

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

The circulation leader among independent publications in the Presbyterian-Reformed world

Let's Be Honest!

Honesty is as important in theology as in trade or commerce, as important in a religious denomination as in a political party. A Presbyterian minister is not a free lance, but is a presbyter who has pledged himself to this system of doctrine. Those who deny these doctrines in Presbyterian pulpits are being false to their ordination vows, and should withdraw to denominations holding their views. Certainly no church officer has a right to accept the honors and remunerations which come from the outward acceptance of a creed which he does not believe or teach.

—Lorraine Boettner

The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination

S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR JULY 3

NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY OF N C LIBRARY
CHAPEL HILL NORTH CAROLINA 27514
COMP



MAILBAG

HAVE THEY NO CONSCIENCE?

New Wine Skins leads me to conclude the basic issue confronting our denomination is, "Are we a Presbyterian Church?" I believe every officer should approve the government of the Presbyterian Church in accordance with his ordination vows. If any finds his views have changed since the taking of his

vows, he should make this known. Appropriate action should then be taken, in accordance with the Constitution of our denomination, to dissolve the active relationship between the church and the officer.

In those situations where congregations feel they could more effectively serve Christ under some other system than the Presbyterian, I

believe their presbytery, in Christian love and with its blessing, should dismiss these congregations, with their properties, to communions of their choice (COCU or whatever).

It logically follows, that no one should be elected as a commissioner to a Church Court unless he is willing to affirm his ordination vows. This would make certain our denomination is not destroyed from within by those whose views obviously differ from our ordination requirements.

I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. I will defend the Presbyterian form of government. How about you?

—Udell C. Brown
Tyler, Tex.

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Rev. G. Aiken Taylor, Ph.D.

Editor

Rev. Henry B. Dendy, D.D.

Managing Editor

L. Nelson Bell, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Associate Editor

Arthur H. Matthews

Assistant Editor

THIS WEEK—

Vol. XXV, No. 8, June 22, 1966

"His Feet, Upon Olivet,"—Perhaps Today..... 9

Taking a look at what Scripture says about Christ's return and what Christians should do.....By Dr. J. Barton Payne

Deleted, Diluted, or Both? 11

Considerations of the mission of the Church do no good to miss the atonementBy Dr. William Childs Robinson

Sacrilege and Cupidity 12

When a preacher claims to have a private direct line to God on social issues, look out!.....By M. E. Bradford

Believe in the Devil? 13

By Dr. Richard C. Halverson

Departments—

Editorials 14

A Layman and his Church 15

Sunday School Lesson, July 3 16

Youth Program, July 3 18

Catechism Studies 19

THE PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL, a Presbyterian weekly magazine, devoted to the statement, defense, and propagation of the Gospel, the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, published every Wednesday by the Southern Presbyterian Journal Co., Inc., in Weaverville, N. C.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: \$3 a year for individuals, \$2 for members of Every Family Plan churches. All correspondence regarding subscriptions, advertising or other business matters, should be addressed to the business

office in Weaverville, N. C. 28787. Second class mail privileges authorized at Weaverville, N. C.

EDITORIAL correspondence should be addressed to P. O. Box 3108, Asheville, N. C. 28802. Editorial offices located at 84 Kimberly Ave.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS notices should be addressed to the business office, Weaverville, N. C. 28787, allowing three weeks for change in the continental U. S. Change notices should include both old and new addresses.

HE DISAGREES

There were many who went to this past General Assembly who couldn't foresee the Presbyterian Church US entering COCU. So how can you honestly say, "The Church will not in the foreseeable future vote for such a union"? For one who proclaims the Reformed faith, this seriously limits the working of the Spirit to make such a statement . . . The prophets on the right and in the middle have seen their prophecies fail the real test of prophecy: Did something happen as prophesied? . . .

If I didn't feel the Presbyterian Church US was an instrument of Jesus Christ I'd leave it. I always have that choice. But I will not make the Church God. It can be judged; it too needs redemption. And I'm not sure we can refer to the Church as "beloved," (Editorial, May 25) for then it becomes the object of our love and God, being jealous, doesn't particularly like that . . .

