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The True Christmas Star

By the REV. THEODORE S. WRAY

Pastor of the Fifth Reformed Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia

A POLAR midnight had settled upon a far northern Eskimo village. The land of the midnight sun had become submerged in its perennial blackout as the pall of darkness and gloom blanketed everything. Life and activity had all but ceased around the snow-covered, wind-swept, bear-skin tents and ice igloos. Within, amid smoking whale-oil lamps, the eskimos eagerly awaited the dawn of a new year. The chief of the village, according to custom, had now appointed one of the young men to ascend each noon to the top of a near-by ice-encrusted hill to search for the first appearance of the sun. After many days had passed there came the long anticipated cry, "The Sun, the Sun, Behold the Sun!" Immediately all the village would appear in its best polar finery and cry in chorus, "Behold the Sun!"

A Martian darkness has settled upon the civilized world today. With war precipitated by Japan upon the United States, peace and security have been blacked out from most of the earth's surface. But even as the war clouds envelop us there appears once more upon the horizon a star—a star which outshines all other stars and pierces all gloom and despair—a star which presages the One, and only One, who can bring peace. Once more we hear the good news, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord". Here we have the glorious proclamation of a

fact—a fact which, like no other event in human history, fills a darkened world with joy and causes it to adorn itself in its best festive garb.

Like the star which appeared to the wise men, so this glorious proclamation of the angel irresistibly draws us to the Babe of Bethlehem and, like that heavenly five-pointed star, it announces five significant facts concerning the advent of Jesus Christ.

The first point of this Christmas star is very personal in nature. "For unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour".

When the birth of the Prince of Wales was announced, throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire there was much rejoicing. Here was the long looked-for heir to the British throne; so on land and sea salutes were fired, flags unfurled, and bells rung declaring the joyful news.

In yonder hamlet of Bethlehem lies an heir to the throne of earth and heaven. Upon His brow shall rest the crown of the universe. That infant hand shall hold the sceptre before which all empires shall fall until He shall "have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth". Yet no royal salute echoes through the narrow streets. No flags are unfurled and no bells are rung. But a celestial salute did greet Him. The angels of heaven, appearing in all the Shekinah glory and splendor of heaven, did proclaim His birth: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born

this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord".

To whom was this great announcement made? Not to Herod in the nearby magnificent palace and fortress; not to the High Priest and Pharisees in the stately temple at Jerusalem; not even exclusively to the shepherds as such; but "to all people". This first announcement of the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem was made to the shepherds only so that they might reecho it to all the world. Nor was this announcement made only for the people then living, for the use of the future tense, "shall be", indicates that what had just occurred was for the benefit of all future generations. And now notice how personal is the announcement. The angel might have said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for there is born this day . . . a Saviour". But No! The messenger from heaven says, "I bring you good tidings . . . for unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour". The advent of Jesus Christ is not only of universal interest; it is of personal, individual interest.

This personal, individual significance of the coming of Christ should take on special interest and meaning when so much of the world has been plunged into war. Often we have misconstrued the meaning of the angelic hymn, "On earth peace, good will toward men", as referring to national peace. As is generally known, the more accurate Revised Version rendering, "Peace among men in whom he is well pleased", puts the emphasis where it should be. Christ came, first of all, to make peace, "to make peace through the blood of his cross", between sinful humanity and a holy God. He came in the second place, to give peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you". In the third place, He will yet establish peace. Social and national peace can only come after the individual is at peace with God and his fellow-man. Isaiah says, "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever".

The second point of this Christmas

star is the simple but profound statement, "is born". "For unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour". There is nothing remarkable or unusual in the statement itself, but when we realize who it was that was born and how He was born, we may truly marvel. This was the incarnate deity who "was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth". He became flesh by means of the miracle of the virgin birth. Paul was ever aware of His incarnation as we see in his introduction to his epistle to the Romans, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead".

As to all that passed in the seclusion of that stable the Gospel narrative is silent. This only is told: that there the virgin-mother "brought forth her first born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger". Beyond the announcement of the bare fact, Holy Scripture, with indescribable appropriateness and delicacy, draws a veil over that most sacred mystery. "He took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. . . ."

In a wonderful way, Charles Wesley has caught in these immortal words the true significance of what transpired:

"Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,

Offspring of the Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the God-man see;
Hail th' Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel".

The third point of this great Christmas announcement stresses the immediacy of His advent—"this day". "Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour". Galatians 4:4 tells us, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons". What does Paul mean by "the fulness of the time"? Why, that towards which all the Old Testament prophecy had looked, how Jesus Christ would come through the descendants of Abraham, be born of the tribe of Judah, appear in the household of David, and be born of a virgin in the city of Bethlehem.

Christ stands at the crossroads of all human history. All that ever went before Him looked forward to that first advent and all who follow have looked back upon it as a harbinger of a new era. His advent changed the datum of the world's chronology. His coming profoundly influenced the subsequent course of history. His birth has left its immortal imprint upon art, literature and religion. Why such tremendous influence exerted by this Babe of Bethlehem? Because He was "God manifested in the flesh".

"The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in Thee to-night".

The fourth point of the star of Bethlehem definitely states the place of His advent—"in the city of David": The city of David, of course, was none other than Bethlehem, the ancestral home of David. The angelic proclamation and the fact of Christ's birth immediately place a seal of fulfillment upon that remarkable prophecy found in Micah and made nearly seven hundred years before: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting".

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The Westminster Assembly and The Authority of Scripture

By the REV. THEODORE J. JANSMA

Pastor of Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Germantown, Philadelphia

THE Westminster Assembly of Divines recognized the absolute and final authority of the Bible. This is perfectly plain from the record of their procedure and debates, as well as from the work they produced. For them the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were the absolute standard of truth, upon which they based all their declarations, and the very language of which is largely used in their formulations. They were determined to declare no more and no less than the teaching of Scripture.

Each member of the Assembly, upon his first entrance, had to make a solemn protestation, "in the presence of Almighty God, that in this Assembly, whereof I am a member, I will not maintain anything in matters of doctrine, but what I think, in my conscience, to be truth; . . ." That this "truth" was the revealed Word of God cannot be doubted, and one version of that protestation, although an incorrect one as to the precise words, says, "the Word of God". In the Solemn League and Covenant accepted by both the English and Scottish ecclesiastical and political assemblies, they bound themselves, among other things, to "the reformation of religion . . . according to the Word of God". And one of the rules by which the Westminster divines conducted their task states specifically, "What any man undertakes to prove as necessary, he shall make good out of Scripture".

It is no wonder then that they lavished such extreme care upon all their statements, over a period of almost six years, even though there was much reason for speed. One of the Scottish commissioners wrote to a friend, "only their longsomenesse is wofull at this time, when their church and Kingdome lyes under a most lamentable anarchy and confusion. They see the hurt of their length, but cannot get it helped; for being to establish a new Plattforme of worship and discipline to their Nation for all time to come, they think they cannot be answerable, if solidlie,

and at leisure, they doe not examine every point thereof".¹

The Westminster Confession begins with the doctrine "Of the Holy Scripture". Their high regard for the Bible is stamped on all their work, but comes to light most clearly, as might also be expected, in this opening chapter. One competent authority says, "If any chapter in the Confession was more carefully framed than another, it was this, 'Of the Holy Scripture'. It formed the subject of repeated and earnest debate in the House of Commons, as well as in the Assembly".²

The authority of the Bible, according to the Westminster Assembly, rests upon the fact that it is the Word of God; "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth . . . wholly upon God, (who is truth itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God" (Sec. IV). No other writings are included in the canon of Scripture, but only those, and all those, which are "given by inspiration of God." The Apocrypha which are regarded in some churches as having an authority superior to human writings, are absolutely excluded by the Westminster divines,

¹ Robert Baillie, "Letters and Journals", ed. Laing, V. 2, p. 109.

² A. F. Mitchell, "Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines", ed. Mitchell and Struthers, Intr. p. xlix.

