

# GUARDIAN

*Salvation by God's grace*

## *Justification by Faith*

**THEODORE J. GEORGIAN**

Did you know that the Bible was the most studied book of the Middle Ages? The general opinion is that the Bible was virtually a lost book during those centuries. As a matter of fact, however, there was no dearth of biblical sermons and commentaries in this period. In countless monasteries and educational centers of Europe men gave themselves to study of the Bible. Moreover, the language and the content of Scripture permeated medieval thought.

Why, then, was the sixteenth century Reformation so desperately needed? The answer is that the study of the Bible in the Middle Ages was restricted to the cloister and the school. The masses were illiterate people who, though they had some notion of the content of Old and New Testaments through visual aids and oral teaching, were ignorant of the message of the Bible. Even the professional religionists whose work was to study the Bible did not understand its message, because they obscured it with their fanciful and mystical interpretations.

The Reformation was born nearly four hundred and fifty years ago when the key was rediscovered which unlocked the meaning of the message of God's Word. That key is Jesus Christ. Once again sinners could rejoice in the knowledge that a holy and merciful God had pardoned all their sins, past, present, and future. And why

was God so merciful? Because sinners had changed and were more worthy of his favor? Not at all. But rather, because of Jesus Christ, for whose sake God would accept sinners as righteous in his sight, through their receiving this only Savior by faith alone.

Would you know what I meant if I used the expression, "justification by faith"? Perhaps you would agree with Professor Paul Tillich of Harvard who wrote: "(Justification by faith) is so strange to the modern man that there is scarcely any way of making it intelligible to him. And yet this doctrine of justification by faith has divided the old unity of Christendom; has torn asunder Europe, and especially Germany; has made innumerable martyrs; has kindled the bloodiest and most terrible wars of the past; and has deeply affected European history and with it the history of humanity. This whole complex of ideas which for more than a century . . . was discussed in every household and workshop, in every market and country inn . . . is now scarcely understandable even to our most intelligent scholars. We have here a breaking down of tradition that has few parallels."

One can almost hear the sigh of relief that such a tradition is breaking down. It has now become scholarly to say: here is a doctrine that has divided Christendom; a divided Christendom

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is very bad; therefore, away with the culprit responsible for this crime.

The truth of the matter is that here is a precious and basic element of the Christian gospel which has always been in the Bible. Christendom became divided when many rejected this teaching, and Christendom can only be reunited when Christians agree to receive this blessed Book as the authoritative Word of the living God, and to believe its doctrine.

### Biblical Truth

Paul wrote to the Romans, "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It was the understanding and personal appropriation of this divine promise that gave birth to the Reformation. Were Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Farel, and Knox all wrong? And are the principal creeds of Christendom — Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Congregational, Baptist — all mistaken in their clear affirmation of this teaching of the Bible? Shall we attempt to dress this scriptural doctrine in the garb of radical reinterpretation, disguising our rejection of it as "fresh insight"?

Perhaps these few observations may serve to emphasize once again that the Bible is not on trial before the tribunal of twentieth century man, but that modern man is on trial before the bar of God and of his holy Word. We must take our stand *under* the Word of God, not above it. So that the burden of proof is with man to show that his brand of Christianity is fully conformable to our historic Christian faith as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as infallibly certified by our Lord and his holy apostles.

Just what is this thing called justification by faith? Let us note first of all that it arises out of the fundamental question of man's relationship to God. What shall that relationship be? One of fear or love? Certainly not of fear. We do not want to look upon God as a disobedient child does who trembles at the thought of his father coming home from work. Thus did Adam hide from God. And why? Because he was guilty. And why did he feel guilty? Up until very recently, modern psychology would have an-

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

swered that Adam and Eve were not guilty; they were sick. They were not responsible for their condition. In other words, let's not use the word *sin*. That is a 'swear' word, not only in modern psychology, but also in the modern church.

It is refreshing, therefore, to discover that "sin" is coming back to the vocabulary of psychiatry. A past president of the American Psychological Association pens these significant words: ". . . the so-called neurotic is a *bona fide* sinner, his guilt is from the past and real, and his difficulties arise not from *inhibitions* but from *actions* which are clearly proscribed, socially and morally, and which have been kept carefully concealed, unconfessed, and unredeemed." And churches and clergymen who are amateur dabblers in psychiatry should ponder *these* words of the eminent psychologist: "At the very time that psychologists are becoming distrustful of the sickness approach to personality disturbance and are beginning to look with more benign interest and respect toward certain moral and religious precepts, religionists themselves are being caught up in and bedazzled by the same preposterous system of thought as that from which we psychologists are just recovering."

### Reality of Sin and Guilt

Let us hope that both psychiatry and the church are getting back to the Scriptures which have insisted upon the reality of human sin and guilt. The apostle John wrote, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And, mind you, those words were directed to Christians!

It is the universal human condition that forms the necessary background for the teaching of justification by faith. Basic to justification is pardon. The Shorter Catechism defines it as follows: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as right-

eous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

I am aware that to many this idea represents "cheap grace." But let me ask you: What alternative plan is there for bringing sinful men back into the favor of their God? Our sinful past we cannot erase, nor can we live in the future without sin. Daily we sin against God and his holy law in thought, word, and deed. If we cannot save ourselves, how will salvation come? God could never take us back to himself without demanding the penalty of our sin against him, and he could not abandon his justice which insists that sin must be punished, unless he were to abdicate his throne and no longer be God. What did he do, therefore? Rather than let us perish eternally, he chose the incredible alternative of providing his own Son as our substitute, to do what we could not do but what had to be done if we were to be saved.

### The Only Way

I am well aware of the objections to this central teaching of holy Scripture. I know how even in the church men decry the idea of believing in a God who, as they caricature it, "must have his pound of flesh." But the point is that they are not arguing with me. Their grievance must be with God who in the Bible has revealed his method of salvation. And it is the only way of salvation, for there is no salvation except in Jesus Christ. That is why Paul gloried in the cross of Christ. You see, once you accept God's verdict that you are a sinner deserving the penalty of sin and unable to save yourself, then you must see that if you are to be saved at all and know the eternal favor of God *it must be by pure grace.*

None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other Hope in heav'n or earth  
or sea,  
None other Hiding-place from guilt  
and shame,  
None beside thee!

The Reformation speaks to us of justification by faith alone. This ex-

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*Here is the second in a series of messages originally prepared for radio by the pastor of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N. Y.*

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# Why I Believe the Westminster Confession of Faith Is Valid for Today

The Westminster Confession of Faith is still the official creed of most Presbyterian denominations. But if present trends continue it will not be so much longer. The largest Presbyterian body in the world is considering the adoption of a radically different confessional statement. Several Presbyterian denominations are involved in union negotiations which envision brief ecumenical formulations to replace the Westminster Standards. And even from those who might be expected to defend these venerable documents we sometimes hear censorious remarks.

Now we mention all this for a reason. It is because we are well aware of the fact that we may seem to be devoted to a 'lost cause' when we contend for the Westminster Confession. Indeed, if popular opinion were a reliable guide in these things it would be a 'lost cause' indeed. For the Westminster Confession of Faith is certainly not highly esteemed today even by most Presbyterians. But in spite of all this we are still prepared to contend for the Confession. After all, the cause of truth is never lost. And we are bold enough to say that the arguments in defence of the Westminster Confession are simply truth itself. So we proceed to candidly state our reasons for believing this Confession to be a valid formulation of the truth for the needs of our day.

## 1. IT IS BIBLICAL

Our first reason for defending the Westminster Confession of Faith is the fact that it is faithful to the Bible. This we would emphasize more than anything else. After all, there is nothing so important in a confession or creed as fidelity to the infallible Word of God. And the truth is that this particular creedal formulation excels all others precisely in this: that it gives so accurate and balanced a summary of what the Bible teaches.

The writer of this article was once a member of a Presbyterian denomination which renounced the Westminster Confession by adopting a brief mod-

ern creed. He also attended a Presbyterian Seminary in which this Westminster Confession was ridiculed as an outmoded relic of antiquity. In fact, it was this ridicule which stimulated curiosity leading to a careful study of its teaching, and to a very interesting discovery. The learned professors who ridiculed the Confession did not agree among themselves as to the most basic teachings of the Bible. They were not able to make a plain and unambiguous statement of what they themselves believed. They could only state clearly what they did not believe, as they criticized the Westminster Confession.

