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MAILBAG

POSTSCRIPT

May I add a postscript to the letter in the April 19 *Journal* from the Rev. John Chinchin, who wrote from the bush of Africa of the loss of his entire library by fire. He praised God for supplying the need for materials with the gift of hun-

dreds of back issues of the *Presbyterian Journal* received in the first mail following the fire.

Mr. Chinchin does not know that those packages were believed to be in use in Liberia when a notice was received that they were being held in Customs for additional postage.

We were extremely provoked after having tried to follow shipping instructions implicitly, but sent additional postage immediately. Following the fire, we realized that the Lord does indeed work in mysterious ways, for had they been delivered they would have been in the fire.

—Mrs. M. G. Johnson,
Indianola, Miss.

THE ABORTION ISSUE

As interested and concerned with the situation our Church finds itself in as I am, I have yet to be moved by any article as I was with "Concerned Without Comfort" (May 3, *Journal*).

We have been blessed with two daughters, but my brother and his wife are unable to have children. Due to adoption, God has given our family the most wonderful little boy, their son, our nephew, and a light of life for his grandparents.

How much happiness this child generates! His mother did not choose abortion. She did not "destroy the fetus," as so many young women are urged to do. I note it is always called the "fetus" and not the "child." But the fetus is a child and murder is still murder.

If young women who are with children only knew the happiness their children could be bringing, the love their child would receive, it could make a difference. Aren't we being most unfair to them not to let them know?

—Mrs. Gordon H. Doss
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

HERS AND HIS

This comment would undoubtedly be more fitting if it originated with one of the fair sex instead of one susceptible to being charged with male chauvinism. However, I cannot resist the urge to give three cheers and a few robust Presbyterian hallelujahs for Mrs. David P. McBrayer of Houma, La., (Mailbag April 12), who has resisted any temptation to personal aggrandizement in favor of obedience to God's Word. If the authority of the Scriptures means anything, it surely tells us that a woman cannot be an elder in an assembly with a Biblical form of government.

Having received this assurance that there are still those who will place obedience to God above all else, I now wait with eagerness though not holding my breath, for one of our professed Christian ath-

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When Is the Sabbath?

On our way to the Far East, recently, we crossed the International Dateline between Hawaii and Tokyo late one Friday afternoon—and suddenly, about dark, it was Saturday night.

Speculating, we reasoned that if the plane had crossed the dateline at 11:55 p.m. that Friday, Saturday would have been just 5 minutes long for us. Conversely, had we been travelling the opposite direction and crossed the dateline at 11:55 p.m. of a Saturday, we would have experienced *two* Saturdays!

It is a strange feeling to lose (or gain) an entire day simply by crossing an imaginary line. We began to think what might have happened had we traveled a day later—no Sunday!

Then we started thinking about the continuing argument advanced by some Christian brethren who insist that one particular day in the week is eternally sacred because it is mentioned in the Bible: the seventh day, or Sabbath.

Most Christians, of course, worship on Sunday—not so much because they willingly violate an explicit Biblical command, but because they believe the commandment concerning the “Sabbath” can appropriately refer to the first as to the last day of the week—in fact, to any suitable day in seven set apart for the worship of God. Thus many Christians freely call Sunday “the Sabbath.” And they remember that in the Bible “sabbath” refers to years and weeks as well as certain days.

The difficulty of selecting a particular period between sunrises and sunsets and saying “this is *the* sacred period specified in the Bible” should be obvious. For one thing, the calendar has been changed more than once since Biblical times and we have no assurance that the day we call Saturday is the Seventh Day of the Bible.

Our experience with the International Dateline sharpens the point we would make. Which was the Sabbath? That day on the eastern

side of the dateline, or that other day just a few miles away on the western side?

When Christians on the eastern side of the dateline got out of bed on Saturday, the same morning that Christians on the western side of the dateline got out of bed on Sunday, for which was that day the Sabbath?

We think the answer is inescapable. God requires of us one day in seven. He does not hold us to a particular period of twenty-four hours. The celebrant of the Lord’s Day is as obedient as the celebrant of the Sabbath.

One additional thought: If this reasoning is valid, then people forced to work on Sunday on account of their “works of necessity and mercy,” do not automatically retain the freedom to use the other six days as they please. God still gets one day in seven. ☐

Whom Do We Confess?

When we recite the Apostles’ Creed, whom do we confess? Ourselves, or Jesus Christ our Lord? Our opinions, or God’s actions? Do we trust in what we have done for God, or in God and what He has done for us in Christ? Is our confidence in our clever acumen and up-to-date scholarship, or in the resurrected Christ and the Spirit He has given? Is our future the great things we desire for ourselves, or is the coming of Christ our hope of glory? Do we believe in our faith, or do we believe in God the Father almighty?

The creed itself is crammed with the objective facts of God’s saving acts. When its recital is introduced with the phrase, “Let us confess our faith,” we refer to the faith which we believe. All too often, however, this introductory sentence is misinterpreted as meaning the faith by which we believe, that is, our subjective act of believing.

When we subjectivize, it is all too easy to relativize. Then everyone

thinks it permissible to put his own individual interpretation upon an or all of the creed’s articles: fact, fantasy, fable.

Some regard the Apostles’ Creed as largely figurative, but they repeat it for the edification of the babe in Christ who still hold it to be factually true. When the process of subjectivizing is carried to its ultimate conclusion, it becomes believing in our own faith, in our feelings, even in our hunches; then we are confessing only our faith in ourselves.

To hold the faith as factually true, we need to keep the emphasis on God, accepting the creed’s affirmation of His mighty acts as not being merely human hallucinations. To that end, pastors and sessions may wish to reconsider the way in which they introduce the creed. We offer for their consideration some such phrasing as, “Using the Apostles’ Creed, let us confess the living God, and His great and gracious acts for us men and for our salvation.”

In whatever way each church decides, let us proclaim God’s mighty intervention in Christ for our salvation. — W. C. ROBINSON. ☐

It’s Always Godless

Some truths have to be repeated again and again — they are basic and, human nature being what it is, we all need to be reminded.

We thought of that when a letter came across the desk from a Christian friend who was reflecting on the possible effects of the new *rap-prochement* between the United States and Communist China. “Wouldn’t it be wonderful,” wrote our friend, “if the leaders of China would let down the bars to a preaching of the Gospel. What a difference it would make if Christians should be found in the leadership of that Communist country!”

We need to be reminded again and again, not only that Communism is godless, but *why* Communism is godless. It simply will not work among believers. The basic philosophy is incompatible with the Christian faith and where Communism enters, *prima facie* evidence exists that Christian faith has departed. In other words, there is no such thing as *Christian Communism*. The two terms are mutually contradictory. Whenever you see or hear Marxist principles supported by