

CHRISTIANITY TODAY



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

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Editorial Notes and Comments

THE GENERAL COUNCIL AS A CLOSE CORPORATION

WE have previously made clear that the General Council exceeded its legal powers when it proposed and in effect initiated judicial action against the members of the Independent Board. It is true that this action by the General Council has been defended on the ground that Section XII of Chapter XXVI of the Form of Government refers only to the General Councils of Synods and Presbyteries. The speciousness of this contention was pointed out in our last issue (p. 107). In this connection we are concerned to direct attention not only to the fact that the resolution adopted by the 1930 Assembly—which is relied upon to prove that only General Councils of Synods and Presbyteries are forbidden to deal with business of a judicial nature—was proposed by the General Council itself but that the membership of the General Council that initiated the action against the Independent Board in 1934 was very much the same as it was in 1930. Members in 1934 who were also members in 1930 include L. S. MUDGE, W. C. COVERT, C. B. McAFEE, H. B. MASTER, J. W. McIVOR, W. E. BROOKS, M. A. MATTHEWS, C. S. LAWRENCE and J. M. T. FINNEY. Members of the Administrative Committee of the General Council (its most important committee) in 1934 who were also members of this committee in 1930 include L. S. MUDGE, C. B. McAFEE, M. A. MATTHEWS and J. M. T. FINNEY. It will be generally agreed, we believe, that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is largely controlled by its General Council, as the General Assembly is little more than a rubber stamp that gives validity to the decisions of the General Council. Obviously this was the case as far as the action against the members of the Independent Board is concerned. Probably, however, the degree to which the General Council is a close corporation is not so generally recognized. Explain it as we may, there seems to be no doubt but that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., despite its boasted democracy, is in effect controlled by a self-perpetuating hierarchy.

THE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY

WE take this occasion again to commend this theological review to the attention of the more scholarly of our readers. In exposition and defense of the historic Christian faith it comes nearer to filling the vacancy created by the passing of the Princeton Theological Review than any existing publication. DR. OSWALD T. ALLIS, former editor of the Princeton Review, is one of its associate editors. It is edited by DRs. JOHN R. MACKAY and DONALD MACLEAN of Edinburgh and published by James Clarke & Co. Ltd., London, but may be ordered through Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 234 Pearl Street, N. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan (price ten shillings per annum). It seems to us

that every minister ought to be a regular reader of a scholarly magazine of this type—for the preservation of his intellectual self-respect if for no other reason. DR. W. CHILDS ROBINSON, of Columbia Seminary, who writes our Southern Presbyterian Church letter, has recently contributed two notable articles to this magazine under the titles "Jesus Christ Is Jehovah" and "The Theocentric Theology Implicit in the Name of the Trinity." Its contributors include European as well as English and American scholars so that in fact as well as in name it is "international in scope and outlook." Book reviews constitute an outstanding feature.

AUBURN AFFIRMATIONISTS LAUNCH ORGAN

UNDER the title of "*The Presbyterian Tribune*" a group of Auburn Affirmationists has launched a bi-weekly paper. Both in appearance and content its first issue (October 4th) is quite similar to that of the defunct *Presbyterian Advance* of which it is professedly a continuation. Its publication office is located at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

In referring to this new paper as an organ of the Auburn Affirmationists we do not mean to assert that it makes this claim for itself. However *The Christian Century*—misnamed if we mistake not—which "extends good wishes in unlimited measure," has stated that "building on the support of the group which signed the 'Auburn Affirmation,' the promoters of the *Tribune* hope to prove that there is sufficient liberalism within the Presbyterian denomination to keep a periodical going" (Oct. 3, p. 1229). That this representation is amply warranted is indicated not only by the fact that its editor is an Auburn Affirmationist but by the fact that fifteen of the twenty-two ministers on its "Editorial Council" and among its "Special Contributors" are also Auburn Affirmationists. What is more, the other seven include outstanding Presbyterian liberals. How thorough-going this paper expects to be in its liberalism is indicated by the fact that it "aspires" to be a denominational rather than an interdenominational magazine because the latter field is "already ably and brilliantly covered by the *Christian Century*." Its close sympathy with the *Christian Century* is further indicated by the fact that its editor is and expects to remain on the staff of the *Christian Century*.