Young People's Topics

THE article on this page will be an aid in studying the young people's lessons published by the Committee on Christian Education of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which may be secured from the Rev. Richard W. Gray, 7 Franklin Avenue, Montclair, N. J. The first eight chapters of the Westminster Confession will be studied during January and February.

and classed with other human writings, simply because they are not of divine inspiration. Although the Confession clearly recognizes and asserts that "the inward work of the Holy Spirit" is indispensable to our "full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof", yet the ground of that authority is the fact of the inspiration and authorship of God.

The Bible, as an authoritative book, is without any rival, since it alone contains all of God's saving revelation extant, and therefore it is also most necessary for us. It pleased God not only to reveal Himself, but also to commit that self-revelation "wholly unto writing". Without it we should have no saving revelation, "those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased" (Sec. I).

That absolute authority which issues from the fact of divine inspiration and authorship is ascribed to all the books of the Bible, and hence they are all of equal authority, though not necessarily of equal importance. However, the Westminster divines were careful to limit this immediate inspiration to the original documents, although they also held that in the transmission of these documents they were "kept pure in all ages" by God's "singular care and providence", so that what we now have is authentic in the original languages, and therefore not only trustworthy but also authoritative.

The words "verbal" and "plenary", which are now commonly used in the formulations of the orthodox doctrine of inspiration, do not occur in the Confession, but the truth conveyed by them is certainly declared. All of the Bible is authoritative; and human writings are specifically contrasted with, and excluded from, the canon. The Bible is now the only mode of the divine saving revelation; the Word of God and the Scripture are synonymous. The Holy Spirit, as the executive of the God-head, is alone acknowledged as "speaking in the

Scripture". In the chapter "Of Saving Faith" it is also asserted that "a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein".

How carefully the divines guarded the sufficiency and unrivaled authority of the Bible is also evident from their principle that all articles of faith and rules of life must come from Scripture, and none are to be made which are not in Scripture. "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added" (italics mine). This principle is also clearly asserted in Chapter XXI, Sec. I, dealing with religious worship; "But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His revealed will, that He may not be worshipped . . . [in] any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture".

As it is authoritative in all matters of faith and practice, so it is authoritative for all men. Even the unlearned are without excuse, even though the Bible is a profound book and not equally plain in all its parts. "Those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them". Translations are sanctioned expressly that the Word of God may dwell "plentifully in all".

Because of its absolute and final authority, Scripture is also its own "infallible rule of interpretation", so that we are bound to suspend judgment whenever we are unable to determine the one true and full sense of any scripture. We have no right to supplement Scripture with human speculation, however plausible such speculations may appear, or with allegorical or "spiritual" interpretations which are not inherent in and demanded by the Scripture itself. All must submit to the clear teaching of the Bible, and no authority is to be tolerated along with the Bible. The Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible is the supreme judge in all matters of

religion and morals.

Such was the solid foundation upon which the Westminster divines built, and because of it their symbols are eminently Scriptural throughout, and universal in their appeal. Dr. Warfield in his excellent work on the "Westminster Assembly and its Work" pays them a great and well-deserved tribute when he says, "There is certainly in

the whole mass of confessional literature no more nobly conceived or ably wrought-out statement of doctrine than the chapter 'Of the Holy Scripture', which the Westminster Divines placed at the head of their Confession and laid at the foundation of their system of doctrine".³

³ p. 155.

Chastised But Content

A Meditation on Jeremiah 29:1-14

By the REV. BURTON L. GODDARD

THE trek of a conquered people into captivity is a pathetic sight. Tradesmen unaccustomed to physical exertion are herded along, weary and footsore and faint. Old men who have known better days are cursed by guards as they stumble on the march. Little children cling to their mother's skirts and cry. Families become separated—forever.

Nor do the cruelties suffered or the heartaches endured end when the journey comes to a close. The strange land of adoption is seldom friendly. The newcomers are fortunate if they escape slavery. They are no longer a nation, no longer free. They long for the familiar scenes of the homeland. Their hearts are not at rest.

A portion of the populace of Jerusalem found themselves in this sad state in Babylon after the hostile armies of Nebuchadnezzar had invaded the temple city, raided the sanctuary and made off with a select portion of the people, including the king and queen.

In the providence of God, the prophet Jeremiah was left behind in Jerusalem, but he did not forget the faithful souls among the covenant people who had been exiled to Nebuchadnezzar's capital city. He knew how discouragement would be apt to press upon them, and so one day he sent to them by the hand of Elasah and Gemariah a letter of comfort and instruction.

Chastisement Understood

Jeremiah was concerned that the exiles have a correct understanding of the catastrophe which had overtaken them. Were it due to blind fate, they might well despair. It was not

It was the work of their own covenant God. For those who still clung to the covenant which God had established long years before with Israel, the present captivity was not of the nature of righteous vengeance. It was merely chastisement. As so beautifully expressed in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, chastisement comes only to sons. It is administered by a loving Father and is intended to be corrective rather than punitive. It is given that the fruit of righteousness may appear.

It was quite necessary that the captive Jews look on the exile in its true light. It was to be a testing and purifying period in their history. This was not their end as a people, but as a nation they had sunk to a state of ignominious sin and disregard for God's law. Something had to be done, or complete degradation would soon result. The corrective measure would have to be a severe one. So Jeremiah explained that Israel's own God had caused His people "to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon".

It is not true that all suffering is the direct result of sin. When our Lord healed the blind man spoken of in John 9, He declared that the man's blindness was neither due to his own sin nor to that of his parents, "but that the works of God should be made manifest in him". However, we may go so far as to say that the design of all chastisement is to produce righteousness. The child of God may know that chastisement is of God. It is included in the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God"; "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works".

So often we err and go astray; we

need to be taught obedience. So often we are proud; we need to learn to be humble. So often we depend upon self; we need to be schooled in depending upon God. Chastisement is the school in which we learn these lessons. The one who sends us to this school is God. The discouraged Israelites in Babylon needed to know this, and we may profit by a like knowledge.

Chastisement Borne

There are two possible responses to chastisement: resignation and rebellion. Open defiance of God's disciplinary measures makes for bitterness of soul and extreme unhappiness. Quiet submission to God's will brings peace and blessing. There are many who are strongly tempted to rebel, many who yield to that temptation.

Lest the Jewish captives do so and find themselves fighting against God, Jeremiah in his letter counseled them to be content with their land of adoption. They should build homes and plant gardens and settle down to as happy a domestic life as possible. They should pray for the peace and prosperity of the government which now sheltered them. Its peace would be their peace.

Chastisement does not exclude blessing. It all depends on how we accept it. It is very possible to endure much suffering of every kind and still have a heart which sings within us and blesses the name of Him who is the author of chastisement. The "apostle to the Gentiles" felt the rod of affliction as few others have ever done, but his prayer was ever like that of his Lord, "Thy will be done", and so he was able to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content".

Can we make that statement ours? As Christians, we should!

Chastisement Left Behind

Though chastisement, properly received, brings blessing, it is yet true that the scourged son experiences a constant longing for a better state. He looks forward to the time when chastisement will be a thing of the past. He can praise God in his state of affliction, but he awaits the time of deliverance.

The exiles in Babylon were to live in the present; they were also to live in the future, to lay hold on hope according to the wonderful promises of their God. In the dark days of the

captivity they were not to forget the God who had wrought for them so many miracles of grace during the checkered history of their nation. In Babylon as in Jerusalem they could pray to their God. They could read and study the inspired writings, the Law and the Prophets. They could still sing the songs of Zion. Though the temple sacrifices would no longer burn on the brazen altar, they could bring sacrifices of thanksgiving and obedience and purity of heart unto the Lord.

Had some of them wandered from fellowship with God ere they left their native land? Jeremiah urged them to reestablish that lost communion. They could again find the God of mercy and taste of His goodness, but they must seek Him with all their heart. They must separate themselves from the sins they had loved and practiced. They must worship Him with singleness of heart and live unto His glory.

