

The PRESBYTERIAN *Journal*

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S.S. Lesson and Youth Program for February 7

DISLOCATED SAINTS

(Gal. 6:1)

The saint with sin in his life is not in correct relationship to his Head and to the rest of the Body, just as an arm out of joint is not in correct relationship to the body and the head. But the saint still is a member of the Body as the dislocated arm is a member of the human body. Again, the life of the Head still abides in the saint as the life in the human head still flows through the arm. Once more, as a dislocated arm is useless to the body and head and will obey neither, so a saint out of fellowship with his Lord is useless to both the Body and the Head, and will obey neither. As a dislocated arm is a hindrance to the body and head, so is a saint with sin in his life a hindrance to the Church and its Head. As an arm out of joint is a source of pain to both body and head, so is a Christian with sin in his life, a source of heart pain to his fellow saints and his Lord. As a dislocated arm is extremely painful in itself, so a child of God with sin in his life, is a miserable Christian. The longer an arm is out of joint, the more painful it becomes, and the harder it is to put back. The longer a child of God remains in sin, the more miserable he becomes, and the harder it is to restore him to fellowship again. But thank God, he can be restored, for "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9).

—Kenneth S. Wuest

WORD STUDIES, Publ. by Eerdmans

ACROSS the EDITOR'S DESK

For some time we have been pondering ways and means of making the Shorter Catechism more interesting to teachers of youth and the recitation of the Shorter Catechism more challenging to the young people themselves. We have decided to offer a stimulating inducement for the perfect recitation of this priceless statement of the Reformed faith, as follows:

Any person, young or old, learning and reciting perfectly the answers of the Shorter Catechism after this announcement appears, will be specially recognized in the columns of the *Journal* and will receive, as a gift, a beautiful Oxford edition of the King James Version of the whole Bible. This Bible, which retails for \$6.50, comes in a French Morocco binding and is printed on India paper complete with maps and references.

Church bulletins are often notoriously dull. But we saw one recently which brightened our spirits no end. Said an announcement in this one: "LEARN ABOUT THE REFORMED FAITH! Subscribe to the *Presbyterian Journal* . . . Order now!" Where was this stimulating bulletin distributed? To a congregation in upstate New York.

A notice of New Year's activities in a certain church caught our attention this week: "Come to the New Year's Eve Snowball, Thursday. From 8:30 till 11:30 we will mambo and cha-cha-cha and dance to the best 'bop' tunes on the current hit parade. Promptly at 11:30 we will journey to the sanctuary for a communion service." The pastor of this congregation, the notice said, treasures the following letter from a college freshman: "I'm going to attend my first college formal next week. I saved the dress I wore to last year's Snowball especially for the occasion . . . I don't think I'll ever go to a dance or wear an evening dress without remembering the dance and the communion service on New Year's Eve." Somehow we are not enthusiastic.

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CONTENTS

FROM THE DISTILLERY FLOOR	5
Rev. Wade C. Smith	
STRAIGHT TALK	5
Tom Anderson	
WHICH WAY, LAYMEN?—The Sermon	7
Forrest B. Gardner	
THE SPIRIT AND CREATION	9
Dr. Wm. C. Robinson	
EDITORIALS	10
A LAYMAN AND HIS CHURCH	11
Dr. L. Nelson Bell	
LATER EXAMINATIONS OF JOHN ROGERS	12
Dr. Gordon H. Clark	
TABLE TALK—"What Is An Offense?"	13
Dr. Wm. C. Robinson	
SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON	14
YOUTH WORK	16
THE CHURCH AT HOME	18
BOOK REVIEWS	19
THE MAILBAG	20

Rev. G. Aiken Taylor, Ph.D.	<i>Editor</i>
Rev. Henry B. Dendy, D.D.	<i>Managing Editor</i>
L. Nelson Bell, M.D., F.A.C.S.	<i>Associate Editor</i>
Rev. Wade C. Smith	<i>Associate Editor</i>

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Lord. We deliver an oration instead of a heart-born petition. Our prayers are just meaningless words.

Most of the time we pray too casually. We fail to realize the marvelous privilege of prayer — the privilege of a creature to commune with his Creator. A hospitalized friend was visited by a friend. Just before leaving this man said, "Well, before I leave, I will whip up a little prayer". The sick one wondered if God heard that prayer. It was certainly no comfort to him.

