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the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Supporting continuation of a Presbyterian witness loyal to Scripture and the Reformed faith

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day, therefore, is not just a holiday. It is not a feast to celebrate having got successfully and prosperously through one more year. In fact, to the Christian, who abides in thanksgiving each day of his life, it is not really a special day at all. But when the calendar, the harvest leaves and the turkeys signal a national holiday, it is a very special thing to rejoice in the adversities with which God has blessed and chastened His own.

It is a particular time to recognize not only the Lord's care, but the trials that strengthen, the pain that builds patience, and the reverses that teach humility. Amid the festivities, the afflicted and suffering ought especially to appreciate that they are uniquely blessed with God's presence and that their rewards are beyond compare.

—Ann W. Hancock
(See p. 7)

S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER 8

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MAILBAG

ROLES REVERSED?

In the past, it was generally recognized that the United Presbyterian Church USA was more aggressive on social issues and the Presbyterian Church US more orthodox in theology. At this writing one wonders whether the latter roles might be

changing.

The first four ecumenical councils which set forth the doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Christ are the basis for the definition of orthodoxy in the Code of Justinian. In accord therewith, the UPUSA Confession of '67 declares:

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Rev. G. Aiken Taylor, Ph.D., Editor
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Seeking to defend, encourage, interpret and report developments in the Presbyterian Church in America as long as it is truly Reformed. Reporting conservative efforts in the PCUS, while encouraging Reformed conservatives in the PCUS in their witness, showing them respect, goodwill and sincere appreciation. Reporting important events in other Churches in the Presbyterian and Reformed family.

THIS WEEK—

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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, is published every Wednesday by the Southern Presbyterian Journal Co., Inc., in Weaverville, N. C.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$5 a year for individuals, \$3 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 postage paid at Weaverville, N. C. 28787.

POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to Presbyterian Journal, Box 635, Weaverville, N. C. 28787. Subscribers should allow three weeks for change of address in continental U. S. Change of address notices should include both old and new addresses (with zip codes).

NEWS AND EDITORIAL correspondence should be addressed to P. O. Box 3108, Asheville, N. C. 28802. Editorial offices located at 247 Charlotte St. in Asheville.

TELEPHONES: (All area 704) editorial office, 254-4015, 254-4016; business office, 645-3310, 645-3962.

"The Trinity and the Person of Christ are not redefined but are recognized and reaffirmed as forming the basis and determining the structure of the Christian faith."

The 1974 PCUS Declaration of Faith gives no such affirmation to this historic orthodoxy. In its single reference to the Trinity, it says:

"Reflecting on this mystery, the ancient church formulated the doctrine of the Trinity."

This is merely a statement of historical fact that even an unbeliever who knew his church history would admit.

In June, the UPUSA and PCUS General Assemblies met in Louisville, Ky., at the same time, and both spoke in reference to the Trinity. The UPUSA Assembly declared:

"In order that members of a congregation may be led into an experience of authentic Christian worship, we ask churches to recognize the necessity of reaffirming the trinitarian conception of God who has promised to be present with us through the sanctifying action of His Spirit."

The PCUS Assembly authorized the publication of a proposed *Book of Confessions*, including a Declaration of Faith. This cites Matthew 28:16-20 as the basis for its doctrine of the Trinity, yet it never cites the baptismal formula exactly as our Lord gave it in His Great Commission. Instead, it speaks of "One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Chapter 1, 5), and from the *Study Guide*, "He is God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Stripping off the definite article from the Son and from the Holy Spirit obscures the personal distinctions within the Godhead. It fails to follow the full phraseology of our risen Lord, to whom "ultimate sovereignty now belongs." It breaks with the practice of the ecumenical Church, for we all baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Here "the name" is singular, maintaining the unity of the Godhead. Within the precincts of the one name, distinctions are indicated by the repetition of the definite article with each: *the* Father, and *the* Son, and *the* Holy Spirit. It is a person who promises, "Lo, I am with you always." And since this Person, the Son, stands between the Father on one hand and the Holy Spirit on the other, from both of whom He is distinguished and to both of whom He is related, this shows that the first and third mem-

bers are each as personal as is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The name of God is ever precious on the lips of Jesus: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name . . . Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour, Father, glorify Thy name . . . I kept them in Thy name which Thou has given me." In the most solemn of His recorded utterances, the risen Lord Jesus Christ gives us the Christian name of God.