We are told that "this new paper is not being launched to carry on theological controversy" but rather "to apply the spirit and ethic of Jesus Christ to the baffling problems of this day." Such statements, however, should be taken with several grains of salt. A paper whose theological assumptions and presuppositions are those of Modernism is necessarily engaged in theological propaganda even if it contains little formal theological discussion. Moreover it should be remembered that the ethic of Christianity is tied up with its doctrines. It is self-deception to suppose that the ideals and attitudes of Christianity will long

Great Public Meetings Show Independent Board Strength

RECENTLY two public meetings of outstanding significance and proportions have demonstrated how public support is being rallied to the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Other meetings will follow, in other sections of the country.

Orange, New Jersey

On September 24th a great audience assembled in the High School Auditorium of Orange, N. J., to hear speakers representing the Independent Board. The meeting was conceived and executed by laymen for laymen. Report of an eye witness:

"The laymen of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. are awakening. They are becoming indignant over the inroads which Modernism has made in the foreign missionary enterprise of the denomination.

"That is the central conviction which was driven home upon the consciousness of this observer by the Laymen's Rally which was staged in Orange, N. J., on September 24th, in the interest of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

"Nine hundred people from New York and northern New Jersey attended the service. Automobiles lined the neighboring streets for blocks.

"It was a meeting planned and carried out entirely by laymen. Three members of the Independent Board addressed the assembly. They were, the Rev. Harold S. Laird, the Rev. Merrill T. MacPherson, and Dr. J. Gresham Machen. The General Secretary presented the Rev. and Mrs. Henry W. Coray, in whose honor the Rally was held. Mr. and Mrs. Coray sailed for China on October 20th, as the first foreign missionaries of the Independent Board.

"In the addresses of the evening the doctrinal issue which today faces Protestantism was clearly discussed. It was made perfectly plain that Modernism was the occasion of the establishment of the Independent Board.

"The laymen are rallying to the standard of the Truth. They do not seem to fear the weapons which are so successfully wielded over their ministerial brethren by those in positions of power. These weapons are intimidation and patronage. The Orange Rally proved clearly that the hope of the present crisis, from the human point of view at least, rests with the laymen."

West Pittston, Pa.

The other rally was held in West Pittston, Pa., October 8th, as a farewell for Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Coray. Mr. Coray has been pastor of the First Church there. The ac-

count which follows seeks to describe not only the bare facts of the meeting but to reproduce its spirit as well:

IMPRESSIONS OF WEST PITTSTON

Written for *Christianity Today*

By J. Gresham Machen

A meeting attended by fully five hundred persons was held in the High School Auditorium at West Pittston, Pennsylvania, on the evening of Monday, October 8th, to bid God-speed to the Rev. and Mrs. Henry W. Coray, who are sailing by the steamship "Empress of Japan" from Vancouver on October 20th to be missionaries in China under the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Before the formation of the Independent Board, Mr. Coray applied repeatedly for appointment under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (before the unfaithfulness of that Board had been so clearly demonstrated); but that Board did not appoint him. Being thus hindered in his long cherished ambition to go to the foreign field he became, on his graduation from Westminster Theological Seminary, pastor of the West Pittston Presbyterian Church, which is a church of 651 members. As pastor of that church he was signally blessed of God and greatly beloved by the congregation. Every ordinary human consideration would have led him to remain where he was. He was pastor of a large and important church—extraordinarily large for a man just out of seminary—he was a successful preacher; he was beloved by young and old; he was happy in his pastoral labors. Everything pointed to a distinguished and happy career for him in the ministry in this country. He might have argued plausibly that in applying repeatedly to the official Board of Foreign Missions of the church of which he was a member he had done his part and might now conscientiously accept the pathway of easier or at least less adventurous service.

But he put all such considerations aside. He was convinced that God had called him to the foreign field, and he would allow nothing to stand in the way of that call. He applied under the Independent Board. He was perfectly willing to face any opposition that might come to him for so doing. God had called him to preach the gospel to the unsaved, and he preferred to obey God rather than man.

