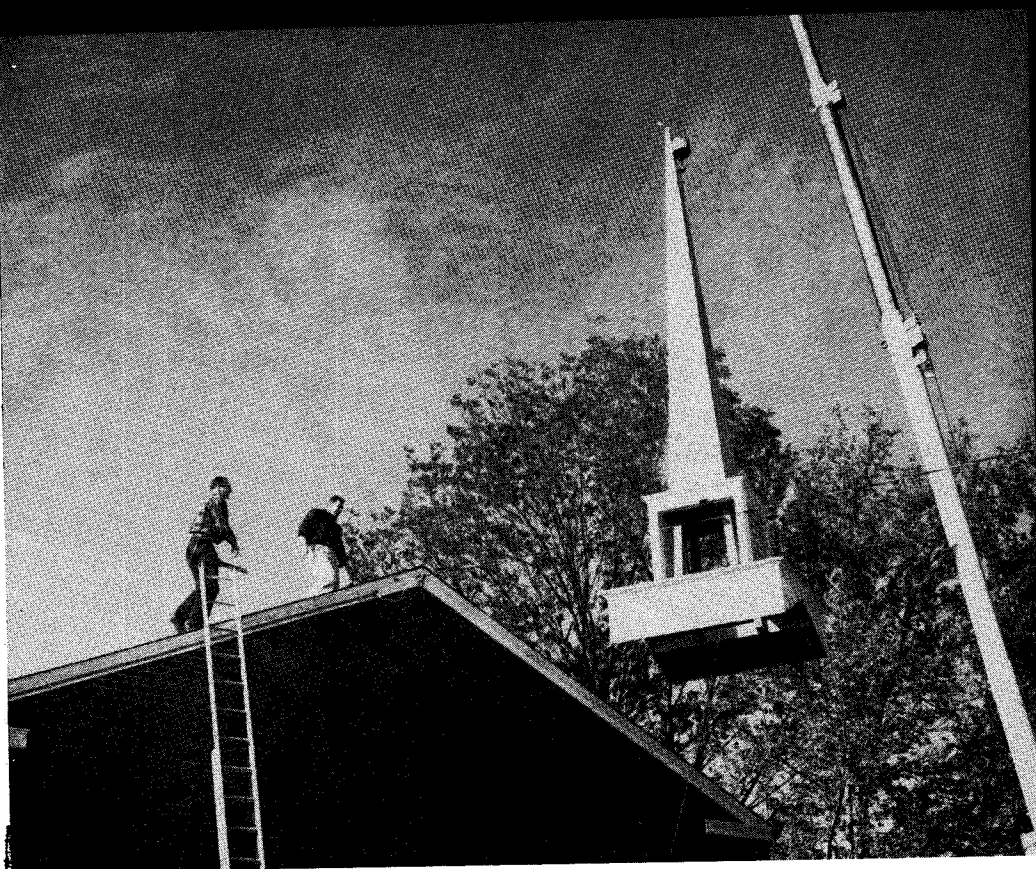


GUARDIAN



Hatboro Church Dedicated

Up went the steeple as work neared completion on the new building of Trinity Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Hatboro, Pennsylvania.

The congregation held the first services in its almost finished permanent home on the third Sunday in November—just five months after groundbreaking ceremonies on a warm day last June.

A series of meetings for thanksgiving and dedica-

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A Memorable Night

EDWARD WYBENGA

The Treachery of Judas **Luke 22:1-6**

It was Wednesday of the last week of Jesus' life upon this earth before the cross. In the providence of God our Savior was to die as our sacrificial Lamb at the very time when the annual Passover lamb was to be sacrificed in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. Joining the two the apostle later wrote, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinth. 5:7). Through the redemption wrought by Christ upon the cross sinners are freed from a far more grievous oppression than ever befell the children of Israel under Pharaoh.

His enemies were determined to put Jesus to death. They had long sought for an opportunity to do so, but delayed for fear of the people, many of whom thought of him as a great prophet. At the time of the celebration of the Passover feast a huge multitude—perhaps two million—had gathered in Jerusalem from all parts of the land, some coming from more distant places. How could the chief priests and scribes seize Jesus and get away with their scheme of putting him to death in the presence of such a crowd?

It was just at this time that Judas came along to help solve their problem. As one of the twelve he had inside knowledge about the life and habits of Jesus. He would see to it that Jesus would fall into the hands of his enemies without the multitude's becoming aware of what was happening.

This was welcome news to the rulers of the Sanhedrin. Immediately they struck a bargain with Judas. After Jesus had been delivered into their hands they would give the traitor thirty pieces of silver—reward enough for Judas who would sell his Master for about the price of a slave.

Satan had indeed entered into the heart of Judas Iscariot. He fell victim

to his besetting sin of avarice. He was neither the first, nor the last, to sell his soul for money. We see it happening every day. Honesty, virtue, character are sacrificed on the altar of devotion to the god of gold. In the heart of man there still lurks a 'Judas' seeking to destroy him!

The Last Supper **Luke 22:7-30**

Now the time had come when Jesus was to keep the Passover with his disciples. Accordingly, he sent Peter and John to make the necessary preparations. He told them that upon entering the city of Jerusalem they would be met by a man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him into the house where he entered. On the authority of Christ they were to ask for the guest-chamber; and there they were to make ready the Passover. All of this came to pass as Jesus had said.

When the appointed hour arrived the Savior and his little band of twelve apostles gathered in the upper room of the house to partake of this last supper together. It was indeed to be the last—for with the death of Christ on the following day the old Passover feast was about to be done away. The true Passover Lamb would then have given his life for the redemption of his people. No longer would the paschal lamb of the Old Testament have to be slain and its blood shed rifice of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

This was indeed a memorable night for Jesus and his disciples. He said, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer"—i.e., "I have greatly desired to do so." It was a deeply religious occasion, a time of close fellowship and spiritual conversation. It brought a foretaste of the permanent and perfect joys of salvation that await the children of God in heaven.

Even so, there was a note of discord amid the solemn ministrations of the evening, for we read: "There was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest" (v. 24). The disciples still had in mind an earthly kingdom of splendor and glory which they hoped the Messiah would set up. They were wondering who would have the places of highest authority in that kingdom.

By means of an object lesson—the example of foot-washing recorded in John 13—Jesus taught them that true greatness lies in true humility which is shown in consecrated service. They who are faithful in their service to Christ shall have reward enough in the kingdom of heaven where they shall live and reign with the Lord forever.

The Lord's Table

It was Jesus' purpose to lead on from the Old Testament Passover meal to the Lord's Supper of the New Testament. In this way he would show his followers that as the true Paschal Lamb he was introducing a new sacrament or ordinance whereby his people could call to remembrance his sacrificial death for their sins. He said, "This do in remembrance of me." The broken bread and the poured out wine would speak most clearly and forcefully of the central truth of redemption, namely, "He loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 3:20b).

While Jesus wished to proceed with the institution of the Lord's Supper, he apparently did not wish to do so until he had first dismissed Judas from the company of the twelve. Such sacred associations of thought and feeling as pertained to the holy sacrament were not in keeping with the heart and mind of Judas, who was already in the clutches of the devil. Therefore, at this point, as indicated in the Gospel of Matthew (26:21-25), the traitor was identified, and he at once left the assembly (John 13:30).

How inexpressibly painful was this scene at the Passover table! The soul of Jesus was agitated within him (John 13:21). The disciples were cast into deep gloom and sorrow (Matt. 26:22). As for Judas, upon him fell the verdict of Christ: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but

(concluded on page 144)

Witnessing About Christ

ALBERT G. EDWARDS

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else could do.

Our Lord Jesus, in one of the last words he left us before his majestic ascension into heaven, said: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

Although the command is clear, many Christians are afraid of witnessing. They are afraid because they have a confused idea of what it means to witness. They think that being a witness and being a "soul winner" or a "personal worker" are one and the same thing. Are witnessing and "soul winning" the same? What does it mean to witness?

Witnessing is, very simply, telling someone what we know to be true. It is *not* the using of clever, memorized arguments with the aim of persuading a person to become a Christian. In a law court, a witness does not try to argue with the judge, or present clever, carefully memorized statements to try to persuade him to take a certain course of action. He simply tells the judge what he personally knows to be true.

Witnessing Is Not Identical with Soul Winning

The Bible says that "he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). But not every Christian seems to have this gift from God. Is it not true that some are so terribly shy that even though they pray earnestly for help, they become hopelessly confused and tangled up when they try to persuade someone else to become a Christian? And so, because they do not seem to have the gift of being a "personal worker," they become discouraged. They think they are failures. They do not realize that if they are Christians at all, they are witnesses to Christ.

When they are told that being a

"soul winner" or a "personal worker" is the same thing as being a witness, countless humble Christians are being discouraged needlessly by this misconception. Christians need to witness, and must be encouraged to witness. The only proper way to encourage them is to tell the truth about witnessing as found in the Bible.

