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The PRESBYTERIAN Journal

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OCTOBER 18, 1961

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S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 29

Let The Church Be The Church

The Church must remain holy. She must be separate from the world. The weapons which she uses in her warfare should be spiritual. The battle of truth cannot be fought with weapons borrowed from the armory of falsehood. The moment the Church decides to lower the standards of her beliefs or her ethics for any consideration of policy, she will find herself on slippery ground, which will certainly not raise the world to her level but will gradually and inevitably lower her down to the level of the world. Let the fence remain intact. Let the level of the Christian life be set high. Let us fight God's battles with God's weapons.

—G. A. HADJANTONIOU,
The Postman of Patmos, Zondervan



• This is a sort of "Centennial Issue," timed to coincide with the celebration of the Centennial of the Presbyterian Church, US, taking place in churches on Sunday, October 15. The thousands of *Journal* readers elsewhere will pardon the more frequent than usual ref-

erences to the Southern Church in this issue.

• The Spirit is moving.

Just last week we heard of another congregation in which He has begun to move. It started in a couple's class. The first symptom was a feeling of restlessness among a few in the class, an urging to do *something*, although they were not sure what.

Then the president of the class had an idea. He passed the word around that there would be a gathering at the church on Saturday night, of anybody who wanted to come to talk about the needs of that church.

About 20 showed up. The meeting got off to a slow start. The young man who had the burden on his heart told about it — about what Christ had recently come to mean to him, about how he longed for the power of Jesus Christ to be set free in that congregation.

And then it happened. Someone got up and told what the Lord Jesus meant to her. Someone else followed with another personal testimony of blessing. There was a searching of the Scriptures. And there was a long season of impassioned prayer.

Those people got home late that night. Since then the fever has caught on. Day-time prayer groups have sprung up in the congregation. People have been reconciled to one another. Other people have been brought into the fellowship of that church.

The Spirit is moving.

This is clearly evident: where the Spirit has begun to move, it has been within the context of a reverent and earnest study of the Scriptures; of a personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ; of the "old-time religion" frankly confessed and joyfully proclaimed.

Let all who hunger for an outpouring of the Spirit study the circumstances under which He moves.

• Socialism is Communism without the firing squad—the halfway house to Communism. — TOM ANDERSON in *Farm and Ranch*.

The PRESBYTERIAN Journal

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God of the Marching Centuries

WM. CHILDS ROBINSON, TH.D

A. GOD IN HISTORY

In this centennial of the Presbyterian church, US, we unite our witness with the good confession our fathers have made to our great and gracious God. Our word today is EBENEZER! hitherto the LORD in His mercy has led us. Thanks be unto God who has revealed Himself unto us in Jesus Christ, who has deposited this treasure in the clay vessels of our founding fathers, and kept this heritage alive in the yet more earthen vessels of us, their spiritual heirs. We come to join our celebration with that of the ancient Hebrews, when being delivered from Pharaoh at the Red Sea they cried,

This is my God, and I will praise Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him. Exod. 15:2.

Or, as one of our former pastors, Dr. D. P. McGeachy of Decatur, said it:

God of the marching centuries,
Lord of the passing years.
Leading a people's victories,
Sharing a people's tears,
Seal us, as now we worship Thee
Here on this moment's height;
Star of the way our fathers
found,
Be still our guiding light.

The Biblical faith anchors in the living God, the God who has done mighty acts, who is active today, and who governs the future for His people in Christ Jesus. Ancient Israel laid hold of the God who made heaven and earth and who redeemed His people from Egypt with His mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Their confidence was in the God of the covenant, the shield of Abraham, the fear of Isaac, the mighty One of Jacob.

