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## Ecclesiastical Executions

Many things have happened in the last two years in the struggle within the Bible Presbyterian Church, but nothing has happened that compares to the action of the Columbus Synod and the presbyteries obeying that action relative to ministers who attended the Collingswood Synod. The Columbus Synod instructed the presbyteries to erase from the roll of the presbyteries any ministers who attended the Collingswood Synod. This was done under a paragraph in the Book of Discipline which provides that if a minister joins "another body, the presbytery shall erase his name from its roll." This action constitutes perhaps the most arbitrary, high-handed action that has thus far been taken.

In the Bible Presbyterian Church, a minister is a member of a presbytery. Entrance into the Bible Presbyterian Church for a minister is by and through a presbytery. A minister does not join the Bible Presbyterian Church by attending a synod or joining a synod meeting. He cannot. The constitution forbids it. He joins the church only by action of a presbytery. A synod meets for a few days, adjourns, and that synod is over. The same is true in regard to local churches. Churches enter the Bible Presbyterian denomination by means of a presbytery. The constitution says, "Entrance into this fellowship is by means of the presbytery" (Form of Government, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1). For elders, therefore, of a local church to attend a particular synod meeting, does not mean in itself that they have left the Bible Presbyterian Church and joined "another body."

In fact, a minister or the elder or elders of a church do not have to attend a synod at all to be in good standing in the denomination. There are some ministers and some churches in the Bible Presbyterian Church that have never been present or represented at a single synod. Some have attended only one or two, three, or five, in the entire eighteen years. All know this. The constitution does not even require the attendance at a synod. Furthermore, a synod is made up of only those who attend it. If a man does not go to a synod meeting, he is not a member of that synod, but he is still a member of the denominational body. Attendance or non-attendance, membership in or non-membership in a synod does not affect a man's or a church's membership in the denominational body. This is the constitution.

If, therefore, within the denomination and under the constitution a dispute develops over synod and two synods meet, it does not and did not mean that by attendance at one or the other men or churches had joined "another denominational body." It is a minister's membership and a church's membership in a presbytery, and a presby-

tery alone, that constitutes his membership in the Bible Presbyterian Church.

When, therefore, the Columbus Synod ruled arbitrarily that attendance upon the Collingswood Synod meant that the ministers who were members of presbyteries in good and regular standing had joined another body, that Synod in Columbus grievously erred. There was a dispute and a difference of opinion concerning a synod, or which synod a man or church desired to attend, but that did not mean that they had joined another denomination, for their membership in the Bible Presbyterian Church consisted of membership in a presbytery, not membership in a particular synod!

The Philadelphia Presbytery gave perhaps the clearest example of this arbitrary and willful action on the part of ministers who were in sympathy with the Columbus Synod. Dr. J. Gordon Holdcroft, president of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, Dr. Allan A. MacRae, president of Faith Theological Seminary, the Rev. Arthur G. Slaght, chairman of the American Council's Radio and Recording Commission, and a number of other men, members of the Philadelphia Presbytery, attended and enrolled in the Collingswood Synod which was held November 23-27, 1956. The Synod adjourned and ceased to exist.

Nevertheless, the Presbytery of Philadelphia, under the leadership of the Rev. Kenneth Horner, Dr. R. Laird Harris, the Rev. Tom Cross, and others, moved to erase the names from the roll of the Presbytery of Dr. Allan A. MacRae, Dr. J. Gordon Holdcroft, and other brethren, if they did not repudiate their attendance in the Collingswood Synod within two months. These brethren could not possibly have been a member of another body, for their membership was only in the Presbytery of Philadelphia. In fact, at the time that the motion itself was made to put these men out of the church, Dr. Allan A. MacRae was present, as was Mr. Arthur Slaght, and others. These men denied that they were members of another body. They were members only of the very presbytery that was putting them out and removing their names from the roll in violation of the constitutional provisions which protect their rights.

The constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church is clear in its teaching that the Bible Presbyterian Church is a voluntary association. Men are free to leave it. But they cannot be put out without the provisions of the Book of Discipline being followed. The constitution is supposed to protect every member and church.

The antagonisms which have developed among the leaders of the Columbus Synod

against the Independent Board and Dr. Holdcroft, against Faith Theological Seminary and Dr. Allan A. MacRae, against Shelton College and Dr. Jack Murray, and leaders of the independent agencies were definitely a part of the move of Synod to throw these men out of the Church without a trial, without a hearing, without considering any of the protections of the constitution. This is ecclesiastical execution. It is the same thing as taking a man and executing him without giving him a hearing or a trial, or protecting his rights under the law.

This action of the Philadelphia Presbytery transcends any other action that has been taken by leaders of the Columbus Synod. There is no protection under the constitution for men whom top leaders desire to remove. They created an "excuse" and proceeded to execute their brethren.

When the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. declared that Dr. Machen's Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was illegal, they did not remove Dr. Machen's name from the roll of the presbytery. Instead, he was put on trial, as the constitution requires. After he was convicted of sin, his name was removed. If an offense has been committed, a man must be given an opportunity to defend himself. And if it was an offense to attend the Collingswood meeting, as the leaders of the Columbus Synod have maintained, then those who attended the Collingswood Synod should have been given a trial, a hearing, and an opportunity to defend themselves. As it is, they were told, "Repudiate the synod which you attended or in two months your name shall be erased." The two months' period is now past and the men's names have been erased—put out of the church without a hearing, without a defense, without an opportunity to protect themselves and their good names under the constitution of the church.

It is interesting also to observe that the Columbus Synod, in its instructions to the presbyteries, specified only the ministers who attended the Collingswood Synod. It did not specify the elders who represented churches who attended the Collingswood Synod. Yet a church's relationship to the presbytery is the same as that of a minister. Both are members and enter the denomination through the presbytery. Ministers were thus in an extra-constitutional way removed from the presbytery's roll, and these included some of the founders of the church, former moderators in the church, and men whose spirituality and integrity cannot be questioned.

