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the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Advocating continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and the Reformed faith

A Touchstone

To be sure, creeds and confessions are the Church's response to the Word of God and in no respect to be identified with that Word itself. They are subordinate standards, secondary standards, and there can never be an infallible standard other than the Word of God. But our creedal statements are intended to voice the Church's painfully wrought out and gradually acquired understanding of the Scriptures, and to reflect that which the Church has received from Christ and the apostles in the Scriptures as to its meaning and implication.

The confession is therefore a touchstone, a test, a pattern, a measuring rod, a form of unity which also dominates and designates error and heresy; and our books of church order and our ecclesiastical constitutions have historically viewed it as such.

—John R. de Witt
(See p. 7)

S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 15

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MAILBAG

GRACE AND LOVE

It is charged that the Westminster Standards underemphasize the love of God and are strong on His power and majesty. As a matter of fact, God's love is mentioned more than seven times in our present standards. That it is not mentioned more is not due to an emphasis on His power and majesty, but rather because the Westminster divines had

an overwhelming sense of that special kind of love for undeserving sinners for which only the word grace seemed suitable.

The old confession is as thoroughly saturated with the word grace as the new confession is with the word love. Conversely, the word love occurs in the Westminster Standards more times than does the word grace in the new confession.

Grace means God's love to the unworthy, to the undeserving, to the ill-deserving. Yes, as my old Columbia professor put it, grace is God's love to the hell-deserving. Calvin had such a sense of our ill-desert in ourselves that he insisted, "No man is loved by God but in Christ."

Nor may the word grace be objected to as not "plain English." The English Bible has made it familiar to us all. It is a one syllable word that may be defined with one syllable words. Thus, grace is God for us in Christ. Grace is God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit as He points us to Christ, dying in our stead. It will take all of eternity to thank God that "out of His free grace and love alone" He saved us in Christ.

—(Rev.) William C. Robinson
Claremont, Calif.

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MORE ABOUT CONFESSION

Today I read the six chapters of the proposed confession in the August 9 *Journal*. I had expected much more subtle heresies such that a layman would have to study both the old and the new to determine the errors. Never have I seen such a deliberate, willful expression of contempt for Christ and His Church as is contained in the proposed confession.

To write such a document and then to call it the confession of a Christian Church overwhelms me. It would be more reasonable to see such a thing offered by the Communists for the open purpose of eliminating the Church.

It is my desire to go on record as a layman who will not belong to any organization with such a confession. It is in direct conflict with many, many statements of the very Bible it purports to interpret, but I will not attempt to cite examples.

I am eternally grateful for the way the *Journal* is keeping us posted on the "inhuman" (if I may borrow a word) activities in the Presbyterian Church.

—Jon E. Tinsley
Albertville, Ala.

NOT CONCERNED?

With all due respect to you and your staff I don't care too much for the *Journal*. It is well written, but in my estimation it does not come to grips with the problem. Most people who furnish your articles seem to be more concerned that they may lose their identity as Presbyterians than