In Luke 11:51, as in Hebrews 11 we seem to have sections of an old Hebrew Creed memorializing God's deliverances of His patriarchs and prophets. The writer to the Hebrews surrounds his tempted friends with this cloud of Old Testament witnesses and then adds those who had spoken unto them the Word of God and suffered as martyrs for Jesus under Nero — James, Peter, and Paul. In the crypt of Domitilla, a part of the Catacombs of Rome, there are pictures from the Old and New Testaments bespeaking the victorious power of God as He saved David from Goliath, gave perishing Israel the water from the rock, delivered Daniel from the lions and raised Lazarus from the grave. That is, the primitive Christians lived surrounded by the witness of the Old and the New Testament martyrs to the triumphs of the living God.

Out of that atmosphere comes the ancient Christian symbol which we now call the Apostles' Creed. God is the Father Almighty who created heaven and earth, and His gracious acts are all concentrated in the coming, the ministry, the death, the resurrection, the reign, and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose saving work is carried forward by the Holy Ghost in the Church.

B. GOD IN REDEMPTION

True to their spiritual heritage, our fathers kept Jesus Christ at the center of their interest. They proclaimed the living God who did act in Jesus Christ, acted in His cross and Resurrection to change the whole relationship between the Holy God and guilty sinners. In Christ He reconciled the world unto Himself. To this great new victory which God won in Christ, the Presbyterian Church, US, has, for a century, borne her testimony.

In 1897 Robert Lewis Dabney delivered his final addresses at Davidson College and Columbia Seminary on the theme: Christ our substitute and sacrifice for imputed guilt. That is, the fundamental design of Christ's obedience and sacrifice is to make satisfaction to the justice of God, so that God may be just and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus. He suffered that sin might be righteously punished and the sinner forgiven. Earlier Thornwell proclaimed:

Jesus made our curse, Jesus made our righteousness, this, this is the Gospel! All else is philosophy and vain deceit. A penal death and a perfect righteousness imputed, the one for pardon and the other for acceptance—these are the things which make the Gospel glad tidings of great joy.

The spiritual heirs of Dabney and Thornwell continued to enunciate this world-shaking deed of God until the 1939 General Assembly unanimously declared that acceptance of the doctrine that Christ offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and reconcile us to God is involved, among other things, in our ordination vows.

Of course this does not mean that there are not other facets to the ineffable wonder of Christ's work for us. That He has victoriously vindicated the justice of God even in forgiveness is the assurance of Christ's triumph over legalism, sin, Satan, death and Hell. Preachers like Gregory the Great and Martin Luther proclaimed both the "Latin" and the "classical" view of the atonement. In Christ's offering of Himself in our stead, Thornwell sees the supreme act of worship and the beautiful spirit of the true priest. For Thomas Smyth,

the back-ground of the atoning work of Christ was the justice of God, but the foreground of the picture — the place where his preaching delighted to dwell — was the love of the Lord.

Daniel Baker bade his son remember that "the sermon which does not distinctly present Christ in the beauty and glory of His mediatorial character, is no better than a cloud without water, a casket without a jewel, a shadow without the substance, or the body without the soul. You ask why my preaching is so much blessed . . . My plan is incessantly to preach Christ and Him crucified."

C. GOD IN JUSTIFICATION

On the day of Pentecost the disciples were vibrant in their testimony to the mighty acts of God in Christ. And foremost among all those acts was the unapproachable manifestation of God's power in the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day (see also I Cor. 15:4). God acted in visiting upon Christ our substitute the whole guilt of our sins; and He died crying that the whole debt is paid, "It is finished!" Then God raised Him from the dead in the blessedness of pure righteousness. In raising from the dead our representative, Jesus Christ, God implicitly justified His body in Him their head.

Moreover, the ascended, reigning, living Christ is busy making this potential justification actual in regenerating those whom He has redeemed; and in calling them to faith and repentance through the preaching of His Word. Today we speak of Christ proclaiming Himself through Christian preaching, confronting men — and bringing them to decision. Our fathers were equally conscious of Christ's direct action by His Spirit working faith in their hearts and uniting sinners to Himself in their effectual calling. Indeed, their glorious emphasis on justification may well give a content to God's encounter with men that is sometimes lacking in our preaching.

