. Only one who has experienced just that can understand what is meant. From the moment that the morning papers of July 4th were delivered, to departure after ten days of the most courteous and expert care by doctors, nurses and attendants of the Newell Sanitorium, the thoughtfulness, attentiveness and liberality expressed by the Presbyterian Good Samaritans of Chattanooga, stirred profound thanks to God and brought tears to the eyes of the beneficiaries. Surely the half was not told about such folk!

On account of the wreck, a vacation trip lost much of its pleasure; but untapped and hitherto undreamed of springs of refreshment were opened, with a demonstration of the marvellous providence of God and a surer sense of His abounding grace and purpose for human life. At home or on the road, the only safe-conduct is God. He is our refuge and strength. And if the Providence of the Lord and the fortunes of the highways do not admit of wholly wreckless driving, at least the human factor should use all measures and means for avoiding mishaps. Faith and prayer top the list. Yet even the Christian has no guarantee of immunity to the ills of this life. If one has not committed his cause and his all to the Lord beforehand, it is too late when a truck loaded with Georgia watermelons suddenly swerves over the center line for head-on collision!

As all drivers seek to be less reckless, most driving will be more wreckless. A Calvinist has further occasion to reflect on the Sovereignty of God.
—R.F.G.

An Unfortunate Start

In the months which are to come the Presbyteries in our Church will be called upon to vote pro or con on the question of our continued membership in the Federal Council.

It will be unfortunate in the extreme if the differences in viewpoint result in acrimony and name-calling.

In its leading editorial in the July 28th issue **The Presbyterian Outlook** castigates Congaree Presbytery for having voted to withdraw from the Federal Council.

Neither Congaree Presbytery or those other Presbyteries which will undoubtedly vote the same way will appreciate **The Outlook's** classification of their position as "Russia" among the churches.

Russia refuses to co-operate with the other nations because of her own evil design on the entire world. Christian men in our Presbyteries who vote to leave the Council will do so because they believe the Council initiates and promotes many policies inimicable to the best interests of the Church of Jesus Christ.

To liken the position of these Christian brethren to that of Russia will cause many to more carefully examine the liberalism of some of those who delight in being "liberal."

Not only so—the questions posed by **The Outlook** as unanswerable have already been answered many times.

Not all chaplains agree as to the supposedly vital role played by the Federal Council. One ex-chaplain frankly stated to his Presbytery that the Federal Council had not helped him one bit in his work in Europe, although specifically asked for assistance in one instance. He further stated that Dr. Pugh's much publicized visit actually helped the Catholics more than the Protestants.

The further statement that our young people will look with disfavor on our withdrawal from the Federal Council needs examination.

Those young people who have come under the persistent propaganda for an "ecumenical reformation" will, many of them at least, follow this line. But, those who have had the opportunity to hear both sides of the issues involved are very far from unanimous in their stand and the only right solution is the one derived at after all factors have been considered.

During the next year we will all be wise to confine our discussions to the issues involved and to refrain from reflections both on the intelligence and character of the men and Presbyteries which vote contrary to our judgment in the matter.

—L.N.B.

Is The Walnut Street Decision The Presbyterian Doctrine Of Church Property?

By Rev. William C. Robinson, D.D.
Columbia Theological Seminary
Decatur, Georgia

At the time of the separation of the Synod of Kentucky from the Presbyterian Church, USA, the Supreme Court of the United States held that the Walnut Street Church in Louisville, Kentucky belonged to that group which the highest court of the Presbyterian Church, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA, recognized as the rightful holders. Thus, the Walnut Street Church went to a little handful of its members, while the great congregation was dispossessed of its property. The same principle that the higher courts hold the property was enforced at the time of the Cumberland Union of 1906 and has come to be called by many "the Presbyterian doctrine of Church property." Any other view is often stigmatized as Congregational. In view of the action of the Supreme Court and of many later decisions which have followed the precedent of the Supreme Court, this may be the position that sundry courts in our land will recognize and enforce. Thus it may be called the American Doctrine—though even the Supreme Court has been known to reverse itself—but that would not necessarily make it the Presbyterian doctrine.

We hesitate to call the Walnut Street Decision the Presbyterian doctrine for three reasons:

I. This view as carried out in the Cumberland Church was not always either equitable or generous or Christlike and Presbyterians should strive to be both just and kind and Christlike. I have before me a letter telling how the Presbyterian Church USA took all of the Cumberland property

in Scott County, Mississippi, even though the USA Church did not have a single member in that county. The USA Church consequently did not and could not use the congregational structures and simply padlocked the church to prevent the people who built it from using it. Was this equitable to the dispossessed Cumberland Presbyterians? Was it fair to the community? Every right thinking community contributes to the building of a house of God that Divine worship may bless the community. Was such a policy honoring to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church? A Church is built primarily to worship God and to preach Christ. Whenever one group, in a division, gets a church building it does not use for worship, it ought to give it to the other group for such use.

