

The Presbyterian JOURNAL

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John Preached Repentance

How does one enter that holy of holies where the human spirit encounters the Holy Spirit of God with all His benefits? The key passage may very well be the description of the role of John the Baptist, whose preaching of *repentance* is offered as the divinely appointed prescription for opening the Way of the Lord.

Baptism with water unto repentance, John said, prefigured the real thing: Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Repentance, then, is what opens the door to the holy of holies. Repentance is the mood in which we must meet the Lord, if we anticipate blessing.

When the Lord Jesus sent out the disciples two by two, it was to "go and preach that men should *repent*."

When the crowd asked Peter on the day of Pentecost, "What shall we do?," the newly bold apostle replied, "*Repent*, every one of you. . . !"

After Cornelius believed, the Church rejoiced that God has also "granted to the Gentiles *repentance* unto life."

All blessings from God are by grace, but the ministry which seeks revival will be a ministry calling for *repentance*. It "prepares the way" and, God willing, the fire will fall.

—THE EDITOR

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR MAY 6

Mailbag

IT READ DIFFERENTLY TO HER

So Mr. Anonymous (March 21 *Journal*) got discouraged and dropped out of the ministry! He is not the first to do that, nor will he be the last. And he is not the first to proof text his reasons, so that it seems to be God's fault, rather than his own.

In your comment on the writer, you said "... he has faced courageously a personal crisis and found his way through it while holding onto his faith." As I see it, he did what he did as a coward and would have been better off losing the faith he now has so that God would have had a chance to convert him.

There is enough truth to the testimony to allow me spots of agreement: i.e. that all Christians share vocational commitment, and that pastors need to understand the work-a-day trials of their parishioners. But one is caught by the barbs in sentences sprinkled throughout the essay.

He says, "I remember . . . associating with . . . people recognized as achievers . . . I was only the insignificant leader of a rather small church . . . going nowhere professionally, financially, or functionally." I couldn't help thinking of Jesus, the Lord Mr. Anonymous says he worships.

Insignificant? What's more insignificant than a dusty, weary, itinerant

preacher, and from Nazareth yet? Leader of a small congregation? Like a group of 12 blind idiots, who most of the time didn't even see what was before their eyes, and, if they did, forgot what it meant the next instant? A nowhere profession? Jesus wasn't going anywhere but to a cross. A nobody financially? Jesus didn't even have what the foxes or the birds of the air enjoyed. A nothing functionally? Jesus was a rabbi whose synagogue was somebody else's fishing boat or a big rock in the wilderness.

Mr. Anonymous knows that "one probably will not prosper financially in the pulpit" and "I prefer to have plenty." Who doesn't? Even the Gentiles do the same!

And what about functional fulfillment? He says, "I am finding more personal satisfaction and enjoyment away from the pastor's life than I found while in it." Perhaps Mr. Anonymous' denomination does not have the same catechism we do, but he seems not to know anything about the first question and its answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy *Him* forever." It says nothing about fulfillment being personal satisfaction or enjoyment. Jesus, I believe, said something about people who want to be first, having to be slaves of all.

It seems to me that the decision to go into the pastoral ministry can be compared in many respects with the decision to marry. Mr. Anonymous says, "For the orderly function of the body of Christ on earth, it ('full-time Christian service') is a no more crucial calling than any number of other vocations." I couldn't agree more! But, for those who take on themselves the vocation of ministry, as for those

who take on themselves the bonds of marriage, that decision, made in the faith that it is God's will, is no less binding when one despairs than when one is sure of the rightness of the original decision.

—Barbara B. McDonald
Enterprise, Ala.

THIS AND THAT

Just a note to say "Praise the Lord" for the *Presbyterian Journal*! I do enjoy each issue of your magazine and I am particularly blessed by the variety of articles you use from different denominations.

—Mrs. Mike Overstreet
Osceola, Ark.

Please accept my much belated compliment on the very attractive format—a new plus to a plus *Journal*.

—Mrs. Henry M. Peoples Jr.
Metairie, La.

MINISTERS

Daniel M. Berry III from Meridian, Miss., to the Dollarway Church (PCUS), Pine Bluff, Ark.

