

The Presbyterian JOURNAL

AUGUST 2, 1978
VOL. 37, NO. 14
\$6.00 A YEAR

SUPPORTING THE ENLARGEMENT OF A PRESBYTERIAN WITNESS LOYAL TO SCRIPTURE AND THE REFORMED FAITH

C285
572p

Here Is the Problem

For the most part, Paul's Gospel about salvation by the righteousness of faith has no real place in modern preaching. It has even been said that the Reformers' passionate concern about justification by faith does not even make sense to modern man.

It is not that talk about salvation is lacking. The modern evangelical would be horrified if it were to be suggested that he did not believe in salvation by grace.

And here is the problem: He is so confident about his belief in salvation by grace that it does not occur to him that there may be a radical difference between the way he thinks about salvation and the way Paul and the Reformers thought about it.

—Robert D. Brinsmead

(See p. 10)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR AUGUST 20

COMO

Collection
University of NC Lib
Depot Hill NC 27514



Mailbag

PASTORAL VISITATION

I want to thank you and say I appreciated so very much your editorial, "Called to Minister," in the June 21 *Journal*.

Being in the ministry of evangelism and going into many churches, I find this is one of the biggest sins of omission on the part of many pastors. If a congregation has any criticism about its pastor, the people unload it on a visiting minister. The one I hear more than all the others put together is "He doesn't visit," or a similar complaint. On the other hand, if they have great compliments about him, the one I

hear more than others is "He is a faithful pastor," or a similar remark.

I have found a congregation will be patient with average or even below average work in the pulpit if a man is faithful in his pastoral work and remains true to the Scriptures in his preaching. This by no means should cause the pastor-preacher to become lazy in his pulpit preparation; he should proclaim the message God has given him to the best of his God-given ability.

How can a man preach effectively to the needs of his congregation if he does not know his people personally and individually through pastoral visitation? Is this not what Paul had in mind when he spoke of revisiting the churches established on his first journey in order to "see how they do"?

You have spoken to a great need and I trust it shall take root in the

hearts of many young pastors.

—(Rev.) Reuben J. Wallace
Laurens, S.C.

NOT A 'SKIM THROUGH'

I just wanted to say that last year when my husband suggested subscribing to the *Journal*, my reaction was, "Oh no, not another magazine to read!"

However, since the *Journal* has been coming, I find it is the one I devour from cover to cover while other publications get the "skim through" treatment.

We really appreciate your ministry.

—Mrs. Frances Lancaster
Baltimore, Md.

AUTHOR IDENTIFIED

The five-line filler on p. 13 of the July 5 *Journal* should have been credited to Caspar ten Boom, Corrie's wonderful watchmaker father.

—(Rev.) A. Boyce Spooner
Waynesville, N.C.

ISSN 0032-7549

The Presbyterian JOURNAL

REV. G. AIKEN TAYLOR, PH.D., EDITOR
CHARLES E. BOYCE JR., ASSISTANT EDITOR
REV. JAMES A. McALPINE, MANAGING EDITOR
JOEL BELZ, ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR

Seeking to promote a rising reformation in God's Church according to the whole counsel of God known as the Reformed faith; to define, describe, popularize and promote the Reformed faith; to encourage and assist Reformed conservatives; and to report on activities in Presbyterian and Reformed bodies.

THIS WEEK—

VOL. 37, NO. 14, AUGUST 2, 1978

'FEAR NOT, LITTLE FLOCK'..... 7

Human fears vanish and great strength appears when our total trust is placed where it belongs

by JOHN T. CLARK

PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION—I..... 10

Sometimes, we may make forward progress only after we have looked thoroughly into the past

by ROBERT D. BRINSMEAD

DEPARTMENTS—

Editorials.....	12
The Layman and his Church.....	13
Sunday School Lesson, August 20.....	14
Under My Palm Tree.....	16
Book Reviews.....	17

THE PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL, a 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 Asheville, N.C. Second class postage paid at Asheville, N.C. 28802.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$6 a year for individuals (add \$2 for overseas), \$4.50 for members of Every Family Plan churches.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES:
The Innsbruck Mall, 85 Tunnel Rd., Asheville,

N.C. 28805. Phone (704) 254-4015.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ADVERTISING:
Address P.O. Box 3075, Asheville, N.C. 28802. Please allow three weeks for address change. Include old and new addresses and ZIP codes.

EDITORIAL AND NEWS: Address P.O. Box 3108, Asheville, N.C. 28802. Manuscripts on topics of current interest welcome.

POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to the Presbyterian Journal, Box 3075, Asheville, N.C. 28802.

