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THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

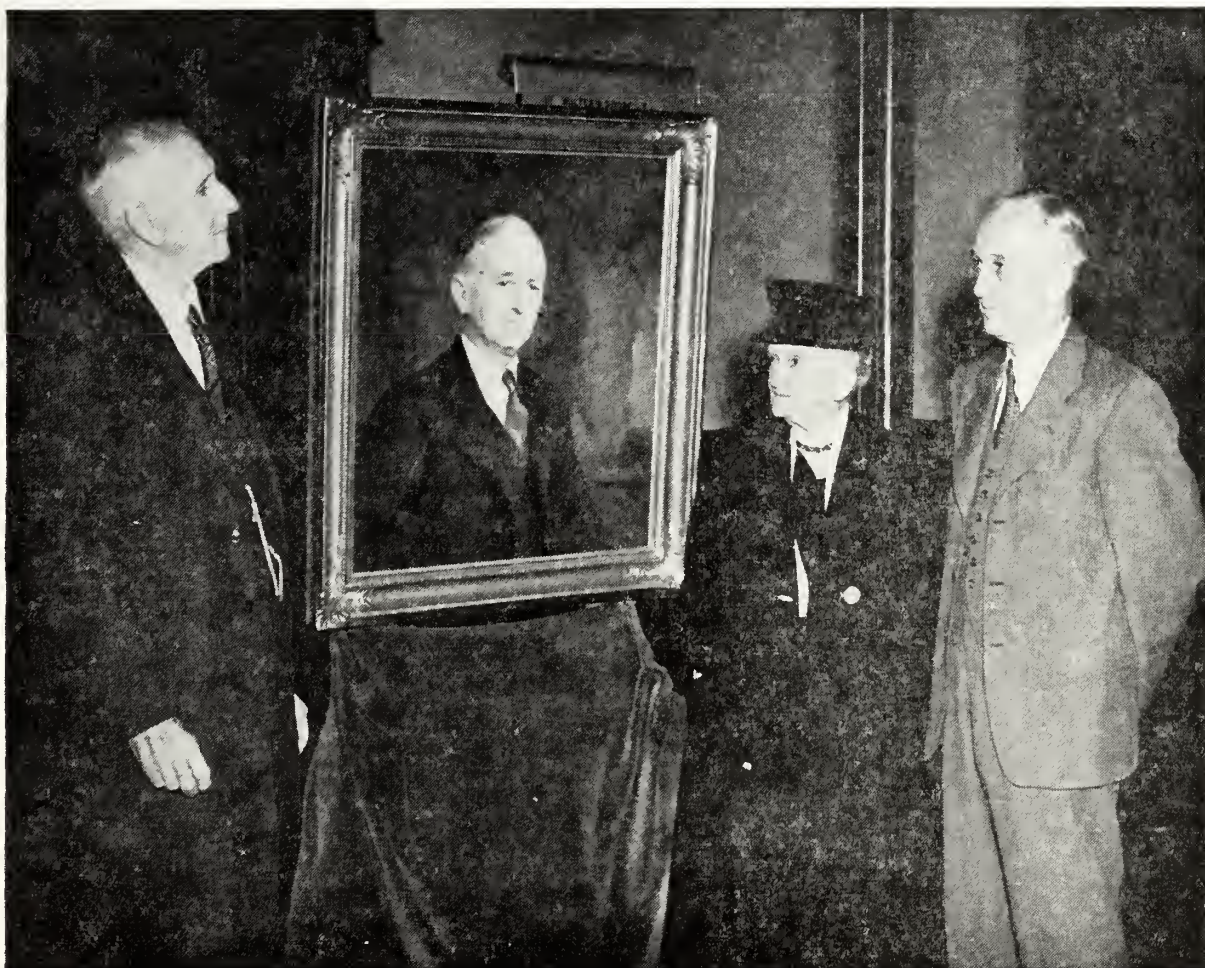
*A Presbyterian semi-monthly magazine devoted to the
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all delivered unto the saints.*

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Portrait of President Lacy Presented to Union Seminary. Dr. E. T. Wellford (left), Chairman of the Board of Trustees, accepts the picture, painted by Mr. David Silvette, of Richmond, Va. The Finance Committee of the Board commissioned the portrait, and Mr. James W. Gordon, Chairman of the Committee, represented it at the recent unveiling convocation. Mrs. B. R. Lacy, mother of Dr. B. R. Lacy, Jr., came from her home in Raleigh, N. C., for the ceremonies. President Lacy has headed Union Seminary for 23 years.

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say he accepts the substitutionary atonement but not in the dimension given in God's Word in which we are told that He died on the cross as our substitute for sin.