But when the writer studied the Confession the contrast was amazing. Here he found clear statements. Here he found, not doubts, but strong affirmations. One could accept these statements, or reject them, but one could not say that they were obscure or ambiguous. Nor could one say that they contradicted the Scripture. To the contrary, the most impressive thing about this Westminster Confession was the abundance of scriptural support. And perhaps the most impressive confirmation came from these sceptical professors themselves. For they would sometimes admit that *if* one could believe the Bible to be infallible he would *then* have no alternative but to accept the teaching of Westminster. (It was only that they did not accept the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.)

Now it is here that we discover the weakness of the criticisms we hear today against the Westminster Confession. We hear that it is now 'out of date'. It is said to be 'too theological'. Some say it is 'too elaborate'. While others censure it for being 'scholastic'. Yes, we hear many things alleged against the Westminster Confession of Faith. But it is very easy to condemn this document in general terms, and quite another thing to prove the charges in anything specific. And the stubborn fact is this: that no one has ever yet produced a Confession of Faith that even rivals this one in point

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of faithfulness to Scripture. So again we repeat our assertion: this Confession excels all others precisely because it is so accurate a summary of the teachings of the Bible. We cannot prove this, of course, in a brief article such as this. But we can invite our readers to prove it for themselves — by securing a proof-text edition for their own diligent study.

## 2. IT IS VINDICATED BY HISTORY

Our second argument in defence of the Westminster Confession is drawn from the history of the church. We say this because church history, from the doctrinal point of view, is just a way of seeing how the Holy Spirit has led his believing people into the knowledge of the truth. The great creeds of the church are landmarks of the way. Consider the way it stands. We begin with a very brief formulation of doctrine in the second century, which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed. After this came the doctrinal controversies about the doctrine of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. As a consequence of these trials the church came to a more sure and complete grasp of the truth. So we see the church making further declaration

of its faith in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and in the Christology of Chalcedon. And observe one very important fact. In each of these formulations, marking the history of our faith, there is a more complete exhibition of the truth. In each instance the church confessed more than ever before amid the unbelieving world. As Dr. J. Gresham Machen once said, "All real doctrinal advance proceeds in the direction of greater precision and fullness of doctrinal statement."

Perhaps even more important than this, is the fact that once the work of clear formulation was finished in a particular realm of doctrine, it was finished for all time. As Dr. B. B. Warfield once said, concerning the formulation of Chalcedon, "There is nothing here but a careful statement in systematic form of the pure teaching of the Scriptures; and therefore this statement has stood ever since as the norm of thought and teaching as to the person of the Lord." This witness is true. And we see it quite clearly in the work of the Reformers. When the Reformation came, the entire body of creedal truth which had been formulated in the ancient church, was preserved.

### **Machen Quoted**

When the Reformed Churches drew up their own Confession, they were careful to include within them the entire doctrinal heritage of the creeds of the ancients. As Dr. Machen again reminds us, "We need not be too much surprised to discover that this is the case. The subject matter of Christian doctrine, it must be remembered, is fixed. It is found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to which nothing can be added." In other words, what the ancient church discovered in the Bible, and accurately defined (in their doctrine of the Trinity, and of the person of Christ), can never be changed for the simple reason that the Bible still preaches today exactly what it taught then.

And for our part we are fully persuaded that the definitions of the Westminster Assembly will likewise be preserved in the true church of God. Of course the day may well come again, when new confessions will be made in faithfulness to Scripture. Out of the conflicts of the past three hundred years there is doubtless a harvest to be gathered. But of one thing we

can be sure: the Holy Spirit will never lead the church to the sort of confession that contains less truth than the Westminster Confession. Rather will it encompass even more truth in crystal clear definition, just as the Westminster Confession contains the whole teaching of Nicea and Chalcedon *plus* the doctrinal advances of the Protestant Reformation.

But the point that must be stressed just now is that the time has not yet come for such a new Confession. We cannot possibly go *beyond* the Confessions of the Reformation while the church has largely fallen away from the truth which is already defined. No, we shall first have to recover our hold upon the principles of the faith from which we have so grievously fallen. Only then — when multitudes again come to know and believe the truths into which the Lord already has led his church — will it be time to talk seriously of going yet beyond.

But even then, let us never forget, the Westminster Confession will still be valid. It will be just as valid for that day, as the ancient creeds are for today. And the reason is this: truth does not change. Nor do creeds go out of date when they are faithful to the Scriptures. Nor will any Confession ever go beyond Westminster except by first taking up into its very warp and woof the teaching it contains.

### **3. IT IS SANCTIONED BY EXPERIENCE**

The third reason for defending the Westminster Confession is the testimony of experience. No, of course we do not suggest that the Confession is essential to a saving Christian experience. Nor do we mean to imply that a mere knowledge of this form of sound words will produce that saving experience. What we mean is simply this: when a man is really a Christian he will be such only because the teaching of this Confession is a true account of things. And he will never understand his own experience unless he is acquainted with this teaching. We speak whereof we know.

The writer himself was once an unbeliever, who came to eternal life through Jesus Christ. But at the time he could not comprehend his own saving experience. He could not explain what had happened to himself. He only knew that whereas he once was blind, now he could see. But then he became acquainted with the truth of

the Bible so clearly summarized in the Confession. And what a strange—and at first unpleasant—thing it was to learn these truths. Take, for example, Chapter VI of the Confession, which teaches that "we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil" by nature. Or think of the teaching of Chapter III, which traces the believer's salvation to the sovereign election of God, saying that "some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

### **Confession Quoted**

Or consider the teaching of Chapter X, in which we see how a dead sinner is actually brought to Christ! "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ." And on and on we might go.

Now we know how these things will sound to every unbeliever. We also know how they can sound, at first, even to those who have experienced the saving grace of God. For it is no natural thing for even a believer to give the credit all to God. But for the writer, at least, it is settled. There is nothing else to be said. When we look at the natural depravity of our own heart, we can only confess that the teaching of Chapter VI is a true description of our heart. When we honestly consider the gracious dealings of God, we can only say that in our case at least, it was God who elected us before we were able to choose him. And we know by the testimony of grace that it was the Spirit who made us alive while we were yet dead in trespasses and sin. To some these teachings are obnoxious. But for us it is not so. For we know that if these wonderful doctrines of the Confession were not true, there had been no hope at all for us.

It is sometimes said that the Westminster Confession of Faith no longer speaks the language of today. Perhaps this is true, in a certain sense of the word. Perhaps it is true because *we* have forgotten the language of God's gracious dealings with men who deserve his wrath and curse. Perhaps it is because we have become too accustomed to a superficial view of the

gospel of Jesus Christ. But one thing we know, and that by experience: the language of the Confession of Faith is the language of our heart.

#### 4. THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

The last argument we present in defence of the Confession of Faith is the present condition of the church. And what is that condition? Is it not lamentable indeed? To say that multitudes are ignorant of the first principles of the gospel would hardly be too strong. To say that there is great doctrinal confusion and uncertainty would be a mere understatement. But what is the reason for it all? Is it not that we have too long ignored our heritage of faith? We say "ignored" because the remedy is very close at hand.

It was Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, who once made the statement that there was more to be learned from the formulations of the Westminster Assembly than from many volumes of the theological literature of the day. And the same could be said today with even greater justification. Nor is this treasure merely open to the theologically trained. To the contrary, it was written expressly for the instruction of the whole company of God's own people. And there have been times in the past when vast multitudes of Christians were able to give a reason for the hope that was in them, because they studied this Confession.

There once was a time when many a humble Scot was a solid theologian. And little wonder. For then were earnest Presbyterians well instructed in the faith. They learned the Shorter Catechism when they were children. And they went on to the vast and high theology of the Confession as adults. Just imagine what this meant in the life of the church. And imagine what it would mean today if this Confession once again lived in the minds and hearts of men. Yes, this is the answer to the present state of affairs. It is to seek again the faith of our fathers as the joy and strength of our souls.