If they would respond thus and

remain faithful, then there would be a sure reward. The day would come when they would leave chastisement behind and go out of captivity back to the land they loved. So Jeremiah promised, and so God in His appointed time brought it to pass.

For the Christian who accepts chastisement as from God and submits humbly to the will and discipline of the heavenly Father, there is also a reward. For all such, Jesus has gone into heaven to prepare a place. Some day they too will leave all chastisement behind and enter into that heavenly home. Will you be among their number?

While you tarry here as a stranger in the valley of chastisement, seek God with all your heart, content whatever comes to pass, assured that God's discipline is for your own good. Make sure of your salvation. And look forward with confident expectation to that better land where chastisement is no more!

The Auburn Betrayal

By Ruling Elder MURRAY FORST THOMPSON

A Member of the Philadelphia Bar

Part IV

WE COME now to the subsequent history of this infamous document. What, if anything, was done about this heresy? And what became of the heretics? The answers to these questions form one of the saddest chapters in the long history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The signers of the Affirmation have never been convicted of heresy. Instead, they have become powerful leaders of a once-great Christian church.

It goes without saying that the Auburn Affirmation failed in its purpose to "preserve" unity in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In the first place there was no unity to be preserved. The peace of the church had long been disturbed by heresy, which had first made its appearance more than a century before and which had been gaining power ever since. The "New School" theology,²⁴ which had come into the church after the adoption of the Plan of Union in 1801 with the General Association of the State of Connecticut (Con-

gregational), had divided the church in 1837. As a consequence of the reunion of the "Old School" and "New School" Assemblies in 1869—a merger which the venerable Charles Hodge had left a sick-bed to oppose—unbelief continued to poison the fountain-head of the church's teaching. The trials of Professor Charles A. Briggs²⁵ and Professor Henry Preserved Smith,²⁶ and the case of Dr. Arthur C. McGiffert²⁷ (to mention only a few of the heresy cases involving ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in the last decade of the nineteenth century) were not without their ominous significance. And the fact that the General Assemblies of 1910, 1916, and 1923 had found it necessary to direct attention to the "Five Points" indicated

²⁴ For an account of the origins of "New School" theology, see *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*, by F. H. Foster.

²⁵ See *The Presbyterian Digest*, for 1930, Vol. II, pp. 305-316.

²⁶ *loc. cit.*, pp. 316-323.

²⁷ *loc. cit.*, pp. 323-324.

the growing influence of unbelief in the church.²⁸ There is indeed grim irony in the publication of the Affirmation in 1924 for the purpose of preserving a unity which had ceased to exist, and to defend, among others, the person whose heretical preaching had done so much to promote disunity in the church.

In the second place, the Affirmation merely added fuel to the flames. The religious press, previously much engaged with Dr. Fosdick's sermons, began to discuss the Affirmation as well. Agitation grew also in the church. Nineteen overtures, two memorials, and one paper dealing with doctrinal issues were sent up to the General Assembly which met in Grand Rapids in May of 1924.²⁹ A slumbering church seemed to be waking up. Perhaps before it was too late something would be done about the Auburn heretics. It is sad to record, however, that not one signer of the Affirmation was brought to trial. More than one-tenth of the ministers of the church had issued a disaffirmation of doctrines at the center of the Christian faith, but not one of those ministers was then formally charged with heresy, much less convicted of it.

That the orthodox failed in their duty there can be no doubt. It is true that they continued to preach the truth of the Word of God; they faithfully and zealously exposed the error of the Affirmation; they contended for the faith; but they did not bring the signers of the Affirmation before the courts of the church. Indeed many conservatives have admitted their dereliction of duty. The church was to suffer for this failure to exercise prompt discipline and thus to purge out "that leaven which might infect the whole lump" and to vindicate "the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel."³⁰

No account of the Auburn Affirmation would be complete if it failed to mention two specific efforts which conservatives made to deal with the Affirmation heresy. These attempts

²⁸ See also, in this connection, *The Presbyterian Conflict*, by the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, and *Why The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, a pamphlet, by the Rev. John Patton Galbraith.

²⁹ *Minutes, General Assembly, 1924*, Vol. I, pp. 22-28.

³⁰ Confession of Faith, Chapter XXX, entitled "Of Church Censures", Section III.

were made a decade apart and the outcome in each case reflected the ever-increasing influence of unbelief in the church.

The first attempt was an overture to the General Assembly of 1924, adopted April 21, 1924, by the Presbytery of Cincinnati. That overture placed the Affirmation in the hands of the assembly that it might be "well advised of its contents and purposes" and that it might "exercise intelligently, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, its powers of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine; of reproof, warning, or hearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, Presbytery or Synod; and of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputation" (Form of Government XII, Section V).³¹ The Cincinnati overture was referred to the assembly's Standing Committee on Bills and Overtures, which was "extremely liberal"³² and included four signers of the Affirmation. The chairman of the committee, appointed by the moderator of the assembly, Dr. Clarence E. Macartney, was Dr. Maitland Alexander, who was, of course, a conservative.³³ The committee recommended to the assembly that "no action be taken" on the overture and the assembly adopted the recommendation.³⁴

In our opinion, under the Constitution of the church, an overture from a presbytery to the General Assembly was not the proper method of dealing with the Auburn heresy. Disciplinary action against the Affirmationists in their respective presbyteries would have been the correct procedure, and such action should have been instituted. That was the course followed, for example, in the cases of Professor Briggs and Professor Smith. The General Assembly of 1924 could not have been expected to prejudge the matter by condemning the Affirmation and its signers in advance of such disciplinary action, which might have subsequently reached the assembly on appeal. It is, nevertheless,

³¹ *An Affirmation*, a pamphlet by John Vant Stephens, pp. 27, 28.

³² Letter, Dr. Maitland Alexander, in *The Presbyterian*, January 23, 1936, p. 22.

³³ The other members of the committee were elected by the assembly.

³⁴ *Minutes, General Assembly, 1924*, Vol. II, p. 202.

regrettable that neither the Committee on Bills and Overtures nor the General Assembly nor any minority of either body placed on the record even a reaffirmation of the precious doctrines set forth in the evangelical pronouncement of the General Assembly of 1923. The conservatives in the General Assembly of 1924 marshaled all their strength to deal with the Fosdick case which was again before the assembly on a complaint against the failure of the Presbytery of New York to carry out the directions of the General Assembly of 1923.³⁵

The baleful influences of Modernism were making themselves felt more and more. The conservatives in 1924 mustered barely enough power to elect one of their number moderator of the General Assembly (by a vote of 464 to 446) but so powerful was the grip of unbelief upon the church that the Affirmationists were permitted to flout her doctrine.

The second attempt to deal with the heresy of the Affirmation occurred ten years later, when for the first time an effort was made to discipline any signer of that notorious paper. On October 12, 1934, formal charges of heresy were filed in the Presbytery of Philadelphia against eleven Affirmationists subject to the jurisdiction of that presbytery.³⁶

Six charges were filed. The first was that Affirmationists, in rejecting the doctrine of the plenary inspiration and inerrancy of Holy Scriptures, had

³⁵ The Permanent Judicial Commission of the assembly, whose judgment on the complaint was confirmed by the assembly, held that the relationship which Dr. Fosdick sustained to the First Presbyterian Church of New York City was "wholly without precedent" and "an anomaly", but recommended that the Presbytery of New York determine whether it was Dr. Fosdick's "pleasure" to enter the church and "thus be in a regular relationship with the First Presbyterian Church of New York as one of its pastors" (*Minutes, General Assembly, 1924*, Vol. I, pp. 195-197). For criticisms of this compromising action of the assembly, see *The Presbyterian*, June 5, 1924 (pp. 13, 20), July 3, 1924 (p. 4) and October 23, 1924 (p. 6).

³⁶ *Christianity Today*, November, 1934, p. 141.