Witnessing Should Come Naturally

Witnessing simply means to tell what we know to be true. Therefore, witnessing is something that should come naturally. It cannot help but come naturally if Jesus Christ is real to us, and his salvation and Word are a source of real comfort and assurance. When Peter and John were threatened and told not to say anything about Jesus, they said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

We cannot help speaking about things that mean most to us, things we are really excited about. If we treasure and are really full of joy over the great salvation that God has given us in his Son, how can we help but bring it up in conversation? If people get excited over new recipes, new cars, or a really good place to fish, how much more ought Christians to be really enthusiastic over the greatest thing in life, fellowship with God himself through his own Son Jesus Christ? The Apostle John was excited about it, and talked about it to everyone he could. "That which we have seen and heard," he said, "declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).

We Must Have Something to Witness About

If witnessing simply means to tell what we personally know to be true, then we must ask ourselves, What do we personally know to be true about Christ? Do we have personal assurance of the truth of the Bible's message?

Do we have personal assurance of what Christ has done for us through faith? Paul's admonition to the Christians in Corinth is much to the point: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobrates?" (II Corinthians 13:5).

May this not be an important reason why many do not witness? They have nothing inside to talk about. They do not know whether Jesus Christ is in them. They are empty and hollow, only pretending. They do not know the joy of their salvation, the reality of the forgiveness of sin. They have only a form of godliness, but know nothing of the power of it (II Timothy 3:5). Christ is not real to them. He is only remote. How then can they speak of the Lord whom they do not know?

If we know Christ we will witness about him. If we are not witnessing, we must seriously ask ourselves whether we are Christians at all. Those who are Christians *will* witness. They cannot help it. They know Christ. They cannot deny him. The Holy Spirit's power in their life compels them to witness. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

Witnesses Must Use Words

Many try to take shelter from the searching light of God's Word by saying that, although they may not say much about Christ, nevertheless they are witnessing with their lives. It is certainly true that the witness of our mouth is dead without the witness of our life (James 2:17-18). On the other hand, the witness of our life is meaningless and not understood without the witness of our mouth. To whom do we give credit for our changed life? If we keep our mouth shut, no one will know. Paul did not hesitate to witness with words about the reason for his changed life. He testified: "But by the grace of God I

am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Because words are absolutely essential to meaningful scriptural witnessing, therefore we are told to use our mouth. "If thou shalt confess *with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and *with the mouth* confession is made unto salvation" (Roman 10:9, 10). Jesus likewise stresses the absolute importance of openly acknowledging him before men. He said: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32, 33).

If we do not use our mouth — our words — in witnessing, we are not witnessing in the scriptural meaning of the term. We are disobeying Christ. We are *denying* Christ by silence. Know then that he will repudiate those who deny him. On that day when we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, what will he say to you? Now is the time to think about this, and to start using your mouth for his glory.

Witnesses Should Be Natural

Witnessing should be a natural expression of the Christian's faith. If witnessing should come naturally, it should also *be* natural. It should not be artificial or put on. That would be hypocrisy. It would actually be telling a lie, bearing a false witness. Each person has his own way of talking and doing things. Each should therefore witness about Christ with his mouth in a way that is not artificial to him, or put on, but natural.

**I love to tell the story;
More wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies
Of all our golden dreams.
I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee.**

Often we are given the impression that before a Christian can witness, he must find somebody who is not a Christian, get him alone in a corner,

and start using a compelling set of arguments to bring him to Christ. This is a most unfortunate distortion. When Jesus told his disciples to witness, he told them *where* they should witness (Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth), but he did not tell them to limit their witness to any one type of person in those places. We should witness to *all* with whom we have contact.

We must not think that witnessing is a type of talk we must reserve for and use only with non-Christians. In the first place, as we have tried to emphasize, witnessing is not some special kind of talking. It is just speaking naturally of the things that are important to us, things about which we can't help but be a little excited, things we know to be true because we have found them in God's Word and experienced their reality in certain ways in our life. Secondly, we find that the Bible tells Christians to speak *to one another* about Christ.

We Must Witness about Christ to One Another

We must witness about Christ to one another. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often *one to another*," we read in Malachi 3:16. In Colossians 3:16 we are told, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing *one another* . . ." In Hebrews 10:25 we are reminded that we should be "exhorting *one another*."

**I love to tell the story;
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it, like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story,
That I have loved so long.**

Start in the Home

We must start with those closest to us and share in our joy in the Lord one with another. We should do this in the home. Husbands and wives should bear witness to each other of God's faithfulness and mercy. Parents should witness to their children. This is the heart of Christian education. Children must share with their parents, speaking of, witnessing to, God's dealings with them. Children in a family should speak with each other and share naturally in their covenant joy.

If we cannot witness to one another, how can we genuinely witness to anyone else? Only by first witnessing at

home can we go on to witness to others.

We Must Witness One to Another at Church

The practice of speaking one to another of God's faithfulness and grace is too widely neglected in many churches. Sad to say, it is often because of shame. Even in Jesus' time there were some who did not confess him, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). How refreshing it is to hear Paul say, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16). Jesus soberly warns us against giving in to this temptation. He says: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26).

**I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love.**

In the life of the church Christians, when they meet together before or after a worship service, should find it natural to speak together of God's wonderful dealings with them. All too often the conversation revolves around the weather instead of the Creator of the weather and of all things. Opportunity ought also to be opened, and encouragement by example given, in gatherings for Bible study and prayer to witness one to another and even to exhort one another about the things of God (Hebrews 10:25).

If Christians do not find it natural wherever and whenever they meet to speak one with another of God's gracious dealings with them, how can they ever hope naturally to speak with non-Christians about Jesus Christ? When a Christian simply puts on a pious attitude for the benefit of a non-Christian, the non-Christian can see through the hypocrisy with ease. It is remarkable that so many of us feel that when we do this we are doing something worthy of God's own praise. Actually, the only ones we are fooling are ourselves.

Christians Must Witness to Those Who Do Not Trust Christ

It should not be necessary to say that a Christian must witness also to those who do not trust Christ, for we should witness to *all*. Sadly, we do not

all do so. In this we are disobedient—disobedient to Christ himself. This disobedience may arise from shame. If so, we should carefully examine ourselves, whether we really belong to Christ (Luke 9:26). If our disobedience stems from fear, we should find out why we are afraid, and ask God to help us. After all, he has promised to give us the power of no less a person than the invincible Holy Spirit! What then have we to fear? "We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).

If our fear stems from a mistaken idea of witnessing, from still thinking that witnessing to a non-Christian means to get him into a corner and persuade him by means of a series of compelling arguments to come to Christ, we ought perhaps to read over again what has been said here so far. We need to remember that the essence of witnessing is not in our being persuasive. That is God's work. The essence of witnessing is *telling*, simply telling what we know to be true on the basis of God's Word and what he has done for us.

**I love to tell the story;
'Tis pleasant to repeat
What seems, each time I tell it,
More wonderfully sweet.
I love to tell the story,
For some have never heard
The message of salvation
From God's own holy Word.**

How Shall We Witness to a Non-Christian?

If the non-Christian we are trying to speak with is a friend, we should ask Christ to help us to speak naturally of the Lord with our non-Christian friend. After all, our friend knows us well enough to sense whether we are being natural or not.

If the non-Christian we want to speak with is a stranger, often the problem is how to start and carry on a conversation with him that will provide an opportunity to speak about what we are excited about.

Whether with a friend or a stranger, witnessing should be a natural part of the conversation, a sharing with him, in a way natural to us, of things that mean much to us and that we feel should and can mean much to him, also. For this reason, "canned" or memorized approaches are too often useless. It should be obvious also that if we cannot see how what we want

to say will be relevant to the person we are talking to, we are wasting our time, and his. If witnessing is not relevant, it is unnatural.

Witnessing Must Be Relevant

In talking with a non-Christian, our witnessing will be relevant if we can say something that will help him meet the particular problem he is concerned about. Or if we mention how Christ can help him find the joy and peace which he obviously seems to be lacking. If, in his conversation, he shows a total unawareness of the joy and help Christ can give in life, we can simply point this out, and tell how we personally have found in Christ what he seems to be missing. He can tell by our life and attitude whether our witness rings true.

Again, it may be that if someone compliments us, and if we are aware that the thing about which he compliments us is due to the grace of God, we can simply bear witness to this conviction and say so. It may be possible to follow up this opportunity with some additional observations if the person does not change the subject and ignore our remark. In any case, simply by speaking, we have witnessed to Christ. It is this that Christ asks of us. This is witnessing. The results are up to God.