In the New Jersey Presbytery, the same thing happened, but only in a little different

(Continued on page 5)

## A PLEA FOR COMMON HONESTY

The Scriptures exhort us to "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17). Peter emphasized that we are to have "your conversation honest among the Gentiles" (1 Peter 2:12). Paul emphasized, "Whatsoever things are honest" (Phil. 4:8). And again he emphasized, "I pray to God that you do no evil . . . that ye should do that which is honest" (2 Cor. 13:7).

The fundamental question of honesty now presents itself in the most direct manner in regard to what has happened in the Bible Presbyterian Church. We therefore make an earnest, genuine appeal to the men of the Columbus Synod or the St. Louis group that they face this question of honesty before God in what they have done to the Bible Presbyterian Church.

It is not honest for men to come into a church that is committed to certain great, fundamental principles, and introduce into that church another concept of things and to seek to change it over into something different. Those who want a church different from that which the Bible Presbyterian Church was organized under its constitution to be, should establish such a church and build it, and not attempt to change over the Bible Presbyterian Church.

Evidence that this is what has happened can be seen both within and without the church.

### L.

The Rev. Kenneth Horner, Wilmington, Del., moderator of the judicial commission, in May, 1956, prepared a statement in which he discussed the different concepts of church government which were struggling within the Bible Presbyterian Church, and he said, "These developments have so aggravated this whole church government controversy that it now seems to the writer practically unthinkable that a reconciliation can be established between the two sides of the controversy and peace restored to the Bible Presbyterian Church."

The document, "The Ideological Division Within Our Church," prepared by Robert G. Rayburn, Claude Bunzel, and Walter E. Lyons, said that "equally sincere men hold different concepts," that "the present division within our Church is ideological in nature, and therefore beyond reconciliation."

These brethren were specific, "Our present ideological division became apparent only after men began to recognize the hybrid structure of the Bible Presbyterian Church." And then they indicated that they meant by this "hybrid structure" "a hybrid mixture of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism." They further emphasized that they were a part of a group "who want a truly Presbyterian church, and not a loose 'association.'" These men were very specific in speaking about their opponents in the church because they called them "Congregational-minded men."

The stated clerk of the General Synod,

the Rev. Robert Hastings, wrote to Dr. Robert G. Rayburn, June 1, 1953, "When we visited the seminary [Faith] a few weeks ago with the Committee on Visitation and Accreditation, it came out in the discussion that my view of what we want to build is quite different from that of Mr. McIntire."

In recent days it has been repeatedly said that there were two churches under one roof in the Bible Presbyterian Church.

Numerous actions taken by the 19th General Synod and the "Columbus Synod," have only implemented the position of these gentlemen to change the church, and, in their terminology, to make it "truly Presbyterian."

The Bible Presbyterian Church, as its position is set forth in its constitution, prospered and grew under the particular concept which was written into that constitution. Churches were built, members joined, sessions carried on their responsibilities under this concept for 18 years. The basic question is, Why was there started a second church within the Bible Presbyterian Church and when did it start? We have just quoted evidence to the effect that there are those who felt that the church was of a hybrid nature. But those who were seeking faithfully to build the church did not think that it was hybrid. They thought it gave freedom and liberty to the local church, restricted the powers of the General Synod, and protected them from any encroachments of tyranny. Now a change has come on the part of some.

In such circumstances, what is the honest thing for men to do—fight and struggle to take over a church and change it; or simply to recognize that they are the ones who have changed and leave the church to those who have invested so much in it, building upon the principles written into the constitution?

This raises a corollary and a good question. If the Columbus group represents that element which has changed the Synod, then what honest right do they have to keep the name, Bible Presbyterian?

These men fought for a tighter, more powerful Synod, with power to order churches to add names to their rolls and to take them off, power to direct presbyteries to meet, power to initiate judicial and administrative discipline against brethren who question some of its actions, power to assert that its administrative decisions, in administrative cases, are as binding as the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States; power to forbid presbyteries and sessions from the exercise of a constitutional liberty in associating themselves with an independent agency—the Bible Presbyterian Church Association; power to instruct presbyteries to erase the names of ministers from their roll if they have attended a Synod which the Columbus group considered illegal. Here are powers gathered, usurped, just, simply grabbed, and in these powers a church is being bound! Men are sacrificing liberty which Christ gave them. The rights of conscience which men have before Christ are

being violated in the name of calling upon men to be "subject to their brethren."

Men who had a part in changing and introducing this element into the Bible Presbyterian Church face a basic question of honesty before Christ. Is it honest to change a church in this way and to try to claim that it is still the same church?

### II.

From outside the Bible Presbyterian Church, at the hands of leaders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, has come the most confirming testimony to the change which the gentlemen from St. Louis and the Columbus Synod have instigated.

Dr. Ned Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary, a leader in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, attended the Columbus Synod and reported at length, in *The Presbyterian Guardian*, December 15, 1956. He declares, "Far-reaching developments are taking place among the Bible Presbyterians," and he adds, "It may well be that a new era is at hand."

Appraising the situation, he says, "As time went on there appears to have been an increasing number of persons who came to feel that the Bible Presbyterian Synod was, to say the least, a denomination which assigned so little authority and responsibility for the life and work of the church to the Synod itself that unless certain reforms could be instituted it could hardly with propriety claim the name Presbyterian."

It would be difficult to find a statement which confirms the position of the Columbus Synod more clearly than this. This also is exactly what the Collingswood Synod said, was taking place. The drive for a "true Presbyterian Church," the pressing need for "certain reforms," all were to the end that the denomination should be changed, and that a Synod which men thought had such little authority should be given greater power over the life of the churches and the ministers.

Stonehouse observes, "There have been certain tensions within this movement resulting from the fact that it has been Presbyterian in name and tradition, and no doubt in certain provisions of its form of government, and yet that there has been a strong accent upon independency."

Here it is, the so-called hybrid church, combination of Presbyterianism and independency or Congregationalism. Dr. Stonehouse sees the situation as these other gentlemen have appraised it and have been seeking to change it. But, is it honest to change a church which is organized according to a certain pattern, position, and principle?

