

The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

Published Quarterly by the Trustees of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church.

*Entered as second class matter, May 1, 1907, at the post office at Princeton, N.J.,
under the Act of Congress of July 16, 1894.*

VOL. XXXIII

PRINCETON, N.J., JANUARY, 1940

No. 4

IN MEMORIAM

SINCE the July number of the BULLETIN was issued, there has passed away from us the one who for twenty-two years administered the affairs of Princeton Seminary, and whose pen, during those years, supplied much of the material for this Seminary publication. We regret to have to announce in this formal and official way the death of Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, President Emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary. Most of our readers will already have heard from other sources of his lamented death; some in remote corners of the world will perchance learn it from these pages for the first time.

In the spring of the present year Dr. Stevenson was suddenly taken ill and underwent a serious operation. He did not recover strength as he should normally have done, and it became evident that still another operation was necessary. The patient was accordingly removed from the Princeton Hospital to the Harkness Pavilion of the Presbyterian Hospital, New York, where he was operated upon again. All appeared to be going well, when suddenly one Sabbath morning, August 13, and totally unexpected by the hospital staff, our former leader passed away. The funeral service was held in Miller Chapel the following Wednesday, in the presence of a large company of relatives and friends, after which the remains of Dr. Stevenson were laid to rest among Princeton's great in the local cemetery.

I first met Dr. Stevenson in 1914 when a student in my Senior year in the Seminary. That year he came to Princeton as our new President. He taught our class a course on missions, using as his text-book one of the volumes of the Report of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. He had himself been a leading member of that famous gathering which inaugurated the modern ecumenical movement. We saw him, therefore, on the first hour he met us as a class in the framework of his two master passions—foreign missions and the unity of the Church of Christ. These were the two foci in which moved the life and thought of the new President of Princeton Seminary. Fourteen years passed ere I saw him again. The gracious hospitality with which I was received at Springdale by Dr. and Mrs. Stevenson when I gave the Students' Lectures on Missions made a lasting impression upon me. In the quality of that welcome I was being introduced to a vital part of the Princeton tradition.



HAROLD MCAFEE ROBINSON, D.D.
1881-1939

HAROLD McAFEE ROBINSON

THE Board of Trustees of Princeton Theological Seminary is deeply bereaved by the departure from this life of the Rev. Harold McAfee Robinson. Dr. Robinson's long and intimate relation to the Seminary, as student, fellow, secretary of the Centennial Celebration Committee, and later as a member of the Board, sometime Chairman of the Curriculum Committee of the Board and at the time of his death its Vice-President, had greatly commended him to us all.

Dr. Robinson's gracious personality, his incisive mind, his administrative gifts, and his irenic methods of thought and service endeared him to the student body, the Faculty and this governing Board. Dr. Robinson's services to the Seminary were great. As a student he represented the best in undergraduate life and thus lifted the daily converse of his fellow students to a higher level. In his associations with the Faculty he was always a source of enlightenment and helpful guidance. As a member of this Board no one was more highly respected than he, and his opinions and leadership were of greatest value. That Dr. Robinson was able to make so generous a contribution over so many years to the life and work of this institution is not surprising when we spread before us the record of his life.

Born in Shelbyville, Missouri, March 1, 1881, the son of Rev. Joseph C. Robinson and Hannah Catherine McAfee Robinson, he spent most of his boyhood days in Minnesota, where his father was for thirty-three years pastor of a home-mission church. That boyhood was a rugged combination of plain living, high thinking, and wholesome fun amid the

joys of his home and the opportunities for outdoor sport in the nearby lake and woods. He entered Park College, at Parkville, Missouri, when only sixteen years of age, graduating in June, 1901, and entering Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1904 with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. His brilliant record as a student in college and seminary was followed by a year of residence at the University of Leipzig, Germany, upon a Fellowship from Princeton Seminary.

Upon his return to America, he accepted a call to become pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Milroy, Pennsylvania, where he was idolized "pastor-at-large" of the entire community. Preaching in rural school-houses, in isolated mountain homes, in hunters' camps throughout that mountain country, he through his friendship drew many into Christian fellowship for the first time. He established his deep concern for the common man in those early days, becoming a leader in Huntingdon Presbytery—attending his first General Assembly as a commissioner in 1908.

In 1913 he became pastor of the Market Square Presbyterian Church in Germantown, Philadelphia, being called from that church to become college pastor and Professor of Bible at Lafayette College in 1915.

In his work among the students of that historic institution, he developed a new interest in the claims of Christianity for its proper place in the life of the campus. After America entered the great war, Dr. Robinson assumed the duties of a Y.M.C.A. Secretary, in addition to his regular duties, and his leadership during

those difficult hours gave promise of his future greatness.

In 1919 he was elected secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work—in 1923 became secretary of the Department of Home, Church and Community of the Board of Christian Education. From 1927 to 1934 he was administrative secretary of the Board, being elected general secretary upon the retirement of his friend and collaborer, Rev. William C. Covert in 1934. From that date until his death he was the responsible leader of the educational policy and program of our Church.

Through the long years of his relationship with the Board of Christian Education, he exerted a tremendous influence not only on the educational program of the local church, but in Presbyterian institutions of higher learning as well. He was recognized as a scholar and educator of outstanding ability but continually he rose above administrative detail and the complexities of his high office to write and speak in terms of prophecy concerning our suffering world—and to champion Christian life and thought against the encroachments of secularism.

In his mind—incessantly occupied with the deepest spiritual needs of the church, community, and home, there grew up an

awareness of the crying needs of our day, which culminated in the great plan for the Sesquicentennial Campaign for Christian Education.

Honors, which he received with that extreme modesty that was so characteristic of him, came rapidly, for Dr. Robinson's rich service to the Church was recognized by American Protestantism with as sincere appreciation as was expressed by the heart of our own Church.

For one year he served as acting general secretary of the International Council of Religious Education, while continuing his full service as general secretary of the Board of Christian Education. He was on the North American Administrative Committee of the World's Sunday School Association, the National Student Committee of the Y.M.C.A., the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian College of Christian Education in Chicago, and the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

We mourn one who walked among us as an example of unselfishness and unshakable Christian faith, and in deep sympathy toward those dear ones upon whom he poured the wealth of his heart's affection, we bear this testimony of our debt to his life among us. May our heavenly Father give us grace to follow in his steps.