We are also at times "gimme" pray-ers. When the tenor of our way is smooth and uncomplicated, we feel no need of prayer. However, when some acute or untoward circumstance arises, we rush to God, whom we have ignored, and expect Him to bring us immediate relief just because we have asked Him. How fortunate for us that our God is a Father of unlimited patience and love.

Do you ever pray with a smile? It was always an inspiration for me to

hear and SEE Dr. Alexander Sprunt, former pastor of the First (Scotch) Presbyterian Church of Charleston, South Carolina, "talk" with the Lord he so devotedly loved. As he lifted his face, with a smile, his countenance was lighted with the joy and love he felt for his God. Have you ever prayed with a smile? Why not try it?

We laymen are indeed "standing in the need of prayer". The measure of our prayers largely determine the effectiveness of our living "all the way for Christ".

We are convenient pray-ers. Witness the small attendance at Sunday night services and the handful at mid-week prayer-meeting; or worse, the many darkened churches at these hours. I wonder how many of us would dare to upset our daily routine and meet for prayer with our pastor at the ghastly hour of seven o'clock in the morning? Yet where this has been done it has resulted in a spiritual stimulus to the whole congregation and to those participating in the unspeakable joy of walking closer to God.

YES, LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

In presenting these thoughts, not for a moment am I presuming to sit in judgment on my fellow Christians. Nor have I written in a spirit of criticism. My heartfelt hope and sincere prayer is that the Lord may awaken within you the impulse to analyze and re-appraise your own spiritual life; that thereby you may be led to go "all the way for Christ".

At a time when a large proportion of our laymen have not reached spiritual adulthood, these prophetic words come to us with frightening impact —

"Because thou art lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

"He that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne".

What is your answer?

* * * * *

Mr. Gardner is a business man of Hendersonville, N. C., and a former Moderator of his Presbytery.

The Spirit and Creation

The Spirit of God in the account of creation teaches us that God who is transcendent over creation in His person and nature is also ever present or immanent in His active work in the universe. Side by side with the emphasis which is laid on the unapproachable majesty of God as the transcendent Person, the account in Genesis lays an equal emphasis on God as the immanent agent in all world changes and movements. The first verse in the Bible reveals the Spirit of God actively empowering and controlling His handiwork, thus adding the doctrine of Providence to the doctrine of Creation. Twentieth century physics makes it easier for the imagination to visualize a spiritual control over physical reality.

A failure to realize the transcendence of God results in identifying God and the universe, which is Pantheism; a failure to realize His immanent activity everywhere present separates God and His creation, which is Deism. True Theism means that "the universe owes its existence and its continuance in existence to the reason and will of a self-existent Being Who is infinitely powerful, wise and good." The Spirit of God brooding upon the face of the

waters is the foundation of our faith in God's most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.

—Wm. C. Robinson, Th.D.
From THE HOLY
SPIRIT IN THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES

DUTY

Just what are a Christian's duties? The Bible answers in general (see Eph. 4:22-23), but not in particular. The reason is evident. It is this: The duty of the hour must be determined by the opportunity of the hour . . . under God in Christ.

Webster defines duty as "that which a person is morally obliged to do or to forbear from doing." This is a very accurate definition for the world at large, but a Christian's duty is "that which he is Christ-impelled to do or to forbear from doing at the moment he is moved to action."

The question now arises: Is Christ "impelling" your life? Unfortunately there are many "borderline" Christians who are just morally impelled or self-impelled; and many others who are mere drifters on the sea of circumstance.

In these days when so many people are imbued with a doctrine of futility, isn't it pitiful that we have so few "Christ-impelled" Christians who see their duty through Christ's eyes and not through their own?

If we Christians could but see it, this spirit of futility, this "don't-care," "what's-the-use" attitude of people today, is a marvelous opportunity for us. It is undoubtedly the opportunity of the hour.

We have the only Way which isn't futile. The road which the Christian travels leads somewhere, whereas the way of the world is a dead-end street.

Our duty, then is to point out to the world the only antidote for futility—the way of the cross which leads home.

—Col. Roy LeCraw