And best of all, it is actually happening in various places. For we ourselves have heard of Christians in various parts of the world who have rediscovered the riches of this Confession. Dispensationalist Baptists have found here a pure system of doctrine, and have renounced their former poverty for the riches of the Reformed

Faith. Creedless Evangelicals have turned to this treasure of sound teaching after growing weary of a superficial faith. And Presbyterians too have begun to awake to the fact that they would be very foolish indeed to forsake this precious "birth-right" for ecumenical "pottage."

It is sometimes said that we need a new faith for a new day. But what are we given by those who make such statements? We are given statements intended to show how little of truth we can get along with and still be Christians. We are given definitions that are as vague as it is possible to be while still sounding pious. And when we turn from these modern statements to the Westminster Confession what do we find? As Dr. Machen said nearly thirty years ago, "Instead of wordiness we find conciseness; instead of an unwillingness to offend, clear delimitation of truth from error; instead of obscurity, clearness; instead of vagueness, the utmost definiteness and precision." And that is what we need today. We do not need a *new* faith for a new day. What we need is

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perience of being in God's favor because of the righteousness of God's Son becomes ours by faith. Calvin has put it well, when he said that faith is like an empty vessel. So we come empty, with the mouth of our soul open, to implore the grace of Christ. Only in this way can we receive Christ and all the benefits he merited for us on the cross.

But let us beware right at this point. Let us not make the mistake of supposing that this faith which receives Christ is *our* contribution to salvation, as though God's part is providing Christ while our part is to believe. The Scripture teaches us that we are saved by grace through faith, and even that faith is not of ourselves, but the gift of God. Faith is but an instrument. It is a discarding of all confidence in self and relying solely on the assurance of mercy contained in God's gracious promise of salvation to all who believe. Faith is to call on the name of the Lord. Faith is to pray earnestly that God will help you to come to the Savior.

### Faith and Its Fruit

The difference between faith and all other methods of obtaining God's

the *true* faith; and that faith is still nowhere so wonderfully summarized as in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

### CONCLUSION

We realize that we have put the matter strongly. And we have intended to do this. But we add these last remarks to avoid all misunderstanding. We do *not* at all place the Westminster Confession on the same level with the infallible Word of God. We do not consider *any* writings of men to stand above criticism or correction. And we are quite prepared to listen to anyone who is willing to prove from the Bible that the Confession goes astray. But again we speak what we know—from the present state of the church—from our own experience—from our knowledge of church history—and our study of the infallible Word of God—and it is simply this: on all these considerations the Westminster Confession stands. We sincerely receive it as our own testimony of faith. And so we rise without hesitation to defend it as valid for today.

grace is illustrated in the life of Paul before his conversion. He, like many, was knocking himself out trying to please God and gain status in God's sight by his own religious life. God had to show him how useless was the attempt. In heaven no one will be able to say, "Thank God I am here by his grace *and* by doing my best to cooperate with God by living a good life." In heaven God will be praised for his matchless grace which alone is responsible for our salvation, from start to finish. "Salvation is of the Lord."

Then, once a person is justified by faith alone, and not by faith plus human effort, God expects him to demonstrate his new life by living to the glory of God. This is where Christianity comes right down to earth. It is not the professing Christian who is always saying, "Lord, Lord," who is pleasing to God — but he who daily does the will of his heavenly Father.

In closing let me confront you with these solemn words from the lips of the Savior himself: "He who believes on the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Have you come to the Son of God in the obedience of faith in him as your only Savior?



SPECIAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN JAPAN — 20TH ANNIVERSARY  
Tokyo, April 28-29, 1966

*Twentieth Anniversary Year*

## *The Reformed Church in Japan*

### **Declaration**

On this day of the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Reformed Church in Japan, remembering the faith and zeal manifested at the time of the founding of our church, we pledge anew to dedicate ourselves and all things to the glory of God.

### **Retrospect**

We realize that it was the unfathomable purpose of God to raise up the Reformed Church in Japan, in answer to the prayers of those who were longing for the establishment of a nation and church subservient to his will, on that day of April 28, 1946, when Japan was devastated and scorched by the war. Truly, the birth of the Reformed Church in Japan, initiated by Japanese Christians who were convinced that Christian theism was the sole foundation for a new Japan and who sought to establish a church whose creed and polity followed faithfully in the succession of Reformation heritage, was an epoch-making event in Japanese ecclesiastical history.

While we are humbly conscious of the great responsibility laid on our church, the path which she must tread has been clearly set forth in her "De-

claration of the Reformed Church in Japan" enunciated at the time of her founding. Looking back over the past twenty years, we are deeply conscious of our sinful failings and weaknesses which prevented our adequately fulfilling this solemn responsibility committed to us. Nevertheless, we gratefully acknowledge the grace of God, who, from a small group of eight churches and some 200 members, increased it till now there are some 65 churches with over 4,000 members. God has further enabled us to complete the official translation of the Westminster Standards as our creed, to maintain and operate the Kobe Reformed Theological Seminary, and to develop step by step a Presbyterian form of church polity.

### **History**

In the beginning, when the human race fell into sin in Adam, God instituted the covenant of grace, redeeming man in Christ, and uniting in one through Christ all things in heaven and on earth. This covenant of grace was fulfilled in the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection of Christ, and will be completed at his Second Coming.

History, under God's leading, which is based on this covenant, is moving toward the eschatological glory, through the proclamation of the gospel of Christ by the church. Standing on this biblical perspective of history, we seek to fulfill our task of proclaiming the gospel in the world, as a particular branch of the church of Jesus Christ.

### **Worship**

The life of the church centers in its worship. The church as a type of heaven, in which God dwells with man in Christ, reveals herself clearly in her worship on the Lord's Day. The God-centered life-view of our church, where all of our life is for the glory of God, is most clearly confessed in her strict observance of the services of the Lord's Day. For God dwells by his Spirit among his people in the services where the Word is read and preached, and where the people respond to its claims in obedience.

### **Theology**

Accordingly, the systematic grasp of God's Word, viz., theology, is an indispensable element in the vital life of the church. It must be our primary endeavor to learn systematically the Christian truths revealed in the Scriptures, in the light of the historic, Reformed theology.

To be sure, theology is no mere speculation, but the study of the Word spoken by the living Christ to man

in his actual situation. And it is the urgent task of a living theology to present clear life-principles based on the sovereignty of God to our present secular society that is rapidly becoming religiously indifferent.

The church must become one body to engage in a spiritual warfare, proclaiming and living by the principles of Christian theism, which is based on the sovereignty of God the Creator, the forgiveness of sin through the redemption wrought by the only begotten Son of God Jesus Christ, and on the regeneration and sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and these are built upon the norm of the infallible Word of God.

It is our earnest hope that the theological struggle of our church will result in our formulating our own creedal confession which we can confess before God and before man.

### **Evangelism**

Lest the claims and practices of the Christian-theistic world-and-life view petrify into a mere cultural activity, the church must energetically engage in evangelism which shall proclaim the gospel of forgiveness of our sins by faith.

We not only believe that the Holy Spirit himself directly saves men through the Word, but are constantly aware of our responsibility to evangelize the world, this mandate being committed to us by the risen Lord Jesus. The vitality of our church is to be translated into evangelistic activities. In relation to the practice of evangelism, the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ shows us that it must not merely be by words only, but in works of love as well. The evangelistic task of our church must therefore be the harmonious expression of theology and love issuing in diaconal ministry.

When we humbly reflect on the development of our church since its founding, we find that our church owes greatly to the contributions and

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*This "Declaration" was adopted at a special synod commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Reformed Church in Japan on April 28, 1966. It was forwarded to us by the Rev. George Uomoto, who modestly described it as a "rough" translation into English. We are certain that it is smooth enough for our readers!*

cooperation of the various Reformed and Presbyterian churches throughout the world. We express our heartfelt gratitude to these various churches of the world holding to the one Reformed faith, and pledge ourselves that with devoted faith our church will promote the task of evangelism throughout Japan, nay, to the ends of the earth.