Dr. Stonehouse observed that at the Columbus meeting "only two of the 73 ministers taking part . . . were involved in the separation of 1937." That is the time when the Orthodox and the Bible Presbyterians parted.

Dr. Stonehouse is encouraged. He thinks the Columbus group is engaged in a "move-

(Continued on page 6)

## "And There They Preached the Gospel"

When one reads the Book of Acts and sees the establishment of the New Testament Church one readily understands that the emphasis is upon the preaching of the Word. "And there they preached the gospel" (Acts 14:7).

The difficulties which have arisen in the Bible Presbyterian Church and which have led a portion of the church to turn its face toward the Orthodox Presbyterian Church need to be freshly appraised in the light of the phrase, "And there they preached the gospel."

*The Presbyterian Guardian*, edited by Ned B. Stonehouse and Leslie W. Sloat, carries a lengthy article, January 15, 1957, in which it endeavors to reply to some of the objections which Bible Presbyterians historically have had to the Orthodox Presbyterian movement.

*The Guardian* recognizes that *The Free Press* and the *Christian Beacon*, in reporting that over a period of 19 years, from 1936 to 1955, the OPC had a net gain of 9 ministers, were speaking the truth. A church which has been able to add an average of only one minister to its numerical strength every two years should have some explanation for this.

*The Guardian* does explain that the "net gain" fails also to mention the fact that the church had to replace 15 or so ministers who went with the B.P.'s in 1937. But 15 and 9 makes 24, and that still would mean a net gain of only one and a fraction of a minister per year for 19 years. The paper further thinks that "unfavorable publicity coming from McIntire" hindered their growth. But, after the initial break, McIntire in his paper and the Bible Presbyterian Church in general went their way, pressing the great issues of the faith once delivered unto the saints. Effort was made to get the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to come into the International Council of Christian Churches and for a while it looked as though the brethren would be willing to co-operate, but they turned back to their "Reformed faith" citadel. Thus the editors emphasize that the reason the church did not grow was that it sought "to be faithful to its historic Reformed and Presbyterian heritage. We unfortunately are living in an age when concern with doctrinal purity does not seem to be generally attractive. That in such an age the Church has grown at all is encouraging."

But there never has been an age in the history of the world when doctrinal purity was generally attractive. The struggle of the church with unbelief and the world, the flesh, and the Devil has always been a fight and it always will be. This is indeed a lame excuse for those who claim to stand in the succession of a Dr. Machen to be encouraged by the fact that the church has shown any growth whatever.

The key to this whole situation is found, we believe, in the narrow, rigid, hide-bound adherence to what is called the "Reformed faith." These brethren preach what they

say is the "Reformed faith." The Reformed faith, and we say it with all due respect, has become some kind of fetish and almost an idol.

In contrast to this, the emphasis in the Bible Presbyterian circle and which the circle generally has been advancing has been upon the "Bible," "Jesus Christ," "the Gospel of salvation," "the grace of God," "the faith once delivered unto the saints." These and similar phrases are Scriptural. These are the phrases that God's people read when they study their Bibles!

One can search the Scriptures from beginning to end and he will not find "Reformed faith." There is no such terminology. What is called the "Reformed faith" historically is a system of doctrine presented in the Scriptures; but the Scriptures present this system of doctrine under the terms of the Gospel, the grace of God, justification by faith, the elect.

This emphasis and approach make all the difference between a church filled with Bible-believing people and those who have become loyal adherents to the phrase, "Reformed faith." We are a firm believer in the Reformed faith and can use such terminology; but we preach the Bible, we preach Jesus Christ, we preach salvation by grace through faith, and we do it in these terms, the terms of Scripture. In this preaching, we are absolutely loyal to the Reformed faith and we present the great system of doctrine set forth in the Scriptures, which has been known historically as the Reformed faith. There is a difference, and a big difference. It makes the difference between a cold, dead, sterile type of church, and a fresh, living, aggressive church, zealous for souls and militant in defense of the faith.

It is a sad, sad state of affairs that the church which Dr. Machen himself started with the warmth of his own zeal and conviction has turned aside. When men wrap themselves with such fetishes, they endeavor to convince themselves that those who have left them are "not so concerned with doctrinal integrity." The men who did not stay in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, then the Presbyterian Church of America, were just as zealous of doctrinal integrity as the OPC men were, but they did not want to bow down at the shrine which they had erected, the "Reformed faith." They were fully loyal to the system of doctrine and to the Reformed faith, but they wanted it presented and preached to the Christian world in the terms of the Bible. Paul, in his missionary preaching, certainly did preach the Reformed faith, but he did not call it that. We read, "There they preached the gospel."

*The Guardian* proceeds to go back to the day when the Bible Presbyterian leaders stood with Dr. Machen and then, after his death, the break came. Effort is made by *The Guardian* to place Dr. McIntire in the position of not being strongly in favor of the Reformed faith. It is reported, "Dr. Machen was insistent that the Church should reject the '1903 Amendments' to the Con-

fession," and that "McIntire on the other hand argued for retaining those Amendments, since they would in some way demonstrate continuity with the old U.S.A. Church." It is a shame indeed when men will misrepresent the position of others which has been clearly made known. Dr. McIntire was in favor of removing the 1903 Amendments from the testimony of the new church. When the Bible Presbyterian Church was started, they were not included in the constitution by unanimous action.

The only question at stake at the time was that the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and Westminster Theological Seminary in their charters had said that they were committed to Presbyterian doctrine in the form in which it was expressed in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. as of such and such a period. The new church was to be the true successor to the U.S.A. Church. Church properties were involved in some instances. We were of the opinion that the new church should take the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. as it was and then proceed to amend it by due constitutional procedures. We did not feel that a break should be made, since, in all the trials of the court, the members of the Independent Board had been professing their absolute allegiance to the constitution. Dr. McIntire's adherence to the Reformed faith was never challenged by Dr. Machen or, so far as we know, by anyone else. He is a Calvinist, but he presents his messages from the Scriptures as the Word of God. Now, after these years, since leaders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church have entered into the controversy in the Bible Presbyterian Church, effort is made to misrepresent Dr. McIntire's views.

