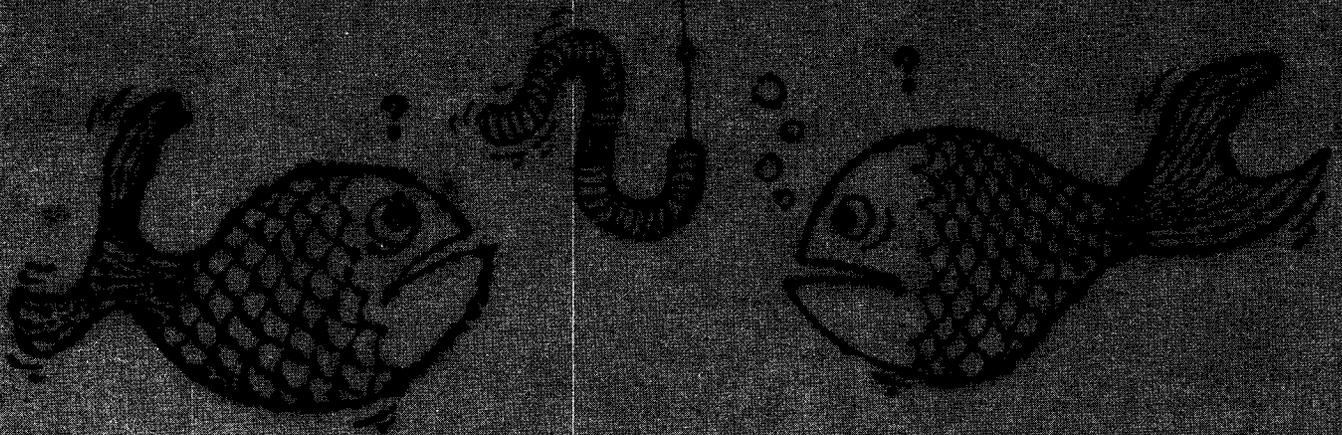


The Presbyterian Guardian

VOL. 44, NO. 4 APRIL, 1975



Looking at Merger...

Letters

Response to Woolley's overture

The overture of the O. P. Presbytery of Philadelphia, authored by Dr. Paul Woolley, ought to be carefully considered by all, RPC/ES as well as OPC. It does represent the thinking of a majority of the Philadelphia presbytery; it may also represent the thinking of some men in the RPC/ES. Let me make several comments:

Dr. Woolley and I look at the word "confess" in the third paragraph of the Preamble of the Plan of Union [of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod] from a different perspective. He was involved [in the events of 1937 when certain elements of what is now the RPC/ES separated from the OPC]; I was not. However, I am certain that Dr. Buswell [a leader among those who separated in 1937] might agree with Dr. Woolley.

I do not see the paragraph saying "that the Presbyterian Church of America in 1937 pursued a sinful course." Rather it seems to say that neither group did everything within its power to bring about a reconciliation. Confessing this does not imply that one or the other, or both, sinned. I do think we ought to consider how those who were there interpret it and in the light of that interpretation perhaps it would be best to remove the paragraph from the Plan of Union.

Regarding the name, we again see things differently. [The Plan of Union proposed the name "Reformed Presbyterian Church" for the merged church, which name the overture opposes.] I see the name announcing to the world that this is what we are—Reformed in our doctrine and Presbyterian in our polity. The historical continuity of the Reformed Presbyterian name seems to me to lie with the denomination that practices the principles and that is the Covenanters [i.e., the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America], not the RPC/ES.

My own Presbyterian roots, adopted after being born of a Roman Catholic-Lutheran marriage, are like Dr.

Woolley's through Princeton Seminary. My pastor from 1927 to 1938 was an old-school Princeton Seminary man. It seems what we need is a name that will describe what the uniting churches will be. Let some brother come up with a name; but let's not let a name stand in the way of union.

Our respective General Assembly and Synod will be asked this year to approve or reject the Plan of Union. Let us prayerfully consider the plan with these questions in mind:

1. Will it glorify God?
2. Will it promote the gospel of Christ?
3. Are our differences any greater than those brought to a marriage by the average bride and groom?
4. Are there reasons, justifiable before God, why this union ought not to be?

Robert A. Wildeman, Sr.
Reformed Presbyterian Church
Lemmon, South Dakota

Ed. note: We hope brother Wildeman will tolerate all those brackets in his letter. They are our doing and were meant to help those readers not familiar with all the background details.

"Reformed Moody Bible Institute"?

In the August-September issue of the *Guardian* there appeared a letter to the editor asking why there could not be a "Reformed Moody Bible Institute." In the months since, I had thought someone "in the know" would have answered that query. No one did.

For those who continue to ask, there is an answer:

Reformed Bible College of Grand Rapids, Michigan, *does* now offer the B.A. degree, and is in every way as complete as Moody except for size (and this should be an advantage in many respects). RBC is not tuition-free, however. This is a real problem, when schools that are not Reformed in doctrine can offer inducements "our" schools cannot.