Soul Winning and Witnessing

"Soul winning" (a good biblical term — Proverbs 11:30) — or "fishing for men" (a term used by Jesus in Matthew 4:19) — is not the same thing as witnessing. Witnessing is simply telling what we know to be true, speaking to Christians and non-Christians alike. Every Christian is a witness. In his witness he undoubtedly prays that God will use what he says to bring a person closer to Christ. The "soul-winner," on the other hand, consciously seeks to persuade a non-Christian, by combining witnessing with careful reasoning, to trust in Jesus Christ.

Perhaps many Christians are not persuasive "soul-winners." But every Christian *is* a witness, like it or not. He is a witness to God's work in his heart and life. He should therefore bear witness to what he knows to be true.

Mr. Edwards is the pastor of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Portland, Oregon.

Speakers Announced for R.E.S. July Conference

"In all things, including ecumenical action, Christ must have the pre-eminence." So stated Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer, General Secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, in describing the theme of the R.E.S. Regional Conference for July 26-28, 1966 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Under the general theme, *Christ or Chaos!*, the Conference will show that Christ is the Power of the gospel, the Head of the church, the Key to unity, the Hope of the world.

"Chaos is the only alternative to Christ," Dr. Schrotenboer said. "Apart from him the world is lost, the churches are confused and our age is disillusioned. Christ alone is the answer. This we shall humbly and boldly proclaim."

"Lest we give the false impression," the General Secretary also explained, "that all Reformed churches are already fully united in the proclamation of Christ, the conference will also face the nettlesome issues which separate Reformed churches. Christ is the critic of his church; our differences must be tested by his Word."

Speakers at the conference will be Dr. Joel Nederhood, Radio Minister of the Back to God Hour; Prof. Edmund P. Clowney, acting President of Westminster Theological Seminary; Dr. G. Aiken Taylor, editor of the *Presbyterian Journal*; and Dr. John W. Sanderson, Dean of Covenant College.

The second day of the conference will feature a panel discussion under the theme: Christ the Critic of his Church: Testing our Differences by his Word. The moderator will be Prof. Bruce Willson of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh. Others on the panel will be Johannes G. Vos, Gordon J. Spykman, Edmund P. Clowney and Jerome de Jong.

The conference will provide an atmosphere and setting in which participants can reflect upon the abiding task of the church: the proclamation of the gospel. Participation will be open to all. The site of the conference is the new beautiful 'Knollcrest Campus' of Calvin College.

RES NEWS EXCHANGE
729 Upper Gage
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada

Basic Assumptions Reconsidered

GEORGE W. MARSTON

“Should parents be received as church members who refuse to have their children baptized?” In an article which appeared in the March issue of the *Presbyterian Guardian*, Albert G. Edwards called for a re-examination of an assumption held by those who were unwilling to receive such parents, namely, that the church “must not receive those it must, in receiving, discipline.”

In reality, the question before us calls for a re-examination of at least three basic assumptions.

Organization and Organism

The first assumption is held by those who are willing to receive at least conditionally, as communicant church members, parents who are unwilling to present their children for baptism. According to this position we dare not exclude from the church as an organization, those who belong to the church as an organism. However, in I Corinthians 5:3-5 the Apostle Paul recommends such an action in respect to a certain member of the church at Corinth. This passage reads as follows: “For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

In these words, he instructs them to cast out of the church as an organization, one who belonged to the church as an organism. It is evident from this that membership in the church as an organism does not automatically qualify one for membership in the church as an organization. Something more, in this case consistent Christian living, must be required of a member of the church as an organization.

More germane to the problem at hand is the requirement of baptism. None of us would insist that baptism is essential to salvation, to membership in the church as an organism,

An overture from the West Coast Presbytery raised this question at the 32nd General Assembly of the OPC: Does the Constitution of the OPC permit church sessions to receive into communicant membership those who refuse to present their children for baptism on account of scruples concerning infant baptism?

The Assembly elected a committee of three to consider the matter: Messrs. John Murray, Charles Ellis, and Laurence Vail.

The reader is reminded that two views on the subject were presented in articles that appeared in these pages in March 1965. Herewith is a further contribution to the discussion, by the Rev. George Marston, a member of the Presbytery of Wisconsin.

but it is certainly required of those who would become either communicant or non-communicant members of the church as an organization. This is evident from Acts 2:38; 16:14, 15; 16:30-33. This requirement is an important aspect of the scriptural doctrine of the church. I would suggest a rereading of the article entitled “Infant Baptism Optional?” by Robert K. Churchill, which appeared in the same issue of the *Presbyterian Guardian*. In this connection see also the references on this subject to be found in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Directory of Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

What the Bible Requires

It is the duty of every church to require of its members what it feels that the eternal Son of God requires in his Word. It has the right to refuse admission to or remove from its membership those who refuse to meet these requirements. The Baptists are consistent in their application of this principle and so should we be. According to our Standards, the Word of God teaches that the sign and seal of the covenant, the badge of church membership, is to be applied not only to adult converts but also to the children of believers (Directory of Worship, Chapter IV: B. 2).

It has been said that parents who



refuse to present their children for baptism should not be forced to sin against their consciences. In what sense is infant baptism a matter of conscience? Those who quote from Romans 14 in support of this position would seem to be placing infant baptism in the realm of the *adiaphora*—things indifferent, left to the conscience of the individual. Infant baptism does not belong in this category. We believe that it is required by the Word of God.

It is true, however, that neither individuals nor churches should sin against their consciences by doing that which they believe to be contrary to the Word of God. If both the church and the individual Christian are to follow what they believe the Word of God teaches on this subject, Christian parents should unite with the church whose teaching on this basic subject they believe to be in accord with the Word.

“All that we may require of the candidate for communicant church membership is a credible profession of faith.” This is the second assumption which must be reconsidered. Those who are in favor of admitting to communicant church membership parents who refuse to present their children for baptism, seek to base their position on this assumption. In this case, the principle stated is correct but it does not support the position of those who appeal to it. They have failed to recognize the implications,

in other words, the scope of a credible profession of faith.

Credible Profession and Obedience

It is evident from the questions asked of those who are making a public profession that a credible profession of faith involves a promise of obedience. Let us listen again to these questions (Directory of Worship, Chapter V: 5).

1. **Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?**
2. **Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?**
3. **Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?**
4. **Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?**

This fourth question, if taken by itself, would seem to require the candidate to accept the total teaching of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as set forth in our various Standards. Since we are not a Confessional Church in this sense of the word, perhaps this statement should be modified. However, assent to this question certainly implies acceptance of the doctrine (teaching) of our Standards on the subject of baptism.

The article by Mr. Churchill to which we have already referred contains this pertinent statement: ". . . Baptism is the initiatory rite into Christ's church and kingdom. It is a matter of simple obedience. When in Scripture was it ever classed with belief in the high mysteries of election which, to say the least, requires knowledge and considerable growth? The broad and enduring basis for infant baptism is that the church in all ages has included children of believers bearing the covenant sign."

As we turn from our secondary to our primary Standard, the Word of God, we note that in apostolic times converts to the Christian faith obeyed the command to be baptized. Not only individuals but whole households were

baptized. Thus we see that the scope of a credible profession of faith calls for obedience to the teaching of the Word of God on the subject of baptisms.

The third assumption to be reconsidered is the one challenged by Mr. Edwards in his article, to which we have already referred, namely, that the church should not receive as members those whose beliefs or practices would make them liable for discipline.

Consistency Required

This position, held by those who maintain that parents who refuse to present their children for baptism should not be received as communicant church members, is based upon a recognition of the fact that a credible profession of faith involves, not only a promise of obedience, but also a life marked by obedience. In other words, a profession of faith is credible only when it is accompanied by a life that is basically consistent with what we confess. In support of this view see Matthew 7:20-22; James 1:22; 2:20.

That a credible profession of faith calls for consistent Christian living is clearly implied in the Directory for Worship, Chapter V: 3, which reads as follows: "When the session is satisfied that any one is qualified to make public profession of faith in Christ, his name shall be publicly announced to the church at least one week before the day chosen for this solemn event, in order that the members of the church may have opportunity to acquaint the session with such facts concerning him as may appear to be irreconcilable with a sincere profession. The session shall weigh such evidence and determine its validity."

Now this is what we mean when we say that no one should be received as a communicant church member if he holds to some erroneous doctrine or is engaged in misconduct for which he would be disciplined. This requirement does not call for perfection, nor can the degree of consistency required be defined precisely, but surely it calls for the acceptance of the *primary* truths of the Christian faith and consistency in our practice of the *basic* principles of Christian conduct.

Baptism and the Lords Supper are *primary* doctrines of the Christian faith. According to our Standards, they must be accepted and practiced, not only by elders and deacons, but by the church as a whole. Indeed, since baptism is the badge of church member-

ship and since, according to our Standards, the church consists of both believers and their children, both should receive this badge.