Evidently that was the way in which his congregation viewed his decision—no one who attended the farewell meeting could well doubt that. But very different was the way in which it was regarded by presbytery. What did the Presbytery of Lackawanna do when this man with his wife desired to sacrifice ease and emoluments

and an assured career in order to preach the gospel to the unsaved? Did it bid him God-speed on his errand of love? That was what one might suppose that it would do. But as a matter of fact it did nothing of the kind. It refused to dissolve his pastoral relation, and then it voted to erase his name from the presbytery roll! It told him that he must not go! "Let those who have never heard of Jesus," the presbytery seemed to say in effect, "let those who would never hear of Him unless this missionary is sent, remain in darkness; let them go down to eternal destruction. We care not. If you go, you may save souls, but you will be doing something derogatory to US. So you must not go. Let the prerogatives of the ecclesiastical machine be preserved at all costs, even at the cost of precious souls!"

That was the real meaning of the act of Lackawanna Presbytery, no matter what the presbytery may have thought it meant. That was the meaning which was evidently detected in it by a great host of laymen in the presbyterial area. A wave of truly righteous indignation ran through the congregation in which Mr. Coray was so much beloved. Modernism and cold indifferentism, it seemed, were at last throwing off their mask. The dreadfulness of that act of presbytery impressed itself upon young and old.

It was in such a situation that the meeting was called. It was not suggested by representatives of the Independent Board, but was a spontaneous movement of laymen. There was little time for the announcement of the meeting; but the hearts of the people were stirred and responded quickly to the call. A great company was present from Mr. Coray's congregation and from neighboring towns.

Mr. Bert Tennant of the Board of Trustees of the West Pittston Church was a prime mover in the arrangements and in the necessary announcements; Mr. Harold Davenport, of the Session, presided; Mr. Henry Morgan was in charge of the singing, which was led by the regular church choir. Rev. George C. Westberg, pastor of the Memorial Presbyterian Church of Wilkes-Barre, was on the platform and took part in the service.

After the meeting had been called to order by Elder Davenport and after an introductory address by the present correspondent, the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, a member of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, spoke on the subject of the Christian message as contrasted with the "other gospel" proclaimed by Modernism. Mr. Coray then bade farewell, in his own name and in the name of Mrs. Coray (who, with him, is deeply beloved by the congregation). The newspapers, he said, had told of certain notables who would be on that ship, the "Empress of Japan," on October 20th. But three young people would also be on it, he said—alluding to his wife

and himself and **R. Heber McIlwaine**, who is going under the Independent Board as a missionary to Japan. These young people would not be widely known, but there would be some who would follow them in their prayers. Indeed, he said, there would be really more than three in that company. "There will be four of us," he said, as nearly as your correspondent can remember the substance of his words, "there will be four of us, because we know that Christ will not forget His promise to be with His disciples."

The final address was delivered by the **Rev. Carl McIntire**, pastor of the Collingswood Presbyterian Church in the Presbytery of West Jersey. It was a stirring address indeed. He told of the way in which in January, 1933, he had listened to the arguments against the present policy of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. He told of his repeated efforts to obtain an answer to those arguments from the secretaries of the Board; he told of the eagerness with which he had awaited some adequate public response of the Board to the specific charges that had been publicly made against it. He told of the failure of all such efforts and of the fruitlessness of all such waiting. Then he told of the present situation in the Church and of the fire that is within the souls of those who would preach the gospel without compromise. It is a momentous situation, he said; there is stirring among us the hope that a true revival may come out of it. Pray God that that revival may truly come!

What is the true meaning of this West Pittston meeting; what is the true meaning of the even larger gathering at Orange, which is no doubt being reported elsewhere in this number of **CHRISTIANITY TODAY** and about which I could say as much as I have said regarding the West Pittston meeting; what is the meaning of the event which is the occasion for these meetings? The answer is very simple. The meaning of all this is that "the Word of God is not bound."

It might have seemed as though that Word were indeed bound; it might have seemed as though it were bound by the deadly shackles of compromise with another gospel which is no gospel at all. It might have seemed as though, at least in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the unfaithfulness of the Board of Foreign Missions and the deadly coldness and ruthlessness of the entire ecclesiastical machine had tied the gospel down in unbreakable fetters. There might have seemed to be no escape from this deadly bondage. But out of the midst of it prayers went up to Almighty God, and God has given the answer.