As one who has a daughter at Reformed Bible College, I would testify that this school stands alone in the United States in this unique ministry.

We here pray that God will continue to strengthen this avenue of training for our youth, and direct many to this particular Bible training.

Harold Borchert, pastor
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Waynesville, North Carolina

Question for Dr. Robertson

I appreciated Dr. Palmer Robertson's article, "Tongues—unquestionably a Revelation Gift" (in the February *Guardian*), on whether speaking in tongues actually involves revelation from God.

I think that is a key question, and I share his concern to maintain the distinctiveness of Scripture. But I am not yet convinced that the phenomenon necessarily meant man's tongue was the "immediate instrument of the Holy Spirit."

Dr. Robertson says, "The words spoken when the gift of tongues is in operation simply must be from God—immediately and infallibly. God has taken over the vocal cords and made them vibrate to his own glory. Man's mouth has become God's instrument to give expression to his truth" (p. 30).

Could Dr. Robertson give some Scripture evidence for that concept of tongues? And could he explain what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 14:14 when he says, "If I pray in a tongue, *my* spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful"? Where does Paul's spirit fit in if his tongue is an "immediate instrument of the Holy Spirit"?

Richard B. Ramsay
Knox Orthodox Presbyterian
Church

Silver Spring, Maryland

Ed. note: Though Dr. Robertson has three more articles in his series on speaking in tongues, we are asking him to consider one more in which he might undertake to answer this question. At least two other correspondents have asked the same question. For the moment, let those with such a question consider the case of those "holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" as immediate organs for God's infallible Word, yet with both their spirits and minds active in the process.

The Presbyterian Guardian is published ten times each year, every month except for combined issues in June-July and August-September, by the Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126, at the following rates, payable in advance, postage prepaid: \$3.75 per year (\$3.25 in clubs of ten or more; special rate for "every-family churches" on request). Second class mail privileges authorized at the Post Office, Philadelphia, Pa.

In appreciation for my church

CALVIN A. BUSCH

The name of my church is a mouthful—Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Yet it frequently provides me the opportunity to explain what we believe and what we would like to be. If we should ever change our name, it is my hope that none of the rich significance associated with that name would ever be lost!

Yes, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is beset with human failure and sin. This particular member has contributed his regretful failures and inexcusable sin. But we cannot afford to allow these failures and sin to blind us to some of the great things we have testified to ever since our small group emerged on the American scene in 1936.

As a member of that small group, first as a student at Westminster Seminary and as an ordained minister since 1938, I would like to record some of my appreciation for my particular denomination.

Faith in the Word

In God's good providence we have been allowed to be faithful to our basic belief that the Bible is God's Word. We have had to resist the blandishments of the old-line liberals and the new-line neo-orthodox, who all give lip service to "God's Word," but who do not have an infallible objective Word to which appeal may be made in the storm and stress of existence.

We have had to warn our generation that the changing and subtle views of the German scholars, who generate new views as fast as a spider spins its web, have not brought new hope for those who waver on this important and basic truth of the Christian faith.

We have sounded the alarm against the notion that the authority of the Bible is wrapped up in its message. We too are fascinated by the message, but the fascination is due to the fact that behind the message is the true voice of

our heavenly Father. Yes, I am thankful to God also for the firm stand our scholars at Westminster Seminary have taken, and for the display of conviction in our young men who have sought a part in the ministry of our church.

Praise for God's sovereignty

But what have we had to say through the years? Let us hang our head in shame for all the moments we failed to be true to our commitment. But for those grand moments in which we behaved like humble servants of the Lord, declaring the whole counsel of almighty God, let us sing a doxology and shout hallelujahs!

Whatever differences we have in exegesis of this or that passage, we have tried to adorn the system of truth found in the Bible, that which is known as the Reformed Faith. This has been an uphill struggle. Many who attached themselves had to be won from the ideas that are popular with the natural man. And it will always be true that the Reformed Faith does not delight the natural man.

We have tried to combine a hallelujah emotion with intellectual integrity—and to resist the idea that these are incompatible. Yes, let us praise God that our denomination does not shudder if someone discovers that we, in this twentieth century, still believe that God is sovereign!

Happy are we, and grateful to God, for a Confession of Faith that points out what Scripture freely reveals—that God displays his sovereignty in creation, providence and salvation. What a joy to awake each morning in a world governed by the eternal decree of a personal Triune God! What a joy it will be to awake one day and acknowledge that we have been ushered into God's presence by Jesus Christ in whose hands are the keys of death!

It is good to know that salvation from start to finish is the work of our

blessed God. The plan of salvation was devised in eternity, for Jesus is the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world. Those who are saved by Christ were elected before God even gave the signal for creation.

How precious too those "five points of Calvinism" as they focus on the main theme of Scripture—that by grace are we saved through faith so that God alone might have all the glory. These doctrines are not "vestigial organs" crying for some skilled theological surgeon to excise. I have a deep appreciation for our church that has not wavered, or found itself content with four or three points.