The Matter of Discipline

Further support for the validity of the basic assumption now under reconsideration, is found as we examine section 5, Chapter V of the Directory of Worship in the light of section 2, Chapter I of the Book of Discipline.

In the first of these sections, the candidate is required to give affirmative answer to the following question: "Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?" The word *doctrine* simply means teaching. As already indicated, this statement includes the teaching of our Standards on the subject of baptism. In the second of these sections, an offense (an action for which one may be disciplined) is defined as "anything in the doctrine or practice of a member of the church which is contrary to the Word of God."

If applicants for communicant church membership have been properly instructed, the taking of this fourth vow by parents who do not intend to present their children for baptism, places both the parents and the church in an anomalous position. These parents are already engaged in a practice which, according to our Standards, is an "offense." Both the parents and the session know that they intend to continue this offense and will therefore be liable to discipline. Under these circumstances, the session is guilty of compounding the offense. Indeed, of the two, the session is the more guilty; both should be disciplined.

Standards Quoted

That the Standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church do not permit the admission of parents who have scruples against presenting their children for baptism is evident from the following quotations:

"Not only those who actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized" (*Confession of Faith, Chapter 28, section 4*).

". . . Infants descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within

the covenant and are to be baptized" (The Larger Catechism — Question 166).

"The baptism of infants is not to be unnecessarily delayed" (Directory for Worship, Chapter IV: A. 2).

"Baptism is a sacrament ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sign and seal of the inclusion of the person who is baptized in the covenant of grace. Teaching that we and our children are conceived and born in sin, it witnesses and seals unto us the remission of sins and the bestowal of all the gifts of salvation through union with Christ" (Directory for Worship,

Chapter IV: A. 1).

"Although our young children do not yet understand these things, they are nevertheless to be baptized. So the children of the covenant are by baptism distinguished from the world and solemnly received into the visible church" (Directory for Worship, Chapter IV: B. 2).

"Do you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore are subject to condemnation, they are holy in Christ and as members of his church ought to be baptized?" (Directory for Worship, Chapter IV: B. 4).

Hanging on the Promises of God

ROBERT G. VALENTINE

Read consecutively through a section of Scripture until a verse comes alive to you and then meditate on that portion as God's message for you that day." So I had advised people many times in trying to help them make Bible study meaningful. This had been my own practice, but so often it was perfunctory, rushed through in a brief "devotion" in the rush for life.

Then, overnight, I was seriously ill with nephritis, a severe kidney disease for which medical science can do little. In the eleven weeks following I was driven to the Word with new urgency and had to find a message to cling to for another day, one day at a time. Day by day the flesh grew worse and all that sustained me was the spirit. Finally, the local doctors had done all they could and sent me to a big medical center to the specialists. I was sick of being sick and often cried out for the release that comes in death, but even that seemed to be denied. All that the doctors could tell me was that in time—perhaps three months, perhaps six months or a year—fifty percent of the cases recovered.

The day I flew off to enter the medical center the Lord gave me this verse to cling to: "I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off" (Isa. 46:13). In the coming days as I continued to read through Isaiah these were some of the verses given me: "My deliver-

ance draws near speedily, my salvation has gone forth" (51:5). "My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you" (54:10). "I will heal him" (57:19b). "Then shall you see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (60:5).

I knew the Lord was faithful to his Word, yet as the days of testing went on, reports were discouraging. They showed that I was making no progress. Physically, I reached the lowest ebb and was unable to move around at all as I had been doing. In order to treat the case further the doctors agreed that it was necessary to have a biopsy of the kidney, but attempts to get such resulted in failure and disappointment.

Through these days as I continued to read Isaiah these words were the verses to which I clung: "I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord,

After an absence of six months Mr. Valentine returned to his pulpit on the last Sunday of August. He is the minister of Westminster OPC, Valdosta, Georgia. His account of the crisis days in May was written as soon thereafter as he was able. It was sent to us this fall at the request of some of his brethren in the Presbytery of the South, along with a note of gratitude for the prayers of many friends.

according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel which he has granted them, according to his mercy, according to the abundance of this steadfast love" (63:7). "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God beside thee, who works for those who wait for him" (64:4). "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you" (66:13).

I clung to these and other promises as the days passed with no sign of improvement or hope. Having completed Isaiah, I continued in my devotions to read Jeremiah. On the day the third attempt was made to obtain a biopsy of the kidney, this verse in Jeremiah stayed with me: "Let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth" (9:24). This third attempt was also a failure and the doctors said they would have to schedule surgery, for I was at a standstill. This was the only way to know how to treat me further.

That evening at eight-thirty I knew the Lord's healing had come. A great peace descended upon me and I began to thank and praise the Lord. During the night the long-awaited remission began, and in a few days was apparent even to the physicians. Suddenly the tests showed improvement. Within five days tests were showing almost complete recovery of the kidney function. One doctor said, "It happened overnight."

In the days that followed these were the verses that came as I read in the Book of Jeremiah: "There is none like thee, O Lord, Thou art great, and thy name is great in might" (10:6). "Give glory to the Lord your God" (13:16). "Art thou not he, O Lord, our God? We set our hope on thee, for thou doest all these things" (14:22b). "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed" (17:14).

Not only was my healing a miracle sent from God, but also the messages he gave day by day and their appropriateness. As my daughter said when told about it, "It was as if God were speaking directly to you." Of that, there will never be any doubt in my mind. Or to express it in the words of the message of another day from Jeremiah: "Thy words were found . . . and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart" (15:16).

EDITOR

Robert E. Nicholas



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

Presbyterian Ferment

As the "year of study" among United Presbyterians passes the halfway point organized opposition to the proposed Creed of 1967 has made itself heard within that denomination. While synods, presbyteries, and many local congregations consider the new creed in one way or another, here and there rallies in opposition have been held and some ministers have come out with strong criticism in series of sermons.

Earlier in the fall reports of an organized group in opposition to the Creed of 1967 were confirmed with the appearance of "Presbyterians United for Biblical Confession." Chairman of its Executive Committee is Dr. Cary N. Weisiger III, pastor in Menlo Park, California. Pittsburgh pastor John Calvin Reid is vice-chairman, with Dr. E. G. Montag, retired pastor from Beaver, Pennsylvania, serving as executive secretary.

Other members of the Executive Committee are listed as Gary W. Demarest of LaCanada, Calif., C. Ralston Smith of Oklahoma City, John D. Tate of Harrisburg, Pa., Richard C. Halverson of Washington, D.C., Dale K. Milligan of Pittsburgh, Addison H. Leitch of Tarkio College, Mo., C. Bryson Schreiner of Pittsburgh (an elder), John H. Gerstner of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Richard E. Pritchard of Madison, Wisc., and Jerry R. Kirk of New Wilmington, Pa.

The avowed purpose of Presbyterians United for Biblical Confession (PUBC) is twofold: "A) to seek theological strength and renewal in our church by a thorough study of the issues raised by the proposed Confession of 1967; B) to seek such revision of the proposed Confession as will make it truly Biblical, evangelical, and consistent with our Reformed Faith."

The Rev. Mr. Kirk, who served as

interim executive secretary for the group, is quoted as saying that PUBC "are committed to operating within the framework of United Presbyterian polity . . . they have come together to seek that kind of revision which will be able to unite the church in a theologically sound confession and mission."

The editorial committee of PUBC has issued a pamphlet entitled "A Conversation about the Proposed Confession of 1967" which the preface says has been "read and, in principle, approved" by some 44 signatories. Among signers other than members of the Executive Committee are David W. Baker, Allyn R. Bell, Mariano DiGangi, J. Clyde Henry, Ellis R. Shaw, and Walter J. Teeuwissen, Jr.

In the form of 62 questions and answers under seven heads, the "Conversation" gives ample evidence to substantiate their earlier statement that the Confession of 1967 "is not truly Biblical, evangelical, or Reformed throughout." Although not as carefully guarded as desirable in some spots, the twelve pages of questions and answers do pinpoint some of the serious deficiencies of the new Creed, faults which on our view make any patchwork revision quite impossible.

Dowey and PUBC

Dr. Edward A. Dowey, Jr., chairman of the committee that prepared the Confession of 1967, is of course most critical of this publication of PUBC. Speaking in the Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, Pa. on November 7, he termed the "Conversation" piece a "scurrilous" document which made him "angry" in some of its statements. What he regards as a milder and more objective statement, however, appeared as one side of "A Debate on the Confessional Position of the Church" in *Presbyterian Life* for November 15.

It is a "revision and condensation" of the earlier pamphlet in the same question and answer format, but with only 35 questions, and may be considered "an official statement of the general views and convictions of the Executive Committee" of PUBC. The other side of the "debate" is given by Professor Dowey himself in similar question and answer form (26 questions).