If this arrant nonsense was translated into a court of law the one advocating it would be cited for contempt of court. If it were taken into the business world it would be called fraud. If into reputable scientific circles it would be recognized as an insult to the intelligence.

When we try to explain away God's Word, when we balk at the supernatural because it defies nat-

ural explanation, when we measure God, His Word and His ways by the standard of the human intellect we must of necessity become mired in one absurdity grafted on another.

Thank God for the capabilities of man's mind when that mind is submitted to the eternal God in faith and reverence.

But, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."
—L.N.B.

Has "Unreserved Dedication" Taken The Place of Creedal Subscription

By Rev. Wm. C. Robinson, D.D.
Decatur, Ga.

This question is raised by a paragraph in a recent book review carried in *The Presbyterian Outlook* of November 7. Reviewing Professor Cooper's *Southwestern At Memphis*, Dr. Warner L. Hall writes the following paragraph:

"One of the sidelights of the book is the struggle which Dr. Diehl had with heresy hunters. His victory was, by no means a personal one, for it, in some sense, assured to many others the right of an intellectual freedom within the limits of an unreserved dedication to the Christian cause."

We have no desire to reopen any struggle with reference to Dr. Diehl, but the inference which Dr. Hall draws gives us grave concern. The reviewer's words imply that many Presbyterian educators and Presbyterian ministers—Dr. Diehl is both—have either (or both) been relieved of all creedal obligations or else have agreed among themselves that those creedal obligations to which they have subscribed are only indicative of their dedication to the Christian cause.

Now it is not difficult to show that "an unreserved dedication to the Christian cause," indispensable as that is, is not a sufficient safeguard for the Church or her teachers. Certainly, there have been Jesuit missionaries unreservedly dedicated to the Christian cause, and Armenian ministers, and perhaps Unitarian scholars. The other day I was told about a very devout Mormon. Apparently, this Latter Day Saint could offer "an unreserved dedication to the Christ cause" as he saw it . . . and yet I cannot believe that Dr. Hall would favor him for a Chair of Religion in *Southwestern* or for his associate pastor in Charlotte, N. C.

We feel obligated, therefore, to ask the questions which Dr. Hall's review has raised. First, have the professors in our Presbyterian educational institutions been relieved of all creedal obligations, vows or doctrinal conditions as requirements for the presidential or professional positions they hold? We invite the several educational institutions connected with our Church to let the Church know just what, if any, obligations are now required. If the institution in particular has abrogated such requirements in the last two decades, the reasons for

such change would also interest the Church. We can conceive of an occasion in which a college might have a man of known evangelical piety and Bible belief from another denomination that they wished installed as professor in some chair in which he would not teach church doctrine and might properly make an exception in his case to a rule requiring subscription to Calvinism. But we could only question the propriety of a Board using such an occasion as an excuse for abrogating all requirements.

Three centuries ago Harvard was training men for the Calvinistic ministry in Puritan New England—teaching the Old Testament in Hebrew, the New in Greek and the Shorter Catechism in Latin . . . but somebody slept at the switch . . . and Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. When I studied at Harvard they were inculcating almost everything, except the doctrine for which that institution was established.

A few years ago a prominent U.S.A. Presbyterian College was teaching a volume on evolution edited by Professor H. H. Newman for "the superior students" of Chicago University, entitled *The Nature Of The World And Of Man*. Now if a Presbyterian College is only going to teach the naturalism which allows of no direct intervention of God in special creations, in miracles, in the Incarnation, in answers to petitionary prayers for physical things—why endow and support such colleges? Why not send the men on to Chicago in the first place? Incidentally, Lecomte de Nouy, *Human Destiny*, has at least pointed out how tenuous is the thread of evolution which Newman said was "proved or established as firmly as the law of gravitation." (Op. cit. 193 of 194,381).

Last summer I met a graduate of another U.S.A. College—Wooster to be exact—who told me how the Bible course in that Northern Presbyterian institution had upset his faith in the Bible as the Word of God and as the guide for life. In the last issue *The Journal* had a review of the Bible Syllabus used at Wooster in 1947.

Without requiring at least the acceptance of the Divine-human Christ, of the miracles of His Person and His works by each professor, an institu-

tion might find its whole Christian position undermined by an academically competent but unbelieving teacher. And the institution might be afraid to remove such a man because of the support he would receive from his professional union and from the academic accrediting agency.

Secondly, do those who take definite professional or ordination vows regard them as merely an unreserved dedication to the Christian cause? Our ministerial vows still obligate us to accept the Holy Scriptures as being the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practise and of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as being the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. If there are those in our Church who feel that the full and fair meaning of these vows is "an unreserved dedication to the Christian cause" we invite such brethren to reconsider their positions in the light of history.