Joy in the covenant

How refreshing it has been to keep talking about the covenants God has revealed in his Word. It means much to say that we believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At no time did God contradict any prior covenant when he gave the Old Covenant through Moses at Sinai. The same God who established his covenants in time past is the God who established the Covenant through and in his Son, Jesus Christ.

As everyone knows, salvation is a very personal matter. But God has been pleased to deal with believing parents and their children. Oh, how precious are those covenant children, with that "clean" aspect stemming from even one believing parent! How heavy, and yet how light a burden falls upon covenant parents who hear the rich promise to their children.

Thanks for presbyterian rule

I appreciate too the form of government that we Presbyterians believe conforms to the general principles laid down in the Bible. We know that it is frustrating to overly active souls who do not wish to be tied to niceties, or
(Continued on page 62.)

PEASE-SOP'S FABLES: Little fish in a big pond

Jean A. Shaw

Down at the bottom of Calvin Pond there lived an opfish. While he was not so flamboyant as some of the other aquatic vertebrates, and he spoke in only one tongue, he was a handsome fish. When he swam to the surface of the water to catch an unsuspecting mosquito, his green and blue scales glistened in the sun.

The opfish was somewhat of a loner. Not that he was unfriendly, but his father had taught him to be careful about his associations and he had found this to be excellent advice. He spent much of his time meditating on the things he had learned from his father. He cared little for hobnobbing.

The closest friend the opfish had was a resfish who shared the same part of Calvin Pond. The resfish was younger than the opfish — or was it older? He was never quite sure. It seemed to depend on which end of the resfish you were talking about! Anyway, when he wasn't swimming

around counselling all the other fish about their problems, the resfish had long conversations with the opfish. They really agreed about many things.

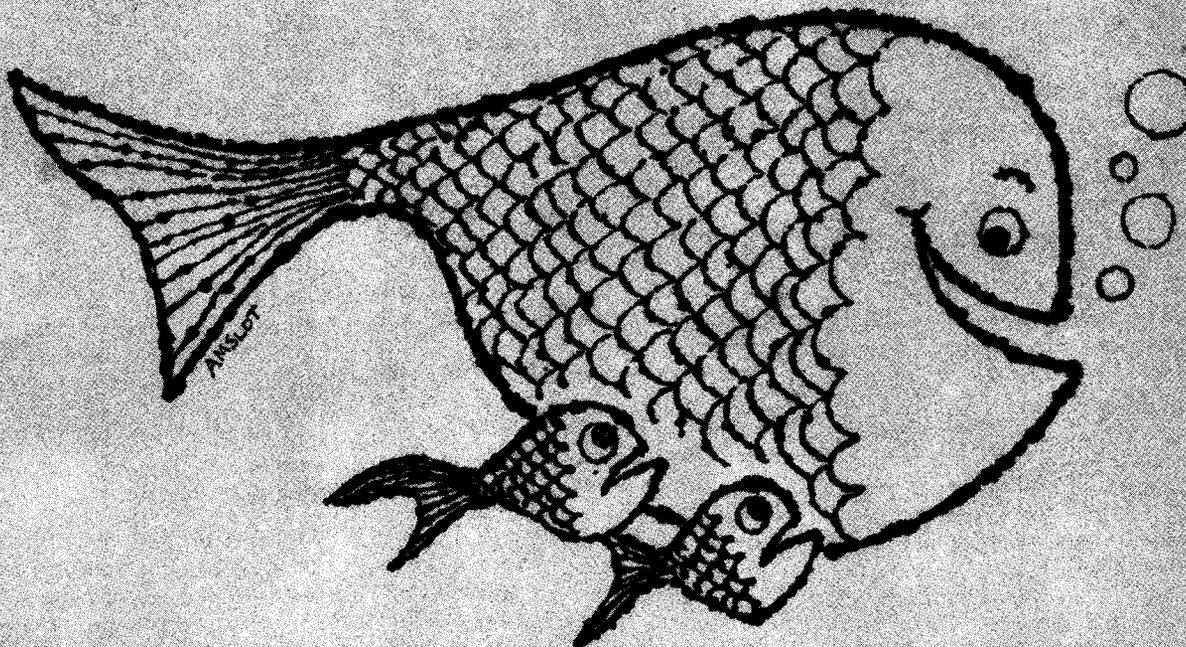
"We really should team up," suggested the resfish one day as the two friends shared a darned needle. "We have so much in common. Think what fun it would be!"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the opfish. "You're too friendly for my tastes. I'm not much for crowds, you know."

"Come on," urged the resfish. "You can't spend your whole life down here at the bottom of the pond thinking about the past."

"Well, I can't be like you and spend my whole life talking about the future! And besides, the disorganized way you swim about scares me a little. I don't mean to hurt your feelings, but my father taught me to be more disciplined."

"I'm sorry," apologized the resfish. "Why, I'd even let you smoke those horrible seaweed cigars



We have a testimony for the world of unbelief

Dr. Dyrness summed up his own and the feelings of many others near the end of a joint meeting of the Philadelphia presbyteries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. During the meeting held on February 1, various subjects of concern in the proposed merger of these two churches were discussed.

