

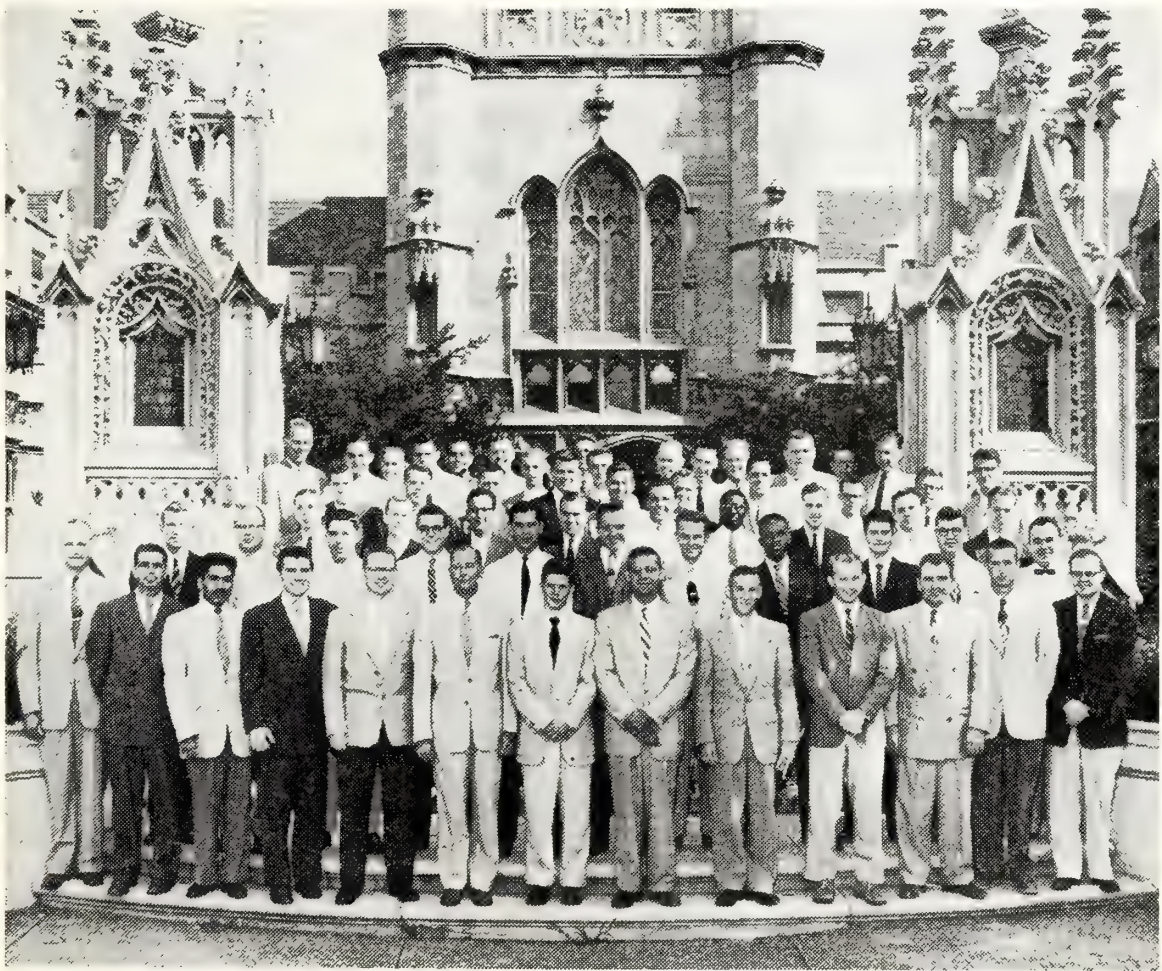
THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

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. 19 1956

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Dr. A. B. Rhodes (left front) and the Entering Class at Louisville Seminary
School Year 1956-57.

(See page 21 for news item)

ter high in the mountains outside Los Angeles. I remember walking down a trail, tramping into the woods, and almost wrestling with God.

I duelled with my doubts, and my soul seemed to be caught in a crossfire. Finally, in desperation, I surrendered my will to the living God revealed in Scripture. I knelt before the open Bible and said: "Lord, many things in this Book I do not understand. But thou hast said, 'The just shall live by faith.' All I have received from thee, I have taken by faith. Here and now, by faith, I accept the Bible as Thy word. I take it all. I take it without reservations. Where there are things I cannot understand, I will reserve judgment until I receive more light. If this pleases Thee, give me authority as I proclaim the truths of Thy word, and through that authority convict me of sin and turn sinners to the Saviour."

Within six weeks we started our Los Angeles crusade, which is now history. During that crusade I discovered the secret that changed my ministry. I stopped trying to prove that the Bible was true. I had settled it in my own mind that it was, and this faith was conveyed to the audience. Over and over again I found myself saying, "The Bible says." I felt as though I were merely a voice through which the Holy Spirit was speaking.

Authority created faith. Faith generated response, and hundreds of people were impelled to come to Christ. A crusade scheduled for three weeks lengthened into eight weeks, with hundreds of thousands of people in attendance. The people were not coming to hear great oratory, nor were they interested merely in my ideas. I found they were desperately hungry to hear what God had to say through His Holy Word.

I am not advocating bibliolatry. I am not suggesting that we should worship the Bible, any more than a soldier worships his sword or a surgeon worships his scalpel. I am, however, fervently urging a return to Bible-centered preaching, a Gospel presentation that says without apology and without ambiguity, "Thus saith the Lord."