Let us honor our Lord by declaring anew both in our declaration of faith and in our congregational worship the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

—(Rev.) Wm. Childs Robinson
Claremont, Calif.

CORRECTION

I appreciated the Rev. William H. Bell's review of *First and Second Timothy and Titus*, by Irving L. Jensen, that appeared in the August 28 issue of the *Journal*.

However, I would like to offer one

correction. Dr. Jensen is not on the faculty of Moody Bible Institute. He is the professor and chairman of the department of Bible at Bryan College.

—J. Stephen Johnson
Moody Press, Chicago

MINISTERS

M. McCoy Franklin from Hermitage, Tenn., to the First Church (PCUS), Auburn, Ala.

William R. Johnston from Decatur, Ga., to the First Church (PCUS), Opelika, Ala.

Ira K. Kennerly from Tallahassee, Fla., to the Three Chopt church (PCUS), Richmond, Va.

David Ray, received from the Reformed Church of America, to the Central church (PCUS), Jackson, Miss.

Harry F. Barnett from Charleston, W. Va., to the Coeburn and Mount Olivet churches (PCA), Coeburn, Va.

Charles E. Cook Jr., former pastor of Trinity church, Macon, Ga., has been appointed executive secretary and stated clerk of Augusta-Macon presbytery (PCUS), with offices in Milledgeville, Ga.

DEATH

Virginia Leftwich (Mrs. L. Nelson) Bell died in Asheville, N. C., Nov. 8, after a long illness. Often overshadowed by her famous husband and of a generally retiring disposition, Mrs. Bell will be remembered for significant accomplishments in her own right. In China she served as director of nurses in the country's largest Christian hospital. Back home, she performed invaluable service as the first secretary in the office of the newly founded *Presbyterian Journal*. Her children include the wife of the world's best known evangelist, a missionary wife, the wife of one of the nation's top nuclear physicists and the pastor of the largest church in the PCUS.

• Someone in the office wanted to know why our Thanksgiving issue this year is the one dated Nov. 20, when next week (Nov. 27) we'll still be a day ahead of Thanksgiving. That's because we'd like as many people as possible to get their Thanksgiving issue before Thanksgiving. Even so, at least half our subscribers will not, the mails being what they are. And missionaries overseas who are not the fortunate recipients of an airmail subscription will be getting their Thanksgiving issue sometime after Christmas. (One or two of those fortunate missionaries, by the way, were put on for airmail delivery, at a cost of \$52, as a Christmas gift from someone in a supporting congregation.)

• In the youth section of this issue (p. 16) we are beginning a significant new series of programs on the strange new cults of our time, prepared by the pastor of the Town North Presbyterian Church (Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod) of Richardson, Tex., the Rev. Harris Langford. Mr. Langford has been working on this series a year and we believe it will make an important contribution to an understanding of pseudo-religious move-

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK



ments. Perhaps you will want to use the series with some adult study group as well as with young people.

• It isn't necessary to be exposed to a cult to encounter unconventional ideas. Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan, an Ethiopian-born Jew and a professor at Marymount College in Tarrytown, N.Y., has mounted a movement against the Christian ethic which, he says, "has outlived itself." Among Dr. ben-Jochannan's views, as delivered to a Richmond, Va., audience of social workers and students: "A marriage license is not necessary for a family . . . The man doesn't even have to live there. It's a family if he can just visit, even if it's only from midnight to 4 a.m. If there's a shortage of men . . . women will miss the boat if they wait around to marry. They should practice unlicensed polygamy if there's a shortage of men." And, "We may have to steal and be violent to beat the system . . . You can't go around not stealing when you're hungry.

You get nothing without violence." The newspaper account we saw didn't speculate on the effect of all this on the professor's Roman Catholic students at Marymount.

• Among interesting statistics from the recent national elections that may not have reached all our readers are some involving the distaff side. In Nevada, the brothel madam whose election to the state legislature was announced in some early editions of the papers discovered by the end of the count that she actually had lost. But in Boston, an admitted lesbian won a seat in the legislature on a "needs of the elderly" ticket. And in Arizona, Sister Clare Dunn became the first Roman Catholic nun to win a legislative contest—running on an "equality of rights for women" ticket. North Carolina's Susie Sharp became the first woman elected chief justice of a state Supreme Court. Six new feminine faces will appear in the U.S. House of Representatives, but there now are no women in the U.S. Senate. ☐