I don't know that I have taken it all in. But I think that all of us came here today with an objective mind to try to ascertain just what is the truth of the whole matter with which we've been dealing. After all, we are members of the body of Christ, the church of Christ. If we can ascertain what God's will and direction is in this thing, I don't think we'll have any problem.

I hate to admit it, but I'm old enough

FRANKLIN S. DYRNESS

to go back to the general assembly that met in the New Century Club in Philadelphia in 1936 [when the then-named Presbyterian Church of America was constituted]. And one of the things that rejoiced my heart was that at last we'd come into the perfect church. [Laughter.] It was so thrilling. There was no such thing as a sacrifice. Even though we had lost our large congregations and our guaranteed incomes, that didn't phase the younger men. That there was a need to support Westminster Seminary and our home and foreign missions programs — this was a joy and a privilege. Because we were in the true church of Jesus Christ.

But I must admit it wasn't long be-

fore we woke up and discovered we were disillusioned. And men like Professor Woolley and others will go back and remember how we began to have a falling off all along the line. It wasn't long before this person and that person who seemed to be so outstanding fell by the wayside.

It was at the Second General Assembly that the matter of eschatology came up. We had the very interesting debate between Dr. Machen and Dr. Buswell. Now I am a pre-mil and make no apologies for it. (I believe in the post-tribulation, if that's any encouragement to any one.) But at the same time, my heart was greatly blessed as I heard these two men debate, and Dr. Machen especially. To me he was my ideal of a true man of God in every respect. He was an a-mil, but that never affected me. I felt that his primary purpose was to glorify the Lord and to manifest the truth of God's Word.

Those of us who were privileged to sit under Dr. Machen's teaching, and that of men like him, feel that our lives were touched and enriched with that sort of thing. But I remember one of my associates in the early church who took the position that the church must

(Continued on next page.)

you like so much if you'd just team up with me. What do you think?"

"I'll meditate on it," promised the opfish.

And so the weeks went by. But the two fish were never able to get together, although they kept on talking about it down at the bottom of the pond.

One afternoon as they were conversing in the shade of a log, a giant fish charged through the water at great speed. He propelled himself to the top of the pond, arched his back, and flipped into the air. Like a rocket he descended to the depths of the pond.

The opfish and the resfish watched in awe. They had seen the great fellow once before, but at first they thought he was an old species practically extinct. Now they concluded they had been mistaken. But the large fish moved with such speed it hard to tell who he was. Back and forth he swam, stirring up the pond and forcing all the other fish to clear out of his way. Finally he descended toward the log with all the force of an oversized water ski.

"Hey, how y'all!" he boomed, shaking their fins in turn. "Forgive me for

not bein' more neighborly, but I've been so busy I haven't had time to stop by even though I've noticed you all talkin' together."

"How do you do," responded the opfish.

"Howdy," said the resfish, surprised to see the opfish so friendly.

"Ah'm from the South," explained the new fish as if they couldn't have guessed. "Momma told me to get out and visit the north end of the pond. She said folks up thisaway could be right friendly."

"Could you slow down a little?" asked the resfish. "The whole pond is trembling."

"Oh, sorry about that. Guess I don't know my own strength. I'm still pretty young yet. Got a lot of itch under my gills. Y'all been here a long time?"

"Yes, we have," spoke the opfish firmly, before the resfish could get into a long dissertation about his history.

"Y'all know what I think would be right fine?" asked the newcomer, swimming closer and smelling of collard greens. "I'd like you two fellas to join up with me and swim around the whole pond!" He swam between

them and slipped a fin snugly over each.

"Thank you, but no thanks," replied the opfish, vainly struggling to get away. "I'm not a joiner at heart."

"Me neither," said the resfish, unable to move so much as a gill. "I've got a lot of friends to see and things to do."

"Well, now, I'm sorry you all feel that way. 'Cause I really think we all should team up. Suppose you just join me for a swim while we all talk it over."

So saying, the giant southern catfish pulled them both along through the water of Calvin Pond. The opfish and the resfish were helpless to do a thing about it. All they could do was go along, noting that the southern fish had a very wide smile.

Mrs. Shaw is familiar to readers of the Reformed Presbyterian Mandate as the author of "Lydia's House." She is the author of Please Don't Stand Up in My Canoe, recently published by Zondervan. She is a member of the Lafayette Presbyterian Church (RPC/ES) in Ellisville, Missouri.

be pure. It may take us a hundred years before we discover it; but even if we weren't there, it would be all right. And every time there was a loss to the church, that was the church becoming pure.

Now in some cases I think it was. But in many cases I don't think it was necessarily that. Rather, it was a matter of differences between brethren. I believe that this which we face now with Barton Payne, Laird Harris — I uphold them very strongly and also the reasoning of their position. I think it would be hard to disprove their position in an open discussion.