³⁷ "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"

violated their first ordination vow.³⁷ The next four charges alleged that the accused had violated both their first and second³⁸ ordination vows in denying the necessity of belief in the virgin birth of Christ, His death as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, His bodily resurrection, and His miracles. The sixth charge involved the Affirmationists' denial of the necessity of belief in all five doctrines as part of the system of doctrine of the church.

In February of 1932 those Affirmationists had been publicly asked to renounce their error or to leave the church.³⁹ For more than two years efforts had been made to settle the matter amicably. The Affirmationists, however, had refused to confer or even to answer letters requesting an interview. When the charges were filed, the prosecutors issued a statement, in the course of which they said,

Judicial process in this case may still be avoided. It may be avoided if the accused will resign their commissions as ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and save the Church from the division which their own acts and presence make otherwise inevitable. Doubtless they will have much to say or imply about "peace", but intelligent people will not forget that if these men really want peace, they, who themselves are breaking the law of the Church, can secure it by eliminating themselves, or else by recanting their heresy, and returning to the faith of Christendom. *If they do really believe that they and others holding their views are entitled to a place in the Presbyterian Church, under its laws, then we challenge them openly to defend this case on its merits, not attempting to barricade themselves behind a smoke-screen of inapplicable technicalities, or to becloud and confuse the issues. If they are sincere in their views they will not be afraid or ashamed to defend them on their merits.*⁴⁰

Here at last was an effort to bring the Affirmationists to book. A decade had elapsed since the publication of the Affirmation but it was still being

³⁷ "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"

³⁸ Sermon, *The Heretical 'Auburn Affirmation'*, by the Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths, in *Christianity Today*, February, 1932, pp. 4-8.

³⁹ *Christianity Today*, November, 1934, p. 142.

circulated. Its heretical teaching was still being given to Christ's little ones. What happened? Did the Affirmationists meet the doctrinal issue on its merits? Were they at last brought to trial and convicted of heresy? None of those things happened.

In the first place the doctrinal issue was not squarely faced by the accused. One Affirmationist, for example, stated that even if the Affirmation was "wrong", it had been signed so many years before that prosecution was barred by the law of the church. Another said that the Affirmation had been signed "a dozen years before" and that, "if there had been any evil in it, the reaction would have been immediate."⁴¹ These comments foreshadowed the raising of the statute of limitations contained in Chapter III, Section ii, of the Book of Discipline, which provided that "prosecution for an alleged offense shall commence within one year from the time of its alleged commission, or from the date when it is reported to the judicatory which has jurisdiction thereof" (italics supplied).

The prosecutors had two answers to this technical defense: (a) heresy—particularly heresy which is still being disseminated when charges are filed—does not cease to be a punishable offense because it was first expressed ten years before; and (b) the heretical teaching of those Affirmationists who were under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Philadelphia had never been officially brought to the attention of the presbytery so that the period of limitation had never begun to run.

This question—not to mention the doctrinal issue—was never decided by any court of the church, for the proceeding did not reach the stage of a trial. The action of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, accomplished by an illegal vote (in which the accused themselves participated!), is one of the most tragic events in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The presbytery—the same presbytery which twelve years before had brought the Fosdick case before the General Assembly—on November 5, 1934, in violation of its own standing rules, refused even to allow the charges to be referred to its Committee on Judicial Business and voted to return

⁴¹ *Christianity Today*, November, 1934, p. 142.

them to the prosecutors.⁴² The Modernists had won another major battle in the war being waged in defense of the gospel.

(To Be Concluded)

⁴² For the details of the actions of the presbytery, see *Christianity Today*, December, 1934, pp. 171 and 178.

DR. BROWN DEDICATES NEW CHAPEL AT LINCOLN, NEBR.

CLIMAXING eight months of labor, the Rev. James B. Brown, D.D., dedicated the Pioneer Orthodox Presbyterian Chapel of Lincoln, Nebraska, on Sunday afternoon, November 16th. For sixteen years the chapel had been abandoned and, apart from its sturdy brick walls which were in good condition, the building had been completely destroyed. Dr. Brown with the help of some local residents completely rebuilt the structure, having secured a deed to it and the church yard on condition that the building be put in use. The Evangelical Church had used the building for some years but, upon the cessation of their services, its title reverted to the family of C. G. Finney, who deeded it to Dr. Brown for an Orthodox Presbyterian church. The building stands in a well-populated rural section on the outskirts of Lincoln, seven miles from the Faith Church of Lincoln, and three miles from the nearest place of worship.

About 150 people attended the service of dedication, and every available seat was occupied and some persons were standing. Those who had part were the Rev. Robert B. Brown of Omaha, the Rev. William Bancroft, a former pastor of the church, and Dr. Brown. The sermon on the occasion was preached by the Rev. Robert S. Marsden. An offering for the building fund was taken, and more than \$150 was received. Another \$100 only is needed to free the building from debt; the whole work of restoration was done for only \$600 in cash, the labor and much of the materials having been donated.

During the five evenings following the dedication, services were conducted by Mr. Marsden. The attendance on Friday, the final evening, was ninety-seven, and every seat was occupied with not a person standing. Nearly

twenty acknowledged Christ as their Saviour on the final evening. Prospects are good for a fine Sunday school, which will be held at 9.30 each Sunday morning, and followed by a brief message by Dr. Brown. The main service will be held in the evening.

LAIRD PROTESTS GUARDIAN REPORT ABOUT HAMILTONS

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN has received the following communication from the Rev. Harold S. Laird, D.D., President of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions:

December 4, 1941

The Presbyterian Guardian
1505 Race Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Dear Brethren:

Your November 25th issue of the PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN contains a story entitled "Hamiltons Forced Out By Independent Board." We feel that in the interests of truth and Christian charity, this letter correcting the story should be published, and we request that you do so.

The Hamiltons were not forced out by the Independent Board. When Mr. Hamilton returned from Korea, he was granted a year's furlough, this to expire December 6, 1941. Mr. Hamilton is still a missionary under our Board, and continues so until his furlough expires on December 6th. Your statement that he was forced out is incorrect.

We are at a loss to know whom you had in mind as a spokesman of the Board, for certainly no one knowing the feeling of the Board would have made the statement which you attribute to this "spokesman." Mr. Hamilton's membership in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was not a source of embarrassment to the Board. We have other missionaries under our Board who are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and they are not an embarrassment to us.

Since in Mr. Hamilton's opinion, as well as our own, the international situation forbade his return to the foreign field at this time, Mr. Hamilton asked that at the expiration of his furlough, his relationship with the Independent Board cease, as he had plans for the securing of a church in America.

Yours sincerely,
HAROLD S. LAIRD
President,
Independent Board for
Presbyterian Foreign Missions

While THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN is happy to comply with Dr.

Laird's request, it feels that his letter requires further comment. In the GUARDIAN account to which he refers there was a misstatement of fact, but at the time that the GUARDIAN went to press even Mr. Hamilton was not aware that the statement was not a true one. It was stated that the Hamiltons severed their relationship with the Independent Board effective October 31st, the day of the board meeting. Although the Hamiltons had tendered their resignations to take effect on that date, members of the executive committee of the board protested that it would be satisfactory for their salaries to continue until December 6th, the date of the expiration of their furlough. Mr. Hamilton, however, said that he felt that more liberty of action would be given both to the board and to themselves if their connection ceased immediately. (It should

Orthodox Presbyterian Foreign Missionaries

NO WORD has been received from the missionaries of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the Orient. As far as is known, the Rev. and Mrs. M. C. Frehn and their daughter, Helen, are still in Tokyo, and the Rev. Egbert W. Andrews is in Harbin.

It is not definitely known whether or not the Rev. Bruce F. Hunt has been released from prison, in spite of several contradictory reports which have come to the office of the Committee on Foreign Missions. The last word was on December 5th, when the Department of State advised the committee that Mr. Hunt and Dr. and Mrs. Roy Byram had been released from prison that day, and that they were on their way to Harbin. The department emphasized that this word had come through the Japanese embassy, not from the American consul at Harbin. Whether the prisoners arrived in Harbin and whether Mr. Hunt was able to join Mrs. Hunt and their five children there, is not known.

