

## Dr. Machen Replies

**I**N THE foregoing communication Dr. Ward is very largely turning aside from the specific point at issue. In my article in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN I did not say that he is not a Christian. I did not presume to say anything about his saving relation to God. God alone can say about that. God alone can say whether Dr. Ward or you or I or any man is or is not united to Christ in truly saving faith and saved by Christ's precious blood.

What I did say is that in the present conflict in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Dr. Ward, after being a member of the evangelical party in the presbytery in more prosperous times, is now fighting against the evangelical party and is making common cause with the opponents of the gospel of Christ.

I said that, and I proved it, and Dr. Ward has not really advanced any refutation of my proof.

The plain fact is that there are ten signers of the heretical Auburn Affirmation in the Presbytery of Philadelphia. The General Assembly's Commission, by the plainest possible implication, gave them a clear bill of health. It failed to find the slightest doctrinal unsoundness in the presbytery. Dr. Ward, instead of speaking out against so outrageous an ignoring of the great issue between Christianity and Modernism, stood for approval of the report, and accentuated his approval by actually appointing a signer of the Auburn Affirmation as a member of the all-important committee which is to reorganize the presbytery in the sense of the Commission's Report.

Those are facts. They are unpleasant facts, no doubt, but still facts. Dr. Ward does not put them out of the way and cannot put them out of the way. They show very plainly that Dr. Ward is now standing on the side opposed to the gospel in the present crisis in the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

How can that be so? How can it be that a Christian man can fight on the anti-evangelical side in a great conflict?

Well, no matter how it can be so, it plainly often is so, in the history of the Christian Church.

Christian men, alas, are not always consistent, and in their inconsistency

they are often perfectly sincere. Persecutors of all ages have been perfectly sincere. In their persecuting activity they have thought they were doing God service. They have acted quite in accordance with their conscience. Yet their persecuting activities have been sin.

So Dr. Ward in siding now with the opponents of the gospel of Christ in the Presbytery of Philadelphia is no doubt quite sincere. He no doubt thinks he is doing God service. He is no doubt acting perfectly in accordance with his conscience. But all the same the thing that he is doing is sin.

Why do I say that? Do I say it because it is my business to judge other men? Not at all. To judge men is something for God alone to do. But, you see, people have to choose now between the course of action which Dr. Ward is choosing and the one that is chosen by the evangelical group in the Presbytery of Philadelphia. If I commend one, I must inevitably condemn the other. That is the reason why I am compelled to speak out against Dr. Ward's present course of action.

Why does the evangelical group in the presbytery not follow Dr. Ward in his present course of action? There are many considerations which might lead it to do so. If it did so, it would enjoy the favor of the ecclesiastical machine as Dr. Ward now presumably enjoys it. Why then does it not go with him?

Is it because it differs from him on some little matter of policy? Is it because it is possessed by a schismatic spirit and magnifies trifles as though they were issues of principle?

No, indeed. I will tell you why that group of evangelical men cannot go with Dr. Ward. The reason is that the course of action into which Dr. Ward has entered is sin.

I think the time has come when that has to be said very plainly. To make common cause with the misrepresentation, unbelief, secrecy, tyranny, and lawlessness of that Commission's Report and of the ensuing action of presbytery, as Dr. Ward has made common cause with these things, is sin. There are men in the presbytery who because they fear God cannot enter upon such a sinful course. I cannot say a word of Christian sympathy for them unless I point out the sinfulness of the course of action which, at such sacrifices to

themselves, they are eschewing. I am sorry if I have had to wound Dr. Ward's feelings in doing so. I certainly do not want to wound his feelings. I am bound to him, as he himself points out, by ties of old friendship, and I have admired him very greatly. I have admired his preaching and listened to it with great profit. I have admired his services as a pastor of a flock. But I cannot allow my admiration of him or of any man to interfere with simple loyalty to Jesus Christ.

At bottom it is Jesus Christ and not any mere man who is being dishonored by that Commission of the General Assembly and by the action of the subservient Presbytery of Philadelphia and by the action of Dr. Ward in appointing a signer of the Auburn Affirmation to that all-important reorganization committee. The question in these days is just the question whether Jesus Christ is or is not our King.

Dr. Ward says that in my article in the January, 1935, number of *The Independent Board Bulletin* I branded him and men like him, and his church, and the beloved missionaries whom his church supports, as "unsound."

What is the fact? The fact is that in that article I did not mention Dr. Ward or his church or the missionaries supported by his church. If he takes what I said as applying to the missionaries supported by his church it must be because he thinks what I said about the missionaries whom I did designate as unsound applies to his church's missionaries.

Well, what missionaries did I designate as unsound? The only missionaries whom I designated as unsound are missionaries *who know that the board under which they are serving is making common cause with Modernist organizations and Modernist propaganda and who keep quiet about the matter.*

Dr. Ward takes that as an attack upon the missionaries supported by his church. Well, then, I should now like to ask him two questions:

1. *Is any one of the missionaries supported by Dr. Ward's church a "missionary who knows that his board is making common cause with Modernist organizations and Modernist propaganda and who keeps quiet about the matter"?*

2. Does Dr. Ward think that a missionary who "knows that his board is making common cause with Modernist organizations and Modernist propaganda and who keeps quiet about the matter" is a sound missionary?