Ronald Brauer, recent graduate of Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga., to the John Calvin Church (PCUS), Tampa, Fla.

Charles W. Clubb from Knoxville, Tenn., to the Big Rockfish and Hope Mills, N.C., churches (PCUS).

Thomas R. Coxe from Albany, N.Y., to the St. Andrews Church (PCUS), Sanford, N.C.

Philip W. Dunford from Ft. Collins, Colo., to the First Church (PCUS), Forest City, N.C.

Walter F. Hall from St. Petersburg, Fla., to the Bridgewater and McDowell Churches (PCUS), Morganton, N.C.

Madison M. Highfill from Charleston, W. Va., to the Hallsville Church (PCUS), Beulaville, N.C.

The Presbyterian JOURNAL

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Leland C. Jorgensen, former pastor of the Westminster Church (PCUS), Asheville, N.C. has been retired by Asheville presbytery and will make his home in Wheaton, Ill.

Franklin P. Medford III from North Miami Beach, Fla., to general presbyter of the Presbytery of the Everglades (PCUS), Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Alfred W. (Fred) Morgan from Austin Seminary, Austin, Tex., to the first pastor of Holy Trinity Church (PCUS), San Antonio, Tex.

Robert W. Ratchford from Lowell, N.C., to the First Church (PCUS), Hickory, N.C., as associate pastor.

Across the Editor's Desk

DEATH

Henry E. "Jeb" Russell, honorably retired by Memphis presbytery (PCUS) in 1975, died in Memphis on March 27, at age 69. He was pastor of the Second Church, Memphis, for 17 years prior to his retirement.

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■ We find it exciting to talk about the Holy Spirit. Don't you? And when something fresh on the person and work of the Holy Spirit comes across the desk, we can hardly wait for a "slot" in the publishing schedule when we can fit such material into another issue of the *Journal*. Ideas, as Richard Weaver reminded us years ago, have consequences when they take hold of human imagination. Beliefs have a galvanizing effect when we become persuaded of some truth. It is written that the Word of God is a light unto our feet and a lamp to illumine our pathway. But in order for life-changing power to pierce even to the dividing asunder of the inner compartments of human personality, bringing new birth and a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit must come in. Isn't that exciting to talk about? If you think so, you will enjoy this issue.

■ Our publishing schedule did not allow us to recognize the fast-breaking developments at King College, Bristol, Tenn., in the editorial columns of this issue (see p. 5, and also the April 11 *Journal*). What seems to be happening in this corner of the Presbyterian Church US is almost wholly without precedent: The college's board of trustees has turned over control to a group of men who have promised to pay the bills if they are given free rein to turn the institution into a distinctly Christian educational center. If committed evangelical Christians of stature can be added to the faculty—especially to the Bible department, which has been woefully inadequate—King College will once again merit the support of Christians. And there will be another school added to the growing number of institutions that have learned that Christian parents are willing to pay premium prices for their children's education only if such prices buy an education that is truly Christian.

■ Perhaps this is the place to note that in Bloomington, Minn., a local bowling alley has refused to renew a contract with a church bowling team because the team members do *not* drink beer. The management explained to the bowling team from South Covenant Church that the alley depended on beer sales to make a profit and for that reason it was looking for teams made up of people who drank. "I wasn't aware that liquor licenses permitted discrimination against non-drinkers," wryly commented Gordon D. Biehl, manager of the team.

■ We don't often extend a general solicitation for manuscripts because we have discovered that such an invitation is too likely to bring a flood of material we don't have the time to read and probably couldn't use if we did. But there is an area of concern about which very little is written but very much needs to be: responsible churchmanship. We're thinking about contemporary applications of everything implied in the Apostle Paul's comment about "elders that rule well." As we travel about today, we are overwhelmed by the evidence that in even the best circles the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ needs *responsible* leaders. There's too much opportunism, too much immaturity and even irresponsibility evident in the practice of the high and holy business of representing God before the watching world. If any of our readers have some really burning thoughts on the subject, we'd like to hear from them.