Prayer is requested on behalf of these faithful servants of the Lord, who may be in most trying circumstances in Japanese custody.

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN will continue to print all news of the missionaries as soon as it is received.

be noted that, prior to the developments of the meeting, Mr. Hamilton had intended to resign at the expiration of his furlough.) Mr. Hamilton then left the meeting, and it was not until later information came from an official of the board, after the GUARDIAN had gone to press, that he learned of the decision to continue his salary until the expiration of the furlough on December 6th.

It was also stated in THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN that, according to a spokesman of the board, "his continued membership in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has proved to be a source of 'constant embarrassment' to the Independent Board." No statement to this effect was made in the course of Mr. Hamilton's interview with the executive committee. The embarrassment which was then declared was not to the board itself, but to the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood, N. J., and was voiced by the Rev. Carl McIntire, pastor of that church and vice-president of the board, as his own opinion only. Mr. McIntire and Mr. Roland K. Armes, treasurer of the board, both took Mr. Hamilton to task for his continued membership in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and Mr. McIntire said that Mr. Hamilton seemed ungrateful for all that the Collingswood church had done in paying the Hamiltons' salaries, for he had not even written to Mr. McIntire his reasons for not withdrawing from The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. While no other members of the executive committee took part in this discussion, none of them expressed disapproval of Mr. McIntire's statements, and THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN feels that it was justified in concluding that the "embarrassment" extended to the entire board. An additional support of that contention is to be found in the fact that, prior to the board meeting, Dr. J. Gordon Holdcroft, general secretary of the board, wrote asking the Hamiltons to attend the meeting, stating that the members wanted to consult them about their continued membership in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church and their views on the millennium.

In the light of the foregoing facts, the reader may draw his own conclusion as to whether or not the GUARDIAN was correct in saying that the Hamiltons were "forced out" by the Independent Board.

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITORIAL

The Christian at War

AT LAST, after months of uncertainty, official and complete war has come to America. As these words are written a new spirit of unity and determination has swept over our country as we gird ourselves for the hard and bloody tasks which lie ahead. The war will have a far-reaching effect upon our religious life as well as upon our economic and social life. Even if we would we cannot escape it. Yet we are Christians even before we are Americans and in the excitement of a national crisis we must not forget or lay aside our Christian principles.

When a people go to war they are convinced of the righteousness of their cause and of the wickedness of their enemy. This sense of the morality of the war is emphasized, of course, by the government and the agencies of propaganda, for without this conviction the will to fight would be lacking. Consequently we have already heard much of the heinousness of the Axis powers, their tyranny and use of brute force, Japan's agrandizement in the Far East, her treacherous attack on Hawaii. Our enemies will be pictured as totally black and we shall be pictured as completely white. It is quite probable that many preachers will say that we are fighting for the Lord against the hosts of antichrist. We shall be told that this is a "holy war", a battle for Christianity. But let us as Christians remember that humility is a national as well as a personal virtue. We believe that our national security demands that we go to war with Japan. We believe that it also demands the defeat of Hitler and all his allies. Yet let us not forget that the democratic countries including the United States have not been without sin. We too have been guilty of imperialism and of selfish nationalism. Britain's and America's record in the Far East is not above reproach. Let us avoid that blind nationalism which can see no fault at home. Our sins are a part of

the world's sins which have brought this catastrophic judgment upon our generation. Again, let us not forget that our nation is not fighting for God but for its own life. We are justified in fighting for our national life but that does not constitute a "holy war". We are fighting for the establishment of a world free from the threat of international banditry, for a world free from fear and free from want, but that does not mean we are all the righteous servants of God—witness friend Stalin.

Another peril that confronts the Christian in a time of war is the

January Book List

TO members of the Christian Book-of-the-Month Club, the following books are offered at special discounts during January.

CRUDEN'S COMPLETE CONCORDANCE. An indispensable tool for the serious Bible student, and an absolute necessity for the Christian who wants to study God's Word. Price to members, \$1.60 (retail list price, \$2; members save 20%).

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR, by Loraine Boettner. An exceedingly timely book, and one that every intelligent Christian in a nation at war should read. Price to members, 80c (retail list price, \$1; members save 20%).

CALVIN AND CALVINISM, by B. B. Warfield. A collection of articles on John Calvin and on the Reformed theology, by the brilliant Princeton theologian. A classic of Calvinistic literature. Price to members, \$2.40 (retail list price, \$3; members save 20%).

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, by John Bunyan. A delightfully compiled and illustrated edition of the Christian classic, in a volume especially suited to children and young people, and popularly priced. Price to members, 80c (retail list price, \$1; members save 20%).

MORE THAN CONQUERORS, by William Hendriksen. Carried over by popular demand from the December list. Price to members, \$1.20 (retail list price, \$1.50; members save 20%).

(PLEASE NOTE: "What Is Faith" by Machen, and "Morning and Evening Meditations" by Spurgeon, are now out of print and cannot be secured.)

temptation to elevate Caesar above God, to place the commands of the state above the commands of God and the interests of the state above those of the kingdom of God. The day war was declared the erstwhile isolationist *Chicago Tribune* came out with the motto, "Our country, right or wrong", upon its masthead. This sentiment is a direct attack upon the Word of God. It seeks to make loyalty to the nation rather than loyalty to God's law the standard of morality. We Christians are American citizens and we are loyal to our government. We love our land and we shall both labor and die for her. But we never forget that our citizenship is in heaven and that our first loyalty is there. In fact, a major reason for our willingness to suffer for America is that she does not demand the things which are God's alone.

Some Christians feel that war is in itself sinful and will not aid in its prosecution. Most of us, though we recognize that war is due to man's sin and though we realize that wars all too seldom solve disputes, fully support our country's stand. We believe that human governments are ordained of God to maintain order and restrain sin that the gospel may be preached and free opportunity given to the people of God to live as God's prophets, priests and kings. We are thankful that in the democracies, despite all their sins, God's Word is not bound and Christ's people are free. We have been appalled at the rise of modern dictatorships with their elevation of the state above God, and when these states set out upon a program of conquest we saw that their triumph would mean the end of gospel preaching and the end of freedom to worship God. If totalitarianism conquers, the state instead of protecting the church will seek to destroy her. Therefore we believe it is our God-given right and duty to take up arms.

We Christian Americans go to war with confession of our personal and national sins, with no jingoistic boasts and no thirst for vengeance, praying that God in His providence will bring a better world out of this holocaust, that America in penitence and faith may turn to the God whom she has ignored and insulted, and that God's richest blessings may rest upon our fellow-Christians in enemy countries.

—J. P. C.

Communicant Church Membership

By the REV. GEORGE W. MARSTON

Pastor of Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia

Conclusion

Chapter IV

Church Membership

THE two kinds of members in a particular church are: Non-communicant and communicant. Non-communicant church members are children of believers, received into the visible church by infant baptism and thus subject to its discipline and oversight, and entitled to many of its privileges and blessings, but not permitted to come to the Lord's table. Communicant church members are those who have appeared before the session and have given evidence of a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, consistency of character and understanding of the Lord's supper, and have therefore been publicly received into the full privileges and responsibilities of communicant church membership.

A. SOME REASONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

1. Non-communicant membership. The children of believers should become non-communicant church members:

(a) because it is the will of God, who has ordained that they receive baptism as the sacrament of reception into Christ's church;

(b) in order to benefit from the guidance and discipline of the church (Rom. 9:4, 5).

(See Chapter III for the further unfolding of this subject.)

2. Communicant membership.

(a) A non-communicant member of the church should become a communicant member:

(1) in order to accept publicly the promises and assume the obligations of the covenant of grace signified by baptism;

(2) in order to enter into the full privileges and duties of communicant church membership, i. e., to come to the Lord's table, to have one's children baptized, and to take an active part in the government of the church. These privileges are restricted to communicant church members in good standing (I Cor. 11:29).