It is interesting indeed to see the defenders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church now accusing Dr. McIntire and those standing with him as standing "for something less than strict adherence to the truth." We have read statements published by *The Presbyterian Guardian* which simply are not true, and they belong to the realm of abuse and slander. In discussing the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and the action of the Presbyterian Church of America in forming its own official board, it is now alleged that the Independent Board "repudiated the leadership of Dr. Machen." It is said that Machen was "ousted from the presidency" of the Board. Machen's leadership was not repudiated! His testimony and his glorious work for Christ were honored by all the members of the Independent Board. Machen himself, at the time of his death, was a member of the Board and left a substantial legacy to the Board!

It is even asserted that the Independent Board "had maintained on its membership persons who held the non-Presbyterian position of independency in actual practice." But these persons were invited to be on the Board by Dr. Machen, and because they did

(Continued on page 4)

## "And There ...

(Continued from page 3)

not belong to a particular presbytery which the group in Westminster Seminary insisted that they should, they were none the less Presbyterian at the time! This position which these men at Westminster Seminary took has led to the view that in order to be Presbyterian, a mission board must be not independent but under the control of a General Assembly. It was this position which Machen himself repudiated and fought against.

Dr. Allan A. MacRae and others close to the situation and associated with Dr. Machen in those days can testify that even Dr. Machen himself was deeply disturbed by the trend which he saw in some of his colleagues at the Seminary and their constant picking at the questions of the "Reformed faith." Machen believed in the Reformed faith, and in his great battle in the Christian world he constantly spoke of "the faith once delivered unto the saints." As a Reformed Christian he was in the vanguard of the movement to defend the inerrancy of the Scriptures and the virgin birth of Christ. In his great fight to preserve Princeton Seminary, Dr. Machen stated his case clearly. In his pamphlet, December, 1927, "The Attack Upon Princeton Seminary—A Plea for Fair Play," Dr. Machen said, "If Princeton is lost, there must certainly be a new institution that shall not conceal the really great issue of the day, but shall contend earnestly for the faith." He claimed that if Princeton was reorganized by the General Assembly, the new directors "may not be Modernists themselves," but he emphasized, "The inevitable result of their policy will be to make Princeton a Modernist institution in a very few years." That, of course, has now happened. It is a citadel of neo-orthodoxy.

Machen castigated the ecclesiastical machinery which he said was rolling smoothly, and said, "The end of Princeton Seminary will, in some sort, mark the end of an epoch in the history of the modern Church and the beginning of a new era in which new evangelical agencies must be formed." Machen took the lead in forming "new evangelical agencies," a seminary, independent; the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. These were agencies. They were not under the control of a General Assembly. Machen struggled, as he says in his pamphlet, "with an ecclesiastical machine," and he just could not see how it would be possible for two million people, members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., to get the necessary information to save the institution which was supposed to be theirs under the control of their General Assembly.

The *Presbyterian Guardian* questions whether the Independent Board has gone on with the work of Machen. The church, which in 19 years has had a net gain of 9 ministers, has virtually abandoned the great battle which Machen led. As the issues which he raised were pressed and the world struggle for the faith made, the Independent Board has been in the vanguard, joining

these issues on mission fields, helping to rally God's people in these lands into associations and fellowships and regional councils. The battle continues, but not at the hands of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

There is a choice passage in Machen's defense or plea for Princeton, in which he speaks, not in terms of the "Reformed faith," but he rejoices in the League of Evangelical Students at Princeton. We remember so well his support and leadership in this field among evangelical students from the various seminaries. Machen writes, "The warm and vital type of Christianity that has emanated from Princeton—the type of Christianity that not only proclaims the Gospel when it is popular to proclaim it, but proclaims the Gospel in the face of a hostile world, the type of Christianity that resolutely refuses to make common cause, either at home or on the mission field, with the Modernism that is the deadliest enemy of the cross of Christ, the type of Christianity that responds with full abandon of the heart and life to the Saviour's redeeming love, that is willing to bear all things for Christ's sake, that has a passion for the salvation of souls, that holds the Bible to be, not partly true and partly false, but all true, the blessed, holy Word of God—this warm and vital type of Christianity, as it has found expression, for example, in the League of Evangelical Students, is disconcerting to the ecclesiastical leaders; and so Princeton Seminary, from which it emanates, must be destroyed."

Then Machen writes: "No one who has come into close contact, for example, with these young men who have formed the League of Evangelical Students can suppose that such consecration can ever be vanquished or discouraged by hostile actions of the organized Church. Vital Christianity never will be crushed out of the world by action of Church legislatures or courts. The Gospel of Christ is still enshrined, even in these sad, cold days, in the hearts of men."

It was this conviction and this type of terminology—the Gospel, the Gospel of Christ—that inspired the students around Machen and made the League of Evangelical Students a spearhead throughout the Christian world. And let us say, at this point, that Machen in such leadership was truly a Reformed Christian! And those who talk about the "Reformed faith" today and make it almost a shrine before which they worship, if they would grasp the spirit and the compass of that faith and its responsibility to lead in the evangelical struggle of the hour, they would be consistent and faithful to their convictions and provide what is so desperately needed throughout the Christian world in this hour—strong, aggressive, militant leadership in behalf of the Christian faith.

Another slander, and it is a slander perpetrated by *The Presbyterian Guardian* against Christian brethren, is the allegation that the Bible Presbyterian Synod repudiated "eschatological liberty."