### **Unity**

Holding to the catholicity of the church of Christ, we seek to execute the responsibilities of our church in relation to the fellowship and cooperation of the various churches throughout the world. This is a fellowship based on the unity of faith, and is fundamentally different from the compromising ecumenical movement which is at the expense of Christian truths. We believe that it is the will of Christ, the Head of the church, that the church on earth, which is spiritually one, should express visibly her basic unity in doctrine and church government.

### **Prayer**

We realize that the development of the kingdom of God is not by works of man, but by work of the Holy Spirit working through man. As our church seeks to fulfill her sacred task in conformity to his will, she must do so in constant, earnest prayer. Only as our church engages in her theology and evangelism in constant prayer, will she be able to stand as a church filled with the abounding power of the Holy Spirit.

We earnestly desire that the prayerful life of our church may be blessed by his grace.

### **Believers**

God has granted the glorious privilege equally to every believer, called of God, to participate in this ministry of our church, as she pursues her way toward the high and arduous goal. Believers must study and spread this Word of God in the midst of their present daily life. The theology and evangelism of the church has its roots in the concrete struggle of faith of every believer linked to Christ who seeks to be obedient to God's Word here on earth.

To establish a family which is founded on God's covenant is the first step in the concrete embodiment of our service to God. On the basis of a

family consecrated to God, each believer can serve God as his witness, utilizing his own gifts given by God. When the omnipotent God redeems mankind through his church, it is clear from the example of the apostolic church that he endows each one of his people with power from the Holy Spirit and thus manifests his glory. It is our earnest desire that, following the example of the apostolic church, each one of our members may be filled with the Holy Spirit, so that God may be glorified in the establishment of our church in our own land.

### **The Present Challenge**

At present, when life-and-world views are rapidly changing due to the recent astounding advances in scientific technology, it is the ardent wish of every society to realize its freedom and to recover its "humanity" which has been lost in a mechanistic culture.

Closer at home, the amazing economic recovery and prosperity of Japan has been called a "world miracle," but if we reflect on the spiritual condition of our people, we can no longer ignore the spiritual vacuum and confusion in their midst.

In this present age, when the old traditional authorities have lost their power and many are groping after true authority, it is our firm conviction ever since the founding of our church, that we must believe in the Reformed faith, in obedience to the authority of a holy God, the God of nature and history, for it alone provides freedom and real joy of salvation, and it must be this principle by which not only our people, but the whole world, must live.

Standing on the eternal Word of God that will never pass away, we hereby pledge ourselves to combat every form of atheism, to proclaim the sovereignty of God in every realm of life, in season and out of season, till the Lord comes again.

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

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**DIRECTOR OF NURSING WANTED for a Psychiatric Hospital in Ontario, to open in July 1968. Should be available shortly for organization and psychiatric post-graduate training. B.Sc.N. preferred. Standard salary. Apply to A. Vandermaas, M.D., President, Salem Christian Sanitarium Assoc., Inc., 10 Norris Place, St. Catharines, Ontario.**



## **My Name Is John**

**WILLIAM L. HIEMSTRA**

**M**y name is John, a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth and later an apostle of Jesus Christ. I would like to step out of the pages of Scripture and history in order to tell you something about myself. I trust that as I do this you will come to learn something more about Jesus Christ, because that has always been my chief concern.

I suppose that you are inclined to think of me as a rather mild-mannered person known as the "beloved disciple." I don't want to disillusion you but I also had to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. For your encouragement I would like to add quickly that by fellowship with Christ I did gain in knowledge and acquired that large measure of assurance which I came to possess as a child of God. And I believe that the same possibility exists for you.

In my youth I was a person full of energy—you remember I was designated by Mark in his Gospel as a "son of thunder." In my early days of discipleship I was inclined to be intolerant—maybe that surprises you. But Mark had occasion to report my words, "We saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us." I meant well, but the Lord corrected me. He said, "Forbid him not, for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us."

### **Fisherman**

You recall that Jesus had called me one day while I was busy at my work. I was mending nets at the time. I was a fisherman in partnership with my brother James when I was called by the Master. At the beginning I did not realize all that discipleship required. It is obvious that as a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth I had a great deal to learn, but I also had a great deal to unlearn. For some time we disciples considered ourselves to be the guards and guardians of Jesus of Nazareth. We considered it part of our duty as disciples to protect Jesus from too

much activity. We thought we had the responsibility to keep people away from him. But we had to learn that Jesus of Nazareth was genuinely interested in people.

I remember the time when the mothers and the little children came. We thought the Master was too big a person to be bothered with little children and anxious mothers. But he corrected us when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." We did about the same thing in connection with those Greek proselytes who wanted to see Jesus. We innocently and ignorantly wanted to keep them away from Jesus. We thought he was too busy to deal with "little" people. How wrong we were! This you know too.

Jesus always saw people as image-bearers of God. It seemed that he had such clear insight into people; he could see what we did not see, namely, the potentiality in persons. He saw what God's grace could do, and what God's power could do in the work of rehabilitation. I would just like to suggest that you consider this for your life—what great things God can do.

### **Son of Thunder**

On one occasion on a trip from the north country to Jerusalem we went through Samaria. The Samaritans would not show us any hospitality, so in anger my brother James and I said, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" It sounds rather strange, doesn't it, for the "apostle of love" to be talking in anger. Jesus rebuked us. He said, "The Son of Man came not into the world to condemn the world, but to give life." We deserved the rebuke; and I can say the same thing about all his admonitions—they were difficult to bear—I don't want to minimize that—but they were all done in love, and we came increasingly to appreciate that aspect of the Savior's admonitions.

Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned in my life of discipleship with Jesus

of Nazareth was that true leadership is reflected in service. It was a lesson learned which I practiced as much as I could in my later discipleship. I continued to remember that love is service and service is true leadership. I came to that conclusion by a rather difficult road. Let me tell you about that.

One day my mother whose name was Salome and who was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, came to Jesus with a special request. She said, "Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom." In eastern countries it was customary to have three thrones—one for the ruler and then two for his assistants. My mother wanted these two places of honor for James and myself. Salome, my mother, was a disciple of Jesus. She had heard him speak about the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, and I don't think she really believed that this was going to be an ordinary earthly kingdom or government. But she believed that no matter what the kingdom was, there surely would be some places of honor and she desired these places for her two sons because of maternal affection.

I am frank to confess to you that James and I did not oppose our mother when she made this request. Mother thought that Jesus would act favorably upon her request because of the family connection. Mother was also a follower of Jesus, and James and I were among the first to be called into discipleship. She also knew that Jesus had a very affectionate regard for James and myself as we were members of the inner circle of disciples.

### **Admonished by Jesus**

Jesus showed us by his reply that she mistakenly applied earthly standards to the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps you remember the words of the Lord, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister." Then he spoke of his ministry: of coming to give his life as a ransom for many, highlighting the truth that service is most important in his kingdom. It was most important for him in his ministry, and he wanted service to be most important in our ministry. For

*(continued on page 122)*



EDITOR

Robert E. Nicholas



All correspondence should be addressed to The Presbyterian Guardian, 7401 Old York Road, Phila., Pa. 19126

## The Devil's Thesis

Robert F. Kennedy, in his book, *The Enemy Within*, quotes Jimmy Hoffa as saying to a Washington newspaperman, "Every man has his price. What's yours?"

These words are astonishingly similar to the thesis of the Devil. He voiced it about Job, and urged it even upon our Lord. Basic to this thesis is the argument that God does not have proper qualities to cause a man to serve for God's own sake. The Devil would sarcastically suggest that this would be serving or fearing God "for naught." Therefore, says the Devil, God can induce a man to fear him only by bestowing on him certain benefits. Take away the benefits, or put him through the spectrum of temptation, and at some point he will smoulder with Satan's own flame, and renounce God. Hence, "Every man has his price."

In fact, the Devil is preparing this thesis for use in the Day of Judgment. He then will argue, "I can be excused for selling out to sin, for God is not worth serving 'for naught.' And look now at the large number of creatures who agree with me."