I must say I see no real purpose for your *Journal*. It simply seeks to secure the status quo and to move the Church more in on herself where our Lord sent us out. And this is done through negative techniques such as are used in more backward nations and Churches.

If you want to justify the money I feel you now waste, look at the world and the Church and examine how the two can really in union serve each other and in serving each other do a little bit of the will of God.

—(Rev.) George Fischer
Kenner, La.

Deleted, Diluted, or Both?

WILLIAM CHILDS ROBINSON, Th.D.

Is the Church, through its courts, its agencies, its committees, its officers, its pulpits, exercising good faith and integrity?

Presbyterians believe that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God. This doctrine of substitutionary atonement is set forth in our official standards and was unanimously affirmed by the 1939 General Assembly to be involved in the ordination vows to which we subscribe.

But the Church's publishing arm has printed and popularized a paperback volume (*The Westminster Confession for Today*) which pushes the Socinian attack on this doctrine of atonement, and other education divisions are recommending this book for source material.

Calvin answered this old charge (that if sins are graciously forgiven they cannot be paid for) by setting forth the fallacy of opposing the merit of Christ to the mercy of God.

In his *Institutes* he wrote, "For it is a common maxim, that between two things of which one succeeds or is subordinate to the other, there can be no opposition. There is no reason, therefore, why the justification of men should not be gratuitous from the mere mercy of God, and why at the same time the merit of Christ should not intervene, which is subject to the mercy of God. But to our works are directly and equally opposed the gratuitous favor of God and the obedience of Christ, each in its respective place."

More recently, J. Jeremias affirms as the central message of the New Testament that the sinless One takes

the place of sinners. "He takes the very place of the ungodly (Rom. 5: 6), of the enemies of God (5:10), of the world opposed to God (II Cor. 5:10)."

Critique

We turn to *New Wine Skins* with respect for our brethren who published it, but with the realization that a document as critical and as important as this must itself be subjected to the closest scrutiny. One disconcerting feature of such an examination is the discovery of the omission of the substitutionary atonement of Christ from the Scriptural passages cited. Another is what seems to be a diversion of the apostolic meaning of reconciliation, from an act of God accomplished in the death of His Son for our sins, to the Church's own reconciling activities.

On page 4 of *New Wine Skins*, Mark 10:45 is cited but only a part of the verse is quoted. Omitted is the important latter part, "... and to give His life a ransom for many."

The death of the One, Christ, for all is repeatedly asserted in II Corinthians 5:14-15. Yet on page 16, these verses are summarized, "The love of Christ leaves us no choice but to carry out His purposes." This summary entirely omits the substitutionary references.

Sections of Paul's great statement on reconciliation from the fifth chapter of II Corinthians are quoted on pages 8 and 16. But in neither case does it cite his most explicit interpretation of God's work of reconciliation as the great exchange wrought in Christ: "Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

According to Paul, we are recon-

ciled to God by the death of His Son, (Rom. 5:10), through His cross (Eph. 2:16). Making peace by the blood of His Cross, (Col. 1:20), God did reconcile us to Himself in Christ and did give unto us the ministry of reconciliation, (the word of reconciliation), that God made Him to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, (II Cor. 5:18-21).

New Wine Skins follows the inaccurate New English Bible translation of II Corinthians 5:18, "He has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation" and concludes that "the life of God's people is characterized by reconciling activity."

Thus, *New Wine Skins* encourages the notion that what Paul means is "enlisting" us in "reconciling activity" instead of proclaiming reconciliation as the act wrought by God in the substitutionary cross of Christ.

So the question arises: Is *New Wine Skins* permitting the true wine of the Gospel to escape from the Church's message?