(b) An adult convert who was not in infancy received into the church by baptism should become a communicant church member:

(1) because this is a Scriptural way of making a public profession of faith in Christ. The believer is commanded to profess publicly his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9, 10; Matt. 10:32, 33);

(2) Because every true church and denomination is a God-appointed organization for the benefit of the invisible church. Therein members of the invisible church have fellowship and worship together, thus practicing the communion of the saints. Thereby, members of the invisible church are nourished upon the Word, proclaim the gospel both at home and abroad, and care for the lambs of the flock (Eph. 4:11-13);

(3) Because believers are commanded to partake of the sacraments. As the use of the sacraments is restricted to communicant church members in good standing, it is obviously the will of God for adult converts from the world to become communicant members of the church (I Cor. 11:29).

B. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

1. Non-communicant church membership.

(a) A creditable profession of faith by the parents, parent, or another acting as a parent. The parents should be communicant members of the particular church in which the child, by virtue of his baptism, becomes a non-communicant member. Unless the parents are subject to its authority, the church has no opportunity of fulfilling the obligations which it assumes in infant baptism, i. e., to see that the child exercises the privileges and duties of non-communicant church membership.

(b) A life of obedience on the part of the parents, parent, or another acting as a parent. This means that the parents must be church members in good and regular standing. Church membership is an evidence that one has made a credit-

able profession of faith; good and regular standing in the church is an evidence of obedience in a denomination which is faithful in the exercise of church discipline. Those who are not church members in good and regular standing are not eligible for the sacraments, and therefore cannot present their children for baptism.

2. Communicant church membership.

(a) The first requirement for communicant church membership is a creditable profession of faith and promise of obedience. When the eunuch said to Philip, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" the latter replied, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8:36, 37). To believe with all the heart involves a creditable profession of faith and promise of obedience.

(1) A creditable profession of faith involves:

(a) A knowledge concerning the gospel. We need to know certain facts concerning Him of whom the gospel speaks: who Jesus Christ is (Isa. 7:14; John 1:1, 14; I John 5:20; Matt. 16:16; John 11:27; Matt. 27:54); why He came to earth (Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:9ff.; Matt. 20:28; Gal. 4:4, 5); what He did to save His people (Isa. 53:6; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 2:24; II Cor. 5:21; I Cor. 15:3). We also need to know how this so great salvation is obtained, i. e., by the Holy Spirit working in us saving faith (S.C. 31; Eph. 2:1, 8) and by our accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour (Acts 16:30, 31; John 1:12).

(b) Repentance. We must know our need for the gospel. We are guilty of sins of omission and commission. We have sinned in thought, word and deed. The wages of sin is death, eternal separation from God (Rom. 3:10, 11, 12, 23; 6:23). To repent is to be sorry for our sins, not merely because of the havoc they have wrought in our lives or the lives of others, but because they are grievous in God's sight. To repent is to turn from our sin with hatred and loathing, to turn to God confessing our sins, asking His forgiveness and receiving His remedy (II Cor. 7:10; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38).

(c) A profession of faith in

Christ as Saviour (Acts 8:37, 38; Rom. 10:9, 10; Matt. 10:32, 33).

(2) A promise of obedience

(a) is a promise to obey Christ and His laws (John 14:15; 15:14; Matt. 28:20); a life of obedience is the test of a sincere profession of faith (Matt. 7:21; James 2:20);

(b) requires obedience to all lawful authority, whether it be that of the state, the home or the church (Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Rom. 13:1-7; Ex. 20:12).

(b) Other requirements for communicant church membership.

(1) An understanding of the meaning of the sacraments. (See Chapter III.)

(2) Some knowledge of the duties and privileges of communicant church membership in order that God may be glorified and the church and the individual may profit thereby. In the early church it was customary to have catechetical classes for converts before admitting them to the church. This is also the practice on many mission fields today. There is need for such instruction in every church, not only for adult converts from the world, but also for the children of the covenant, before they are admitted to communicant membership in the church.

(3) In the case of the adult convert from the world, adult baptism is also required. (See Chapter III.)

C. THE PRIVILEGES OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP.

1. To enjoy the peculiar advantages which the church offers for the worship of God in its customary services on the Lord's day. The salutation, the public prayers, psalms and hymns, the offering, the reading and preaching of the Word, and the benediction, are all means of worship. The church also offers such special opportunities for service as ushering, teaching of Sunday school class, etc. We have been saved to serve. (Psalm 122:1; 65:4; 84:4; Eph. 1:2; Acts 4:23-31; Psalm 92:1-3; Eph. 5:19; Matt. 5:23, 24; Neh. 8:8; II Cor. 13:14.)

2. To be taught what we are to know concerning God, and what duties God requires of us. We must know God's answer to these questions, "What is truth?" and "What is good?" The Lord Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". Truth is in order to godliness. It is the church's

task to instruct its members in these matters (Matt. 7:21-27; John 8:32; Acts 8:30, 31).

3. To partake of the sacraments. "A Sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers" (S.C. 92). The sacraments are baptism and the Lord's supper. It is the privilege only of communicant church members in good standing to partake of the Lord's supper and to have their children baptized. By means of the sacraments God teaches us certain truths and bestows upon us certain blessings. Unless one understands the meaning of the sacraments, and partakes in a worthy manner, there is no blessing to be had from partaking of them, but, rather, condemnation (I Cor. 11:27, 29).

4. To enter into the missionary work of the church both at home and abroad (See 3 under "Duties of Communicant Church Members").

5. To enjoy the guidance of the church in spiritual matters, e.g., in problems of Bible interpretation and Christian conduct (Matt. 2:1-6).

6. To obtain aid in time of want. "And in those days, when the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said . . . Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:1-3). (See also Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:2; James 2:15, 16; I John 3:17, 18.)

7. To have a voice in the government of the church, i. e., election of pastor, elders, deacons, and the business of the church. A church is like a democracy in that the officers of the church are elected by the people. They are Christ's representatives in that they enforce Christ's laws. They are the representatives of the people in that they are elected by the people for this purpose (Acts 6:1-5).

D. THE DUTIES OF COMMUNICANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

1. To keep the Christian Sabbath. "The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and

spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy" (S.C. 60). (Lev. 23:3; Heb. 10:25ff.; Isa. 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:11, 12; Mark 2:27.) Keeping the Christian Sabbath calls for church attendance, physical rest, performing works of necessity and mercy, personal Bible study and prayer, reading good Christian literature, training the covenant youth, and other hallowed activities.

2. To come regularly to the Lord's table and to present the children of the covenant for baptism as soon as is reasonably possible (I Cor. 11:24; Gen. 17:12; Luke 2:21).

3. To take an active part in spreading the gospel and thus building up the church. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word". "Ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God". "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. . . . The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 8:4; I Thess. 1:7-9; Acts 2:41, 47).

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of the particular church and the denomination, as long as they are in accord with the Word of God. The Bible teaches us to give freely (II Cor. 9:7); sacrificially (Mark 12:41-44; II Cor. 8:1-3, 7, 9); systematically (Mal. 3:8-10; II Cor. 8:12; I Cor. 16:1-2).

5. To give obedience, in the Lord, to the officers of the church. A church is like a monarchy, a country ruled by a king. It consists of a king and his subjects. Christ is the King. We who are members of the church are His subjects. He rules us by His Word and Spirit. His laws are enforced and law-breakers are censured by the ruling and preaching elders, whom He has appointed to do this work in accordance with the provisions of His Word. This work of law enforcement we call church discipline.

The purpose of church discipline is: to vindicate the honor of Christ, to maintain the purity of the church in both doctrine and life, to reclaim the sinner, and to warn others lest they also sin.

The various kinds and degrees of censure for breaking God's law as set forth in Holy Scripture are: admonition, rebuke, suspension, and excommunication.