As a student at the College of South Carolina, James Henley Thornwell picked up a copy of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in a second hand book store and found the organizing principle of this great book and of all theology in the Reformation doctrine of Justification.

For R. A. Webb of Louisville, "There is no more important doctrine, no more

distinguished blessing, in all the Christian system than justification." For Dr. Wm. S. Plumer, Pastor of the First Church of Richmond and later Professor in Columbia, "Justification by Christ's imputed righteousness is the centre arch of that bridge by which we pass out of time into a blessed eternity."

In his class instruction at Columbia and later at Louisville, Thornton Whaling was never tired of reiterating, that Christ's bearing our sins in His own body on the tree closed for us the gates of Hell. But the sinner needs not only his guilt imputed to Christ and done away in His Cross; in addition to having his debts paid, he needs a positive righteousness that he may have access to Heaven. Now as our sins were laid upon Christ and all their fearful punishment endured in His cross, so also was His whole holy obedience imputed to us. By the one the doors of Hell were closed, by the other the gates of Heaven were opened.

And all this is the work of grace through faith.

D. GOD IN REVIVING GRACE.

At Pentecost the immediate reference to the mighty acts of God was the coming of the Holy Spirit. This centennial year is the time to remember that God has visited and does visit His people with seasons of saving grace bringing "revivals in the midst of the years." He does not always speak in the whirl-wind or the tempest, but with a still small voice as the Spirit uses the Word for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the saints.

Two centuries ago, as our American tradition was being formed, God led the Presbyterians to share in the great awakening when the Spirit mightily used the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Freylinghuysen, the Tennants, Samuel Davies and Devereaux Jaratt. This evangelistic passion has been carried on among us by such ministers as John Blair Smith, John Holt Rice, Moses Hoge, W. S. White, Beverley T. Lacy, and S. M. Glasgow of Virginia; Nash Legrande, Geo. W. Belk, Wm. McC. White of North Carolina; James McCready and David Rice of Kentucky; Robert Wilson, Thomas Smyth, R. G. Pearson in South Carolina; Daniel Baker and R. O. Flinn of Georgia; J. A. Bryan, A. S. Johnson, Wm. Ray Dobyns of Alabama; James I. Vance

and Wm. Crowe of Tennessee; J. B. Hutton and A. A. Little in Mississippi; B. M. Palmer in New Orleans; B. T. Kavanaugh in Arkansas; S. F. Tenney B. I. Dickie, W. S. Reed, C. T. Caldwell P. B. Hill in Texas, James E. Thacker from Missouri and a host of others.

Despite the fanfare and cavalcades for evangelism, this last year saw the lowest increase on professions of faith in five years, the greatest number of losses, and the lowest net gain. These shocking statistics ought to send us to our knees that we may know God's way with His people today. Perhaps, there is a word for this year in the account of the revival God granted through John L. Girardeau's ministry in the Anson St. Presbyterian Church of Charleston where nine-tenths of the 500 members were Negroes.

The greatest event in his ministry was the revival in the later eighteen fifties. This began with a prayer meeting that constantly increased until the house was filled. Some of the officers of the Church wanted him to commence preaching services, but he steadily refused, waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit. His view was that the Father had given to Jesus, as King and Head of the Church, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus in His sovereign administration of the affairs of His Church, bestowed Him upon whomsoever He pleased, and in whatever measure He pleased. Day after day, therefore, he kept his prayer addressed directly to the mediatorial throne for the Holy Spirit in mighty reviving power.

One evening, while leading the people in prayer, he received a sensation as if a bolt of electricity had struck his head and diffused itself through his whole body. For a little while he stood speechless under the strange physical feeling. Then he said: "The Holy Spirit has come; we will begin preaching tomorrow evening." He closed the service with a hymn dismissing the congregation, and came down from the pulpit, but no one left the house. The whole congregation had quietly resumed its seat. Instantly he realized the situation. The Holy Spirit had not only come to him — He had also taken possession of the hearts of the people.