Other Scholars

Meanwhile, some of the best scholars of our day are vindicating the Westminster doctrine of reconciliations as God's act in the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

In addition to the writing of J. Jeremias, read *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross and The Cross in the New Testament*, by Leon Morris and *The Work of Christ*, by G. C. Berkouwer. And there is R. Taylor's *God Loves Like That*, a volume which calls us back to James Denney's great work on *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*.

Finally, here is the clear word

The author is professor of Church History, Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga.

of Dr. T. F. Torrance of Edinburgh from his *Theology in Reconstruction*:

"Justification by Christ is grounded upon His mighty act in which He took our place, substituting Himself for us under the divine judgment, and substituting Himself for us in the obedient response He ren-

dered God in worship and thanksgiving and praise. In Himself He has opened a way to the Father, so that we may approach God solely through Him and on the ground of what He has done and is . . .

". . . Who once and for all has wrought out atonement for us in His sacrifice on the cross . . .

"Justification by Christ alone means that from first to last in the worship of God and in the ministry of the Gospel Christ Himself is central, and that we draw near in worship and service only through letting Him take our place . . .

"Nothing in our hands we bring, simply to His cross we cling." ☐

A plea for perspective —

Sacrilege and Cupidity

M. E. BRADFORD

The social gospel is old hat. Its shiny newness has long since worn away; and even in theological circles it has experienced an embarrassing interrogation.

But it is by no means dead.

After apologizing for the doctrinal excesses of some of its early champions, and after developing a new and conciliatory idiom for use on the theological and political conservative, it now sits comfortably in the councils of Christendom, its essentially political and utopian character effectively masked.

Television programs and books have been recently devoted to its resurgent influence. And, in fact, that influence has never been diminished. All we can say is that, for a time, it was checked. The heterodox order of priorities it represents has long been a pulpit commonplace.

And it is with reference to that order of priorities that I here propose to examine and define the origin of social gospel as a political force. For it is this politics *cum* faith that presents American conservatism with its most serious challenge.

Hot Line To God

It is by no means easy to debate with men who insist they speak for God. American liberalism (whose theological voice the social gospel

is) has always had a plentiful supply of adherents who speak for God; and they have, I am sorry to admit, had no monopoly in this business of sacrilege; American politicians of various persuasions have claimed a pipeline to the deity.

By now American conservatives should have learned that this is a degrading strategy — and that the very nature of their position makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to "play the game" this way.

And what is more important, they should have learned how to answer the latter-day bogus "thus saith the Lord," on its own theological ground.

Rhetoric of Love

The backbone of the popular brand of the social gospel is what I call "the rhetoric of love." Its argument goes something like this: "God is love; God has given us (we, the liberals) a clear definition of what he means by love; those who oppose what we urge are the enemies of love."

No normal American will admit that he is against love (or deficient in it); and the American conservative, when charged with such an enormity will "crawfish," "hedge," or perhaps try to "outlove" his opponent. In brief, he will do anything but insist that there is such a thing as an excess or misplacement of love.

He knows in his bones that man is indeed prone to excess in all things (including love); and a re-

luctance to indulge excessive impulses is part of what we mean by conservative. But he is unwilling to examine political and philosophical sentimentalism (by definition, expression of emotion out of proportion to its occasion) in its theological dimension. And he must do so if he is not to fall victim to the rhetoric of love.

The good old theological name for this excessive or misdirected love is "cupidity." It was the original sin and has, since Adam put the love of Eve before the love of God, been among the most frequently repeated. And it is the error into which good men and true fall most readily. Assuredly, it is the sin into which the social gospel should lead us through the rhetoric of love. For this rhetoric makes no distinction among the objects of love. It sees all objects as equally worthy and thus abolishes all order of priorities in our obligations.

Heart And Head

For example: American grants of aid to free nations may at times prove wise, necessary, or even successful. But the conservative maintains that the virtue of any foreign aid program is conditioned by its effect on our economic and military posture.

The rhetoric of love may call for greater and greater largess in the name of humanity; but the theologically-grounded answer to its insistence is that our obligations to preserve our own economy, and with

Reprinted from THE FREEMAN of the Foundation for Economic Education, with permission.