I don't personally hold their position [concerning eschatology], but I think one must be open and charitable enough as a Christian to allow them to feel free to hold such a position for themselves. As we rejoice in the basic foundation of the Reformed faith, then we don't really have too much to fear. If the Reformed faith isn't big enough and strong enough to stand when it's presented, even with some differences among us, then I think we face a losing battle.

Even though we may be a minority in the religious world today, I do think we have the most desirable position of doctrine, the Reformed position. The more I see it the more I rejoice in it. The Adversary may very well trick us in getting off into sidelines and being very much concerned to convert Barton Payne or Laird Harris or people like them to our own position, for fear the church is not going to hold together. Their fearless stand is a strength to our church. We may differ, yet we are one in our main message, purpose and goal.

Reason of tensions

(The background to Dr. Dyrness' remarks is a statement on eschatological freedom with various views and limits suggested that was proposed for inclusion in the Plan of Union. The statement was not adopted, however. It is quoted in full in the August/September 1974 issue of the Guardian.)

I think the reason this came about was the fact of the action of the last general assembly of the OPC in which it seemed to the Fraternal Relations Committee of the RPC/ES that it was basically an evidence of a lack of confidence (on the part of the Orthodox Presbyterians) that we (Reformed Presbyterians) were not Dispensational as a denomination.

We felt there was no need to go any further (toward merger) until the OPs

became satisfied that the RPs were not Dispensational. Now there are apparently some men in the OPC who question, if not for the whole church, at least for enough percentage-wise that they're concerned about.

If this is the attitude of the OPC, I think we're just inviting confusion and irritation—and I don't think we should irritate each other. I think we respect each other greatly. But I personally feel we may be losing a golden opportunity when we major on our differences rather than on the things that we agree on. If we view our main objectives and goals where we stand as one, I believe these secondary things will drop off.

Back in the early days of the movement, we did have Dispensationalists and Independents. And I remember being told about dealing with people where we found there was a difference. I was told, "You be faithful in presenting the truth, and either those people will be converted to that position or they'll drop off." And I believe that we should practice a broader position of Christian charity and compassion toward one another.

All of us are wrong. And when Christ comes, in whatever manner we'll experience it, I think all of us will hang our heads in shame and say, "I marvel that I could have been so foolish and been so far from understanding." And then, as with the two on the road to Emmaus, our Lord will remove the shackles and we'll see and understand as we've never known before.

What directions?

I think it was Don MacNair who said, in one of the joint meetings of the fraternal relations committees, "Men, it's not where we are or what we hold or are doing, but what is the direction in which we're going?" And I would say to the OPC men that, if you feel the RPC is going in the direction toward Dispensationalism and away from the Reformed position, you ought to vote down union by all means. But if you believe that there is a direction toward that which is in accordance with the Word of God and our standards of the Reformed faith, then I think you ought to think twice before you make too much of a point of these things that you may differ with—and differ with seriously.

We must ask ourselves whether there is proper charity and love in our hearts for the brethren of Christ. After all, we are proud of our individual denominations. But let us never be more proud

of them than we are of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that he is the central source of our blessing and of our life.

If Christ is grieved—and I don't care whether we stay apart or unite—we may have "Ichabod" written above our doorposts. Then if the glory of the Lord has departed, what do we have? We may have organization; we may be pure—true as we see it. But if the Spirit of God has been grieved, all of us have lost. And then the dying world will have missed the opportunity of hearing the message that God has entrusted to us.

Now I have questions in my mind about how I ought to vote on union. But I want to be completely objective. I feel we shouldn't try to view this thing as a matter of how we can resolve all our petty differences now—three to five years wouldn't do it.

As you look over this group here today, how many of us were present when Carl McIntire led the group out as the Bible Presbyterians, or when the Bible Presbyterians left McIntire and became the Evangelical Presbyterians? Of course, many of you were not involved in those things. But you see, men come and men go and you and I are in that category. But God alone and his work will go on.

The question is, Do we want to be associated with God and be a part of that work God is doing? Or, do we want to hold to our petty situation—as it must appear before God, though it appears important to us—at the expense of losing the opportunity of being collaborators together with God and in the work that he is doing?

I think we ought to think prayerfully and seriously that we do not obstruct because of our differences. We ought rather to provoke one another to love and good works in the Lord. And we ought to stand together and rejoice that we have a testimony that is really a vital testimony in this day of unbelief.

The world of unbelief is dying for want of the gospel. We have so much to give that we should not take time to try to tear each other apart. But rather, we should try to build each other up as a unified group for the testimony and glory of Christ.

Dr. Dyrness is executive director of the Quarryville (Penna.) Presbyterian Home. We believe his extemporaneous remarks above reflect the general feeling of many in both churches as they contemplate a possible merger.

The Presbyterian Guardian

Preparing to vote on OP-RP merger

Sometime between May 30 and June 6, 1975, the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, must vote whether to approve or reject the Plan of Union for the merger of these two conservative Presbyterian bodies. Only a very presumptuous prophet would hazard a guess about the outcome. But commissioners to the Synod and Assembly must go prepared to cast their votes on this crucial matter.