THIS AND THAT

After receiving the second issue of the *Journal* as a gift subscription, I knew I was going to subscribe—I love the magazine! It has helped me so much to grow in my faith and knowledge of the Scripture. My husband and I have been members of the PCA only three years, having been in the UPCUSA all our lives. This is written in haste so I won't miss next week's issue.

—Louise (Mrs. J. E.) McCarrell
Clinton, Pa.

I have been receiving your *Journal* since last summer as a one-year gift for the graduates of Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Miss. Often when I found the *Journal* in my mailbox—usually a month late because of coming by sea mail—I've spent a half hour at the doorway to finish reading up. It is, for me, a hotline to have fresh information and credible insights from my friends in the U.S. I could find names familiar to me several times and I could read just enough news of Presbyterians which I needed to know.

I don't know the details of why the *Journal* is coming to me now, but because I'm afraid of missing a single issue, here is my check to renew my



EDITORIALS

The Problem and a Possible Solution

While the present financial distress in the Presbyterian Church in America is both painful and embarrassing, it no longer can be ignored or kept from public scrutiny. As additional information becomes available (July 12-19 *Journal*, and p. 5, this issue), a definite pattern begins to take shape and a possible course of action begins to appear.

Three primary considerations loom large in the picture which now has begun to give the whole Church concern. The first is the unfettered freedom of church members, congregations and presbyteries to give as they please and designate as they please; and the unfettered freedom (nay, obligation) of the denominational committees, which are responsible for raising their own budgets, to solicit all the support they can get.

This unfettered freedom has not been matched by the practice of responsible stewardship, either on the part of donors or on the part of recipients. Elders and deacons have acted with varying degrees of responsibility in developing budgets and channeling gifts. At least one denominational committee has experienced unusual success in attracting gifts while others, with less appeal, have well nigh starved.

A second primary consideration which looms large is the shocking fact that the PCA has the lowest record of per capita giving to its own General Assembly causes of any Church in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council—perhaps of any denomination of any size in America.

The PCA's record in per capita giving to all causes—current expenses and benevolences—is quite respectable: some \$371. But of that amount only \$35 per capita goes to the General Assembly committees. The OPC more than *doubles* that proportion and in the CRC and the RPCES, per capita giving to denominational agencies is *triple* that amount.

There are reasons, of course. For

one thing, a very large number of PCA churches are brand new congregations—either started from scratch, or formed by the division of former PCUS congregations. Such churches must get on their feet before they can begin carrying their share of the benevolence load. Unfortunately, some of these churches also want to travel first class before reaching out: They have pushed their pastors' salaries out of sight and committed themselves to elaborate building programs at the expense of benevolences.

For example, one congregation listed in the PCA *Yearbook* had a total income of nearly \$50,000 for 1977, but gave only about \$1,500 to benevolences. Another church reported total gifts of nearly \$44,000, and while some \$1,400 went to local and non-PCA benevolence causes, *not one thin dime* went to the Assembly committees.

The problem of local and non-PCA causes is very much a part of the overall picture. One congregation reported nearly \$64,000 total gifts and only \$800 to Assembly causes. But it gave \$2,300 to local and non-PCA objectives.

Perhaps the record was set by one congregation which reported \$113,000 in total gifts, \$5,600 to local and non-PCA causes and \$40 (that's *forty dollars*) to the General Assembly committees—all of it, by the way, to Mission to the World.

The PCA itself must bear some of the responsibility for such giving patterns. It has encouraged presbyteries to take the initiative in matters which in other denominations are left to the General Assembly—even to the sending out of missionaries.

A third primary consideration which looms large is the tendency of both large and small churches to give disproportionate attention to one favorite cause to the practical exclusion of the others. No one would deplore major attention given to world missions. But if such attention is not bal-

anced by at least minor concern for administration, something is wrong.

But whoever heard of faith-promise gifts solicited in behalf of administration?

That just may offer a clue to the ultimate solution of the crisis: pledges of the faith-promise kind to *multiple* causes, not just one alone. It is an idea that deserves consideration, though it will require much study. □

As We Are

From West to East one meets the cliché of Paul Tillich that "God accepts us as we are." Let us examine this statement in the light of God's actual acceptance of Saul of Tarsus, and the inspired Word which He gave to Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ.

Saul of Tarsus entered the road to Damascus breathing out slaughter and threatening against the disciples of the Lord. Did God accept him as he was, or did He radically change Saul before He accepted him for Christian baptism? Even Rudolph Bultmann points out how much Saul the inquisitor was changed both in his thinking and in his living by his conversion.