The millennial question and difference was not the big struggle with Machen. These questions were raised primarily after Ma-

chen's death by those associated with him. But there was a clear, unquestioned attack upon the premillennarians and it was openly said that the new church would not tolerate premillennialism but that it would be an amillennial church. There are defects and errors in the Scofield Bible, but to blast the Scofield Bible in the manner in which it was done before the Christians who delighted in the Second Coming of Christ did untold harm among the sheep and the lambs. We have always believed that this was done to keep out of the new church those who believed in the premillennial return of Christ. But a man who accepts the Reformed system of doctrine may, in all consistency, believe also in the premillennial return of Christ. But a dispensationalism which violates the unity of the covenant of grace is an anti-Reformed heresy. The attack upon premillennialism was fanned into a major issue and brought tragedy. Many turned back and fell by the wayside. The first General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, when it was established, made a declaration in behalf of eschatological liberty. The resolution in full reads:

"WHEREAS, this General Synod has adopted changes in the Confession of Faith and the Larger Catechism which bring our doctrinal standards into harmony with the premillennial view of that blessed hope, the second coming of our Lord; and

"WHEREAS, although we hold this view to be taught in God's Word, we yet recognize that there are sincere Christians who hold to other views of the events which shall accompany our Lord's return but who nevertheless are one with us in receiving the system of doctrine taught in the Bible and stated in our doctrinal standards;

"Therefore be it resolved, that this General Synod declares that subscription to our doctrinal standards upon the part of all office-bearers shall be understood as leaving them and our churches and members free to hold any eschatological view which includes the visible and personal return of our Lord to earth, and which is not otherwise inconsistent with the system of doctrine of the Bible and the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church."

The third matter had to do with Christian liberty and the use of intoxicating beverages. At this point *The Guardian*, January 15, 1957, said, "The Church in 1937 refused to take a position which would in effect have impugned the integrity of her Lord Jesus Christ, but instead reaffirmed the stand which is set forth in Scripture and the historic Presbyterian Confessions." It was alleged that to advise people, young people, to abstain from intoxicating beverages, as the Presbyterian Church of America refused to do, impugned the integrity of our Lord and made Christ a sinner because it was said He used intoxicating beverages.

For years on end the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had counselled its members and its young people to abstain totally from the use of intoxicating beverages. This advice and counsel was in the tradition of

(Continued on page 5)

## "And There ...

(Continued from page 4)

the Presbyterian Church in the United States. It was believed to be expedient and proper to give such advice. But the group that was in control of the Presbyterian Church of America at that time insisted that the historic Presbyterian confessions and the Scriptures ruled otherwise.

The resolution setting forth the position of the Bible Presbyterian Church on this matter and adopted by the Second General Synod reads as follows:

"We, the members of this Assembly, in the interests of making clear our position on this particular matter, namely the question of a Christian's relation to the use of intoxicating beverages, and with no slightest intention of setting ourselves up in judgment on the conscience of any man where the Word of God has not bound him, do desire to declare that we deem it wise to pursue the course of total abstinence; and furthermore, we lament the widespread tendency of the American people toward intemperance, and we are unalterably opposed to the modern saloon and the liquor traffic in general, which, as now carried on, is associated with and leads to sinful abuses, and is subversive of the general welfare of society."

These issues—Christian liberty, premillennialism, the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions—were raised in the conflict, not by those who later became Bible Presbyterians, but by those who were seeking to direct and mold the life of the new church from Westminster Theological Seminary. The questions and issues were first raised there and made an issue in the church.

It has been our opinion for many years that these questions were raised to provoke division, because there were those who felt that within the new movement there were men who were "not Reformed" and they were not wanted in the new church, even though they had been leaders in the fight to preserve a true Presbyterian testimony in the United States. These issues were used to provoke and to prod men to leave, so that the new church would be in the hands of a group who would be, according to their understanding, loyal to the "Reformed faith." This is exactly what they obtained when the story was over, and in 19 years they have had a net gain of 9 ministers.

In our modern life, with its present tempo, the testimony of the Lord's people in the United States has generally been that it is the best and wisest policy to abstain from any use of alcoholic beverages. This has been counselled in the realm of Christian expediency and it has been a blessing to the church.

Furthermore, churches which have been strong in their emphasis upon the Second Coming of Christ have been among those which, in God's providence, took places of leadership in defending the faith.

It was an exceedingly unwise and disastrous thing for the Westminster group to

## SEPARATION

The Rev. Frank E. Allen, D.D., a leader in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, who attended the Columbus Synod, has reported the "split" in the Bible Presbyterian Church in the February 6 issue of *Covenanter Witness*. Since Dr. Allen was present at Columbus his report is significant in that he declares that the group that met in Columbus "represents the element of the Church which was critical of the one-man leadership of Dr. McIntire and the extreme separatism that characterized his policy."

When leaders connected with the Columbus Synod emphasize that they have not changed and that they agree with Mr. McIntire in matters of separation, we now have this testimony confirming the position of Dr. McIntire and others that there has been a change in the emphasis and the position of separation.

Dr. McIntire in his place of responsibility in editing the *Christian Beacon* and in the International Council of Christian Churches has not changed. His separatist stand and his militant attack against the apostasy continues as through the years that have passed. When Bible Presbyterian pastors begin to speak of this position as "extreme separatism," it is pretty good evidence that they have changed.

The charge, too, that it is Dr. McIntire that they have been attacking and seeking to discredit is also confirmed by Dr. Allen's report, though some of their leaders vigorously deny it.

Dr. Allen, too, gathered, the impression that the Columbus Synod removed the men from the church who stood with Dr. McIntire. He writes, "The names of the ministers who joined this meeting at Collingswood were declared erased from the Bible Presbyterian Church."

turn away from the Independent Board, which had been the focal point of such terrific attack by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In the break that took place in 1937, the spirit, the emphasis, the struggle which Machen himself led was carried on, as history has shown, in the current which the Bible Presbyterian leaders followed, while, on the side of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the battle was virtually abandoned.

Now an element in the Bible Presbyterian Church looks to this Orthodox Presbyterian Church for comfort and fellowship.

The Bible Presbyterians who desire to see a true testimony preserved in this country must understand the issues that are at stake at this point and by their own personal testimonies in their positions of influence declare themselves and join with those who are seeking to continue, through the Collingswood Synod, the historic position of the movement and of the Bible Presbyterian Church itself.

## Ecclesiastical ...

(Continued from page 1)

way, so far as its accomplishment was concerned. The New Jersey Presbytery, as a Presbytery, had indicated that it would recognize the Collingswood Synod. The majority of the Presbytery recognized the Collingswood Synod.

