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PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

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

Life Imperishable

We are born anew to an inheritance of eternal life with God Himself, "to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Life imperishable, which has no end; life undefiled, incapable of corruption; life unfading, which shall never change, ever—that is God's gift in Jesus Christ.

There is a corollary here. If our inheritance is kept by faith in heaven for us, then we are also kept on earth for it. The love of God reaches down into the midst of this present world to hold safely and securely, eternally and lovingly, each one who puts his faith and trust in the Saviour.

Eternal life begins here and now.

—R. Norman Herbert
(See p. 7)

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MORE ABOUT 'REFORMED'

May I join the fun?

What is all the fuss about? We know: 1) God has chosen His own people out of humanity; 2) God will work in the hearts of the elect through the Holy Spirit to effect a change—to make that person spiritually alive; 3) We cannot tell by looking at any person's physical

characteristics whether that person is elect or not. So, for goodness sakes, speak to every person you see or meet in case they are of the elect!

If they are, the word you speak may be the instrument to confirm the work of the Holy Spirit. Any person who shows a sincere desire for or interest in salvation or conviction of sin surely demonstrates

the work of the Holy Spirit in their life already.

When we have a birthday at our house we know there will be a cake. I may make it, or one of the girls. Whoever makes it will have to use a bowl and spoon and oven and eggs and milk and butter and sugar and flour. We don't say, "How nice, a birthday, we will have a cake" — then smile sweetly and wait for it. No sir! We get to work because only through the instrumentality of our hands and the oven, etc., will there be a cake.

Do I have to say that God has provided the means of salvation, and *that's* how they experience prevalent grace?

—Mrs. Gordon Reed
Greenville, S.C.

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Rev. G. Aiken Taylor, Ph.D., Editor
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Rev. Henry B. Dendy, D.D., Managing Editor

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.

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"Get thee to a nunnery." Start a slick journal for Doctors of Divinity, but leave the driving to Clydie!

It is not that one seeks to evade that which should and must disturb, or instruct, but having traveled the hills and vales of theological discussion into despair in youth, I finally arrived at the simple conclusions of childlike faith rather than intellectual efforts to comprehend the mind of God.

I think it is all as simple as Romans 10:9, and I honestly do not care to stay in a state of constant harassment over whether I am elect. I believe I am saved through Jesus Christ and that His life is the pattern I should strive for.

So if your devoutly-to-be-hoped-for fears materialize, (aren't most of your readers laymen?), the majority of us I'll just bet feel as I do and thank God for a Clydie, whoever she is, who is able to articulate so perfectly what we have been unable to say.

—Mrs. Edward H. Blount
Atlanta, Ga.

I'm not a great letter writer, but after reading your fine articles on the Reformed faith, I feel compelled to express my appreciation.

I know whereof you speak. I inherited, in my present church, a group of embryonic theologians whose views are so narrow that anyone or anything not strictly Reformed is considered suspect and dangerous.

Your articles are very incisive to the heart of the problem. I trust they will be fruitful in removing the divisive spirit which so hinders the cooperation and unity that ought

The Trinity

WILLIAM C. ROBINSON

The doctrine of the Trinity is at once the ultimate and the supreme glory of the Christian faith, as C. W. Lowry once said. It seeks to interpret God almighty in terms of a life of love.

In His self-revelation, God has manifested Himself in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament reveals the story of the personal intercourse of our Lord Jesus Christ with His God and Father and with the Holy Spirit, whom the Father sent to take the things of Christ and show them to us.

Jesus prayed, Abba, Father, not my will but Thine be done. Jesus had been baptized and as He was praying, the heaven was opened and the Father said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased," and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form as a dove.

As the Lamb of God, Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God. Because of His perfect obedience, the Father accepts as righteous all those who believe in Him. The Father raised Christ from the dead for our justification, and exalted Him to His own right hand to pour forth the Holy Spirit, who effectually calls us to faith.

The greatest love of which Jesus could conceive was the love of the Father: "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. I, even I myself, am the Good Shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore does my Father love me,

because I lay down my life that I may take it again."

Likewise the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, for God commends His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

In the matter of knowledge, Jesus declared that "no one knows the Son save the Father, neither does anyone know the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." He also said, "I know my sheep as the Father knows me and I know the Father." Jesus affirmed that His meat was to do the will of Him who sent Him, to speak the words which the Father gave Him, and to do the works the Father sent Him to do.

Paul reminded us that the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. "Even so, the things of God no one knows save the Spirit of God." As the Son glorifies the Father, so the Spirit glorifies the Son, taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us, reminding us of His words and unfolding their meaning.

In His light we see light. By the gracious work of the Spirit, illuminating the darkness of our minds, we perceive the revelation of the loving Father made by the gracious Son.

Thus does the New Testament present the personal intercourse of the Father with the Son and with the Holy Spirit. In so doing, it presupposes the personal relations between these distinctions within the Godhead. "The Trinity of God's self-revelation is no impersonal system of relations between hypostases in an essence" wrote Leonard Hodgson. "It is the living, loving communion of Father, Son and Spirit into which we have been adopted in Christ."

This blessed truth of God's self-

In His self-revelation, God has manifested Himself in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

revelation helps us with tensions which arise in thinking. For example, person implies relations with other persons. And if these persons are external one to another they involve limitations. Accordingly, much Unitarian theology posits a limited God. But when the personal relations are eternally existing within the Godhead, then is God truly personal while at the same time He is sovereign, absolute.