This thesis is undermined and shamed by the existence of men and women who cannot thus be induced to sell out. They reply with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." They will assert day in and day out by their faith and by their repentance that there is no price level which can top the price with which they were already purchased. They cannot be bought. They have been plucked, as brands from the burning. Their chief end, and their chief enjoyment, is to live to the glory of God, and for God's own sake.

—EDWARDS E. ELLIOTT

## Thank Offering — 1966

Is it easy to take for granted what has become an accepted part of Orthodox Presbyterian giving at the Thanksgiving season? May it not be so! For we may never take for granted those whose labors require our gifts: our missionaries at home and abroad, our writers, our administrative staff—to say nothing of the souls they serve.

## Emerging Presbyterianism

In our previous issue we wrote of the fact that Presbyterianism is fast disappearing among many of its professed adherents. Even within some larger Presbyterian bodies, however, a few voices of concerned Calvinists are heard. We pray that words may be joined to deeds in such a way as to effect, at whatever cost, a continuing allegiance to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

There may be greater reason for optimism in the rise in many parts of the world of a number of smaller bodies determined to maintain and spread the historic Christian faith. Note as an example the testimony printed in this issue of the Reformed Church in Japan. Cooperating with it are Christian Reformed, some Southern Presbyterian, World Presbyterian, and Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries seeking to build a strong witnessing church in that land. Our prayers are with them.

## Stonehouse Memorial Fund

A memorial fund established at the time of the death of Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse has recently been designated by the Board of Westminster Seminary for graduate study in the field of New Testament. From time to time a fellowship for New Testament study will be awarded to young men who show promise of distinguished service in the area to which Professor Stonehouse devoted a lifetime of painstaking scholarly labor.

For a quarter of a century Dr. Stonehouse served the *Presbyterian Guardian* in several capacities — editor, writer, president of its Board of Trustees. We commend this memorial fund in his memory and its intended purpose to your prayerful consideration and support.

R. E. N.

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## Hiemstra *(from page 120)*

that reason we ought not to have been preoccupied or concerned with places of honor in the form of sitting on the left or the right hand.

You can well imagine that the other disciples were quite indignant with my mother and with James and myself because of this request. They were rather jealous of the fact that we might be given these positions of honor. You can see that jealousy was a common failing among us as disciples of Jesus even as it is among you.

I don't want to parade my faults but I do want to say that because of God's grace to me I can afford to be honest with you. Because God has accepted me, I have no fear that you will reject me, though you know everything I can tell about myself.

Sometimes Peter receives most of the blame for sleeping in the Garden of Gethsemane. I don't think that is quite fair, because I also failed to watch and pray. But you don't generally think of the well-beloved disciple as someone who fell asleep, and who also failed to watch and pray. So as a member of the inner circle I want to share the responsibility which too many people have given to Peter only. But I want you to know (and I say it with all the earnestness of my being) that in spite of my shortcomings, in spite of my failures, I *did* love the Lord Jesus. I felt very close to my cousin. I was perplexed by the Master's behavior when he washed our feet. I wasn't as quick to speak as was Peter—I often chided myself afterward for not having volunteered to serve in the washing of feet. But this was another illustration of service as the Master taught us again and again.

### **The Inner Circle**

I felt so secure sitting next to Jesus in the upper room when he instituted the Lord's Supper and observed for the last time the Passover. I felt so calm and so self-assured in the best sense of that term. And it was so disturbing to me when I heard him say that one of us—one of the twelve—would betray him. After the departure of Judas Iscariot we went to Gethsemane. We were sad, and I think our heavy-heartedness in part explains our sleep. I was shaken in my whole being by the betrayal of Judas Iscariot—one of the twelve. In fact, it is so painful to me to recall it that I do not care

to say anything else about it. Let me pass on. Again and again Jesus showed his love for us. He protected us at so many different times at his own expense. When the soldiers came he said to them, "If therefore ye seek me, let them go their way."

I followed when they took him away. I was able to enter into the court of the High Priest and I helped gain entrance for Peter. I winced when one of the officers struck Jesus with his hand. I was greatly moved by Peter's experience of denial, but I couldn't help him. I knew only the Lord himself could help him!

I was almost numb when present at Calvary—because my world was turned upside down. Events had moved so quickly I had not time to think, let alone feel. We went from Annas to Caiaphas, to Pilate, to Herod, to Pilate again; and in addition there were the false witnesses, the tricky tactics of opponents, and the fickleness of the people—too much to bear manfully.

### **Beloved Disciple**

I have been called the "apostle of love" and I am thankful for the designation. I don't feel worthy of it. Perhaps I am called the "apostle of love" because I have written about it so much. And I wrote about it so much because I saw so many exhibits of God's love in Jesus Christ. I think I saw the love of God in its purest form when I heard my Savior say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." I believe I saw divine love when I heard my Master say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Then he said to me, "Behold thy mother." I believe that the Lord, because of love for me, gave me an assignment so that he might assuage my grief for him.

I saw the empty tomb. I saw the risen Christ. I saw him when the disciples were present together, Thomas being absent. I saw him when Thomas was present. I saw him at the sea of Tiberias. I saw him ascend to heaven. I saw him in a vision on the isle called Patmos. And I experienced the power of the risen Christ at Pentecost.

I know that you do not read very

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*The Rev. William Hiemstra, Ph.D., serves as a chaplain at Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

much about my preaching ministry in the Gospel, but I was with Peter when he was preaching and I was agreeing to everything he said. I wasn't at all jealous because of the leadership in speaking which Peter was able to display. He was the spokesman when the crippled man was healed and when we dealt with Simon the magician. Peter was the spokesman when we were together before the Sanhedrin. I was more of a writer—this was God's gift to me.

### **Gospel Writer**

Ten years after the synoptic Gospels were written I had the privilege of being God's penman in writing another message. In the writing of my Gospel (and I only use that term to designate that God used me as a secondary author) I wanted to tell all those intimate, personal, meaningful things, some of which the other disciples had not recorded. I wanted to include, and the Spirit constrained me to include, the account of the encounter of Jesus of Nazareth and Nicodemus—the others had not mentioned this. The Spirit used me to write about the Good Shepherd and his sheep. In my Gospel I presented portraits of Christ.

The Spirit used me to give a word-picture of the Son of God, of the Son of Man, of the Divine Teacher, of the Soul-winner, of the Great Physician, of the Bread of Life, of the Water of Life, of the Defender of the Weak, of the Light of the World, of the Good Shepherd, of the Prince of Life, of the Servant, of the Consoler, of the True Vine, of the Giver of the Holy Spirit, of the Great Intercessor, of the Model Sufferer, of the Uplifted Savior, the Conquerer of Death, the Restorer of the Penitent. There were the portraits that the Holy Spirit wanted me to give of Jesus Christ.

Dear friends, I want you to know that not only did the Lord remember me in my need, but he has remembered you in your need. He used me to write to all who have ears to hear and who love the Lord Jesus: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And to all who will hear the Spirit's call he used me to address these words to you: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but

we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

I have told you something about my experience as a disciple. I have done this because of my heart's desire that you should be or become a disciple of Christ. It is not so difficult! You remember that I wrote: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him

that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The Spirit of God caused me to write of many things which Jesus said and did. And of course there are many things that Jesus said and did which are not recorded in God's Book. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

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## Collinsworth's Lectures — VII

# The Olive Tree

*Edited by R. K. Churchill*

Now, we proceed to examine the church as the *olive tree*. The church is called an olive tree. That tree began to grow somewhere; that tree began to grow sometime, and it began to grow some way. Now the important question is, after it began to grow, did it cease growing? Has it been brought to an end? The Baptists say Yes, and all the rest of the Anti-infant-baptists say Yes. They say it died root, branch, and all. If that is so, we are wrong; for if the church is called an olive tree, and the church has been perpetuated, the olive tree has been perpetuated. If the church was an olive tree, and the tree died, the church died; and if the church was an olive tree, and the tree continues to grow, the church continues to grow. If the olive tree has continued to live, the church has continued to live.

