

The Southern **PRESBYTERIAN** *Journal*

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WHEN TO BEGIN

God left the boy Samuel with his mother Hannah as long as He did because she knew how to pray. The early years, even the first two, are of vital importance in inculcating the basic attitude of fearing God, the beginning of wisdom. We have mentioned the selfishness of parents as one reason for a shortage of missionary workers; we hasten to add that another error is waiting until too late to present children to God for training and service.

There must be Christian schools below the college level in present-day pagan America. The nominally Christian colleges which we have must be thoroughly committed to Christ. Did God tell Hannah to take the child home until he was older? No! Had Hannah waited until Samuel was through high school and then sent him to a church college of the contemporary kind, Israel would probably have missed a great leader!

WHY BEGIN

Hannah had a missionary heart. Listen to her prayer offered after she gave Samuel to the Lord: "I rejoice in Thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside Thee." I Samuel 2:1,2. She is in the same class with the woman who anointed Christ with the costly ointment, not considering her son's life wasted when she devoted him to God. The woman with the ointment was accused of wasting her money but every missionary of Jesus Christ knows better. *He is worthy!*

Even though she had given much to God, Hannah rejoiced. After such sacrifices, we might think that she would be despondent, but the opposite is true. If you are sad, try giving to God! Support a foreign worker in a heathen land. Send your last penny for an orphan in Korea or Christian rescue mission and get out of your slough of despond. You cannot turn loose your home in heaven to another! God will see to it that you do not give away your standing with Him. If you have salvation, what more do you want? Hannah rejoiced in her redemption; do the same!

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LETTERS

SIR:

Your editorial in the February 11th issue on Church and State came to my attention recently. Though I may have differed in the past with some of your editorials I heartily agree with this one and hope that you will continue to bring the principle of Separation of Church and State to the attention of your readers, especially in the coming months when the issue will be increasingly debated.

J. B. Reynolds, President
Asheville Chapter of P.O.A.U.

Sir:

I have just received your Journal for Feb. 4 1959 and I was delighted to see that article by Dr. Gribble in the review of the "Understanding" the Old Testament by Dr. Anderson of Drew Theological Seminary.

It came in very timely for a few days ago I was asked to teach chapters in this book to a group of ladies who are anxious to know more about the Old Testament. I consented and last Friday went to get the book which came from the church library. The ladies said it had been taught by the pastor but he could not be present next meeting so I had been asked to substitute.

I took the book home and read first the chapters I was to teach getting more amazed at every page. This is a free country and I am the last person to suggest any censorship and just as God allowed Jereboam to reject the Bible and start worshipping God in his own way, forbidding Rehoboam to interfere, so I have no idea of starting a campaign against the publishing of such books.

I subscribe to all that Dr. Gribble has written, but what made me disgusted was the fact that here was a group of ladies being led to study this book by the pastor. It is beyond my comprehension how a person can stand up and preach faith in the Bible on Sundays and teach unbelief on Monday.

I feel that the way to combat this sort of infidelity is of course first of all to be sure we are informed on the Old Testament and preach Christ as we should, but I feel strongly that there is a call for us to gain broad scholarship not only knowledge of the Bible, but of its earliest heritage.

—J. V. N. Talmage

Louisville Kentucky
March 5, 1959

The Editor
The Southern Presbyterian Journal
Weaverville, North Carolina

Dear Sir:

I was very interested in the article which appeared in your paper, "The Congregation Sits About the Table".

The last paragraph expresses views that are not in line with historic Presbyterianism . . . "the elder takes equal part with the minister in the Lord's Supper".

Historic Presbyterianism lays down that the celebration of this Holy Sacrament is a ministerial

function not a sessional one. Only an ordained minister can preside and celebrate. The minister partakes first himself of the elements, hands them to the elders who in turn hand them to the people, after which the minister serves the elders.

Any other practice is a heresy and is non-Presbyterian.

Sincerely,
W. R. Clarke

In Answer to Dr. W. R. Clarke

Let me thank Dr. Clarke for calling to my attention an erroneous inference from my article of February 18th. I agree that only a Minister can preside at the celebration of the Supper of our Lord. I was concerned in my article to show that the elder had equal access to the Lord's Table and ought not to be separated from it by the mediation of the Minister. This access to the Table has been observed in sundry Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Europe.