This meant, therefore, that in the Presbytery of New Jersey, which remained intact, the directives from the Columbus Synod would not be honored. So, the minority in the Presbytery met, called themselves "the Presbytery of New Jersey," and proceeded to authorize a directive to all the members of the Presbytery "to ask you to declare your actual standing with the Collingswood Synod." The letter, sent by registered mail to every minister in the Presbytery, said, "If we do not hear from you within thirty days, we will consider that evidence that you no longer wish to be a member of the New Jersey Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Synod." Thus, a minority who could not be the presbytery, and who did not have the records of the presbytery or the moderatorship or the stated clerk of the presbytery—these offices were occupied by ministers in a presbytery whose sympathies were with the Collingswood Synod and who attended the Collingswood Synod—this minority proceeded simply to rule that, if they did not hear from the majority of the presbytery, they would drop their names from the roll, which, it is reported, they did. A roll which they did not possess, names which they did not have in their records, they proceeded to drop from the roll of the presbytery and to claim that these men were no longer members of the Presbytery! This is ecclesiastical execution *par excellence!*

This is anarchy, rebellion, unconstitutional procedure of the highest order. There could be and there certainly has developed a difference of opinion as to which synod men desire to recognize or to attend. Some went to Columbus. Some went to Collingswood. But a particular synod is *not* the denomination, and it is possible, within a denomination for such a dispute to develop, as it most assuredly has developed. The constitution with all parts of the structure contained there make the denomination!

In contrast to all this, men who attended the Collingswood Synod and who are active in their presbyteries, have not taken any action of any kind to discriminate, penalize, or to throw out of the church their brethren, even in presbyteries where the majority represents men who are in sympathy with the Collingswood Synod.

When the history of the present episode in the Bible Presbyterian movement is written, in the light of Presbyterian history, this action on the part of the leaders in the Columbus Synod will be the blackest and the darkest of all. It is ecclesiastical execution, without warrant, and in violation of the constitutional protections given to ministers in the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Confession of Faith of the

(Continued on page 8)

## AN APPEAL TO ALL BIBLE PRESBYTERIANS

It is a source of real encouragement that throughout the local churches of the Bible Presbyterian Church God's people are coming forward and expressing their determination to preserve and to carry on the work of the Church's testimony.

People see that the Collingswood Synod is carrying on that testimony. It supports and endorses the Independent Board. It backs and is a member of the American Council of Christian Churches and the International Council of Christian Churches. It is supporting the agencies which God has raised up through the years, and it stands squarely against ecclesiastical control and power and the rise of an ecclesiastical machine within the Church. The Collingswood Synod has repudiated the 19th General Synod because of the actions which it took in violation of the constitution of the Church.

There must be a witness in the United States of America to the true, historic Presbyterian witness, a testimony which will give the evangelical emphasis, warmth of consecration, and Christian zeal which have been characteristic of Presbyterians through the years.

The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is officially apostate. The United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. are living on the inclusivist policy program and are in the apostasy as represented by the National and World Councils of Churches. There must be a movement to preserve, for Christ's sake, this historic testimony in the United States. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has turned aside, with its emphasis upon what it calls the Reformed faith. The Bible Presbyterian Church has been beset with grief and sorrow.

The appeal now is that God's people be not discouraged. Let each in his own place hold the fort and stand on the line. Let us not be castaways.

The St. Louis Synod has turned aside to a tighter synod, to a synod control of all of the agencies! How the members of all the churches can run all of these agencies in the name of Presbyterianism is more than any reasonable person can guess. Dr. Machen emphasized that two million people in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. could not begin to be informed as they should have been in order to direct the affairs of Princeton Seminary and save it from the hands of the modernists. That system failed. It did not work. Machen led in establishing independent agencies which began, as he said, a new epoch. The independent agencies which have been established, thank God, have been delivered and saved in the present struggle. What would have been the estate at the present moment if all the agencies and all the institutions had been put under the control of one general synod? Now, with the general synod having changed its complexion, everything would have been lost.

Those who are now seeking to build the institutions and the agencies which the St. Louis group and the Columbus Synod have

established will find again some day that everything is lost. It will all go into an ecclesiastical machine that takes it over.

The lessons of history are replete with warnings on this point. We have seen them; we have learned them; and now we appeal to God's people to go on in the freedom and liberty which we have purchased at such a great price. Let us keep and enjoy the liberty which Christ has given us, and build our churches true and sound upon the Word of God, and support the Gospel throughout the whole world through agencies loyal to Him.

### A PLEA . . .

(Continued from page 2)

ment of thought and action," and "it appears likely that they will be concerned, as consistently as possible, to work out the implications of their commitment to the Reformed Faith and Presbyterian church government." Here is revolution within the Bible Presbyterian Church being led by men who are moving in their thought and action.

Dr. Stonehouse further emphasizes, "This group wishes to be and to be known as a distinctively Reformed Church," and he thinks that this will "be a distinct strengthening of the testimony and life of churches worthy of the name Reformed." It has been one of the allegations of the leaders of the Orthodox Church from the beginning that the Bible Presbyterian Church was not worthy of the name "Reformed," that it really was not a Presbyterian Church. Thus Dr. Stonehouse places himself on the side of those who want to change the Bible Presbyterian Church and he wishes them to be completely successful in their revolutionary movement, so that it will conform more, according to his opinion, to the Orthodox Presbyterian position and setup.

Is it honest? Is it honest for men thus fundamentally to change a church? We do not think that it is. Involved in this is the ordination vow of every Bible Presbyterian minister, for all declared at their ordination that they approved of the government and discipline of the Bible Presbyterian Church, and this government is set forth in the constitution, with liberty and freedom for the local churches and limited authority granted to a General Synod. Men approved of this, and yet, having sworn that they approved of it, they now operate to change it fundamentally and basically through the channels of the church. This is one reason why we raise the question of honesty. Is it honest for men to take ordination vows saying they approve and then turn and work to change the very thing which they said they approved of and try to remodel the church into the kind of church which Dr. Stonehouse says may be "worthy of the name Reformed"?