He has given the answer in the departure of these three modest young people as true missionaries of the Cross. They are loyal in every fibre of their being to the Constitu-

tion of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the two of them who are ministers are loyal in every fibre of their being to every part of their ordination pledge. Particularly are they loyal to that part of the pledge—neglected by so many ministers today—in which they promised "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church, *whatever persecution or opposition*" might arise unto them on that account. They are not only loyal, but they have shown by their actions that they are loyal. They have shown that they are loyal by their willingness to submit to the lawlessness now so rampant in the Church. They

have made Christ their Captain, as the Constitution of our Church and the Word of God bid them do; they have gone forth to preach the gospel without any compromise with the unbelief of the world.

As they go, the prayers of God's people go with them. May God soon send that blessed day when—all preliminaries over, all vexatious delays behind their backs,—they shall have the unspeakable privilege of making Christ known to those who have never heard His name, and when they shall have the joy of seeing the glory of salvation appearing in the faces of those who but for their going would have remained forever in the darkness of sin!

Independent Board Meets First Missionaries Sail

THE Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions met on October 16th at the Drake Hotel, Philadelphia. It announced the re-election to the Board of all those in the outgoing class of 1934. They are: the **Rev. Roy Talmadge Brumbaugh, D.D.**, Tacoma, Washington; the **Rev. Carl McIntire**, Collingswood, N. J.; **Mr. Willis R. Roberts**, Norristown, Pa.; **Mr. Peter Stam, Jr.**, Wheaton, Ill.; and **Miss Marguerite Montgomery**, Rochester, N. Y. Other announcements concerning elections to the Board and other acts of the Board will probably be made in the future.

The Board announced the appointment of the **Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine**, of Pittsburgh, formerly assistant in the First Church there, as a missionary.

First Missionaries Sail; Farewells Given

On October 20th, the **Rev. and Mrs. Henry W. Coray** and **Mr. McIlwaine** sailed for the Orient on board the *Empress of Japan* from Vancouver. Ultimate destinations: **Mr. and Mrs. Coray**, China; **Mr. McIlwaine**, Japan. Their arrival at their respective destinations was being looked forward to with anticipation by many missionaries. A welcome on their fields was assured for all. Those opposing the Independent Board, however, had taken steps to dampen the welcome if possible.

Mr. and Mrs. Coray had participated in farewell meetings which have been described elsewhere. **Mr. McIlwaine**, who is much beloved in the First Church of Pittsburgh, was given a farewell there.

Farewell for Mr. McIlwaine

About a thousand members of the First Church of Pittsburgh, Pa., were present at the mid-week prayer meeting on October 10th as a farewell service for the **Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine**.

The **Rev. Clarence E. Macartney, D.D., LL.D.**, presided at the meeting, and bore testimony to **Mr. McIlwaine's** exceptional abilities and beautiful Christian character. The size and enthusiasm of the meeting testified to the congregation's cordial cooperation and assurance of their interest and prayers in his behalf.

Prayer was offered by **Rev. W. A. Jones, D.D.**, Associate Pastor, and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh.

Dr. W. B. McIlwaine delivered the charge to his son, expressing the confidence that he would be true to the faith without compromise with the modernistic tendencies now prevalent and disturbing the progress of the gospel in foreign missions. He warned his son against the dangers that lurk in "conference" and "cooperation" with those who themselves are not believers in the gospel. Eye witnesses describe it as a historic and soul-lifting occasion.

A large number of the young people accompanied **Mr. McIlwaine** to the railway station the following evening where he was joined by **Mr. and Mrs. Coray**. All three were given a great and moving farewell.

The *First Church Life*, organ of the congregation, in its October, 1934, number contains a full page photograph of **Mr. McIlwaine**, and also the following paragraph by **Dr. Macartney**:

"We are all sorry to part with **Mr. McIlwaine**. He came to us two years ago, and during that period has endeared himself to our people, and has left behind him the imprint of a beautiful Christian character. Born in Japan, where his father served for almost half a century, and where his brother is now a missionary, **Mr. McIlwaine** goes back to Japan as a missionary under the new Independent Board. He expects to sail October 20th, on the steamship *Empress of Japan*. We shall follow him with our prayers, and shall hope to hear from him from time to time."