The idea of personality implies a plurality of persons. C. J. C. Webb put it this way: "We cannot think of any life as truly personal unless it is a life of intercourse between persons." If we try to think of God as unipersonal we have to think of Him as eternally related to some object of personal concern. So Unitarian theology tends to think of creation as eternal—the eternal object of God's personal love and care.

The Biblical affirmation, God is love, implies the lover, the beloved, and the bond of love between these persons. Thus it indicates eternal personal relations within the Godhead. Otherwise, this climactic truth would need to be changed to read: God became love only after He had created persons to love.

The New Testament sees creation as temporal. Behind or before creation it sees the Son glorifying the

(Continued on p. 19, col. 1)

The author, professor emeritus of Church history, Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga., now lives in Claremont, Cal.

Father: "Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. For Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

"In the beginning was the Word (already existing), and the Word was with (in loving fellowship with) God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with (in blessed communion with) God. No one has seen God at any time; God only begotten who dwells in the bosom of the Father has revealed Him."

Thus the doctrine of the Trinity enables us to believe that the life of God is essentially and eternally personal without denying the implications of the doctrine of creation. Thus a great line of penetrating Christian thinkers has found a lift in the revelation of an eternal life of intercourse between persons.

A contemporary Roman Catholic scholar, Gerard S. Sloyan, has arrived at this same conclusion: "The world of existence, the real world that is, reveals itself to us as a universe of persons united by love. Love exists eternally in God in the Trinity of divine persons.

"The community of spirits in the world who are united by love is a manifestation of the divinity which is Three. Between the divine Trinity and the human community there exists a bond of love and of communication which is the person of Christ, true God and true man."

Among our own Church fathers, H. Thornwell presents it this way: So intimate is the connection between society and personality that, in our humble opinion, the infinite God could neither be holy nor blessed unless there was a foundation for society in the very essence of deity. A god that was only a single person would want that union without which the person would be imperfect. Solitude may be enjoyed for a while; but it is imprisonment and death if made permanent . . .

"Before time began, or the stars were formed, the Father rejoiced in the Son, and the Son rejoiced in the Father. There was the deepest union and the most ineffable communion, and it was only to reflect their blessedness and glory that other persons and other societies were formed, whose laws and principles must be traced to the bosom of the deity."

Charles Gore expressed the truth in these weighty words: "There is,

JOHN KILLINGER
answers the question,

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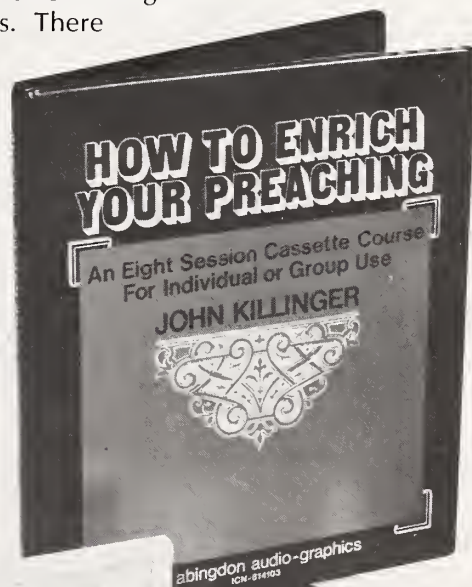
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of course, a profound intellectual difficulty—amounting, I think, to impossibility—in conceiving of such an eternal, living, personal God as a solitary monad, seeing that all the elements of conscious life, whether will, or knowledge, or love, involve relationship—an object of will, an object of knowledge, an object of love.”

Again he said, “God cannot be thought of consistently as Absolute Life, Absolute Intelligence, or Absolute Love, unless He be thought of in a Trinitarian manner.” Hence there is a deep philosophy in the doctrine of the Trinity.

In a book entitled *God and Personality*, C. J. C. Webb researched this matter in the history of religions. He found that Trinitarianism is the only faith which, over a long period of centuries, preserved personal religion. By personal religion he means a religion in which the worshiper loves God because he is sure that God loves him. Webb ascribes this continuance of personal religion to the revelation of the eternal love links in the Godhead.

Another facet of Church history was brought out by K. E. Kirk and his associates in their Oxford *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*. “Every new revival of Christianity has been a revival of adhesion to the fullest Trinitarianism.”

Out of the Great Awakening came these challenging words of John Wesley: “I know not how anyone can be a Christian believer . . . till the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God, that is, in effect, till God the Holy Ghost witnesses that God the Father has accepted him through the merits of God the Son; and having this witness, he honors the Son and the blessed Spirit, even as he honors the Father.”

At the heart of God's self-revelation is this loving communion of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, so it may well be that great human loves offer a pointer or partial analogy helping to understand a bit of this holy mystery.

In Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*, Sidney Carton soliloquizes as he is about to die for Charles Darnay, “In that England which I shall never see again, I will have a place both in the heart of Darnay and in the heart of Lucy Manette such that neither will be dearer to the other than I shall be to each.”

By his unselfish love he would in-

dwell and interpenetrate the hearts of those for whom he dies. In the heart of Lucy Manette there would dwell the love for Darnay, her husband, the love for Sidney Carton who died for Darnay.

Perhaps the indwelling of Christ and of the Spirit points the analogy

a bit more directly to “the Trinity which seeks to construe the highest in terms of a life of love.”

This living love which wills the blessedness of others is “the Father from whom every family takes its name,” the source of all social life and organization.

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