The change in the Bible Presbyterian Church has not been on the part of the Collingswood Synod. Here is the group that has resisted these so-called "reforms" which would destroy the church and its liberty.

## ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIANS AID CONFUSION

Leaders in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are continuing their active participation in the affairs of the Bible Presbyterian Church.

The majority of the congregation of the Bible Presbyterian Church of East Orange, N. J., has left and gone to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church nearby. This development was a part of the picture at the time the Rev. Daniel Fannon left East Orange and took the Columbus Church.

Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary was the speaker at a meeting of "Reformed" pastors which has been started in New Jersey among men of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and men who recognize the Columbus Synod. The meeting, it was announced, would deal with the question of Christian liberty, one of the differences between the two groups which caused the separation.

The Rev. Carl J. Reitsma, pastor of the Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church, West Collingswood, N. J., featured the Rev. LaVerne Donaldson, whom he called "moderator of the Bible Presbyterian Church," at his annual missionary conference. On the front page of the Collingswood weekly newspaper, he reported the Donaldson meeting with the title, "Moderator of the Bible Presbyterian Church."

This is, of course, contrary to the constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church, for the man who is elected moderator is moderator not of the denomination or the church but only of a particular synod. It is proper to speak of a man as moderator of a particular synod. Reitsma's reporting in the Collingswood paper contributed further to confusion. Donaldson was elected moderator of the group that met in Columbus and called the "Columbus Synod." But Mr. Reitsma is fully aware that there was a Collingswood Synod, held in Collingswood.

The next General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is scheduled to meet in Mr. Reitsma's church.

Dr. Stonehouse has also published a lengthy article in *The Presbyterian Guardian*, "A Reply to McIntire," in which he makes some serious misstatements of fact about the ACCC and ICC, and has made statements which misrepresent the position historically of the Bible Presbyterian Church.

Here is the group which continues the same identical position which the church has had and honored and been blessed under for 18 years. Here is the group that is standing by the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and its glorious testimony, standing by the American and International Councils of Christian Churches, and rejoicing in the way in which God has used them, delivered them, and, we believe, will further use them for the advancement of the Gospel and the defense of the Faith.

(Continued on page 7)

## Reason for Independent Board's Stand

It is now reported that there is more than \$4,000 in the hands of Mr. John E. Krauss, treasurer of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Columbus Synod. Most of these monies formerly were given to the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

Involved in the diversion of funds from the Independent Board to the Columbus Synod-controlled Board is represented the change which has taken place in some of the Bible Presbyterian pastors. This is expressed in the *Bulletin News Supplement*, February 17, 1957. The editor, the Rev. Max Belz, writes:

"Our denomination is learning a lesson the hard way. We are coming awake to the fact that independency is, in the final analysis, hostile to Presbyterian law and order. This is not to say that independent works cannot be used of God; they certainly can. But we will eventually have to face the fact, one way or another, that our King of Kings has given us officers, laws and censures; that he rules us visibly through the visible church.

"The future of any 'Independent Board' in our church will probably be as shaky as the future of the motorist who declares himself independent of the highway patrolman. It is most difficult to enjoy the benefits of church law and order and at the same time be independent of the church."

This represents a radical change from the historic position of the Bible Presbyterian Church. Those who have accepted this new concept have turned their backs upon the historic position of the Independent Board and the great fight which Dr. J. Gresham Machen made against the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. It, too, maintained that the Independent Board was "hostile to Presbyterian law and order." Such an agency was illegal, it was maintained. The General Assembly, in the famous Mandate, also emphasized that Christ rules us visibly through the visible church, an excellent expression of Roman Catholic doctrine.

But, Christ rules us as the Head of the church through His Word and by His Spirit! And the Westminster Confession of Faith, to which we subscribe, says, "Synods and councils may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith and practice," but simply to be used as a "help in both."

One thing is sure, the Independent Board did not put itself under "the highway patrolman" (Columbus Synod). But the new concept of the tighter synod and the greater power which has been usurped by that synod over the churches has resulted in the diversion of funds from the Independent Board.

All of this is unfair, unjust. The Board has not changed. Its position, program, activities are the same!

The executive committee declined to receive the funds from the official Synod's Committee and behind this decision was a basic constitutional question and one that involved the charter of the Board.

It is this point that Bible Presbyterians need to understand. The Independent Board is free of ecclesiastical control! Its charter makes it so. It suffered at the hands of the dictates of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1934. As an Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, it has sought to merit the confidence and support of Bible-believing Christians in many circles for its truly Biblical missionary work. This confidence has been merited and has been strengthened through the years.

Historically, the Bible Presbyterian Church has been blessed by the Independent Board and the Board's position entered into the very fabric of the church's constitution and witness to the faith. The constitution, form of government, of the Bible Presbyterian Church, says:

"The General Synod may, at its own discretion, set up committees to act as its agents in conducting benevolent, missionary and educational enterprises, or it may commend to the churches, for their support, other such Christian enterprises."

There are two sections to this, one dealing with synod-controlled agencies, the other with independent agencies. The two sections are separated by an "or."

It was under the second section that the church all these years has "commended to the churches, for their support" the Independent Board. The Columbus Synod has now withdrawn that commendation. The Collingswood Synod continues to commend the Independent Board.

Thus, when dealing with the question of foreign missions, the Columbus Synod no longer commended an independent agency, it fell back on the first section of this constitutional provision and it established a permanent Foreign Missions Committee. The only power in the constitution for the Synod to establish such a committee is in this one paragraph. The Committee which is thereby established, according to the constitution, becomes the synod's own committee "in conducting . . . missionary" work. Some have said that the Columbus Synod did not set up a committee to function but that it was only a transmission agent for funds from the churches to the Independent Board itself.

But the constitution itself tells the true story! The new permanent committee is the agent of the Synod to act in conducting synod's foreign missionary work. If it is not this, then the constitution has been violated in setting it up. Thus, the Columbus Synod has turned away from the second section of the constitution, which gives it the right to commend, and has chosen to establish its own agent to conduct its foreign missionary work.