Now, that is a plain statement. Can we ascertain this? Can we determine whether or not the olive tree died? Now, my Anti-infant-baptist friends, in the examination of this olive tree either the Infant-baptist cause or your cause, dies. How much interest we should have in this investigation! We are going to this test as Elijah did with Baal; and you can appeal to God as much as you like; and I will appeal to him to know whether this tree continues to grow, or died and passed away. If it lives your cause is dead, and if it dies our cause is dead with it. Then as your ecclesiastical life is upon the altar, how much interest should we feel; now, with honest hearts, let us go to the altar on which

our ecclesiastical lives are laid. Take a stand by your own living altar and we Infant-baptists will stand by ours, and let us test the question.

### Judgment and Mercy

The Lord called thy name. A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit; with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken (Jeremiah 11:16).

What was done? *A fire was kindled upon it.* What was the effect? The branches were broken, but the tree was not destroyed. There stood the old tree upon the old root. Whatever the olive tree was, it lost branches but the tree was not destroyed. The fire only destroyed some of the branches. *Mark that.* What was done? A fire was kindled upon it. What was the effect? The branches were broken. But there stands the tree defying the flames. It is still upon the root. The root is not destroyed. The tree is not destroyed. The branches are broken and destroyed but the tree stands there. It has been in the fire, and is not hurt, and how well this links in with what God has said in another place, if your path leads through fire, the flames shall not hurt you; if it leads through deep waters, the waters shall not overflow you. His protection kept the tree from burning. It was in the fire. All that should have been burned was burned. That which should not be burned was not burned. Why? God protected it. It did not burn because God would not let it burn. That part that burned God wanted burned, and that is why he kindled the fire upon it.

Look at the case of the three He-

brew children. They were branches of that olive tree that God would not let burn. A wicked king wanted them out of the way because they were worshipping God, the protector of the olive tree. The king directed them to be put in a furnace that was heated seven times hotter than it was usual to heat it, and so hot was the fire that when the executioners came near enough to dash the children in, they were burned up. After awhile the king looked at the heated, burning furnace and said; did I not cast three in there and lo! I see four; and the fourth one is like the Son of God. Here were olive branches that the fire could not hurt. They came out without the smell of fire about them. He remembered what he said. Though your pathway is through fire it shall not hurt you.

What was the olive tree? Can we find that out? Let us try the 17th verse.

For the Lord of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal (Jeremiah 11:17).

### Abraham the Root

Who did wrong? The house of Israel and the house of Judah. Where did the olive tree begin to grow? In the family of Abraham. He was the root of it. The whole race came from Abraham. It was the visible church. The house of Israel and the house of Judah were descended from Abraham, and he was the root of the olive tree. Thus it was; the "house of Israel and house of Judah"; the olive tree lost some of its branches but the tree was not destroyed. The trunk or body of the tree was standing. Now we have found out what the olive tree is—the "house of Israel and house of Judah."

We are linking the Old Testament and the New Testament together. Why? Because all Scripture is given of God, and is profitable for doctrine. Hear Paul in Romans 10:

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?

*Now mark you, Israel was the olive tree.*

First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found of them that sought me not;

*The Gentile people* —

I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people (Rom. 10:16-21).

What was Israel? The *olive tree*. They had become very corrupt as a church, hence God had scattered them all over the Roman Empire. They were the gainsaying and disobedient people to whom he had stretched forth his hands all day. Were those gainsaying and disobedient people cast away? What do you say, my Baptist brother? "Yes." What do you say my Reform (Campbellite) brother? "Yes; they were cast away. The old church ceased and a new church started." I have a book here entitled *Theodosia Ernest*, written by Mr. Dayton. In this book Mr. Dayton says Paul was a Baptist preacher. Did you ever hear the like of that before? Paul a Baptist preacher! Dayton says the church began in Jordan, and that Paul was a Baptist preacher. Well as I have already shown you, I don't believe a solitary word of it, but I will examine Paul as a Baptist preacher a little while. Now hear an old-fashioned Baptist preacher talk about the people called Israel. Well, Paul, we have learned that you were a Baptist preacher that belonged to the new church, and we want to know if the old church was destroyed.

### Not Cast Away

We want to know if that people was "cast away." Your Baptist brethren of the 19th century say they were; Paul, what do you say? (Romans 11:1, 2) — "I say then, Hath God cast away his people?" Your Baptist brethren now say "Yes." The Reform (Campbellite) brethren all now say "Yes." Did God cast away his people? You all say yes. But does Paul? No, — "God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." He was an olive branch that God had not cast away. Now, bear in mind, when Paul made this declaration, it was 25 to 30 years after the day of Pentecost. Continue with verse two (Romans 11):

God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying . . .

What people was it God foreknew? Israel; the church; the old kingdom. "God hath not cast it away." Don't

you see it? Paul says he did not cast them away. Will you run rudely afoul of that old Baptist brother, as you call him? Will you? I do not believe one word about Paul being a Baptist preacher, such as we have now; that is, holding their doctrine; but I accept the statement for the time to accommodate myself to the notions and whims of some people. Don't you see these people were *not* cast away? Paul says they were "not cast away." Then they are still "his people." How beautifully does this link in with what Jeremiah says about the "new covenant" and the people with whom it was made. Whom? "The house of Israel and the house of Judah." Why? Because he has not "cast them away."

### Some Fell

Well, says one, you left Jeremiah and started to the eleventh of Romans to get to the *olive tree*, and have not said a word about it. Well, don't be in a hurry. Let me read v. 11:

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world. . . .

"But stop," says one, "right there. We have got you. N-o-w w-e-'ve g-o-t y-o-u." What do you mean? "Why, it says, 'If the fall of them'; didn't they fall then?" Certainly they did. "But just awhile ago you tiptoed to it that God did not cast away his people. Get out of it if you can." *Yes, they did fall, and they are fallen to this day.* "But you said they were not 'cast away.'" Yes; and I say so *still.* "And you said they did fall." Yes; and I say so *still.* "Then you said they did not fall." Yes; and I say so *still.* "Well, that is a riddle to me. *They did, and they did not; they did not and they did.*"

Well, there is a mystery somewhere. If a man ascends the tree and chops off a limb, that falls, does it not? "Yes." And if he chops off another, that falls, does it not? "Yes." But he leaves another that he did not chop off; it does not fall, does it? "No." Then if he leaves still another that he does not chop off, that does not fall, does it? "Well, I reckon not."

### Branches Broken Off

Now you can begin to see who fell, and who did not fall. Those that were *lopped off, fell*, because God wanted them to fall. Those that he wanted to *keep* were not lopped off, and did

*not fall.* Paul was talking about the branches that Jeremiah said were *broken.* Do you not see how God cast away the broken branches, and retained those that were not broken?

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? (Rom. 11:13-15).

"There, we have you again. At the first verse he says, 'God hath not cast them away', and at the 15th verse he says, 'If the casting away of them . . .' Now does not Paul contradict himself? He says they were *not* cast away, and now he says they *were* cast away. How is that?" Well, the branches that were cut off are those referred to as *cast away*, and the branches that were not cut off are the ones referred to as *not cast away.* "Well, you have not got to the olive tree yet." Hold still.

For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

"And if some of the branches" — there it is *some* —

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee (vv. 17-18).

### Gentiles Grafted In

Now, in the 17th verse he tells us "some branches were broken off," and you Gentiles being taken out of a wild olive tree should not boast "against the branches." Gentiles were taken out of a wild olive tree and grafted into the *true* olive tree, among the branches that were left, and in the place of those that were broken off. Do you not see the children of the kingdom thrust out? For it is the same people that were called the kingdom. Those wicked Jewish rulers were the branches of the good olive tree that should be burned, and they were burned; and the Gentile branches out of the wild olive tree, were brought and grafted into the good olive tree, where those others were broken off. That is fixed, and no one can draw that spike — it is fastened forever.

Now, what was that olive tree?

(continued on page 126)



The Lees and the Gaffins in front of their home.



Bing Hsin on his bamboo stool under yellow palms.



Aunt Polly holding little Bing Hsin.



Ruth and her family on our front porch.

## Aunt Polly's Letter

Taichung, Taiwan  
Republic of China  
August 29, 1966

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS:

I have been thinking of you very much though a year has passed since I last wrote.