In his able discussion of the meaning of our Presbyterian ordination vows Dr. Charles Hodge, **Church Polity**, Pages 317-432, shows that the meaning of the vow is not determined by the man taking it but by the natural, historical force of the words and by the body imposing the vow. There was a wave of rationalism in eighteenth century England and Ireland which substituted sincerity for creedal subscription. Even James Moffatt says that "this mistaken aversion to creedal subscription" killed English Presbyterianism; and only the entrance of the Erskinites or Seceders saved Presbyterianism in eighteenth century Ireland. Against the loose views of Presbyterianism then coming over from Ireland the American Presbyterian Church passed the adopting act of 1729 in which every minister subscribed to the Westminster Standards as being in all essential and necessary articles good forms of sound words and accepted said Confession and Catechisms as the confession of his faith. This act has governed our American Presbyterian thinking these 220 years. Under its aegis our Southern Assembly in the last decade has declared certain things such as the infallible truth of Scripture, Christ as true and eternal God, His becoming our brother man by His virgin birth, to be involved in the vows to which we subscribe.

Again, if there are ministers or professors who regard these creedal vows as merely an unreserved dedication to the Christian cause we invite them to reconsider their positions before the judgment bar of truth. Speaking on this theme from the standpoint of the Scottish Churches, Principal John Macleod says:

"We should not fail to observe the moral issues that are raised in regard to the loyal maintenance of pledges given to be faithful to Creeds and Confessions. They call for very deliberate study and consideration before they are adopted. They call equally for honorable treatment on the part of men who have avowed them as their own."

"Yet if men change their views on what they had confessed as the truth of God they should have the manliness to acknowledge that such a change has taken place and to refuse to stay in what is to them a false position."

"We should not forget that the fundamental obligation lies upon every teacher in the Church of God to be true to the full circle of truth as the Apostolic and Prophetic Revelation has brought it before us. This truth has been entrusted to the Church to be held fast in its integrity, and it is no bondage to be laid

under the obligation to honour such a trust; and this is what is meant by the exaction of a strict pledge of loyalty to the Confession of Faith. Nor can it well be spoken of as an advance in Christian freedom for the Church to loosen the bond that binds her rulers to hold fast the whole truth of God as His Word sets it forth." **Scottish Theology**, Pages 254-241-254.

Finally, we invite any brother if any there be who thinks that unreserved dedication is an adequate fulfillment of his ordination vows to reconsider the same before the judgment bar of God. For in the end we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account of the deeds done in the flesh. And even before that final day, God does execute judgment among the children of men and often His judgment begins at the house of God. Two hundred years ago the moderate machine tolerated lax doctrine on the Deity of Christ by Professor John Simson, of Glasgow, Scotland, while it cracked down on the marrow men because their evangelical fervour smelled of dispensationalism—their paradoxes sniffed of anti-nomianism. But read the two histories of Scottish Theology, by Walker and by Macleod, and history has vindicated the Evangelicals—Boston, Erskine, T. Gillespie, John Love, and John Witherspoon; while it has judged Hadow, Patrick Cumming, William Robertson and Principal Hill with their whole "moderate" program. Pick up second volume of **The Life Of Alexander Duff**, by George Smith, and get a real account of the miserable end to which this so-called moderatism—what God has called lukewarmness—actually led. God will judge ... God does judge ... God is judge.

As He does judge may He also speak in the mercy which every one of us needs. All of our obligations get their meaning from our loving Lord Jesus Christ who stands above and by His Spirit gives life to our system of doctrine. It was well said of Charles Hodge, the ablest expounder of our Presbyterian vows, that there was no point in his whole system of theology that did not derive its chief meaning from its relation to Christ. For him, "man is nothing, Christ is everything. We have no worthiness. Christ is altogether worthy ... our acceptance with God from beginning to end is in the Beloved. He is the ground of our election, the foundation of our Justification, the fount head of our Regeneration, the means and medium of our Sanctification, and the efficient cause and model of our glorification. He is all in all, and we are complete in Him." "Jesus Christ is the God whom I worship." —Dr. William Paxton on Hodge as a Teacher of Theology in **The Life Of Charles Hodge**, Pages 596-597.

Luther's Safe Place

When Martin Luther was in the throes of the Reformation, and the Pope was trying to bring him back to the Catholic Church, he sent a cardinal to deal with Luther and buy him with gold. The cardinal wrote to the Pope: "The fool does not love gold." The cardinal, when he could not convince Luther, said to him: "What do you think the Pope cares for the opinions of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend you—you, a wretched worm like you, I tell you no. And where will you be then?" Luther's reply was simple: "Where I am now, in the hands of Almighty God." —Pentecostal Herald.