(Cont. on p. 8, col. 3)

"frequent." This first rubric is present with us today in the *Directory of Worship* of both Presbyterian, US and UPUSA Churches:

The Communion, or Supper of the Lord, is frequently to be celebrated; but how often, may be considered and determined by the Ministers, and other Church-governors of each Congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the comfort and edification of the people committed to their charge. And it shall be administered, we judge it convenient to be done after the Morning Sermon.

At this period (1650) the practice in the city parishes favored semi-annual Communion. Rural parishes, on the other hand clung to the older ways, feeling that the Communion, like the Passover, ought to be an annual feast, but not at Easter. Thus the proposal to insist on four celebrations a year was opposed by the Scots as an attempt to regulate what Scripture had not. The evil of infrequent Communion rapidly increased after Westminster — until the Restoration there were in Glasgow only six Communions; none at all for six years at Edinburgh, and nine at Stirling.

III.

The English Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians found yet another difference in practice — the place of Communion. In England the custom had been to consecrate the elements at a small table and then take them to the communicants who remained in their pews. In Scotland the communicants left their pews and took their seats along the sides of portable tables which extended the length of the church. The English majority in the Assembly were naturally adverse to changing their national custom, which treated the Communion Table as the focal point of worship in conformity with the universal Christian practice. In the end another ambiguous phrase—

After this exhortation, warning, and invitation, the Table being before decently covered, and so conveniently placed, that the Communicants may orderly sit about it, or at it.

Attempting to clarify this statement the adopting General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland declared "that the clause in the *Directory* of the Administration of the Lord's Supper, which mentioneth the Communicants sitting

about the Table, or at it, be not interpreted as if, in the judgment of this Kirk, it were indifferent, and free for any one of Communicants not to come to, and receive at the Table."

Nevertheless by 1824 the English custom was introduced at Saint John's Church in Glasgow where the elders distributed the elements to the communicants in their pews. All that remained of the bygone days were strips of linen (dowdling cloths) on the back of the pews to symbolize the common table. The following year the General Assembly condemned this innovation by once again declaring that not to sit "at or around a Communion Table or Tables" was contrary to "the law and immemorial practice of the Church of Scotland." But the English practice gradually spread in the larger congregations because it reduced the Communion service by many hours. The process of change occupied the better part of a hundred years, so that a modern Scottish theologian could justify the Puritan custom in these words:

When we Presbyterians celebrate Communion we do not go up individually to the altar; we sit in our places together as at the Lord's Table. We are gathered at the family board for a feast in fellowship, we pass the bread and the cup from hand to hand, receiving them from our neighbor in the Communion of the Lord's Supper. What excuse then have we forgetting that this is indeed a corporate act, a meal in sacred fellowship . . . (D. M. BAILLIE, *The Theology of the Sacraments*.)

IV.

When we examine the *Directory for Public Worship* four basic (and progressive) divisions may be discerned:

EXHORTATION

—"Fence" the Table by listing sins which should keep men from it

—Setting apart of the Elements to a holy use

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

—Eucharistic prayer

—Function and Administration

COMMUNION (Ministers receiving first)

—Call to worthy life

—Post-communion prayer of thanks giving

—Collection for poor

THE BLESSING

Particular notice must be taken of the placement of the Words of Institution without intervening exhortation as in Calvin's form and that of the *Scottish Book of Common Order*. However following the Reformed example the *Directory* states that the minister should not be the last to receive the Elements, as if a gracious host at his own banquet. Christ Himself is both Host and the Food of this spiritual feast; and the elders who are leaders of Christians should be the first to partake of the Supper. The addition of the Call to a Worthy Life was unfortunately abused and became an excuse for a second sermon. The rite properly ends with the Word of Possibility (for those who have worshipped are sent out to witness, so that the world may have Life).

* * * * *

Mr. Jeanes is a Senior at Austin Theological Seminary.