Some Scripture references on this subject are: Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5:9-13; Gal. 6:1; I Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:5-13; 3:10; I Thess. 5:12-15; II Thess. 3:14-15; Heb. 13:7, 17.

Notice, please, that unless one is hindered by a work of necessity and/or mercy, failure to attend the Lord's table or the regular services of the church makes one liable to church discipline (I John 3:4; I Tim. 5:20; Titus 3:10).

6. To comfort and help our brethren, to the best of our ability, when

they are in need. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"; "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Rom. 12:15; Gal. 6:2). (See also Gal. 6:9, 10; James 2:15, 16; I John 3:17-18.)

7. To engage in daily Bible reading and prayer,* and in the case of heads of families, to establish and maintain the family altar. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). (See also Matt. 26:41; Deut. 6:6, 7.)

QUESTIONS

1. What are the two kinds of members in a particular church?
2. Why should the children of believers become non-communicant members of the church?
3. Why should non-communicant church members become communicant members?
4. Why should adult converts from the world become communicants?
5. What are the requirements for non-communicant church membership on the part of the parents?
6. What are the requirements for communicant church membership, on the part of non-communicant members? On the part of adult converts from the world?
7. What is involved in a creditable profession of faith?
8. What is involved in a promise of obedience?
9. What are the other requirements for communicant church membership?
10. What is required of the adult convert from the world, which is not not required of the non-communicant member?
11. What are some of the privileges

(Phil. 4:6).

"The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called *The Lord's Prayer*" (S.C. 99). Three things are evident from this statement of our Shorter Catechism:

1. We need to be directed in prayer (Rom. 8:26).
2. The Word of God is an infallible rule to direct us in prayer as well as in other matters (I John 5:14).
3. The Lord's Prayer has been given us especially for this purpose (Matt. 6:9). Herein we have fundamental principles to be observed in prayer (see S.C. 100-107).

of communicant church membership?

12. What are some of the duties of communicant church members?

The True Christmas Star

(Concluded From Page 162)

The city of David only had a stable with which to welcome that advent. But when we think of the Babe of Bethlehem as the Messiah from heaven, the surroundings of outward poverty, so far from detracting, seem most congruous to His divine character. Earthly splendor would here seem like tawdry tinsel, while the utmost simplicity appears like that clothing of the lilies which surpassed all the glory of Solomon's court.

How wonderful it is that, in the divine sovereignty of God, the census, ordered by Caesar Augustus, brought Joseph and Mary on that eighty-mile journey from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea at just the time Mary was to give birth to her first child. A further remarkable thing about this census is the fact that it was not taken in the usual Roman way, by which each would have been registered in the town where he was born, but rather it was taken in the Jewish manner, by which each was enrolled according to tribe and family. Both Joseph and Mary were of the house of David, and so had to go to Bethlehem.

The last and most glorious point on this Christmas star is the final declaration — "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord". These words were carefully chosen and divinely inspired to give us a specific and clear picture of just who this little Babe might be.

He is first of all a Saviour. Much more than a teacher; much more than a miracle worker; much more than an example; much more than an emancipator and liberator. He came to save — to save man from the guilt of sin by His substitutionary death upon Calvary. He comes to save us from the power of sin through union with Himself in faith and love. He comes to save us from the fear of sin and death by His risen, resurrected life.

Of equal significance is the next title employed, "Christ", that is, the Anointed One, the long looked-for Messiah of the Old Testament. He was anointed Prophet, the Revealer of God and the Fulfiller of prophecy.

He was anointed Priest, as our intercessor before God's holy throne. He was anointed King, as one exercising rule and authority over all.

Finally, we reach the great climax in the concluding title, "Lord", the One who has absolute authority and dominion. The One who is worthy of all homage and worship.

The glorious Christmas star has appeared once more and draws us to the Babe of Bethlehem. Each of its five points radiate in different directions and emphasize various aspects of Christ's birth:

(1) The first point is personal in character and focuses attention upon man, "Unto you", the object of God's mercy and recipient of His love-gift. (2) The second point turns our thoughts to the wonders of the incarnation and virgin birth. (3) The third point concerns the time, "this day", that upon which all the Old Testament prophecies were focused.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

Presbytery of the Dakotas

IN NOVEMBER the Rev. Jack Zandstra was forced by ill health to give up the work of the Logan Fontenelle and Goff Terrace Missions in Omaha, Nebraska, and since then the fields have been in charge of the Rev. Robert B. Brown, pastor of Jennings Memorial Church. Attendance during November at Jennings Sunday school averaged nearly eighty; at Logan Fontenelle thirty-five; and at Goff Terrace twenty. Boxes of old clothing from the Calvary Church of Middletown, Pa. have helped to alleviate real suffering among Omaha's needy. . . . Jennings Church will make the next to the last payment on its building on January 10th, after which only \$262 will remain to be paid.

An every-member canvass in the interests of the building fund is being conducted by members of the Hamill, S. D., church, whose pastor is the Rev. Melvin B. Nonhof. First reports from the committee are encouraging. . . . Eighty persons were present at a November 23rd worship service.

At Volga, S. D., the Rev. Charles L. Shook has concluded a successful Bible conference with a young people's rally, which was attended also by members of the Christian Reformed and Reformed churches. The con-

(4) The fourth point directs our attention to the place, "the city of David". (5) The fifth point dazzles us with its brilliance, "A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord".

The darkness of tyranny and enslavement, dread and fear, shrouded the world on the first Christmas morn, but the star of Bethlehem had brought new hope and joy. No wonder the shepherds immediately resolved, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us". Today once more there hovers over the world the threat of tyranny, when that most glorious heritage of Christianity, freedom—freedom of thought, of action, of religion—is being challenged. But the star of Bethlehem still shines, and shines even more brilliantly than ever before. Its message brings new hope and assurance. "Let us go even unto Bethlehem".

ference lasted for one week, and included afternoon studies in Ephesians and popular evening services assisted by a faithful young people's chorus. . . . The Ladies' Aid and Sunday school have purchased a hundred new hymnals for the church.

The congregation at Lark, N. D., has been saddened by the sudden death of Mrs. Peter VandenBurg, a faithful member of the church. . . . A young people's society has been organized at Leith and a children's Bible study hour begun at Carson.

Presbytery of New Jersey

CALVARY Church, Wildwood: Four communicant members were welcomed into the church at the last communion service and one covenant child was baptized. Recently a social evening was held as a reception to the new members and a deacon. . . . "Aim Cards" have been distributed to raise funds for a building, and loans are being solicited in order to construct a building this winter if possible. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Leslie A. Dunn, will take his vacation during January.

Faith Church, Pittsgrove: New equipment, renovations and redecoration to the church building have caused enthusiasm to run high at the

Pittsgrove church. One hundred and forty-four chairs, a pulpit and communion table, primary chairs and table, a completed primary room and kitchen, and more shrubbery on the grounds have been an encouragement to the members as well as to the pas-

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tor, the Rev. Edward B. Cooper. And even with these increased expenses, gifts to the church budget have set a new record.

Covenant Church, Orange: An encouraging increase in attendance at all the services has been evident this fall. On Sunday evenings a home Bible study course is distributed and on the following Sunday collected and corrected, and much interest has thereby been aroused. . . . At the mid-week prayer meeting the pastor, the Rev. Richard W. Gray, has been conducting a study of the continuity of the covenant, by means of several charts he has prepared.

The Rev. Donald C. Graham, pastor of Emmanuel Church (Independent) of Morristown, reports that the Women's Missionary Society held an open meeting on November 26th. Fifty people heard Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Gaffin, Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries, and contributed an offering to their work.

Presbytery of Philadelphia

GETHSEMANE Church, Philadelphia: Thanksgiving service was held at eight in the morning, and an offering of canned goods, flour, sugar and other foodstuffs was distributed to the needy of the congregation.

Mediator Church, Philadelphia: Nearly fifty persons attended a Thanksgiving service in the Mediator Chapel. A union service for that part of the congregation meeting in the regular church hall was held at the Fifth Reformed Presbyterian Church, with the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church and Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church cooperating. . . . At a recent communion service five new communicant members were publicly received into the membership of the chapel and one united with the church congregation.