II. Is the Walnut Street Decision of universal validity in the United States? The Synod of Kentucky which left the USA Church, as well as the Synod of Missouri, certainly rejected the Walnut Street decision. And when we received the Synod of Kentucky into our Southern General Assembly we assured them that we held with them against the Walnut Street Decision. Indeed, we permitted them to write their (Kentucky) principles of Church property into our Minutes of 1867. Certainly, our Assembly on 1867 did not accept the Walnut Street Decision.

When the Presbyterian Church USA deposed certain professors from Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.) for heresy that institution left the USA Church and became independent so that they might continue to use these heretical professors. Now the USA Church did not sue in the U. S. Supreme Court for the property of Union Seminary given to it as a Presbyterian institution. Apparently, the USA Church did not regard the Walnut Street Decision as the Presbyterian Doctrine of Church property for Union Seminary. More recently Auburn left the USA Assembly and moved down to Union (N.Y.). The USA Church sued for this property in the state courts of New York, but did not appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court in which they could have secured the property under the Walnut Street Decision. Apparently the USA Church did not regard the Walnut Street Decision as the law of Presbyterian Property in the case of Auburn Seminary. Auburn Seminary (Presbyterian) income is being used to provide scholarships in Union (N. Y.) Seminary, a non-Presbyterian institution.

When the Reformed and Evangelical Churches merged to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church they recognized two different doctrines of church property. The Reformed Churches have the doctrine that the property is held by the presbyteries and synods, the Evangelical Churches that they are held by the congregations. In Atlanta the old Evangelical Church united in this merger and then tired of the idea of mergers and even greater mergers and left the Evangelical and Reformed Church with its property so that it is now the St. John's Lutheran Church—a member of the United Lutheran Church. The Evangelical and Reformed Church is a member of the Alliance of the Churches of the World holding the Presbyterian and Reformed Faith.

III. Is the Walnut Street Decision valid in Presbyterian Churches outside of the United States? After all there are bodies beyond our national

boundaries just as Presbyterian as those within our boundaries. In Canada there was a union of the Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Congregationalists Churches. In this merger every Presbyterian congregation was permitted to vote as to whether or not it wished to join the merger and each congregation decided for itself by a bare majority vote. If 51% of the voters voted to stay out of the merger they stayed out and held their property. The property went with the majority of the congregation, not as with the Walnut Street Decision with the higher courts.

Near the beginning of this century there was a merger of the Free and the United Churches of Scotland. The conservative Highlanders fought the union in the courts of Britain. And the highest court of Britain held that this small body of Free Church Highlanders was the true heritor of the disruption led by Chalmers and consequently legally entitled to all the Free Church property. At this stage, the British Parliament, intervened and appointed a commission to divide the property equitably. The continuing Free Church with the legal title was given those churches and manse where they had congregations while the rest of the property was given to the United Free Church. In 1929 the United Free Church merged with the Church of Scotland. About 150 United Free congregations continued the United Free Church and in many cases were allowed by the Scottish courts to hold their property. And perhaps, Scotland is as Presbyterian as are those who say that the Walnut Street decision is the (only) Presbyterian doctrine of Church property.

The Head and King of the Presbyterian Church is neither the General Assembly nor the Supreme Court of the United States, but our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If union and division come every Presbyterian shall give account to Christ of his views and acts in reference to Church property. May we then formulate our doctrine on this subject as in His Presence.

Some Things Further To Consider About Re-union

By Rev. J. David Simpson

Newton, Miss.

The Northern Presbyterian Church has a record of being strong on the 'receiving' of church members from our Presbyterian Branch, but not so impressive in the 'giving' of her church members to us. An over-zealousness has been noted about the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., following up only a handful of her members into Southern Presbyterian spheres of greater influence, and actually encouraging her members not to come into the Southern Presbyterian Church, but to hold out for a possible organization of a Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., some day. One such community, to my knowledge, had a paid Northern Presbyterian worker, to seek to hold out of the Southern Presbyterian Church, a very few Northern Presbyterian members who could have, and would have, had they had their choice, meant much to a small but growing Southern Presbyterian Church in that community. After so long a time, these Northern Presbyterian members saw the hopelessness of