The question to be voted on is:

"Shall the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod be united to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church on the basis of the Plan of Union submitted herewith?"

This question must be decided on a "Yes" or "No" vote. No further amendments are possible, unless the whole issue is to be delayed indefinitely.

Requirements for passage

Both the Assembly and Synod will meet simultaneously and both will meet at Geneva College. The other Reformed Presbyterian Church (of North America) will also be meeting at the same time and place; though not involved in the merger question, it is intensely interested.

The proposal must receive a two-thirds majority in both the Assembly and Synod. It must then be approved by two-thirds of the presbyteries in each church, but only by a simple majority in each presbytery. It must finally be approved at the following Assembly and Synod, again by a two-thirds majority. Only then can the two bodies combine in a united General Assembly.

One hurdle not built into the system of approval is any sort of plebiscite by members of both churches. To many members this seems "undemocratic." It is. We happen to be Presbyterians, not Congregationalists. We believe Christ gave gifts of rule to certain men and we have been responsible to recognize those men and place them in ruling

office. As Christ's rulers in his church, it is their duty to gather in presbyterial assemblies to decide such basic questions.

To be sure, the Plan of Union makes provision for a congregation to withdraw from a merged church. It also makes provision for individuals to withdraw if their congregation moves contrary to the person's wishes. But the basic decision rests with the elders of the church in Assembly, Synod, and presbytery.

The Plan of Union

The Plan of Union being submitted for a vote this year contains a historical Preamble, a Testimony to the beliefs of the two churches, the constitutional standards for the merged church, details for merging presbyteries and agencies of the two churches, and the provisions for congregations that choose not to enter the merged church.

As this Plan has taken shape in recent months, one frequently hears comments about which church has given up the most for a merger. Reformed Presbyterians point out that Orthodox Presbyterian standards predominate in the proposed constitution. Orthodox Presbyterians point out that every existing agency of the RPC/ES, including Covenant College and Covenant Seminary, is retained in the merged church.

Both those statements are true—so far as they go. Though the Confession is to be that now held by the OPC, that should cause no problem to the RPC/ES since there is no appreciable difference. The Shorter Catechism is the same for both churches. The Larger Catechism, with its proposed changes in the area of the resurrection of the dead, probably satisfies no one in either church—too much change for most OPs, too little for many RPs.

Though the OPC Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for Worship do predominate (presbyteries are free to choose either Form of Government for the time being), all three of these documents are being included only until a revised form is finally approved. That could

result in quite a difference in some areas later on.

As for the retention of agencies now operating in both churches, the Plan does generally include whatever was found. Specifically, it includes Covenant College and Seminary despite the fact that many Orthodox Presbyterians find this educational enterprise objectionable on what they see as scriptural grounds. The Plan also includes an Assembly committee on nominations as in present R.P. Synod practice, as well as a committee on judicial matters, both of which are not entirely welcomed by Orthodox Presbyterians.

The confessional standards will be fixed, of course, subject to amendment only by the same repeated two-thirds majorities required for the merger itself. But the standards of government, discipline, and worship can and almost certainly will be changed by a much simpler process. Even the name "Reformed Presbyterian Church" could be changed within two years of merger—we don't advocate that; we just point out the actuality.

The presbyteries and agencies can be realigned and reoriented by a simple majority in any future assembly. No doubt there will be changes made, and some of them will come rather quickly as circumstances and feelings determine.

All we mean to stress here is that commissioners and presbyters should be clear on this point: The Plan of Union, even if the merger is approved, does not become a part of the constitution of the merged church. To be sure, if any brother immediately moves to chop great holes in the patterns set by that Plan he would be flying in the face of a carefully worked out consensus. But if there are faults in the Plan, and we believe there are, these can be dealt with in time and without the tensions involved in deciding the basic question of merger.

Intangible considerations

To be sure, there are those who believe that certain details in the Plan are too much to accept even for the sake of a merger. Some will reject the whole package because of details judged to be imprudent or even wrong in principle. But for most who have to vote on this question in the months ahead, the decision will be made on the basis of what they expect the future church will be like.

(Continued on next page.)

What sort of church can we expect if merger occurs? It would be a church firmly committed to the historical American form of Presbyterian orthodoxy in doctrine and church order. It would be a church actively involved in gospel outreach in a vital way. It would be a church with, perhaps too much, structures to facilitate its affairs and activities. Its skeleton would be good and much of its muscle would be well designed.

We are not aware of any OP agency included in the Plan to which any RP has raised objection. In fact, the only agency of either church to be excluded from the merged church is the OPC's present Committee on Stewardship. The joint committee that drew up the Plan of Union yielded to RP objections on this point though it did not yield to OP objections to the inclusion of Covenant College.

Elimination of the Committee on Stewardship will mean that OPs will no longer be able to support the work of the church's gospel outreach (home and foreign missions and Christian education) through a combined giving approach. We believe the joint committee should have made provision for this arrangement to continue, at least for those who desire to use it.