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Those who may wish further information about CHRISTIANITY TODAY are referred to their advertisement on Page 24.

H.B.D.

In the New Testament We Find Female Missionaries, but Not Women Elders

It is argued that "there is no New Testament authorization for *female* missionaries," and that since our Church is using many without such authorization, therefore we do not need explicit Scriptural warrant for women elders.

With the highest esteem for our distinguished brother and his associates on the Ad-Interim Committee, we reply: *First*, there is New Testament example for use of women in missionary work. The precursor of mission boards was composed of women who, having been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, ministered of their substance to support Jesus and the Twelve in their missionary work of preaching the Gospel through cities and villages, Lk. 8:1-3. Using the word in its general sense of ones sent, the first missionaries entrusted with the good news of Jesus' resurrection were women, Mat. 28:7-8; Mark 16:7; Luke 24:9, 22-23; John 20:17. The four virgin daughters of that redoubtable missionary to Samaria, to the Ethiopian Eunuch, to the cities from Azotus to Caesarea, Acts 8:5, 29, 40, supported and continued the missionary work of their father Philip by prophesying, Acts 20:9.

There were two major mission movements in the primitive Church. Peter led the one to the Jews and looked to James and Jerusalem for direction. In their missionary work, Cephas, the brethren of the Lord and the other apostles took their *wives* with them, I Cor. 9:5.

The second movement stemmed from Antioch, sought to reach the Gentiles, and was led by Paul. In Corinth, Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla, took them with him on his missionary journey to Ephesus, left them there to nurture the infant mission and to expound to Apollos the way of the Lord more accurately, Acts 18:2, 18, 26. So effective was the work of this couple that the Apostle commends them in three epistles, declaring: Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles, and salute the Church that is in their house," Rom. 16:3-5. This is full and explicit approval of a *female* missionary.

Secondly, it is a matter of grave concern that in this and in other matters there seems to be

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a tendency to treat church practice as of more authority than the Bible. Historically and confessionally we stand for the sufficiency and the authority of Holy Scripture. How far will the other point of view lead our church? It was church practice and popular piety which brought in the dogma of the Assumption into heaven of the body of the Virgin and which is today leading Rome toward an additional dogma, namely Mary as co-redemptrix.

Thirdly, it is not Presbyterian for the the proponents of this change to shift the burden of proof onto those who hold the present positions. According to Lutheran tradition, the Church may introduce or continue anything that is not forbidden in Scripture. But the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition is that one ought to have a positive divine warrant from Scripture for anything introduced into the government or the worship of the Church. This is the position of our Confession of Faith, chapter 1, paragraph 6, and of our Book of Church Order, paragraph 10. The burden of proof rests on the affirmative. It is up to the proponents of the innovation to offer "clear Bible evidence" to the effect that God has authorized a woman to be an elder in the Church.

It is our conviction, moreover, that we have offered evidence from the New Testament which is clear on this matter. We repeat: "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of the Christ is God." "Subject yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ. Wives be in subjection to your own husbands as unto the Lord. . . . Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." "The bishop must be the husband of one wife . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion (usurp authority, take authority for oneself) over a man."

W. C. R.

Negative Preaching

In religious periodicals today there are frequent recommendations of the power of positive preaching. It is even suggested that our daily ills and annoyances can be cured if we only think positively. Negativism is bad and leads to mental disorders.

Undoubtedly positive preaching and thinking are necessary. For example, when a little boy is fussy because he does not know how to occupy his time, the wise mother will make a positive admonition to go skating or to play with finger paints. The little boy needs some definite direction because he does not know what to do.

But we are not all little children, and many of our daily situations do not correspond to this example. If to avoid strain on the heart

a man decides to reduce, his physician will tell him not to eat butter and other fats. Or, in cases of allergy, the physician will direct him not to eat tomatoes, or not to get in contact with chicken feathers, or not to do something else. The patient may do pretty much as he pleases, except that he must not do this one thing.

The same thing is true in religious matters, whether preaching from the pulpit, or conversing with friends, or private meditation. Of course, positive statements must be made. Sinners must be told positively that Christ died for their sins. But it is unwise to avoid negative statements. Sinners also need to be told negatively that they cannot earn heaven by their own merits. To be sure, we should positively require the worship of God in spirit and in truth. But we should also negatively prohibit bowing before images and praying to the Virgin.

Negative preaching and thinking is necessary because it is exemplified in the Bible. It is God's method, at least a part of God's method of dealing with us. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet. Nor does it take much brilliance to see the wisdom of this method. Suppose a young man asks himself who he should marry. Well, there are a lot of girls, and he is free to marry any of them—except a certain few. He must not commit adultery or incest. A positive command could apply to one person only. God might tell Hosea precisely whom to marry; but such a command applies to no one else. A general command for such practical problems must usually be a negative command. Raise sheep, buy real estate, sell cloth, make money in nearly any way you wish; but, says the Lord, Thou shalt not steal.

Now, why is the wisdom of negative thinking recognized in medicine, in child training, in all secular matters, but so vehemently condemned in religious affairs? Why—unless our popular religious leaders have discarded the Bible and are blind to God's example? G.H.C.

By Comparison

Ask the average Church leader what is the most important issue facing America and the Christian Church today and the overwhelming majority will reply that it is the race issue.*

Admitting that intolerance and bigotry are in some measure abroad in the land, and that this intolerance and bigotry is found in some on both sides of this problem, the writer would say that the race issue is NOT the one which deserves major consideration.

**Dr. Bell's own clear and unequivocal position on this is found in the October 1st issue of LIFE magazine.* Ed.