In Chicago on November 22-23 more than 500 persons from all over the country showed up at a conference under the auspices of PUBC (which has attracted over 5,000 supporters in the UP denomination). A number of

speakers were heard, including Dr. John Mackay, former president of Princeton, urging a stronger statement on Scripture, and Dr. Dowey, invited to engage in a face-to-face debate with PUBC's spokesman, Dr. John Gerstner.

Major purpose of the gathering was to consider (in some 40 discussion groups) nine pages of revisions prepared by PUBC's editorial committee in order to present the best possible suggestions to the denominational special Committee of Fifteen meeting in mid-December, also in Chicago. That Committee, headed by the Rev. W. Sherman Skinner of St. Louis, has been receiving criticisms and suggestions and will be hearing representatives of varying viewpoints at its Chicago session.

The Committee of Fifteen has announced a deadline of January 15 for any suggestions, after which it is expected to draft its recommendations as to the final form of the proposed Confession to be submitted to the General Assembly meeting in Boston next May. If approved by that Assembly, the presbyteries would vote during the ensuing year.

All of this discussion and debate raises certain questions which we hope to consider in the months ahead. Dr. Dowey insists that the Confession of 1967 is to be taken in the context of the proposed *Book of Confessions*. Does this make it easier to swallow? What is the view of truth underlying such a *Book*?

Is it possible to "revise" the new Confession in such a fashion as to make it "truly Biblical, evangelical, and Reformed"?

Are the two views of Scripture espoused by the Westminster Confession and by the Confession of 1967 supplementary? Different only in emphasis? Basically in conflict?

R. E. N.

In Harrisburg Professor Dowey also asserted that there is certainly "no possible schismatic level" of difference among the several confessions of the *Book*; and PUBC are committed to working for revision that will be able to unite the church. One must ask at what point, if any, the basic and, in our judgment, irreconcilable issues are to be joined and carried to a conclusion, regardless of the consequences?

R. E. N.

(The address of PUBC is Box 488, New Castle, Pa. 16103.)

Hatboro Church

(continued from cover)

tion over the Thanksgiving weekend introduced what an attractive folder termed "not just another church" but an old friend in a new location — a church whose "message offers the only certain and lasting answers to our personal, family and community needs. In a world of change, insecurity, and tension, Jesus Christ is the one foundation on which to place our trust."

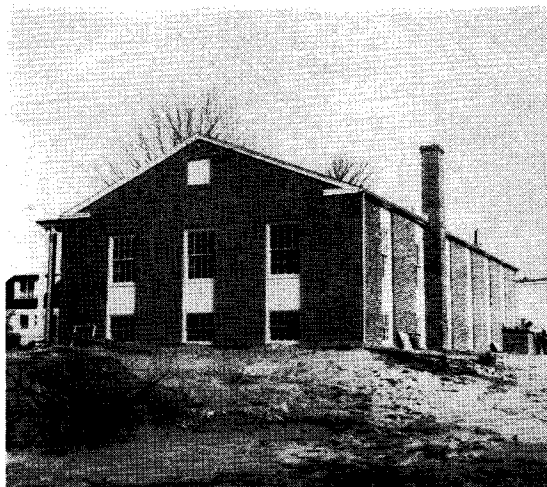
The Rev. LeRoy Oliver, general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions, was the speaker for the afternoon dedication service on November 28, using as his theme, "The Contemporary Church: True Worship." Special music was provided by the Westminster Seminary Chorale under the direction of Mr. William Viss. The dedication came ten years to the day from the time of the organization of the congregation.

Thanksgiving

A Thanksgiving Day service was held in cooperation with the choir and pastor, the Rev. Wilbur Blakely, of the neighboring Warminster Reformed Presbyterian Church. On Friday evening the Rev. Professor Edmund Clowney, acting president of Westminster Seminary, preached on "A Historical Church," with the choir of Calvary Church, Glenside, furnishing the music. Dr. Edward Young, Old Testament professor at Westminster, spoke on Saturday night on "A Bible-Centered Church." A social hour followed each evening meeting with refreshments supplied by the ladies of the host church in the fellowship hall.

Other participants in the service of dedication, beside the Rev. Arthur Boyce Spooner, pastor since 1962, were three men who had served as former moderators of the session: the Rev. Professor Paul Woolley and Dr. Robert Knudsen of the Westminster faculty, and the Rev. Robert Thoburn, organizing home missionary and pastor of the congregation during its first three and a half years. Mr. Thoburn is now principal of Fairfax Christian School and pastor of Trinity Church, Fairfax, Virginia.

Keys to the new building were presented by Mr. Fred Milacci, who was in charge of construction and is an earnest Christian who prayed as well as labored for the completion of the job. Mr. Milacci is affiliated with the



Building nears completion four months after June 20 groundbreaking.

Worthington Construction Company of Bristol, Pa., a firm headed by Christians and presently engaged in the building of eight other churches in the area. "It was a pleasure to work with a concern of such integrity and competence," stated Pastor Spooner.

The Building Committee consisted of Mr. Paul Kent, chairman, Mrs. LeRoy Oliver, Mr. Alton Leger, president of the trustees and a deacon, Mr. John Tolsma, recently ordained as an elder, Dr. Robert DeMoss, also an elder, and Mr. Spooner.

The building design is called "Pioneer" and is one of the *Christian Life* plans of architect Joseph Kimbel in conjunction with the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company. Of concrete block construction with brick facing, this first unit of the overall plan seats 225 persons. The pastor's study-office, a cloakroom, restrooms, and a spacious narthex complete the main floor. A full basement in the 80 x 36 feet structure includes a nursery, the central heating unit, an open kitchen corner, two large classrooms, and a Sunday school assembly room which will serve as a social and fellowship hall and which in due course may be partitioned for additional classrooms.

Total cost of the building, including a paved parking lot, is approximately \$50,000. While the lower level ceiling and walls are unfinished as yet, the upper level is plastered, with tile flooring and a "majestic red" carpet on the center aisle and platform. Members of the congregation spent many hours in painting, scraping, cleaning and putting the building in shape for use. Temporary furniture will be replaced



Mrs. Spooner takes her turn while the Pastor looks on.

by the pews and pulpit furniture of Calvary Church of Glenside (original "mother" of the congregation) when that renovated and enlarged building acquires its new furniture in the near future.

Trinity is a home missions church and its building program has been made possible only with the continued support of the whole church through its Committee on Home Missions and with the aid of loans from the Church Extension Fund and a local bank. Members of the congregation have assumed a burden of sacrificial giving in their determination to further the gospel in the area.

Some years ago the four-acre site, which includes a manse, was purchased. It is at 151 W. County Line Road, the dividing line between Montgomery and Bucks counties. The road is in the process of being widened and repaved and will soon be a four-lane highway joining other main arteries. During the decade of its existence Trinity Church has met in several places, for the most part in recent years in the Fulmor Heights Community Building, about three miles from its present location. It is now in the center of the expanding Hatboro-Horsham-Warminster area and about eight miles north of the Philadelphia city line.

EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Dear Sir:

The newly organized Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Campbell, California) enters a 100 percent membership subscription to the *Pres-*

byterian Guardian. Please send 25 copies each mailing period until further notice. God's blessing upon your very fine work.

Cordially,

(Rev.) WILSON H. RINKER, pastor
2154 San Tomas Aquino Rd.
Campbell, Calif. 95008

* * *

Dear Sir:

You rightly point out (October editorial) that all reforming that is done in the church should be done on the basis of the Word of God. Thus, confessions of faith which depart from Scripture are to be rejected.

However, it is interesting that the reformers of the past placed great emphasis upon translating the "expressions of changeless truths" into the thought patterns of the day. Luther and Calvin translated the Bible into German and French.

We pride ourselves in using the Apostles' Creed which includes such phrases as "descended into hell" and "holy catholic church." But these phrases cannot be taken at face value; they must be interpreted. Thus we almost find ourselves in the same situation as those who are formulating new confessions of faith: we say one thing and mean another.

Other examples could be drawn from the wording of the King James version of the Bible or perhaps from the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The OPC must be careful that the presence of ambiguity which it detects in the new creeds is not found in its own statements of faith.

ROGER W. SCHMURR
Portland, Oregon

* * *

A Good Witness

November 10, 1965

Dear Sir:

Some of my friends may be interested in the trip of this "ex-monk" across the U.S.A. last summer en route to Taiwan. With a heavy heart I left my dear OPC friends on the East Coast, especially the Urbans, Sr.

On the way to Chicago via Greyhound bus my seatmate was a pretty young girl who was soon to marry a man about to enter a theological seminary. I advised her that she should ask her fiance whether he believed the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God, for it does not make sense to go

into the ministry without believing that. She promised me to do so. Being a Westminster graduate, I did not forget to recommend that seminary!

