

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

*A Presbyterian weekly magazine devoted to the
statement, defense and propagation of the
Gospel, the faith which was once for
all delivered unto the saints*

JULY 22, 1953

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L. U. N. C.
Carolina Room

STRONG PREACHERS

"STRONG PREACHERS HAVE EVER BEEN BIBLE PREACHERS. THE OLD REFORMERS DREW THEIR WEAPONS FROM THE HEAVENLY ARMORY. THE SERMONS OF BUNYAN, AND BAXTER, AND FLAVEL, AND MEN OF THEIR STAMP, WERE FULL OF GOD—INSTINCT WITH LIVING DOCTRINES. THEIR VERY GARB WAS AFTER THE SCRIPTURE PATTERN. WHITEFIELD, AS A CUSTOM, READ THE BIBLE WITH HENRY'S COMMENTARY, DAY BY DAY, ON HIS KNEES, PRAYING OVER EVERY SENTENCE, LINE AND WORD. EDWARD AND DAVIES WERE MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES. OF CHALMERS, IT HAS BEEN SAID, THAT HIS SERMONS 'HELD THE BIBLE IN SOLUTION.' PREACHERS WHO SATURATE THEIR SERMONS WITH THE WORD OF GOD NEVER WEAR OUT. THE MANNA WHICH THEY BRING IS PURE, AND SWEET, AND FRESHLY GATHERED. IT NEVER CLOY. GOD'S WORD IS DEEP, AND HE WHO STUDIES IT WILL EVER HAVE SOMETHING NEW. HE WILL NEVER BE DULL. FOR THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE ARE STRONG, LIVING WORDS, AND ITS IMAGES AND DESCRIPTIONS ARE VERY FLOWERS OF ELEGANCE. APT CITATIONS CLINCH THE PASSAGES OF THE PREACHER'S DISCOURSE, AND GIVE SANCTION, DIGNITY, POSITIVENESS, AUTHORITY TO IT. AND THEY SHED LIGHT ON HIS SUBJECT, LIKE WINDOWS IN HOUSES."

—Fish.

volves danger, hardship, and few rewards by worldly standards. But, if it is the place of God's choosing then it is the place of certain blessing and usefulness.

Not only do young Christians need to offer their lives in service, according to God's will and plan for them, but all of us need to offer our *daily* lives to be lived according to His all-wise design.

The gateway to service is to be found in the attitude of Samuel of old: "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

It is not as easy as one might think. Try it!
—L.N.B.

AN OPEN LETTER

Decatur, Ga., July 6, 1953.

Dr. H. Ray Anderson,
Fourth Presbyterian Church,
Chicago, Illinois.

Dear Doctor:

Thank you very much for your gracious courtesy in sending me a copy of Dr. Kelso's Sermon on the significant theme, "Kingship Of Jesus Christ," as given in The United Presbyterian.

In addition to this treatment of the Kingship or Lordship of Christ over every individual believer, there is a great Presbyterian tradition which recognizes His Kingship over His body, the Church. Indeed, the distinct existence of the United Presbyterian Church springs from the fact that this sole Kingship of Christ over His Church was not always or sufficiently recognized in the Kirk of Scotland. In my opinion, several of the separations that have marked the Presbyterian line in America come from the same lack of full and continuous recognition that He is the only King and the sole Lawgiver in Zion. If we are to have a union of Presbyterian bodies that does not invite other schisms, then our history calls on us to give full recognition to this sole Kingship of Christ not only over the individual but also over the corporate existence of our Presbyterian Church.

For example, in 1637 the worshippers in St. Giles objected to a high ritual that seemed to them the mass, because it was put in by King Charles I rather than provided by King Jesus in His Word. In 1638, they deposed "the pretended bishops and archbishops" because that was a set of officers provided by the earthly Crown in violation of the exclusive Crown Rights of Jesus Christ over His Church. Following this there was the Westminster Assembly called to reform the Church of Great Britain that it might conform to Holy Scripture, the Word of the King, in doctrine, worship, government and discipline. If you will turn to our Book of Church Order, Par. 10, you will find that this paragraph follows the purpose for which the Westminster Assembly was called.

The Preface of **The Form of Presbyterian Church Government** adopted by the Westminster Assembly of Divines is a magnificent statement of Christ's Kingship over His body, the Church. This is reproduced as Paragraph 8 of our Book of Church Order.

The substance of our Paragraph 9, B.C.O., goes back to the Second "Buik" of Discipline adopted

by the Kirk of Scotland about 1580, Paragraphs 10-11-12-13, which speak of Christ as "the only spiritual King and Governor of His Kirk," "hearing the voice of Christ the only spiritual King and being ruled by His laws," "the only Head and Monarch of the Kirk." "For it is Christ's proper office to command and rule His Kirk universal, and every particular Kirk, through His Spirit and word, by the ministry of men." There is an echo of this in the 1952 Plan of Union, Page 112. But the meaning of the sentence is radically changed by the insertion of the word **and** before the reference to the ministry of men. The sense of the Second Buik and of our B.C.O. is that Christ rules by His Spirit and Word as men preach that Word and govern according to it. In the 1952 Plan the ministry of men becomes co-ordinate with the Word and Spirit so that the Plan alleges, in effect, that Christ is governing by the ministry of men even when these men do not limit their words and acts to the Word, the instrument the Spirit has formed for His own use.

