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## A MAN FOR THE HOUR

**A** LITTLE over two years ago the long conflict between Modernism and the Christian religion in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. entered in to its final phase. Christian people were asked to support the Modernist propaganda of the Board of Foreign Missions. When they refused to do so, and when they in support of their refusal appealed to the Bible and to the constitution of the church, they were placed under the ban; and the doors of the ministry were closed to others who, like them, would not promise to put the word of man above the Word of God.

In this conflict, who would be raised up as a spokesman and defender of the gospel cause? Who would stand in hostile General Assemblies and say a good word for Christian liberty and for the lordship of Jesus Christ? Who would plead before biased judicial commissions in order that the record, at least, might show,

to all fair enough to examine it, the ruthlessness of the ecclesiastical machine in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the justice of the unpopular cause?

The answer to these questions could not very well be given in the editorial pages of this paper hitherto, since the modesty of the Editor prevented it; but no such inhibition rests upon us now, and so we can say very plainly that in our judgment the man whom God raised up to be pre-eminently the spokesman of the evangelical cause in the councils and courts of the church was the Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths, D.D., who has up to the last issue been the Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN.

In 1934 it was he who stood on the floor of the General Assembly and opposed the indifferentist plan of union with the United Presbyterian Church and who also pled with the Assembly not to

dethrone Jesus Christ by adopting the "Mandate" requiring an implicit obedience to human councils. At

## AN ANNOUNCEMENT

With the present issue "The Presbyterian Guardian" appears under the editorship of J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D., and Ned B. Stonehouse, Th.D., with Mr. Thomas R. Birch as Managing Editor.

This paper was begun in October, 1935, as the organ of the Presbyterian Constitutional Covenant Union, which had been organized to bring about a reform of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. or, failing that, to continue the true spiritual succession of that church in a body distinct from the existing organization. Employment of an editor at full salary would not have been financially possible; but the paper was exceedingly fortunate in securing, at the start, the services of the Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths, D.D., who was also General Secretary of the Covenant Union.

On June 11, 1936, the Covenant Union was dissolved and The Presbyterian Church of America was constituted. Just before the dissolution of the Covenant Union, the assets, liabilities and good will of "The Presbyterian Guardian" were transferred to The Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Company, which is now publishing the paper.

Since our financial resources do not warrant the employment of an editor at full-time salary, we are obliged, to our great regret, to release Dr. Griffiths from his engagement with us, though we rejoice greatly in the assurance of his continued counsel and assistance.

We are happy to announce that the editorship will be undertaken by the Rev. Professor Ned B. Stonehouse, Th.D., of the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Dr. Stonehouse is assuming full editorial supervision of the paper, except that the editorial pages, for the present, will be in charge of the senior editor, Dr. Machen. Mr. Birch, Managing Editor, will be in charge of the business affairs of the office and will continue to render important service in the matter of the make-up of the paper.

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first the Assembly was inclined to ridicule him, as it would have been inclined to ridicule any defender of the gospel cause. But that ridicule was gradually silenced. Dr. Griffiths *compelled* the Assembly to listen to him—by the admirable courtesy and dignity that characterized all his utterances, by his evident knowledge of Presbyterian law and of the issues that were under discussion, and by the profound earnestness of his pleading. When, just before adjournment, he mounted the platform to speak against the outrage of an amendment, by the majority, of the minority's protest, one could have heard a pin drop in that large assemblage. Seldom has so unpopular a cause had so effective and so eloquent a spokesman.

Equally noteworthy were Dr. Griffiths' services in the judicial and administrative causes before the courts of the church. In his knowledge of ecclesiastical law and ecclesiastical procedure he always surpassed not only all of the advocates on the other side but also all of the members of the court. I think that fact was usually quite clear to the judges themselves. It was at any rate abundantly clear to all impartial observers. He was always courteous, no matter what the provocation might be; and at the same time he was unswerving in his devotion to the great principles involved. At times, whenever the occasion warranted it, he rose to heights of true eloquence in his pleading for Christian liberty and the authority of God's Word.

Let it never be said that such contending was all in vain. True, the courts were biassed. That was abundantly clear at the start. But the effect of Dr. Griffiths' pleading was not lost upon that "impartial public" which the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. rightly declares it to be one of the ends of church discipline to impress. It is true that the effort was sometimes made to close the doors upon things that might well have shunned the light of day, as was done, for example, in the travesty on a trial in the Hollond Memorial Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia; but such efforts were not always successful and the righteousness of the unpopular cause became rather widely known.

What is far more important, however, even than the effect of Dr. Griffiths' pleading upon the public or upon Christian people is the fact that it was the discharge of a solemn duty in the presence of almighty God. We have taken the serious step of becoming separate from a church organization to which we formerly belonged. What makes our conscience clear in taking that step is that we did not take it without hav-

ing exhausted all other possibilities. We did not sever our connection with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. until we had pled with that church not to require of us things that no Christian man can do.

In addition to this unique service in the courts of the Church Dr. Griffiths' services as an editor—first as Managing Editor of *Christianity Today* (before the change in the policy of that paper) and then as Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN—have been of the greatest possible importance. If just one example may be taken among many, we may point to the truly brilliant accounts which he has given of events at recent meetings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Those accounts, together with all of his other services as an editor and with his pen, have had a major part in dispelling the Stygian darkness in which ecclesiastical affairs in recent years have often been enveloped and in informing Christian people of what has really been going on.

In connection with the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, his wide knowledge of legal and ecclesiastical matters stood us in good stead. I think no one who was present is likely to forget the impressiveness of the moment when he declared The Presbyterian Church of America to be duly constituted; and the dignity which he there displayed was no mere matter of the superficialities of voice and personal presence but was based upon a true knowledge of our Presbyterian heritage and of the great principles involved.

Today we are calling on him for another piece of emergency service. In view of the present attack upon us in the civil courts, the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Presbyterian Church of America has appointed him as "ecclesiastical counsel." Such appointment seemed to everyone to be quite obviously in place. His broad knowledge of the history of the Presbyterian churches in this country and other countries and his clear understanding of the great principles that are involved make him to be again truly a man for the hour. One of the evidences of the blessing of God upon the whole movement represented by The Presbyterian Church of America has been the fact that despite the manifest human weakness of the movement in the presence of a hostile world God does seem to have raised up the necessary human instruments just when they were most needed. So we have been profoundly thankful all through the various phases of this movement that He has raised up the Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths, D.D., for a time like this.