In the Reformed Churches of Switzerland, the Minister presides at the center and administers the bread to the communicants. An elder on each side of him administers the cup, with the appropriate words of administration, to the communicants. In a Huguenot Church in France the communicants stood in a hollow square and the Minister served them the bread followed by the elder who took the cup from the Table and served. Both of these customs are observed in the Waldensian Churches. In Cambridge, the Session gathered about the Table and themselves partook sitting, thereafter serving the congregation. (It is generally held that the London Presbytery, of which Cambridge is a Church, authorized Makemie, Hampden and McNish to organize Philadelphia Presbytery). At the First Assembly of the World Council in Amsterdam the Reformed Church of the Netherlands conducted the communion around a large Table at which the congregation was served in turn. Here every member came fully to the Table and took the plate and the cup from and returned it to the Table as occasion offered.

As to when the minister partakes, I find little or nothing in the early Presbyterian directories. In the **Book of Common Order** prepared by Knox with the help of Calvin it is only stated that, "The exhortation being ended, the Minister cometh down from the pulpit and sitteth at the Table, every man and woman likewise taking their places." Further after prayer, "The Minister breaketh the bread and delivereth it to the people, who distribute and divide the same among themselves".

There seems to be nothing in the Scots' Confession, in the early "Buiks of Discipline" of the Kirk of Scotland, in the Westminster catechisms or Form of Presbyterian Government, in Hodge's **Manual of Forms** for the USA Church or in his Commentary on the Confession about when or how the Minister is to commune. The following occurs in the Confession of Faith itself: "to take and break the bread, to take the cup and (they also communicating themselves) to give both to the communicants."

Professor Francis R. Beattie of Louisville interpreted this parenthetical use-clause as meaning, "the Minister is to commune along with the people."* That is, he interprets the clause as meaning, they themselves also partaking of the Lord's Supper. The word **also** hardly means **first**. Rather it conveys the impression that the Westminster Divines were good shepherds thinking first of the feeding of their flocks and then afterward "also"

of feeding the shepherds. Our Presbyterian, U. S., **Directory of Worship** has not interpreted this parenthesis to mean that the Minister is to serve himself, but that he, as well as the people ("also"), is to be served.

Our early usage was that the Minister be served last, and this is often found in our churches. The 1925 Book provides: "For the sake of order it is recommended that the minister be served after the people, and that he then serve the elders." On either of these orders, after the people are served, an elder goes to the Table takes up the plate and walks over to where the Minister is sitting and serves him. Another elder does the same with the cup. Under the direction of the President this order is used at Columbia Theological Seminary. The current Directory of worship recommends "that the Minister be served before the people". This "be served means that the elder offers the Minister the bread and the cup — not that he serve himself. We invite Dr. Clarke to reconsider the terms he has applied to our practice.

Of course, many of our congregation are now using the **Book of Common Worship** which we adopted from the USA Church. According to this book the Minister first serves himself. This is in line with the provision of the **Book of Common Prayer** of the Episcopal Church:

"Then shall the Priest first receive Communion in both kinds himself and proceed to deliver the same to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons and after that to the people."

It is well to think through the implications of our practice. Logically and in the long run, the Priest officiates at the altar, offering there man's sacrifice to propitiate an alienated Deity. And equally logically, the Minister of the Word serves the Lord's Supper at the Table of the Lord, thus symbolizing and sealing God's gracious work of feeding His children unto life everlasting. A long chancel with a near-altar at its end which can only be touched by a priest-minister who thus mediates between altar and people is a long step in the direction of the Anglo-Catholic worship (which itself has moved far in the Roman direction). Logically this wide step may be expected to be followed by the Altar which has ceased to be the Table and at which the Priest who has ceased to be the Minister of the Word offers a propitiatory sacrifice which is no longer that Supper of the Lord resting upon His one sacrifice made at Calvary once for all. On the petition of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, Parliament removed the altars from the Churches in England.

—W. C. R.

CC to Rev. W. R. Clarke, D.D.
Second Presbyterian Church,
Louisville, Ky.

* **The Presbyterian Standards**, p. 325.

From a Reader in Brazil—

"How can I convey to you my appreciation of **The Southern Presbyterian Journal**? It is amazing. Each issue seems to stun me with its truth and powerful articles of faith and robust arguments. I tell you sincerely I cannot keep pace with this flow of truth. I have several issues lying here on this desk, wondering to whom I shall send them, for I would have these truths circulated far and wide. I wonder how I can do this. Can I send them first to England and enclose a list of addresses, asking that they be forwarded to each one of these, and then posted on to the others. I want to circulate them in Australia, too. One copy is not enough.