In Chicago Mr. Jacob Heerema, brother of Mrs. Egbert Andrews, and his wife entertained me. Like many Christian Reformed people he is a staunch supporter of Westminster, and needless to say I expressed my appreciation. Mrs. Heerema drove me around to show me the face of Chicago. To my disappointment I did not see gangs fighting in the streets, which publicity had led me to expect.

On my way to Omaha, Nebraska a middle-aged Christian lady was seated behind me on the bus. Formerly a Lutheran, she was now a member of a UPUSA church. Being talkative, I chatted with her over an hour on the infallibility of the Bible, the cancer of Liberalism, and the history of the OPC. She was fascinated. I said to her that it was her duty to investigate just what her pastor believed, and she promised to do so. At Des Moines she changed buses, and as a token of her appreciation of the conversation she gave me Billy Graham's book *Peace with God*, which she had been reading. When she had gone I opened the book, and found a five-dollar bill inserted. The Lord bless her. It pays to be talkative!

At the terminal in Omaha the Rev. Mr. Reginald Voorhees was looking for the self-styled Taiwanese "monk" whom he had never met before. I had written him that I was coming to "invade" as many OPCs as possible on my westward trip. The Voorheeses were very kind and agreeable. On Sunday morning I found my shoes shining! Did an angel polish them while I slept? (After inquiry, I found the angel was the pastor.) I preached in Omaha in the morning and at Faith Church, Lincoln in the evening, where the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Russell Piper offered me hospitality for the night.

My next stop was Denver. Eighty-year old Miss Harriet Teal, who had been praying for and corresponding with me for years but had never seen me, came with Rev. Mr. Elmer Dortzbach to meet me. Miss Teal is a wonderful Christian and I owe her much. Rev. Mr. Dortzbach is a very unusual pastor. I asked him to take me to a barber shop; instead he brought out a clipper and began to cut my hair before I could ask about his skill. He put a small piece of plastic bag around

my shoulders, but a lot of hair stuck to my Banlon shirt. I rinsed it under a shower but, alas, the hair still would not come off and I spent hours picking it off one by one by hand! I guess the haircut was a success, however, for the OPC ladies to whom I was to speak were much pleased, laughing and giggling while I was addressing them.

I preached both in Denver and in Thornton. The Taws family treated me to Chinese food at home—their five children are crazy about Chinese food. For a whole week I stayed with Elder and Mrs. Arthur Johnson, who were most hospitable.

On the West Coast

After a short stop at the Grand Canyon I arrived in Los Angeles. Elder and Mrs. Clarence Taylor of the Manhattan Beach OPC, who had entertained me when I first arrived on the U.S. mainland three years ago, and Mr. Carl Erickson (Westminster '64), assistant to Rev. Mr. Ralph Clough, offered me hospitality. I was surprised to meet my old friend Mr. John Yen from Taiwan. I thought it was his ghost! He had come to the U.S. last May without my knowledge. Years before he was sleeping next to me in the army, and later I brought him to Christ. I spoke at the Manhattan Beach church and preached at San Diego (Paradise Hills). It was a delight to see for the first time the gifted Mrs. Edward Kellogg, mother of Mrs. Edwin Urban, Jr.

On my way to San Francisco Mr. Erickson drove to Yosemite National Park where we stayed overnight in a white tent that was like an ice-box. Though there was no snow, it was deadly cold. I had managed to survive snow in Pennsylvania for three winters but I doubted that I would survive Yosemite. It was a great surprise to find myself alive when I woke up the following morning!

In San Francisco I served the First OPC as a student pastor for five weeks. The friends were very kind and I owe Elder Young much. Being a "bishop" in the area I had the privilege of playing host to famed Rev. Mr. Henry Coray and the Churchills at a Chinese restaurant in Chinatown one afternoon. I also preached at the South San Francisco church once, where the Urbans, OPC missionary appointees to Taiwan (now teaching in Virginia), were most helpful. I was

also given the privilege to speak at Covenant Church, Berkeley, where my teacher for a time, Rev. Mr. Richard Lewis, is pastor.

On July 16 I left the U.S.A. for Japan. The Andrewses, on vacation in Japan, entertained me for a week there. Now I wish to thank those who offered me kindnesses and hospitality on my "monkish trip" across your great country. A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you all.

Gratefully yours,
DANIEL M. HUNG
P. O. Box 53
Taipei, Taiwan

* * *

Dear Sir:

In case OPC-ers should feel like Alice in Wonderland at the Mad Hatter's tea party after reading Mr. Spaan's speech to the General Assembly (in the September issue), let them take a long look at the face of Clerk Johnston pictured with the article. Here is patience and rectitude, and here is intelligence!

R. K. CHURCHILL
Sonora, Calif.

Wybenga *(from page 134)*

woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24).

And whoever has enjoyed the privileges of the gospel, and the blessings of the covenant, and the fellowship of Christ, and the advantages of Christian influences—and then turns against God and away from the Savior—of that person it may also be said, "Woe unto him! It had been good for such a person if he had not been born!"

New or Corrected Addresses

The Rev. Theodore J. Hard, Orthodox Presbyterian Mission, APO, San Francisco, Calif. 96259 (*Package mail: Box 184, Pusan, Korea*).

The Rev. Howard E. Hart, Bridge-water, So. Dakota 57319.

The Rev. Wilson H. Rinker, 2154 San Tomas Aquino Rd., Campbell, Calif. 95008.

The Rev. Cornelius Tolsma, 1551 N.W. 47th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33313 (ordained by the Presbytery of the South).

Subscription Crisis for Presbyterian Officers

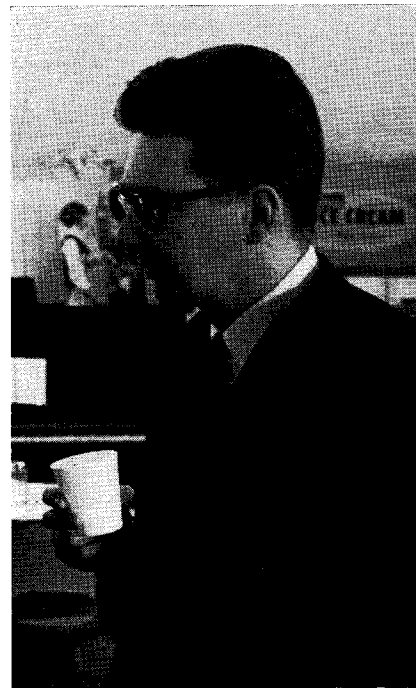
NORMAN SHEPHERD

The movement within the United Presbyterian Church to introduce a new confession has created a crisis situation for numbers of loyal Presbyterians. Nowhere, however, will the problem be more keenly felt than among the ministers of the denomination who have subscribed to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms in truth and sincerity and who seek to maintain confessional teaching in local congregations. (The same situation applies to elders and deacons in their areas of responsibility.)

The seriousness of their plight can be appreciated only after careful attention is given to the form of subscription, together with the Confession of 1967 itself as proposed to the recent General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church. Moreover, one must take note of the stance which these men have taken over the years in remaining in that denomination even when the accuracy of criticisms leveled against it by Orthodox Presbyterians and others has, to a large extent, been conceded.

Up to the present time the United Presbyterian Church has had the Westminster Confession as its own confession of faith. In line with that, it has required all its ministers to receive and adopt the Westminster Confession as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture. No one has understood this formula as the mere affirmation of an historical fact, that the Westminster Confession is scriptural. Both the prior commitment to the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice as well as the words "receive and adopt" represent an agreement with the Westminster Confession as expressing one's own faith.

In view of this, Presbyterians have frequently pointed out, and properly so, that no minister could legitimately hold office in the denomination without being Reformed in doctrine. There is a generally accepted opinion that the addition of two articles and a declaratory statement to the Westminster Confession in 1903 seriously weakened the Reformed emphasis of the document.



The Rev. Mr. Shepherd, now on leave for studies at the Free University of Amsterdam, will return to Westminster Seminary next year as Assistant Professor in Systematic Theology.

For this reason, these amendments were struck down when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church adopted the Westminster Confession in 1936. Nevertheless, even B. B. Warfield argued forcefully that the system of doctrine remained unimpaired.

With strong constitutional support, some United Presbyterians have remained loyal to the Reformed faith and have sought to restore the denomination to the purity to which it is officially committed. They have been in the morally stronger position in using the ordination vows to prod clouded consciences. It is as clear-cut as the simple matter of honesty before God.

The New Formula

Ironically enough, it is just this same insistence—proper and unavoidable in itself—which will create the

bind, if the proposed Confession and ordination vows are adopted. The new formula reads: "Will you perform the duties of a minister of the gospel in obedience to Christ, under the authority of the Scriptures, and the guidance of the confessions of this Church?"

Three positive observations must at once be made. First, an affirmative answer to the question does not bind a man to any confession. Conservative ordinands will not be required to receive and adopt the Confession of 1967 as their own in the way in which their less conservative colleagues were required to receive and adopt the Westminster Confession.