Under this condition, and none can deny that this is what the constitution says, when the Foreign Missions Committee of the Columbus Synod presented its check to the Independent Board with designations for par-

ticular activities and missionaries, it was acting as the synod's agent in conducting its foreign missionary work!

In all the years, this has never happened before. The missionary work is the work of the Lord through the Independent Board—always has been. The Board has co-operated fully and freely, receiving the missionaries which have come to it, accepting the contributions and commending its ministry to the local churches.

A new relationship would therefore be injected into the whole missionary activity of the Independent Board if it received funds from a committee which was the agent of a denomination conducting the denomination's missionary work! This raised many questions and could lead to much misunderstanding and difficulties. On one side, the Synod's Board now represented and spoke for the local church. On the missionary side, the Synod's Board now represented and spoke for its missionaries. The injection of the Synod's Board in between the churches and the Independent Board, and in between the missionary and the Independent Board created new problems.

The Board could not, in faithfulness to its charter, in which it says that it is an independent agency and that it is responsible to God and to no ecclesiastical authority, get itself involved or tangled up in any such developments.

It properly said, No. And it has appealed to the churches and the individuals who have supported it through the years to continue their support on the ground that the Board has not changed and that its missionaries, its testimony, and its historic position are still worthy of their commendation and help.

It has acted on a high principle. Its missionaries have come under its direction after approving its charter, and the Lord's people are earnestly petitioned to stand by it in this hour of need.

### A PLEA . . .

(Continued from page 6)

We say unhesitatingly that it is not honest before God, before the Gentiles, for men to come in and try to change a church this way. Let them go and establish a church according to their own new understanding of Presbyterianism, or the principles which they embrace.

It is this that has contributed to such disruption and disturbance of the peace, and it is the one factor which has caused such great harm. When men differ, as men obviously do differ now, they can at least be honest in their differences, and the group which has championed and is pushing the changes should face, before God, their duty and not attempt to take over churches, presbyteries, and a synod, that they may be diverted to this new concept.

## Funds Diverted From Independent Board

The churches which diverted funds from the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions to the official Foreign Mis-

sions Committee of the Columbus Synod, together with the sums, are here given.

John E. Krauss, treasurer of the Colum-

bus Synod's official Foreign Missions Committee, on January 25, 1957, presented this list to the Independent Board with a check for \$1,085.73. The list follows:

CHURCH	DESIGNATION	AMOUNT
B. P. Church, Canon City, Colo.	Support Rev. and Mrs. H. G. Marshall	\$ 20.00
B. P. Church, Columbus, Ohio	Support Bruce Fiol	52.60
	" Frank Fiol	20.00
	" William Le Roy	10.00
First B. P. Church, St. Louis, Mo.	Support Donaldsons	80.00
	Korea Hospital Fund	3.00
W. M. S., First B. P. Church, St. Louis, Mo.	Support Mrs. N. A. Cochran	202.00
	" Dr. S. L. Hosmon	149.00
	" Frank Fiol	34.00
	" James Gilchrist	15.00
	Work in Africa	15.00
Beginners Dept. S.S., First B. P. Church, St. Louis	Support Kathleen Young	2.50
	" Peter Young	2.50
	" Rhoda Cochran	2.50
Mrs. A. H. Seitzinger through St. Louis B. P. Church	Support Mrs. Donaldson	25.00
Miss Ida McCain through St. Louis B. P. Church	Support Dr. and Mrs. A. B. Dodd	2.00
B. P. Church, Watford City, N. Dak.	Roland K. Armes Memorial Hospital	23.63
Watford City Missionary Society	" " " " "	33.00
B. P. Church, Gainesville, Tex.	Support Rev. and Mrs. L. Donaldson	125.00
	Roland K. Armes Memorial Hospital	3.00
First B. P. Church, Robein, Ill.	Support J. Robert Fiol	5.00
B. P. Church, Alton, Ill.	Support Ruth Young	3.00
Mrs. Winslow Collins, Kirkwood, Mo.	Support Rev. and Mrs. Frank Fiol	10.00
Faith B. P. Church, Tacoma, Wash.	Support Rev. and Mrs. William Le Roy	70.00
	" Andrea LeRoy	10.00
	" Rev. and Mrs. Robert Hamilton	25.00
	" Miss Edna Barter	43.00

The executive committee of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, after full consideration of the problems involved, returned the check to Mr. John E. Krauss and by unanimous action authorized the following letter:

"Acknowledgment is made of the delivery to our office of a check of the permanent Foreign Missions Committee of which you are Treasurer, for \$1085.73, designated for twenty-seven items, such as support of missionaries and dependents and for projects

regularly supported by our Board.

"Heretofore, in accordance with the policy of the Board, we have received all such payments direct from the donors you list, and we can see no reason for the change of practice indicated by this check from you. No donors or missionaries have asked us to consider so radical a change, and we are aware of the misunderstandings, complications, and delays to which such a change would lead. Our missionaries are depending on the gifts which these donors have promised to supply through our Board, and

we are praying that the donors, standing by their commitments, will continue to support the work as heretofore.

"Therefore we return your check, and are asking the donors to continue to forward their contributions to us direct as they have in the past."

Dr. J. Gordon Holdcroft, president of the Independent Board, was requested to write all donors and missionaries, explaining the Committee's action and sending them copies of the Committee's action.

## Ecclesiastical ..

(Continued from page 5)

Church. This is the way Hitler treated the Jews. He executed them without trial!

Ministers and churches who love the

Lord and desire to be true servants of Christ and true presbyters in the terms of the Scriptures certainly cannot trust or have confidence in a group of brethren who will throw out of a denomination, dropping their names from presbyteries, sincere, earnest brethren,

and execute them summarily, without trial or hearing.

The Columbus Synod and its leaders who used church power to execute brethren have a blot on their record that nothing can erase! Church history condemns them.

Requests for copies of *The Free Press* and all communications may be addressed to the secretary-treasurer of the Committee, the Rev. Arthur G. Slaght, 1630 S. Hanover St., Baltimore 30, Md. Dr. Carl McIntire is responsible for this issue.