Last spring when it was cool and pleasant Uncle Dick took some pictures for me to send you. They are pictures of Ruth and her family. We call her Ruth because like Ruth in the Bible she left her idol-worshipping family. She turned through Jesus Christ to the living and true God, in deed as well as in word. She married a Christian and said, "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." When she married she could not speak her husband's language. She learned it so as to be at one with his family who do not speak the national language, Mandarin.

A year ago in August when we returned from furlough we had to find a house in which to live. Ruth and her husband were house-hunting too. They were just transferring from a school in a country town, where they had taught since their graduation from the Chung Hsing University, to high schools here in Taichung city. We found a house first. It was much too large for just Uncle Dick and me so we invited Ruth and her family to come and live in part of the house with us. It was an especially well-built and comfortable house in a lovely garden with grass, plants, trees and a lily pond. Uncle Dick put some catfish in the pool and we have fruit

from the trees: cocoanut, mango, pears, guava and others. I cannot tell you all the happiness we have enjoyed living here together with the Lee family.

Little Bing Hsin (uphold faith) Lee, just two years old now and his baby brother, Bing Chen (uphold truth), eight months, have been a true pleasure. Before Bing Hsin was a year old he would fold his little hands and call for the blessing to be said before he began to eat. We have enjoyed observing him learning to walk and to talk. The Lees are early risers and often in the morning before we were dressed we would hear Bing Hsin toddling down the hall (his shoe laces had bells on them). He came to our rooms to say, "How, boo how?" — which is "How are you?" in Chinese. Soon we taught him this greeting in English. Whenever he saw us, often from his play in the yard through our sunroom windows he would say, "How are you?" This on the part of such a little fellow with such bright, dark eyes and sweet, clear voice pleased us and delighted and amused the Chinese friends very much.

Every Sunday Bing Hsin attends church with his parents and behaves very well. Once he was quite late; he entered with his mother and took a seat beside me. At once he began talking to me; I disapproved by placing my finger on my mouth and saying, "Sh-h, sh-h." Thereupon he spoke, very loudly, "How are you?" as though English might do the trick. This really attracted attention and responses of pleasant smiles!

Ruth and her husband, like all teachers on Taiwan, where the school population is overwhelming, have to work very long hours. Usually they leave home at seven o'clock. By mid-morning Bing Hsin would grow a bit tired of being alone. While the nurse girl who took care of him and his little brother was holding and giving Bing Chen his bottle, he would steal away and come to our sunroom where I have my study. He would sit on a little bamboo stool which I kept by my desk with a scrapbook on it for him. It was made from some of the pictures that you have sent. When he would grow tired of sitting he'd say, "Bu yow," slip down from the stool and go home. We taught him not to disturb our papers and books by saying, "Bu yow" — which means "Don't want" or "Don't." But I did let him pull out of the boxes the used greeting cards that you have sent and he loved that.

Two weeks ago Bing Hsin, Bing Chen, and their parents moved. How we miss them! We too have to move very soon for the owners of this lovely place are going to tear it down and build twenty-two houses on this land to sell to factory workers. We want you to pray for Ruth, her husband, and these two little boys that their family will be a real Christian family with works that will cause men to glorify our Father in heaven.

I haven't forgotten I promised to tell you the true ghost story that Ruth told me. The next time I write I shall tell it to you. I hope the little girl who asked me about this story while I was on furlough will not get too tired of waiting. Uncle Dick sends his love.

AUNT POLLY GAFFIN

## Collinsworth (from page 124)

Jeremiah says it was the *house of Israel and the house of Judah*. Where were the Gentiles grafted? *Into that olive tree*. What was the olive tree? The kingdom of God, the church of God; the house of Israel and the house of Judah; the family of Abraham, the house of Jacob, that the last king in David's line was to reign over forever. There were some wild branches grafted into it. What for? To partake of the root and fatness of the tree. It had been growing all the time. And after this same old house of Israel and house of Judah had been under the new covenant about ten years, the Gentiles were brought and grafted into that old tree that had been growing from the days of Abraham to the coming of Christ.

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith (vv. 19, 20).

### Unbelief or Faith

Those broken branches were broken off because they had *no faith*. That olive tree they were in, they were in without faith; and because they had no faith they were broken off from it. Could they have been in the kingdom of glory above without faith? All answer in the negative. They were not in glory as a glorified olive tree without faith. Then there is only one kingdom to which the olive tree can be compared and it is the *visible* kingdom, the *visible* church, the *visible* family of Abraham. They belonged to a kingdom and were not regenerated, and being there did not regenerate them. They were the branches the fire was kindled on and they were broken off. Nicodemus was in it without faith, and the Savior said unto him, "Except a man be born again he cannot see (enter) the kingdom of God." He was in the olive tree, but he was not in the spiritual kingdom. And because those unbelieving Jews were not in the spiritual church and were without faith, they were broken off; they were in the visible kingdom and they had no faith, no repentance.

How did they get in? I will keep that question before you. "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." Paul says they were *natural* branches. How did they get there? *By nature*, being natural descendants of Abraham they

were born in Abraham's church; they were born in Abraham's kingdom. *By birth* they secured a place in the olive tree, the visible church. They had no faith; they had no repentance; they had no change of heart; they had no regeneration; they were not branches by faith, repentance, or being grafted there. They were there by nature; they were born there; and *all* the children of church members were born in the *visible church*.

### Children in Visible Church

But some were broken off. Why? Because they had no faith. Then they were in by nature, without faith. Were they in the kingdom of glory? Never. They could not be in glory by *nature*. Were they in the spiritual kingdom? Never! They could not belong to the spiritual kingdom by *nature*. So it must have been the visible kingdom they were in. They were broken off from that and the Gentiles grafted in; and there is the good olive tree perpetuated, still growing; and so certain as it is still growing, the Anti-infant-baptist cause is a lost cause.

"Do you mean," says one, "that Baptist regeneration is false?" I say No; I have guarded that point so as not to be misunderstood. Wherever regeneration is, it is right. But there were branches without regeneration, without conversion, without faith. When I say the Anti-infant-baptist cause is false, it is their organism as a visible church I speak of. They are not in this old olive tree, and they know it—they do not profess to be. My Baptist brother, are you in the old olive tree the Jews were in? "I do not know what to say." Well, let Jeremiah say. He says it was the "house of Israel and the house of Judah."

That is the tree the Gentiles were grafted into. Are you in it?

I wish I could provoke you to say Yes or No, and for the argument, it matters not which. If you are in it, all your children are members of it. What kingdom was it the Gentiles entered into? It was the kingdom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been in, and out or which those unbelievers were cast. Are you in that kingdom? *You* say you are not, but if you are not, the Bible makes it very plain that you are not in the visible church of God at all. Converted you may be; children of grace you may be, but if you are out of that olive tree you are not in the visible church of God. I tell you, my friends, you cannot escape the alternative, and to reject it, is skepticism and infidelity.

But let me read further at the 22nd verse:

Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

The broken-off branches are off to this day, and likely will remain so for a long time to come. But the scattered Jews yet have a standing promise of God. "They are my people." And when the Jews come back, they will come back to the same olive tree.

### Jewish Branches Grafted in Again

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again (v. 23).

When the scattered Jews come back again, it will be *as grafts*. They will not be there as natural branches as they once were. They will be grafted in. Into what? Why, the old olive tree that will be living when they come back. They have not come back yet;

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but when they do, it will be to their own olive tree that will still be alive. What tree is it? It will be a living olive tree they will be grafted into. Now the 24th verse. *What olive tree will the scattered Jews be grafted into?*

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree.

This is the olive tree that will be living when they come back. Their own olive tree, from which they were broken over 1,800 years ago. They continue scattered; they still wander; they still rove over the face of the earth. They are looking for Messiah to come. But the day is rolling up, when in the providence of God they shall come back; and Paul says they shall be grafted into *their own* olive tree, being *natural branches* broken from it.

