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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.

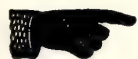
VOL. XV NO. 16

AUGUST 15, 1956

\$2.50 A YEAR



Breaking of Ground for New Sunday School Building at The Austell Presbyterian Church in Austell, Ga. (See Page 15)



Be Sure To Read:

"SLANDER IN BRAZIL"

By L. NELSON BELL

(See Pages 5, 6 and 7)

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

The Journal has no official connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States

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EDITORIAL

The Sufficiency of Scripture and Women Elders

The Reformation in general and our Confession in particular stresses the sufficiency or completeness of Holy Scripture. Thus,

"The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men."

In full accord therewith, our Book of Church Order declares:

"Christ, as King, has given to His Church officers, oracles, and ordinances; and especially has He ordained therein His system of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship: all of which are either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary inference may be deduced therefrom; and to which things He commands that nothing be added, and that from them naught be taken away.

"The exercise of ecclesiastical power, whether joint or several, has the divine sanction, when in conformity with the statutes enacted by Christ, the Lawgiver, and when put forth by courts or by officers appointed thereunto in His word."

Now are these principles being honored in the arguments put forward for women elders, or are we assuming there that the voice of some leaders, the practice of other communions, or the expediency of the hour is the leading of the Holy Spirit even though it is not in accord with Holy Scripture? If we are using the reasoning that befits James' pragmatism or Dewey's instrumentalism, what is to keep our people from using similar reasoning to justify pictures and statues as means of worship in contradiction to the teaching of our Church on the Second Commandment? Or on what basis can we con-

demn the Roman Catholics who have used the same kind of arguments for their doctrines of infallibility of the Pope and the assumption of the body of the Virgin into heaven?

The Holy Scripture sets forth both the general principle or rule of the government of the Church by men and the specific assertion thereof positively and negatively. First the general principle, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." I Cor. 11.3. So also Eph. 5.21-24,33.

Secondly, the elder is positively set forth in Titus and Timothy as "the husband of one wife," "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity," Titus 1.6-8: I Tim. 1-7.

Thirdly, negatively, the Apostle specifically forbids women to "usurp" or "to have authority" over men, I Tim. 2.12, I Cor. 14.34-35. The Greek word translated "usurp authority" or "have authority" etymologically means one who acts on his own authority, so Thayer and The Expositors' Greek New Testament. If on mere human authority we put into this office those whom God has not authorized us to place there, can we continue to say that their actions meet the requirements laid down in our Book of Church Order for those acts which have the Divine sanction, namely, that that be by officers appointed THEREUNTO IN HIS WORD, par. 19?

In writing the above we are not denying that the Bible richly recognizes women and the gifts and callings that God has given them. The influence of the Bible has elevated womanhood to the high place she has. We also declare that in Christ they have the same access and nearness to God by grace through faith which the men have. We do not understand that this teaching by the Apostle contradicts his other teaching of the order God has established for the man and the woman in the home and in the Church. This matter goes to the root of

our recognition of the sufficiency and the authority of the Word of God which we have accepted as our infallible rule of faith and practice. The Word of God is the sole sceptre of Christ's reign in the Church. W.C.R.

The Sort of Expert Most Needed

The writer recently came upon the following words of the late Dr. James Denney, expositor, theologian, and author of two notable books on the death and the atonement of our Lord. They were first spoken in lectures at Chicago Theological Seminary and later published in his book, "Studies in Theology." In the forty-odd years since, the need of such a reminder of the true mission of the church has become all the greater, and Dr. Denney's fine statement is peculiarly timely now. In part, it is as follows:

"People cry out fiercely that the church ought to mediate, that the church ought to be on the side of the poor and oppressed, and so on. The church ought certainly to be on the side of justice and mercy; but it needs more than sympathy with justice and mercy to decide on the merits of a given dispute; it needs an accurate knowledge of the whole circumstances of the case, and that it is impossible and unnecessary for the church to have. It is no part of my business as a Christian man, or even as a Christian minister, and therefore it is no part of the business of the church, which is the assembly of Christian men, to understand mining, docks, engineering, railways, or any industry, so as to be able to give sentence in cases of dispute.

"To do that is the work of Christian men who in God's providence are called to live the Christian life under the conditions in question; and it should be left for them to do. When representative Christian ministers interpose in economic disputes, in their character as ministers, it tends to put the church in a false position . . . All life has to be Christianized; but the process is to be accomplished, not by dragging everything under the scrutiny and sentence of the church as it exists among us, but by sending out into all the departments of life men to live and work there in the spirit of Christ . . . There were things He refused to do; there are things that the church and the ministers of the church should refuse in His name. We shall speak often of money, if we

speak as He spoke; but we shall not divide the inheritance among rival claimants. We shall not assume that because we are Christians we are experts in economy or in legislation, or in any branch of politics, any more than in science or in art. We shall believe that the church which cultivates in all its members the spirit of humanity, the spirit of liberty, justice, generosity, and mercy, will do more for the coming of God's kingdom than if it plunged into the thick of every conflict, or offered its mediation in every dispute.

"The church does nothing unless it does the deepest things; it does nothing unless it prevails on sinful men to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in love even as He loved us. Let us fix our minds on this as the first and supreme interest, and everything else will come out in its proper place."

As these weighty words of Dr. Denney make clear, the supreme need in these confused times is not for a church expert in sociology and statecraft and business ethics and educational technique and curriculum, but for a church the members of which are expert in the Gospel of our salvation and who practice and preach and propagate it in all the contacts of their lives.

W.T.W.

Arrested Development

Paul's *Plaint Gal. 4:19*

"My Children, I am again undergoing child birth (for you) until Christ (and His likeness) be (fully) formed in you."

When birth has been accomplished the normal expectation is for growth; evident, healthy growth. The mother weighs the baby daily and the father watches and checks the development. When Paul failed to find this growth in his spiritual children, he declared he is again in the throes of child-birth for them.

Arrested Development! Oh, how many there are who have named the name of Christ as their Saviour, but who do not evidence growth in devotion and active, clear cut, Christian living. What has happened to them?

SUFFOCATION due to *Prayerless Worship*

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed

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