

The PRESBYTERIAN *Journal*

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\$3.00 A YEAR

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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mination of two former councils, of which one favored him and one the heretic; but he would have the Scripture to be their judge.’”

(Rogers then gave a second example). “By these things I prove that I ought not to be denied to be heard against a whole parliament, bringing the Word of God for me, as well as the authority of the old Church 400 years after Christ, even though every man in Parliament had willingly agreed without respect of fear or favor — which thing I doubt not a little of. For if Henry VIII were alive and should call a Parliament and begin to determine a thing, then would ye all say, Amen, yea, and it please your grace, it is meet that it be so enacted.’”

At this point Bishop Gardiner prevented Rogers from saying more, for the Bishop saw that he was losing the argument. Then, after he had berated Rogers and taunted him, he proceeded to read his excommunication and his condemnation. The condemnation contained just two articles; first, that “I affirmed the Roman Catholic Church to be the Antichrist,” and that “I denied the reality of the sacrament.” Rogers was then delivered to the sheriffs. Before being carried away, Rogers petitioned the Bishop to see and speak with his wife and children. The Bishop replied that the woman was not his wife, that Rogers had lived in open sin for eighteen years, and that he would not be permitted to see her (Rogers had been a priest).

In prison between the time of his condemnation and the execution, he was able to write somewhat, and he expressed himself on doctrine and the evils of the reign in a very manly way. After a long time of imprisonment among common thieves, the sheriffs came to take him to the place of execution. Again his request to see his wife and children was denied him. However, they did join the crowd of people who came to witness the burning. He walked to the stake singing psalms, and as his body was burnt to ashes, his soul ascended in a chariot of fire to that Redeemer whom he loved even more than he loved his family, yea, even more than he loved his own life.

* * * * *

Butler University.

TABLE TALK

What Is An Offence?

WM. C. ROBINSON, Th.D.

According to the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church, US, what is an offense, and what is the proper ground of an accusation? Are there two grounds on which an act may constitute an offense, or only one? Two grounds of accusations, or only one? A century ago in the undivided Presbyterian Church (Old School) there were two grounds, but the General Assembly of that body had just given its tentative approval to a revision offered by an ad-interim committee with J. H. Thornwell as Chairman which changed this two-fold ground to a single basis. With the War and the separation of the South in which the Chairman lived, the matter of the change died in the USA Church, but was continued in the Southern Church. Indeed the Book of Church Order sent down by our General Assembly to the presbyteries in 1887 listed the two different and divergent definitions and directed the presbyteries to choose between them. The full meaning of our present definition, then, is only realized when it is seen that the other view was rejected when the present one was accepted. We invite a careful reading and a close consideration of these two definitions which we have labeled re-

spectively, “A” and “B”. “A” permits only one matter of accusation, one ground of offense; “B” prescribes two.

* * *

The Rules of Discipline

CHAPTER III

Of Offenses

A Separate and distinct vote is required by the General Assembly making choice between these two definitions of offense.

A. An offense, the proper object of judicial process, is anything in the principles or practice of a Church member professing faith in Christ, which is contrary to the Word of God. The Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly, together with the formularies of government, discipline, and worship, are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in the United States as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any court as an offense, or admitted as a matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture, as interpreted in these standards.

B. An offense is anything in the principles or practice of a Church member which is contrary to the Word of God; or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification. Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any judiciary as an offense, or admitted as matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture, or from the regulations and practice of the Church founded on Scripture, and which does not involve those evils which discipline is intended to prevent.

Now the presbyteries voted the first of these definitions (A) and in so doing voted down the second one (B). Accordingly, any Session or Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly which treats a deviation merely “from the regulations and practice of the Church founded upon Scripture” as a matter of accusation and as a ground of discipline is using a principle which our Church rejected, and is not properly using our Book of Discipline to which our third ordination vow obligates us.

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Decatur, Ga.