No, God did not accept Saul of Tarsus as he was that day on the road to Damascus. God rejected him, smote him to the ground, rebuked him severely, blinded him so that he needed to be led by the hand and kept him without sight, neither eating nor drinking three days.

Only after those days of darkness with God's judgment searing his conscience, did the Lord send to him Ananias to open to his guilt-laden conscience the Gospel of the grace of God, and lead him to make his Christian confession (I Cor. 15:3-8). Only when he had confessed Christ's death for his sins and resurrection for his justification, did God accept him for baptism into Christ.

To Paul and through Paul God revealed the doctrine of His righteousness for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ (Rom. 1). The apostle lamented that Israelites according to the flesh went about seeking to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of God. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10).

Paul knew he had not his "own

righteousness which is according to the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness from God upon faith" (Phil. 3). Only so may one attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

"God accepts you as you are"—since it comes from Paul Tillich—could be understood to imply that God is indifferent to immoral living, and that God who speaks in grace does not also speak in judgment. If understood that way, it would mean that God is not the living God who has revealed Himself as the holy one of Israel but is only a philosophical construction.

Calvin taught (*Institutes* I, xiii) that the true God distinguishes Himself by His immeasurable infinity, His spiritual nature, and His triunity. "Unless we grasp these, only the bare and empty name of God flits about in our brain to the exclusion of the true God." In Tillich, one fails to find the Trinity.

"God accepts you as you are" makes no mention of Christ nor of the righteousness of Him in whom alone are we accepted by God. Let us remember the words which Paul spoke to save the jailer from suicide: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts 16:31).—WILLIAM C. ROBINSON. [F]

Beheading the Body

The Rev. Louis H. Evans Sr. once told of a man writing him to ask for his church letter. The man stated that he was quitting as a church member but was not quitting as a Christian. He didn't feel any need of the church and so he was just going to belong to Christ.

Dr. Evans replied that he himself was not going to participate in such a bloody act—that of cutting Christ, the head, from the Church which is His body.

Know anyone who wants to belong to the head but not the body?

In order for a person to find wholeness he must be committed to a great cause and a great person. A great fellowship with an eternal purpose and a great person are found in Christianity but one cannot truly leave one for the other—the two go together. [F]

Conservation: A Biblical Mandate

"And God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen. 1:28, *NASB*). These ringing words have been considered as marching orders throughout the centuries. Christian cultures have ingeniously subdued rivers, exterminated unwanted species, overkilled useful animals and wantonly wasted natural resources.

But Genesis 2:15 was overlooked: "Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." The right to rule was never questioned; the responsibility to care, rarely mentioned.

Until now. Modern sentiment has shifted away from a literal understanding of Genesis 1:28 as being contrary to environmental concerns. That misinterprets the problem. The rape of nature has resulted because Scripture was *not* taken literally and specifically enough.

People have assumed that those first words apply "to mankind . . . forever." In fact, the directive was given to Adam before the fall. *Before* the fall! When nature is first mentioned after the fall, Adam's position is notably different:

"Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the day of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you. . . . By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:17-19).

Gone is the monarch dominating nature. Instead, Adam is consigned

to a struggle with it, constantly reminded that he has no more than clay feet.

Technology promised to eliminate the struggle. It appeared to reestablish human dominance, until suddenly the conflict changed. Modern societies can control thorns and thistles. The current question is whether they can manage unstable ozones, polluted seas, erosion, and the disappearance of minerals. Scientific knowledge is being used to subdue nature—but not without cost. And the cost of rampant exploitation has alarming possibilities.

Over and over Scripture's message is, "The earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it" (Psa. 24:1). "The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine; the world and all it contains, Thou hast founded them" (Psa. 89:11). The basis of this ownership is simple, ". . . for it was He who made it."

Only Psalm 115:16 suggests again that nature might be entrusted to man's control. "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord: But the earth He has given to the sons of men." However, God's position and man's are differentiated in the beginning: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, But to thy name give glory." After contrasting the Lord with idols, the psalmist declared, "But as for us, we will bless the Lord . . . Praise the Lord!" God first put Adam in the garden to tend it. Adam's descendants now live in it to bless the Lord as stewards.

Psalm 104 illustrates the point. Past creative actions of God were extolled; then the verbs change to the present tense. God "sends," "waters" and "causes," He is presently involved. When God acts, nature responds. Mankind's place is considered one part of a functioning whole. "Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until evening." Dominion belongs to the Lord for "they all wait

The author of the layman's column this week is Nancy May (Mrs. Roy) Penney, an elect lady of Pasadena, Tex.

(Continued on p. 18, col. 3)