Second, conservatives may point out that the formula commits them first of all to obedience to Christ under the authority of the Scriptures. Calvinists will not balk here, for the Word of the Scriptures is the exposition of the will of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Submission to the Word carries with it obedience to Christ. That is good doctrine as expounded in the Westminster Confession.

Third, the formula does not speak of the Confession of 1967 but of "the confessions of this Church." Note the plural. One of these is the Westminster Confession, and men who were willing to receive that document as an expression of personal doctrinal commitment will not draw back at the thought of receiving guidance from it.

Nevertheless the significance of these salutary features is negated just by the fact that the word is plural—*confessions*. In using the new subscription formula, a minister not only agrees to be guided by the Westminster Confession together with older Reformed confessions with which the Westminster Confession is in full agreement, but he also promises to be guided by the Confession of 1967 in the conduct of his ministry. In fact, and this is the main point, if a minister refuses such guidance, he is in violation of his ordination vow. Ordinands will be as fully obligated to observe the terms of their ordination in the future as they are now.

Contradictory Guidance

In the first place, it is immediately apparent that the new subscription formula requires something which is in itself impossible. How can a minister be guided both by the Westminster Confession and the Confession of 1967? To illustrate the problem, the

items in the new document dealing with the authority of Scripture are intended as a revision of the Westminster Confession, and the revision is in the nature of a rejection of the older document. So also the doctrine of reconciliation, while pretending to be a restatement in modern terms, is in fact a rejection of the Westminster doctrine. Other examples could be cited.

How can a document which denies a doctrine "supplement" one which affirms it? More to the point, how can one be guided in any significant way by mutually contradictory teachings?

The way out of this dilemma is obviously to be found in the way in which the former United Presbyterian Church of North America (the smaller of the two bodies which merged in 1958) supplemented the Westminster Confession with its Confessional Statement of 1925. Both documents had constitutional status but where their teachings conflicted, the new statement was to prevail. So also is the position of the Confession of 1967 intended to prevail over the Westminster Confession. If that is not the case the formulation of a new confession is an exercise in futility. The Assembly intends to adopt a brief *contemporary* statement of faith.

Impossible Alternatives

Unless one is prepared to argue that the revised subscription formula *intends* to require the impossible, one must grant that the Confession of 1967 is a *prima inter pares* (first among equals) whose declarations are to prevail over those of the Westminster Confession. Both liberals and conservatives must grant that much, and by the same token, only impossible alternatives are left open for ministers of Reformed conviction.

On the one hand, a Reformed minister who has committed himself to the Word of God as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and to the Westminster Confession as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible, cannot give any allegiance to the Confession of 1967. He cannot allow his ministry to be guided by it just because his ministry must be guided by the Word of God. It is neither scientifically nor historically justifiable to place the best possible interpretation from the point of view of the Westminster Confession, on the Con-

fession of 1967; nor is it scripturally sound to exchange a clear formulation of biblical truth for an obscure one. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is into the truth, not out of it (John 16:13).

On the other hand, a Reformed minister who has all along insisted that ordination vows be taken seriously cannot now relax that position. It is not merely a question of consistency, but a matter of refusing to take a position which one has declared to be morally indefensible.

In view of all this, it is difficult to see how a Reformed minister can continue to carry on his labors for the Kingdom of God within the fellowship of the United Presbyterian Church if the Confession of 1967 should be adopted. Those who are already ministers cannot even retreat to the precise form of their own ordination vows which call only for commitment to the Westminster Standards. As good presbyters, they will be asking candidates for the ministry to receive guidance which they themselves have, in principle, refused but nevertheless must be willing to accept in the examination of these same candidates.

As the lines of escape are cut off, the serious nature of the crisis becomes all the more apparent.

Yet the picture is not entirely dark. One has just for a moment to think what a confession of faith is and does.

The confessions of the Reformation emerged in crisis situations. Their purpose was to affirm and proclaim the historic Christian faith over against the errors of the day. The Reformers were compelled to abandon the temporal security of the old institution, but they found eternal security in the gospel of free and sovereign grace. They were obedient to their Lord who when brought to a critical moment before Pilate did not retreat behind subtleties and sophistries but witnessed a good confession. Paul commends the same steadfastness to Timothy (I Timothy 6:12, 13).

The tragedy of the confessional crisis in the United Presbyterian Church is surpassed only by the glory of the opportunity now at hand to confess anew and unequivocally the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fellowship of a church where the Westminster Confession and Catechisms are sincerely received and adopted.

Where There's Life

ROLLIN P. KELLER

Why have we failed in youth work? Oh, we haven't failed completely. But many pastors and youth directors in our churches are scratching their craniums and wondering why our youth work is as unsuccessful as it is. There are many reasons, no doubt: poor adult leadership, no social outlets, too few teen-agers to start with. Here is one more possible reason: we have been choking the life out of our youth groups!

Take this hypothetical example. Suppose all the evangelical churches of the area are going to attend a youth meeting which has scheduled a real "live wire" youth speaker. The O.P. church decided to discourage its youth from attending. They know that this speaker is a dispensational, "free will Baptist." What are the results? Well of course the more they discourage Mary Jones from attending the youth rally with her school chum, the more interested she becomes. Teens have an unwritten law that whatever their elders forbid must be enjoyable (after all, they are children of Eve too).

Let's say Mary happens to be a real potential in the local Machen League. She knows a lot of kids at school, she has a head on her shoulders, and best of all she really seems to know what it means to belong to Jesus Christ. In a word, she has *life*.

The day arrives for the rally and all of the elder's children, being well-behaved, covenant deadheads, stay home and watch the Addams Family while Mary Jones goes to the youth rally. What happens? For the first time in two years she hears a preacher that talks her language. Not only that, but the overdone, Arminian altar call has actually caught 25 or 30 kids in the gospel net. That's something they are always talking about down at the O.P. church, but somehow it never happens.

The next night she comes to Machen League all fired up to talk about how to win souls more effectively at school. But she is greeted with yawns from

Mr. Keller is the pastor of the Good Shepherd Chapel in Neptune, N. J., under the sponsorship of the Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Westfield. Although there are but 16 communicant members, the Sunday school is five times that number and Machen League attendance often runs up to 20 high school young people. "I attribute this to the fact that we started with a core of kids who were really saved and wanted to do a work for the Lord," wrote Mr. Keller.

the disinterested kids who cannot wait to tell about the funny thing they saw on T.V.

After two or three experiences like this Mary doesn't attend church very regularly any more. She does not attend Machen League at all. Her alert pastor makes a call and is surprised and disappointed to find that Mary has been attending a local independent church. What a shame that such a bright and promising girl should do such a thing! "How could she prefer that rank Arminian message?" "How could she prefer those light ditties and empty choruses to the stately hymns she was learning to love?"

Try this for an answer. Chances are she actually prefers the well-organized, logical presentation of the gospel she used to get at the O.P. church. She may very well miss those stately hymns with real content. Her choice of churches has been made on another basis. She found a church where there is *life*! In their youth group they talk about witnessing, and when they get to school the next week, they do some witnessing.

Meanwhile, back at the Machen League, they are still discussing Lurch and Morticia. Oh, they don't discuss them during the meeting. No, with hands folded in lap they quietly and dutifully allow a lecture on the imputation of Adam's sin to drift through their ears. They look intelligent and ask no questions. The pastor hopes and prays that some truth has sunk in. Then bang! Right after closing prayer

the room boils over with chatter. It is at this point that you can take the temperature of your group. What are they talking about *now*, on their own time?

Do we really want a youth group that is on fire for the Lord? Then why do we chase away each teen-ager who has what we covet for our group?

Some say that it is our Calvinism that drives out evangelistic zeal. I don't buy that; but I do think some Calvinists unwittingly drive out those who have this zeal. We have allowed the fundamentalists a lot of circumstantial evidence to support their claim that the Reformed faith breeds "dead orthodoxy."

Let's leaven our friends the "fundies." Let's get into local interdenominational youth and evangelism programs and present the God-honoring Calvinistic position. Let's accompany our youth to such rallies and discuss the good and bad features with them later on.

You may be delightfully surprised to find that your teen group is able to detect the "helplessness" of God in the Arminian message all by themselves. And even if they do not see the difference, by the time they are in high school it is a little bit late to try to shield them from the bear of Arminianism. In a few short years they will be attacked by the lion of atheistic philosophy on a college level.

Now is the time for on-the-job training in the Christian art of discernment. After a discussion of the Arminian drawbacks to an otherwise excellent youth rally, your young people may learn more theology than they would in a whole year's lectures.

* * *

You may not agree with the specific suggestion of this article. You may be one, however, of many who long to see sound doctrine accompanied by more joy in the "abundant life" that Jesus came to give, and by more zeal in Christian witness. We'd be happy to share with our readers answers that you have found.