If Dr. Ward would answer these questions, I think that light might be shed upon his view of what a sound missionary is.

As for my assertion in that same article in *The Independent Board Bulletin* that a missionary who engages in the above-mentioned policy of concealment of the Modernism of his board is "no more sound than is a minister here at home sound if he preaches orthodox doctrine on Sundays and then votes with the Auburn Affirmationists when the presbytery meets the next day," this reference to a minister here at home certainly could not have been aimed at Dr. Ward, since at the time when that article was written Dr. Ward had

not yet begun to vote with the Auburn Affirmationists. If Dr. Ward by his subsequent actions has made those words of mine apply to himself, I certainly did not foresee that lamentable fact when I wrote the article.

Finally, I just want to say that although Dr. Ward and I are certainly now fighting on opposite sides in one of the greatest issues that could possibly be imagined, I am not without hopes that that may not always be the case. I do believe—though that was not the question at issue in my last article—that Dr. Ward is a truly Christian man. I do hope, therefore, that he may be led some day—by some persuasions far better than the poor attempts of the present writer—to make a clean break with the ecclesiastical machine dominated by the point of view of the Auburn Affirmationists and may seek true Christian fellowship and unfettered Christian testimony in some true Church of Jesus Christ.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

## The Rev. Harold S. Laird "Guilty," Ordered Rebuked by Commission

CARICATURE testimony taken at the trial, the Special Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of New Castle, as expected, brought in a verdict of "guilty" against the Rev.



Mr. Laird

Harold S. Laird on March 25th. The Commission in its judgment attempted to put Mr. Laird in the position of not being an "extreme" member of the Independent Board.

It also twisted evidence concerning designated gifts to the Boards of the church in such manner as to make it appear in the judgment that his Church had increased its gifts to the official Board of Foreign Missions.

### Penalty and Dissent

Penalty assessed was rebuke—supposed to be a little stronger than admonition. One member, the Rev. Harley B. Kline, dissented from the finding. The rest concurred. The verdict came a week after the Defense, in the face of ridicule from the bench itself, interrupted its case and refused

to offer further evidence. Counsel for Mr. Laird were James E. Bennet, Esq., of New York, and J. L. Rankin, Esq., of Chester, Pa.

Excerpts from the decision follow: "After careful consideration of all the evidence and arguments, the Special Commission of the New Castle Presbytery elected to decide the matter, finds the defendant guilty.

"The 1934 General Assembly issued the following directions. . . .

"On the witness stand the defendant, Harold S. Laird, stated that he is a member of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, that he received notice of the action of the General Assembly, and that he is still a member of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

"The direct disobedience to this order of the General Assembly is the more offensive because the defendant continues to be a member of an organization which attempts to disturb the peace of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and to promote schism within that body.

"The Special Judicial Commission of the New Castle Presbytery hereby rebukes the defendant for his disobedience and for his action in continuing at present to associate himself with a group which by insidious propaganda strives to injure the good name of regular and faithful agencies of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

"While the offense is grave, the Commission chooses this mild form of censure in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VI, Section 6, of the Book of Discipline. . . .

"On the witness stand the Rev. Harold S. Laird stated that while he is a member of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, he is by no means in sympathy with the extreme views expressed in official publications of that group. Testimony was presented by the defense to show that, while the defendant holds membership in the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, he does not solicit funds for the work of that group, and that he still encourages members of his congregation to contribute to the work being carried out by the official Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and that such contributions are increasing at present.

"We therefore feel that, while the defendant is guilty of grave offense in associating himself with men engaged in such un-Presbyterian and un-Christian action, and in allowing his name to appear on its official publications—an offense for which he is hereby rebuked—he is guilty of an offense of the head and not of the heart.

"Since his offense does not strike at the vitals of our faith, since his views are not industriously spread, and since his error is an error of the human understanding and not likely to do much injury to our great Church, we feel that he may still labor with us in our work for Christ in the bounds of the New Castle Presbytery and in the work that our representatives are doing throughout the world.

"It is our earnest hope that the Rev. Harold S. Laird, our brother in Christ, may in time see the error of his position and have his name removed from the roll of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and continue wholeheartedly with us in the work our great Church is doing for Christ, whom we love and serve.

"Signed:

REV. JOHN D. BLAKE, *Moderator*,  
REV. JOHN JACKSON BROWN, JR.,  
Elder GEORGE P. TUNNEL,  
Elder HOWARD S. CLARK,  
Elder HORACE DAVIS."

### Errata

IN THE issue of February 17, page 162, the Professor of the History of Christianity at Dubuque University was mentioned as a signer of the Auburn Affirmation. Dubuque's Daniel Grieder, D.D., is no Affirmationist; Auburn Affirmationist Daniel E. Grieder, of Terrell, Texas, is no Dubuque professor.

In the issue of March 2, page 176, it was erroneously stated that the Rev. T. Guthrie Speers, D.D., is a member of the National Committee of the Modern Missions Movement. Dr. Speers is not a member of that committee.