CENTURIES—from p. 6

Immediately he began exhorting them to accept the Gospel. They began to sob softly, like the falling of rain, then with deeper emotion to weep bitterly, or to rejoice loudly, according to their circumstances. It was midnight before he could dismiss his congregation. A noted evangelist from the North, who was present, said, between his sobs, to an officer of the Church: 'I never saw it on this fashion.' The meeting went on night and day for eight weeks. Large numbers of both black and white were converted and joined the various churches of the city. His own was wonderfully built up, not only in numbers, but also in an experience that remained in the Church. It is in such events that "Our God is marching on."

E. GOD IN WORLD MISSIONS.

As God has blessed His people with seasons of grace when the Holy Spirit was particularly close and powerful in their hearts, so He has led us into new appropriations of His marching orders for His body the Church. In 1831, John Holt Rice of Virginia, chal-

(Cont. on p. 18, col. 1)

is a member for life of the said society.

lenged the General Assembly to recognize that the Presbyterian Church is a missionary society the object of which is the conversion of the world, and that every member of the Church

In 1861 the General Assembly inscribed on the Church's banner as she first unfurled it to the world the Great Commission. And despite Southern poverty, every year of Recon-

struction saw a new world mission opened: China, Italy, Brazil, Colombia — Later the Congo, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Ecuador, Portugal, Iraq, Formosa. The fruit of these endeavors was evident at the 1961 General Assembly in the testimonies of fraternal delegates from most of these countries. What has been done adds its weight to the mission call:

Where once the twisting trail in darkness wound

Let marching feet and joyous song respond.

Where burn the fun'ral pyres and censors swing,

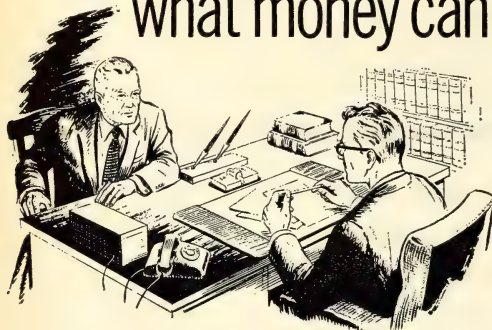
Make straight, make straight the Highway of the King.

Now unto Him who loves us, who redeemed us from our sins by His blood; and made us to be a kingdom, priests unto His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

* * * * *

Dr. Robinson, Professor of Church History at Columbia Theological Seminary, has been a member of the Centennial Committee.

what money can do



MAN: When you prepare my will, I'd like you to provide for my wife and children. Then I want to do something that will carry my influence on after me. I'm thinking of a bequest to a Presbyterian college or seminary.

LAWYER: A fine idea. There's no better way to keep your influence active in generations to come than through a bequest to Christian higher education. Think of it:

\$10,000 in a scholarship bequest, invested at four per cent, means a \$400 scholarship each year helping a student in a Presbyterian school;

\$1,000 for a library would earn enough to add ten good books for students each year;

\$200,000 for a professorship would provide a professor's salary for all the years to come.

Your gift will continue doing good in the far future.

CONGREGATIONALISM—from p. 11

things both the power and the initiative belong exclusively to God.

That is, if you want to explain why this or that happens, you must take God into account. If you want to explain why you have troubles and your neighbor has none, you must take God into account. If you want to know how to win someone to Christ, you must begin with God. If you want to know *why* Khrushchev, you must begin with God. If you want to know how the Pilgrims could give thanks after losing half the company to disease and starvation, you must take God into account.

Out of this doctrine flow the other Reformed doctrines; Election, Predestination, Perseverance, Preventive Grace, a Limited Atonement, etc.

Isn't the official Church going to say *anything* about the Reformed Faith during this special year of emphasis upon it?

Conservative, downtown Presbyterian Church seeking contact with qualified Director of Christian Education (lady). Write Box N, PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL, Weaverville, N. C.

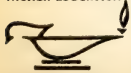
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