■ We are still getting occasional notices from the Weaverville post office that some subscribers have forgotten that we moved our offices to Asheville over a year ago (see p. 2 for details). If you send a letter to us addressed to Weaverville, you simply will have it returned to you as "undeliverable." [1]



EDITORIALS

Believing . . . Unto Salvation

There's a difference between, "Be orthodox in your beliefs and you will be accepted and approved—you will pass the test," and, "Be orthodox in your beliefs and you, yourself, will undergo a change—some amazing things are likely to happen."

It's the difference between beliefs that are held for the legal and judicial difference they make and the credentials they supply, and beliefs that are held *also* for the effect of connections established and the experience of doors opened to new worlds of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

On the one hand, faith qualifies a believer for an insurance policy, so to speak, that he can file away for the time when he needs to claim its benefits. On the other, faith is a kind of "firstfruit" of grace which acts with life-changing effect.

It's the difference—if we may say it reverently and without being misun-

derstood—between, "Believe in the Gospel and a way shall be opened unto the presence of God," and "Believe in the Gospel and *you* shall be opened up, as by a surgeon, for the power of God to enter and take over."

The difference may be small, it may be subtle, it may seem insignificant. But it is of enormous consequence.

In some religious circles—particularly in some Reformed circles—the emphasis on belief is so academic, so rote, so *mechanical*, that the believer becomes skilled in believing and not much else. He comes to approximate a brilliant student whose head has been filled with knowledge, but to little practical purpose.

What happens is that the Gospel is handled somewhat the way one might handle an economic system, or a political theory. One may be a Fabian socialist, for example, and through study and experience come to aban-

Honoring the Prince of Peace

Of our Lord and Saviour it is written: He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth; when He was smitten, He turned the other cheek; when He was imposed upon, He went the second mile; when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; when He was crucified, He prayed His heavenly Father to forgive His crucifiers. Thus did the Prince of Peace leave an example for His disciples to follow.

Can His body, the Church, so far forget His example as to contribute substantially to such causes as the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe which is using violent means to overthrow the government of Rhodesia, on the continent of Africa?

In this process white settlers and Ulster missionaries have been murdered so that both the Salvation Army

and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland—our Mother Church—have suspended support of the World Council of Churches.

Moreover, a current communication from a PCUS presbytery to the General Assembly insists that these gifts should not be "guilty of paternalism." This seems to mean that no strings or limitations should be placed on their use. If that be the meaning, they could be used for the shooting down of commercial airplanes, killing many or all their civilian passengers.

What individual people care to do with their gifts is their own business. What the Church gives in the name of Christ, however, ought to be given to support the spread of the example and teaching of Him whom we rightly acclaim as the only Lord and Head of His body, the Church.—WILLIAM C. ROBINSON. [F]

don his socialism and embrace passionately a commitment to free enterprise. His beliefs have changed and his commitments have changed—even his way of life may have changed. But he is in some respects the same person.

On the other hand, if the issue is *marriage*, and one has been a confirmed bachelor and he falls in love: His beliefs change, but with startling effect, not only upon his beliefs but on his life.

While the illustration of marriage is a very feeble one, it also is one that the Bible itself uses often to suggest the relationship between Jesus Christ and

(Continued on p. 23, col. 2)

Was It a Wise Choice?

The New Covenant Church of Pompano Beach, Fla., is a frankly charismatic congregation. Prominent in its leadership are the Leonard LeSourds (Mrs. LeSourd is the former Mrs. Catherine Marshall) and other well-known figures in the Presbyterian Charismatic Communion.

The congregation was Presbyterian in orientation, but informal in connection until it applied to and was received by the Presbytery of South Florida of the United Presbyterian Church USA (see news story, p. 6, this issue). And thereby hangs, as they say, a tale.

There was a time in its development when the congregation could have turned to any one of three strong presbyteries: the one which received it and which included the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale and the First Presbyterian Church of Miami; the Presbytery of the Everglades of the Presbyterian Church US, which includes such strong congregations as the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church and Old Cutler Presbyterian Church; or the Presbytery of Southern Florida of the Presbyterian Church in America, which includes such congregations as the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and the Granada Presbyterian Church.

There also are Florida Presbyteries of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

But New Covenant organizers had their eyes on the UPCUSA from the