What was that olive tree? Jeremiah bugles it forth to the nations of the earth. All between his time and this have heard. It is on record, and generations unborn shall read it. When the angel shall stand with one foot on the sea, and the other on the land, and with uplifted hand touching the blue arch of heaven, swear that time shall be no more, that which Jeremiah says will be heard by all nations, that the olive tree "is the house of Israel and the house of Judah." Here are the natural branches broken from it. Paul says God will bring them back, and that they shall be grafted into their own olive tree, not another.

### The Same Olive Tree

If they are grafted into the "new church," as the Baptist and Reformers (Campbellites) call it, it will not be their own, but one of which they never heard; something they were never in before. They are natural branches, not of a new compact, but the old one, and it is the one they will be grafted in when they come back.

My friends, how can you doubt this? In God's name is it not infidelity that rejects it? What a strange infatuation! What a strange incubus! What strange things must run in the minds of those

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men who can reject God's word, Old Testament and New Testament! The Jews are coming back. To what? "*Their own olive tree.*" Were they ever in it as a people? Yes. How did they get out? "They were broken off." For what? A want of faith. They were in it by nature, but because they had not faith they were broken off. What was the olive tree? The family of Abraham, the house of Israel and the house of Judah. When these unbelieving Jews were broken off, their children went with them. They were not accountable; but shared the common fate of the parents. But the branches that were not broken off, remain there with their children, the natural branches of the olive tree.

The Gentiles were grafted into it, and Isaiah saw them coming nearly 800 years before they did come; and in the 66th chapter and 12th verse of his prophecy, he says they came like a "flowing stream"; and in the 49th chapter and 22d verse he says, as he saw them coming, they were bearing their sons and daughters upon their shoulders, or, they were carrying their sons "in their arms," and their daughters "upon their shoulders." Then the church stood, root, trunk and branches. What did the root represent? Abraham. The branches were his long line of descendants. And who were the little tendrils? The little tendrils of each family, the family of Abraham, branches of the olive tree. And the Jews that were cast out or broken off were broken off with their children; those that remained, remained with their children; and the Gentiles that were grafted in, were grafted in with their children.

### Are You in the Visible Church?

Now with one hand upon your heart and the other ready to lay upon your lips should they go to speak wrong, my brethren, Baptists and Reformers (Campbellites), are you in that olive tree from which these natural branches were broken? Are you in it? If you are in it, you are in Abraham's family, Abraham's church, the church with the children in it. If you are not in it, you are not in the true visible church of God. My brother, will you not be in it? My sister, will you not be in it? If regenerated, we belong to the same great family of the renewed.

We are journeying through this low land of sorrow, through the pelting

storms of earth, and beating tides of time; our little barks are tossed upon the proud waves of the troubled sea of life; but if born of God we belong to the same family. We will sit down at the same table above, and then, my Baptist brother, I suppose you will allow me to eat with you. If you want to be in the visible church of God, you must get into the church that was replenished by nature, by the increase of families in the church. This is the underlying law of God, to increase his church.

### New Addresses

Rev. Theodore J. Georgian, 65 Hoover Drive, Rochester, N.Y. 14615.

Rev. John D. Johnston, 231 Min Chuan Road, Taichung, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Rev. George W. Knight, 570 Trail Blvd., Pine Ridge, Naples, Florida 33940.

Rev. Ronald L. Shaw, Fawn Grove, Pa. 19321 (ordained by the Presbytery of Philadelphia).

### Clowney Inauguration

Edmund Prosper Clowney will be inaugurated as President of Westminster Theological Seminary on Monday, October 24. After serving as Acting President during the preceding year, he was named to the Presidency by the Trustees last spring. In addition to his administrative duties, the Rev. Dr. Clowney is Professor of Practical Theology. A Westminster graduate in 1942, he has been on its faculty since 1952.

His college alma mater (Wheaton, Ill.) honored him with the Doctor of Divinity degree at its summer convocation. Dr. Clowney has been invited to attend the World Congress on Evangelism to be held in Berlin from October 26 to November 4.

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# THE CHANGING SCENE

HENRY W. CORAY

Writing in a recent Newsletter published by Presbyterians United for Biblical Confession, Thomas M. Gregory discusses the Revision of the Confession of 1967 as adopted by the General Assembly of 1966 and sent down to the Presbyteries of the United Presbyterian Church for ratification. Mr. Gregory virtually gives the proposed revision a blanket endorsement. He concludes:

The restoration of a more acceptable balance in the areas mentioned has been accomplished only by the willingness of the Committee of 15 to allow Biblical categories to stand on a par, at least, with the more empirical and personalistic categories used in the original document. Also, a more faithful use of some historically accepted Church doctrines has brought the newer form of the Confession of 1967 a little nearer to its companion creeds, and probably, by the judicious procedure of leaving debated beliefs an open question, no doctrines in these companion confessions are now denied or contradicted.

All in all there is more reference to the supernatural aspects of reconciliation in the revised form of the Confession. This may not please some, but will win the acclaim of others, in the Church and outside of the Church, who will applaud a revision in the Confession of 1967 that was significant enough to allow the Church to present her belief in greater honesty.

Now undoubtedly the Confession as amended does contain some improvements on some doctrinal statements as they existed in the original document. But these would seem to be sops to the conservatives in the church. When they come to the key passage, the one that sets forth the terms of admission to future office bearers, the conservatives look the other way. That section has been altered so radically from the present form as to permit the most liberal of the liberals to be received as ministers, elders and deacons. No longer will the candidate for office be required to affirm his belief in the Bible as the Word of God, "the only infallible rule of faith and practice." That is deleted. If the revision goes through—and it appears to be a

foregone conclusion that it will—the future officers of the U.P.U.S.A. Church will be asked:

*"Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the church catholic, and by the Holy Spirit God's word to you?"*

Here we are at the very core of neo-orthodoxy. The acceptance of the Bible's "unique and authoritative witness" is limited to the person of Christ. Nothing is said about its "unique and authoritative witness" to sections of Scripture that do not relate to the Savior. A mass of material in the Word of God covers subjects other than Christological themes. Obviously, applicants for the ministry may hold destructive views of these segments and still be received into the church. Such a position opens the door for the most sweeping type of rationalism—this in the garments of "greater honesty."

The leaders of the U.P.U.S.A. Church have done their work well. Blandly and graciously, they have granted certain concessions to the evangelicals for the sake of peace and harmony. Now, it appears, almost everyone is happy with the picture.

How doth the little crocodile  
Improve his shining tail,  
And pour the waters of the Nile  
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,  
How neatly spreads his claws,  
And welcomes little fishes in,  
With gently smiling jaws!

\* \* \*

One of the great preachers of the day is Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones of London. In his excellent little book, *From Fear to Faith*, he has this to say about the grand perspective of God's Word:

"... There are those who use the

Bible in a narrow sense, as being exclusively a text book of personal salvation. Many people seem to think that the sole theme of the Bible is that of man's personal relationship to God. Of course that is one of the central themes, and we thank God for the salvation provided without which we should be left in hopeless despair. But that is not the only theme of the Bible. Indeed, we can go so far as to say that the Bible puts the question of personal salvation into a larger context. Ultimately the main message of the Bible concerns the condition of the entire world and its destiny; and you and I, as individuals, are a part of that larger whole. That is why it starts with the creation of the world rather than of man. The trouble is that we are inclined to be exclusively concerned with our own personal problem, whereas the Bible starts further back: it puts every problem in the context of this world view.

"If we do not realize that the Bible has a particular world view, it is not surprising that the world in its present state makes us despair. But if we read right through the Bible and note its message, instead of just picking out an occasional Psalm, or the Sermon on the Mount, or our favourite Gospel, we shall find it has a profound philosophy of history, and a distinctive world view. It enables us to understand what is happening today and that nothing that occurs in history fails to find a place in the divine programme. The great and noble teaching of the Bible is concerned with the whole question of the world and its destiny."

\* \* \*

At our midweek service, a dear saint  
Whose eyes had grown dim  
By reason of age  
Was reading the passage in Paul  
Where he pleads with Euodias and  
Syntyche  
To bury their differences;  
The good man read audibly,  
"I beseech Odious and beseech Soon-  
touchy  
That they be of the same mind in  
the Lord."

*The Old Chinese Philosopher*