All in all, we believe it is fair to say that those points on which RPs have insisted (retention of Covenant College, abolition of the Stewardship Committee, amendment of the Larger Catechism) have "gone their way" in the Plan. Points on which OPs have insisted have not usually prevailed; in the matter of the Larger Catechism changes there has been some yielding to OP concerns. In other words, the Plan as proposed calls upon Orthodox Presbyterians to yield more for the sake of merger than is being asked of Reformed Presbyterians, even including the matter of a name for the merged church.

Having said all that, we hasten to add that that opinion really has nothing to do with whether a merger is wise. The question still is whether merger is right, even though some of the provisions are unsatisfactory.

Future place of the Plan

Much has been said about this detail or that in the Plan. A great deal of time has been spent in debating and refining the Preamble—and very little time in discussing the future of the agencies of the church, for example. But commissioners should keep in

mind just what practical significance the Plan and its sections will have if and when a merger takes place.

Once the two churches manage to unite, if they do, the Plan will become no more than an historical document gathering dust. To be sure, it will determine how the merger takes place at the time. But once the kinks are worked out, presbyteries merged, agencies combined and redefined, the Plan has no more effect.

What is impossible to know is just how its heart and mind would operate on crucial decisions day by day. Perhaps it would help to put the question in perspective by focusing on the decisions made by presbyteries on whom to ordain to the gospel ministry. Certainly no more basic decision has been given to the church by her Lord than of determining who shall exercise a teaching ministry.

What can we expect in a merged church? Will presbyteries blithely pass along any young man who comes with a vaguely evangelical faith in Christ? Will they rather be concerned to ordain men mature in that faith and firmly committed to the doctrines summarized in the Westminster Standards? Or will they tend to be such sticklers at minute points of doctrine as to give the apostle Paul a hard time?

How can we know about such things in advance? There is no certain way. Our only basis for judgment will have to be our knowledge of "how they do it" in each other's presbyteries now. Those ministers and elders who've taken the time and effort to gather with their brother ministers and elders in joint meetings to discuss these things will have some basis for judgment. Those men will have gotten to know, to some degree at least, the men of the other church with whom they may be united. Sadly, there will be some commissioners to the coming Assembly and Synod who will be voting on the merger in the dark.

To sum it up: We're not greatly concerned about most of the details in the Plan of Union. What is said in the Preamble and Testimony will not determine the future of a merged church. Even with the changes proposed in the Larger Catechism, changes we would prefer not to have made, the resulting confessional standards are more than adequate; we can repeat the second ordination vow quite heartily. (To be sure, there may be some Reformed Presbyterians who feel less assured on this point. We can understand that,

though we believe that even for them the proposed Standards should create no insurmountable problem.)

We are concerned, however, to reach a decision about this merger based on a fair and knowledgeable judgment about the "heart and mind" likely to exist in the merged church. We do have a testimony to make for the sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus. May our sovereign God give us wisdom to decide this matter of merger in obedience to his will and for the glory of his Name.

—J. J. Mitchell

Professor Murray seriously ill

Professor John Murray, former professor of systematic theology at Westminster Seminary, recently underwent an exploratory operation for a malignant growth on his stomach. Doctors found the growth too extended to remove, and further treatment has been ruled out. Mr. Murray is back at home recuperating from the operation.

Professor Norman Shepherd, presently professor of systematics at Westminster, flew to Scotland on March 21 to visit his predecessor. His travel expenses are being borne by the Westminster Alumni Association and he goes as their pastoral representative to this greatly beloved teacher.

Mr. Murray retired from active teaching in 1967, returning to his home in Scotland. Soon after he married and he and his wife Valerie are the parents of two growing children. For readers who may wish to write him, the address is:

The Rev. John Murray
Badbea, Bonar Bridge
Ardgay, Ross-shire, Scotland

Westminster Seminary hosts mission consultation

Presbyterian and Reformed leaders in the world mission of the church will discuss the theology of church growth at an invitational consultation to be held at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia on March 24-26, 1975. The agenda will consider the nature of evangelism, the place and importance of numerical growth, people movements and other issues with particular reference to the pioneering work of Donald McGavran of the Fuller School of World Missions. (RES/News Exchange, 2/4/75).

The Presbyterian Guardian

Overtures oppose use of "Living Bible"

Two presbyteries are overturing the Forty-second General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to instruct its Committee on Christian Education to cease using *The Living Bible* in the Sunday school materials.

The overture from the Presbytery of Ohio urges the General Assembly "to instruct the Committee on Christian Education to cease from all future use of quotations from *The Living Bible*, for the following reasons:

"1. *The Living Bible* is not a translation of Scripture, but a paraphrase.

"2. As a paraphrase it contains many inaccuracies and passages prejudicial to the Reformed Faith.

"3. Its repeated use and official recognition tends to promote the extended use of *The Living Bible* among users of the Great Commission Sunday School curriculum."