Witness in Hawaii

A small, dedicated group of Christians interested in a Reformed witness in Hawaii is now meeting each Sunday evening for worship and fellowship in either the Seventh Day Adventist Church or in the home of one of our members, according to a

report from David and Jean Hunt. They have had various speakers, listened to taped sermons, or studied the Bible in a discussion group. About twenty attend each meeting, this number fluctuating greatly due to mobile military families, tourists, and homesick folks returning to the mainland.

"We have the harvesters, and the field is just as ripe as it was when the first missionaries from New England arrived here in the early nineteenth century. We look forward to establishing a church here and bringing the Good News to the Hawaiian community," they write.

If you plan to be in Hawaii, please contact the group through Mr. Tjerk Bosgra, 2567 Laau Street #17, Honolulu, (ph. 966-491).



Joel Nederhood Appointed Radio Minister of the Back to God Hour

The Denominational Radio Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, in special session, appointed Dr. Joel H. Nederhood to the position of Radio Minister, succeeding the late Dr. Peter H. Eldersveld who suffered a fatal heart attack on October 14.

Dr. Nederhood served the church, whose Back to God Hour broadcast is heard on 300 stations, as Associate Radio Minister since 1960. He is already well known to the radio audience

through the messages he delivered over the air during the past five summers and the many contacts he has made through the correspondence follow-up and personal appearances he has made in behalf of his predecessor and the Christian Reformed denomination.

The Back to God Hour last year commemorated its 25th anniversary. The broadcast ministry of the church expanded from a single station in 1939 until today it is heard on stations in the U.S.A., Canada and many foreign countries. Presently it is heard in English, Arabic and Spanish, reaching listeners on every continent.

Peter Eldersveld

In addition to his radio ministry Dr. Eldersveld served as editor of *The Family Altar* from its beginning 15 years ago. The circulation of this monthly devotional booklet which is widely used in Orthodox Presbyterian homes has grown from about 25,000 in 1950 to more than six times that number today. Dr. Eldersveld was the author of the October meditations on the theme of "The Covenant Home."

Thousands of believers who were blessed by his worldwide ministry will take comfort that he is now "at home" with the Lord whose faithful servant he was. They will rejoice that for him it is indeed "far better" to be in the presence of the risen Savior whose gospel he proclaimed with the forceful eloquence of simplicity and truth.

Theological Society Meets in Nashville

The Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee will be host to the 17th annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society from December 27 to 29. Dr. Gordon Clark's presidential address on "The Inerrancy of Scripture" highlights the major theme of the gathering. President John Walvoord of Dallas Seminary will moderate a panel on that subject.

Among participants prior to open discussion the following have been scheduled: Dean Kenneth Kantzer of Trinity Divinity School—"Significance of Inerrancy"; Dean Laird Harris of Covenant Seminary—"The Basis for Inerrancy"; Professor Robert Saucy of Talbot Seminary—"Difficulties with Inerrancy"; and President Stephen Paine of Houghton College—"The Maintenance of Inerrancy."

Dr. Carl Henry, editor of *Christianity Today*, is to be moderator of another panel on "Frontier Issues in Contemporary Theology" with participants including Drs. Arnold Schultz (Old Testament), Berkeley Mickelsen (New Testament), John Montgomery (Church History), and Roger Nicole (Theology). Projects in Palestinian archaeology will be presented with illustrations by Drs. Joseph Free (Jordan) and G. Douglas Young (Israel).

THE CHANGING SCENE

HENRY W. CORAY

It is not often a book falls into your hands that makes you want to stop people on the street and ask, "Have you read this one?" I think I can promise that a reading of Harry Blamires' paperback, *The Christian Mind*, will have some such effect on you. Here is a production (S. P. C. K., Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone Road, London, N.W. 1; 6 s.) that you will find as stimulating as desert rain. Mr. Blamires is reminiscent of the late C. S. Lewis in his fresh way of stating propositions. Add to that an apologetic with a Van Tilian dimension and you have a rich diet for both mind and soul. The writer's thesis is that secular

thinking has so permeated the Christian community that, as he says, "There is no longer a Christian mind." Is it an exaggeration? Read what the man has to say before you pre-judge him. His thesis is:

The religious view of life differs so fundamentally and comprehensively from the secular view of life that it seems scarcely possible for the Christian to communicate intelligibly with the modern secularist. And indeed this is our most acute problem today. It seems virtually impossible to bridge the gap between ourselves and our unbelieving fellowmen so as to present to them, vividly and convincingly, the Christian view of the human situation.

Mr. Blamires, nevertheless, without

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compromising the theistic position one iota, does define current issues, defend the historic Christian faith boldly and ably, thrust his sword into the Achilles' heel of disbelief and turn it with great skill. I particularly like the passage where he writes:

We are not a lot of amateur detectives on the hunt for clues in a cosmic whodunit. This is not the world as the Christian sees it. For that would be an abandoned world, a world on which God had virtually turned His back—a world in darkness from which God's light had been withdrawn. . . . Men have need neither to fabricate their creed, nor their moral code, nor their picture of the purpose of the universe. God chose not to leave His world in darkness. He chose to lay open in it the revelation of Himself. That is what Christianity is all about.

Like this tidbit? There are more like it in abundance.

* * *

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake appeared recently on a T.V. panel with a Jewish rabbi and Catholic Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. He was asked his view of the Catholic Mass. His answer was that the Mass differed from his view of the Lord's Supper in *emphasis*, not in *dogma*. One wonders why Dr. Blake does not go back into the Roman Church.

* * *

A paperback titled *The Comfortable Pew*, which sold 150,000 copies in Canada (why, I can't imagine), has found its way south of the Canadian border, and will no doubt be hailed with glee by the increasing number of the church's critics. The author, one Pierre Berton, confesses that sheer boredom, coupled with a skeptical mind, forced him from the ranks of the Anglican Church. Some of his boredom is bound to rub off on the reader—this in spite of the fact that Bishop John Robinson, creator of the misnamed *Honest to God* work, calls Berton's Blast "the most penetrating and, indeed, prophetic book by an outsider taking a critical look at the Church." (It should be the kiss of death.)

Not often do I find myself in agreement with articles in the *Christian Century*. I will have to admit, however, that I fully endorse the comment of the *Century* reviewer of *Pew* to the

effect that Berton really has nothing new to say. To which I may add: if you are planning to buy the book, don't. But if you must, then be prepared upon reading it to articulate with considerable feeling the final word of the title!

* * *

Freud, by R. J. RUSHDOONY

This brief book, the newest addition to our church library, is the latest in the series of MODERN THINKERS, published by Craig Press, Nutley, New Jersey. It contains a wealth of information about the man who has perhaps done more to influence psychiatry and psychology than any one person. Mr. Rushdoony gives a character sketch of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian Jew, whom he describes as a "reserved, kindly, and old-fashioned person . . . clearly a stoic . . . a Liberal of socialist leanings, indifferent to political attempts to attain a good society."

Persuaded that guilt was man's most fundamental problem, Freud went about trying to solve the problem on a spiritual premise but his was a theology wrenched from God, the creation, the fall, and Jesus Christ. It was, from start to finish, purely anthropological,

or on a human level. "Other psychologists have sought to ignore the religious implications of man's personality. Freud recognized them," says Mr. Rushdoony, "and sought to dissolve and destroy them. Not only was his approach to man and his guilt to be non-religious, but it was purged also of philosophy, and to become strictly biological."

The impact of Freud's thinking on psychology and theology is both immeasurable and frightening. "He has," the writer states in conclusion, "prepared the way for what Charles Hodge called 'the last issue of history, the conflict between Atheism and its countless forms and Calvinism. The other systems will be crushed as the half-rotten ice between two great bergs.' Freud, like Nietschze, forced man to the edge of the abyss. Modern man has been warned, and it is from within his own ranks that this warning has come. He is thus in every respect *without excuse*."

The thoroughness with which the Rev. Mr. Rushdoony has gone about his analysis of Freud is shown by the incredible fact that in the 69 pages in his booklet you will find 204 quotations!

* * *

My impression of Hamlet's famous soliloquy
In the rhythm and structure of the Revised Standard Version
Would read something like this:

To continue in this present existence or not
Poses a burning issue for me;
Which is preferable intellectually:
To allow directionless fortune's weapons to keep the pressure on,
Or to fight trouble until it is pinned to the wall?
That is, to fall asleep, and so
Confess that we have put a stop to disappointment and other set-backs
That come naturally—this is the climax to be sought, is it not?
To pass on and go to sleep—it could be to dream;
Yes, that indeed makes for friction:
Who knows what kind of dreams Death's sleep may produce
After we have taken ourselves slowly out of this machine that
seems to keep running down—
It surely makes us hesitate. . . .

The Old Chinese Philosopher

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