

The Southern **PRESBYTERIAN** *Journal*

VOL. XVIII NO. 13

JULY 29, 1959

\$3.00 A YEAR

“SUBTRACT FROM OUR CIVILIZATION EVERY INFLUENCE TRACEABLE TO CHRISTIANITY. TAKE AWAY MOST OF OUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. CLOSE DOWN ALL BUT ONE OR TWO OF OUR PUBLISHING HOUSES WITH THEIR OUTPUT OF DEVOTIONAL BOOKS, PERIODICALS, LESSON HELPS AND OTHER LITERATURE. THEN POPULATE OUR TOWNS AND CITIES WITH TEMPLES AND IDOLS, AND THE RESULTING SCENE WILL GIVE SOME CONCEPTION OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE UNDERTAKING WHICH OUR MISSIONARIES HAVE ACCEPTED IN THE NAME OF CHRIST”

— C. Darby Fulton

For a picture of some who have answered the call see pages 10-11.

How Jesus Dealt With A Juvenile Delinquent

In the opening of the eighth chapter of our Gospel of John there is the story of men bringing to Jesus a woman taken in the act of sin demanding that she be stoned according to the law of Moses. Now in Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 22:22 it is provided that a married woman taken in adultery be put to death. The rabbis interpreted this as meaning that she be strangled. On the other hand, the last verses of Deut. 22 deal with a betrothed girl guilty of this sin. Deut. 22:24 provides that where the girl consented she be stoned. Evidently, then the accused who was brought to Jesus was a betrothed person, and the usual age of betrothing a girl was twelve or twelve and a half. Accordingly "the woman" brought before Jesus was a juvenile delinquent, and it is most timely that we observe how He dealt with her.

The accusers were shamelessly gloating over the girl and seeking to entrap Jesus into either a condemnation of Moses' law or an execution of a teen aged delinquent. Jesus closed His mouth in silence, bowed His head in embarrassment, and stooped to write upon the ground. His actions remind them that the charge they make is against their own society and that it ought to bring a community and a people to repentance. Indeed, in Jeremiah's plaintive appeals to Israel there is the following:

They that depart from Me shall be written in the earth; because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water. 17:13.

After His silence, His bowed head, His writing on the ground with its veiled appeal to Jeremiah's warning have given time for God and conscience to work, Jesus lifted up Himself and spoke to the accusers. "He that is without sin among you let him be the first to cast a stone at her." Then Jesus again bowed His head and continued to write upon the ground. Under the lash of his own conscience, one by one, beginning with the eldest even unto the last, each hung his head and went out shame-facedly.

Once more Jesus lifting His head and seeing no one except the shamed girl, spoke as only the gracious Saviour could. "Where are thine accusers? Has no one condemned thee?" That is, "has no one cast the first stone?" In Jeremiah 17:13, the LORD is the hope of Israel, the fountain of living water. In John, God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him be saved. With the first faint ray of hope, the delinquent child replied, "No one, Lord." The Redeemer added, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." In the final words — go and sin no more — the Lord condemned the sin. In the first clause — neither do I condemn thee — He forgave and received the sinner.

No, the God of the Bible did not treat the sin of this juvenile delinquent lightly. She was arrested and brought to judgment under the law which decreed her stoning to death. Under the Gospel, the Judge condemned and executed — not her, but in her stead — Himself. He bore her sins in His own

body on the tree that she being dead to sin might live unto righteousness. The punishment that gave her peace was laid on Him, and with His stripes she was healed.

Jesus showed Himself the Good Shepherd ministering to the lost sheep of the house of Israel who without Him would have been far from God. Jesus' forgiveness of this juvenile delinquent meant that God the Father received His prodigal back into His arms of love, and that there was joy in heaven over this sinner who repented more than over the ninety and nine who, they brought the teen-ager to Jesus, thought that they themselves had no need for repentance.

Wm. C. Robinson

Bibliography:

J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*
M. Dods *Commentary on John* in
Expositor's Greek New Testament

What Is The Difference Between "THE LIBERAL" AND "THE CONSERVATIVE"?

What is the distinctive difference between the liberal and the conservative? Years ago, Dr. J. G. Machen offered the generalization that the former starts with an imperative, the latter begins with an indicative. One calls on man to do, do, do; the other asserts primarily what God has done — His mighty acts in Christ.

Professor G. Wayne Glick of Franklin and Marshall College has a further contribution to this matter in a careful study of the *influences on Adolph Harnack* published in June CHURCH HISTORY. The clue to A. Ritschl's position is "his fundamental anthropocentrism", "in the sense that the norm is made to be the *value for man*." The chief question here is "What is God worth for man?" The conservative, on the other hand, is radically theocentric and asks "What is man worth under God?", or "What is the Chief end of man?"

The liberal arrives at his norm "not by the employment of fundamentally biblical categories, in which man is always seen to be under God, but by the employment of idealist speculation concerning man's relation to nature."

For the liberal, the primary referent is the world with man as a part of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature. With this presupposition, the liberal defines a religious—value—judgment as the way in which a particular religion makes available the power of God to secure man's domination over nature. Because Christianity solves this problem it is the absolute religion. But instead of posing this question suppose the one asked, "How can I be faithful to God, whether I see the immediate relevance of this fidelity or not?" The reply to this question must bring a very different answer from that found in Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*. For the liberal, the primary referent is the world and the assumed intrinsic worth of man by reason of his constitution as spirit. For the conservative, the pri-