Closely connected therewith in our thought is the fact that the 1943 Plan of Union, Page 84, Paragraph numbered 9, reproduced Paragraph 19 of our Book of Church Order and declared that the exercise of ecclesiastical power has the divine sanction **when in conformity with the statutes enacted by Christ the Lawgiver**, and when put forth by judicatories or by officers appointed thereunto in His Word (emphasis supplied). The omission of this paragraph from the subsequent Plan of Union looks to us like a further retreat from the recognition of the full and unique Kingship of Christ over His Church. If that is not the significance of this withdrawal, why may not this paragraph be restored? A restoration of it would be more convincing than any reasons offered for its deletion.

There was no objection to the acceptance of the Westminster Standards for fear that it would mean the arbitrary rule of men. The Westminster Divines, however, petitioned Parliament for their adoption averring that they were setting up, not the rule of men, but of God Whose rule in Christ is gracious, not arbitrary. The sheets you enclosed from The United Presbyterian record their first American Communion Service 200 years ago. At about that same time in Scotland the Kirk of Scotland was deposing Thomas Gillespie because he would not obey the rule of the majority which commanded him to help install Andrew Richardson the nominee of the lay patron against the will of the congregation. He said for him to do that would be to sin. They said do it anyway. At that time, about 1750, the leader of the Evangelicals in the Kirk was John Witherspoon. In order to prevent a repetition of the Gillespie story, Witherspoon wrote into your Preliminary Principles, Paragraph 7 (1953 Plan of Union, Page 111), thus: "That the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority . . . there is much greater danger (of error) from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made and common to all who profess the Gospel." We respectfully call you and the Committee framing the Plan of Union, to consider Paragraph 58 of our B.C.O., as an effort to carry into Church Government the implications of Witherspoon's Preliminary Principles, and urge its inclusion in the Plan.

Shortly before the Old School Presbyterian Church separated there was a Committee on Revising the Form of Government, on which were the distinguished "Northern" leader, Dr. Charles C. Hodge, and the distinguished "Southern" leader, Dr. James H. Thornwell. This Committee made one

report to the undivided assembly and was continued. Then the separation came in 1861. Our Church has, in general, taken over in our Book of Church Order the work of that Committee. In particular we have availed ourselves of their work in our definition of an ecclesiastical offense, as given in Paragraph 179 in our Book of Church Order. This definition may be described as a further application of the Confession of Faith, I.6; XX.2; XXXI.3 cf with I.X of the Petition of the Westminster Divines to Parliament, of the Preliminary Principles, Paragraph 7. That such a careful delimitation of an ecclesiastical offense to that which is contrary to the Word of God is needed may easily be shown from the history of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and in America. Any decree deposing, suspending or excommunicating a minister or a member which is not based on Scripture is ruled out by this definition. It may be that in particular cases, familiar to us both, the decree could have been based on Scripture. This will require that, in the future, every case be expressly so based.

It is my earnest conviction that the acceptance of the sole Kingship of Christ over His body, the Church, in the sense that only His laws are to be enforced therein, will honor Him Whom alone God has placed at His own right hand to administer the counsels of redemption and govern His Church, and will protect, direct and comfort His people. May God lead you and the Committee to consider further these matters as requested by the 1953 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Cordially and fraternally,

Wm. C. Robinson.

(Copies to The United Presbyterian and The Southern Presbyterian Journal).

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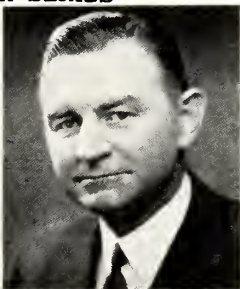
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ANGLERS

Lesson Number 17

Very Young People Can Fish

Last week this column presented an "experience" sent in by a young fellow who had just finished prep school. This week we have one from a girl, recently finished high school, now in college. It is gratifying to see our young people starting out early to become "fishers of men." And it is surprising how the Holy Spirit uses very little folks in winning souls—even adult souls. "... and a little child shall lead them," says Isaiah (11:6). "A little maid" was used of God to bring the great general of a heathen army to his knees, saying: "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel." (2.K.5:15). A little lad, with five barley cakes and two dried lake fish, was used by the miracle working power of Jesus to feed five thousand men, with twelve baskets full left over.

I took a six-year-old boy down to the pond to fish. It was early spring and the bass were beginning to break around the lily pads. It was a long cast out there, but the breeze favored and my minnow made a perfect drop right into the appointed spot. The cork bobbed in and out along the edges. I held my breath, for I was sure the bait was irresistible. After waiting a little I heard a whimper, and looking around, saw the boy standing disconsolately; he hadn't even unwrapped his line. He said: "I want a long line and reel like yours, so I can fish out there, too." "No, son," I said, "you could never do it. Now just unwind your line, put a worm on the hook and with your little pole drop the bait right down there close by that stump and you will catch a perch." Reluctantly he obeyed. Meantime my cork continued to bob merrily on the edge of the lily pads. Directly I heard a terrific splash, and looking round saw that boy straining every muscle to land his catch. It took him quite a time (I let him handle it alone) but finally there was a two-pound bass flapping on the grass while an ecstatic little fisherman threaded the fish string through its gills. It was the only fish caught that day, and at supper the family sat around the table feasting on a delicious bass—*caught on the little hook.*

One of the Sunday School teachers, who taught a class of juniors, came to me to say that Arthur was ready to join the church. I talked to Arthur and found the boy had a very clear understanding that he was a sinner and needed a Saviour. He was quite sincere in his desire to be baptized and admitted to membership in the church. His teacher had done good work. His father and mother were not Christians. I said: "Arthur, wouldn't you like to see your father become a Christian, too?" "Yes," he answered, "I certainly would." "Well, suppose you tell your Dad that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and that you want him to

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