Covenant Church, Pittsburgh: Due to a new ruling that no religious services may be held in any of the halls of the government housing projects, this congregation has been forced to transfer its mission to the church building. Average attendance for the mission Sunday school during the first three weeks was fifty-eight. Since the church is only two miles away, it is probable that the majority of these can be transported to the new meeting-place. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Calvin K. Cummings, has started an

adult class in one of the homes during the latter part of November.

Faith Church, Quarryville: Two weeks of special services conducted by the Rev. William T. Strong of West Collingswood, N. J., proved a blessing to the congregation and friends. . . . On November 20th a fellowship Thanksgiving dinner was held, with about eighty persons present. Special gifts amounting to more than \$525 were received to reduce the church mortgage.

Eastlake Church, Wilmington, Del.: At a congregational meeting held November 19th, the Eastlake Church formally changed its name to the Eastlake Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The trustees were directed to proceed with the purchase of the church building and manse from the Presbytery of New Castle of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. for the sum of \$7500. These properties had been lost to that body as a result of litigation following the withdrawal of the Eastlake congregation from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1936. At the same time, a four weeks' financial campaign was instituted, with a goal of \$3000 in cash and pledges payable within one year. At the end of the second week the goal had been passed.

Redeemer Church, Philadelphia: About ninety people attended the installation service of the Rev. Thomas M. Cooper as pastor of Redeemer Church, which was conducted by the presbytery on November 30th. The sermon was delivered by the Rev. Edwin H. Rian on "The Reformation and Protestantism Today". The charge to the pastor was given by the Rev. John H. Skilton, and the pastor's brother, the Rev. Edward B. Cooper of Pittsgrove, N. J., delivered the charge to the congregation. The Rev. Theodore J. Jansma, moderator of the presbytery, presided.

Calvary Church, Willow Grove: November, always a big missionary month at this church, broke all records when \$300 was given for the Committees on Home and Foreign Missions alone. . . . A Quarryville Conference banquet-rally will be held on January 9th, with the Rev. Franklin S. Dyrness as the speaker. . . . Friends of the church have made it possible to order a five-piece pulpit set. The congregation has decided also to purchase pews at this time.

Knox Church, Washington, D. C.:

"Why I Baptize My Infant" was the sermon topic of the pastor, the Rev. Henry D. Phillips, on the occasion of the baptism of his son. . . . Toys are being made for the Trinity Chapel at Newport, Ky., and the children derive a great deal of fun from the work.

Grace Church, Middletown, Del.: Plans are being made for an every-member canvass in the hope of reviving the interest of some careless members. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Robert H. Graham, exchanged pulpits with the Rev. Peter De Ruiter of Nottingham, Pa., on November 16th.

Faith Church, Harrisville: The book of the month for December is Ephesians, in the weekly Bible study hour. The Sunday school has made plans for a Christmas program, consisting of a series of tableaux depicting the birth of Christ. A new PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN Club is forming this month. The Dorcas Missionary Guild is making a quilt and gathering other useful things for the Rev. and Mrs. Clarence W. Duff in their mission field in Colorado. The young people and the pastor, the Rev. Charles G. Schaufele, recently broadcast a service from radio station WISR in Butler.

New Hope Church, Branchton: The Women's Missionary Society spent several days making "flannel-graph" pictures for the use of Mr. and Mrs. Duff. Bible club attendance in the McDermott and New Hope rural public schools has increased.

Kirkwood Church, Kirkwood: The congregation joined with the Faith Church of Quarryville in a union Thanksgiving service addressed by the Rev. E. Lynne Wade, pastor of the Kirkwood Church. . . . The fall Fellowship Supper and the Harvest Home service were combined this year. Following a bountiful feast prepared by the ladies of the church, offerings were received for the building fund amounting to nearly \$400. Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary addressed the almost two hundred persons present. . . . By a special series of prayer meetings, the church is preparing for the annual fall evangelistic services to be conducted this month by the Rev. Calvin K. Cummings of Pittsburgh.

Presbytery of California

COVENANT Church, Berkeley: The young people of the church will distribute one thousand copies of

the *Home Evangel* from door to door during December. . . . On December 6th the young people joined those of the San Francisco Church in a Machen League Rally. . . . A special Christmas program of the Sunday school will be held on December 23rd, at which time an offering will be received for the building fund.

First Church, Long Beach: Three new communicant members have recently been received. Delegates from four churches attended a Machen League Rally held a short time ago, and the chapters in Southern California plan to hold a Bible Conference at Wrightswood from December 29th to 31st.

Westminster Church, Los Angeles: On the fifth anniversary of the church, the Rev. Dwight H. Poundstone was guest speaker and soloist, and one communicant member was received. . . . Jerome Frehn, son of the Rev. and Mrs. M. C. Frehn, Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries to Tokyo, has returned to the homeland and is attending school here. His brother, David, is still in Hershey, Pa. . . . Mr. Paul Hittson, a graduate of Westminster Seminary, played the piano and preached on November 22nd.

Beverly Church, Los Angeles: Two covenant children have been added to the church membership. During the past two months about \$400 has been received for the building fund. The Rev. Dwight H. Poundstone is pastor of Beverly Church.

Presbytery of New York and New England

CALVARY Church, Schenectady: The Machen League is now dis-

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cussing "The Theory of Evolution vs. the Word of God". The League sponsored a harvest festival as a time of social fellowship for members and friends. New families in the neighborhood are being reached through Schenectady's "Welcome Wagon Service". The pastor, the Rev. Raymond M. Meiners, is teaching the Shorter Catechism in a Sunday school class of men and boys.

Covenant Church, Rochester: The annual fellowship dinner was combined with the congregational and corporation meeting on November 26th. Reports from all organizations were heard and a steady progress in all departments was noted. The communicant membership shows an increase of eleven during the past year. "The Good News Hour" is still on

the air, and the response has been encouraging.

Second Parish Church, Portland: The Young People's Society is holding a candle-light service as a part of the program on Sunday evening, December 21st. . . . A Week of Prayer will be held in January, with the Rev. Robert S. Marsden as guest speaker.

The presbytery met at Cornville, Maine, on Thursday, November 27th, to examine the group that had recently applied for admission as a particular congregation of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The examination was eminently gratifying, and the church was constituted at that time. Stated supply is the Rev. Charles E. Stanton. A full report of the formation of this newest congregation of the denomination will appear in an

early issue of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN.

Presbytery of Wisconsin

AT GRESHAM, evangelistic services were conducted in the Old Stockbridge Church during November, with a total attendance of four hundred for the ten nights. Eleven persons publicly professed faith in Christ as their Saviour. At two of the services, a blind Stockbridge boy, converted during the past year, played the accordion and sang. Although he had not memorized many hymns, hearts were touched as he sang: "Amazing grace . . . Was blind, but now I see." On November 24th and 25th, the Rev. Robert S. Marsden and the Rev. George Willis visited Gresham, and Mr. Marsden preached both evenings.

THE SECOND COMING

is a subject of intense interest to every Christian believer.

Among those who hold without wavering to the infallible authority of Scripture, there are different views as to the meaning of the Bible's teaching concerning matters connected with the return of our Lord. These variations are often classified under the terms Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism.

The Presbyterian Guardian is not committed to the defense and propagation of any one of these varying views, but it does wish to give its readers as much information on the subject as possible. To this end, and in response to a number of requests from persons holding the premillennial position, it has arranged for the publication of a series of articles in exposition of one of the least known of these types of view—Amillennialism.

This series of twelve articles will be written by Dr. Robert Strong, pastor of Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Willow Grove, Pa., and will begin in the next issue, running concurrently for the following six months. If your subscription is about to expire, be sure to renew it now. And why not send a gift subscription to your Christian friends? An eight-months' subscription will cover the entire series, and costs only one dollar.

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