In the overture from the Presbytery of New York and New England, a statement of the Committee on Christian Education is quoted (in part) as follows: "A special word of warning may be in order here concerning *The Living Bible*. Because it is an acknowledged paraphrase, it is more easily read than most Bible translations and if its use is not tempered by constant comparison with other versions, it could become 'habit-forming.' Exclusive use of *The Living Bible* by older young people and adults could, of course, open the door to some erroneous doctrinal views based on this version's Arminian bias. . . . Inasmuch as children vary significantly in intellectual and spiritual maturity, the teacher should be constantly alert to the need to provide individual guidance on this subject. In terms of the policy outlined above, the teacher is advised to use his own discretion as to when and what degree to confront Junior students with the complex problem of evaluating Bible versions" (from "Publisher's Note about Bible Versions," *Junior Teacher's Guide*, June, July, August 1974, p. 9).

Comment: Unfortunately, as quoted by the overture above, the statement from

the Sunday school teacher's guide is obscured, suggesting that only *The Living Bible* was being discussed. Actually, the "terms of the policy outlined above" included several other points and were generally directed at all Bible versions. The statement bluntly asserts, correctly so, that "*there is no perfect Bible translation*" (its own emphasis). It states the general policy to be the aim of making use of "the most accurate translation of a given passage that is at the same time most understandable to the age group for which it is being used."

Every version of the Bible, except the original Hebrew and Greek, is a paraphrase at times, since it's simply impossible to translate word for word in every instance. *The Living Bible* is admittedly a much freer paraphrase than most and makes no pretense at translating the original Hebrew and Greek.

In other words, being a paraphrase does not prove that a version "contains many inaccuracies and passages prejudicial to the Reformed Faith." That may be so of *The Living Bible*; it is also true to some degree of every other version available today.

The one area where the overtures may appear to have a justifiable concern is in the supposed effect on users of the Sunday school material. Does use of *The Living Bible* (with students in grades 4, 5, and 6), despite the warning to the teachers, "tend to promote the extended use" of this version by those youngsters? Only if the teachers and parents of these children also work to promote that use is this at all likely to happen.

After all, teachers are forcefully warned of the dangers of *The Living Bible*. They are hardly likely to urge their students to run and buy one and use it for all their Bible study. We don't see that as a real problem.

We do see a real problem in the overtures' attempt to urge the church to place *The Living Bible* on its "index" of forbidden literature. Once we start on that road, there's no end.

—J. J. M.

Missionaries still in Ghinda, Eritrea

The Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries in Eritrea, Ethiopia's rebellion-torn northernmost province, are still in the town of Ghinda, location of the mission's hospital. Fighting between government troops and forces of the Eritrean Liberation Front still continues around Asmara, the provincial capital. Ghinda lies between Asmara and the seacoast.

It was a group from the ELF who kidnapped nurses Anna Strikwerda and Debbie Dortzbach last spring. Miss Strikwerda was shot and killed when she failed to run fast enough. Mrs. Dortzbach, pregnant at the time, was held for over a month and finally released despite the mission's refusal to pay a demanded ransom. She and her husband Karl are now the parents of young Joshua and living in the Philadelphia area while Karl completes seminary training.

With the overthrow of the Ethiopian monarchy by army leaders, the country has been increasingly unsettled. The ELF, whose aim is to separate Eritrea from the rest of the country, have stepped up their attacks and have succeeded in confining government troops to the larger towns. But apparently much of the rural area continues its regular life.

Communications with missionaries have been broken off by the fighting, with neither mail or cables getting out. American consular officials have reported, however, that all the mission personnel are safe at the hospital. Supplies like gasoline are running out, but food is sufficient.

For many years the efforts of Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries have borne little visible fruit among the people of Eritrea, who are divided mainly between Moslem and Coptic Christian elements. But in the last two or three years, small congregations have been organized, elders ordained, and a tenuous foothold for the gospel established. Pray that the Lord of the harvest would enable his reapers in Eritrea to see much more of the harvest brought in. Their readiness to remain at their posts in spite of the present dangers can only be another and effective form of witness to their Lord among these people.

(More news on next page.)

In Appreciation for My Church

(Continued from page 55.)

even to make the effort to work together with their brethren.

To be sure, the process of presbyterian government can be tedious—because of the limitations of imperfect men. But on the whole it does point to some beautiful principles—sharing the burdens, mutual admonition, fellowship and love among believers—which are often neglected.

We have clearly learned that no minister is lord of the manor. He and the ruling elders ought to walk humbly before God and before each other as they *serve* the congregation. The deacons spend their time and energies to alleviate suffering in the Name of the

compassionate Jesus.

Nor do congregations operate as independent entities in themselves, but humbly join with others like-minded, acknowledging Christ's own delegated authority in the presbytery as it watches over them all for purity in faith and life. These presbyteries in turn recognize the authority given to a General Assembly to watch over them for the same prayerful care.

All together, the various judicatories submit themselves to the Word of God for mutual edification, mutually benefiting from the gifts Christ has given to his church. Yes, I appreciate this system, even though in the hands of fallible men it often fails to be what it should.

I have been young. I am now a little older. I am not ashamed that thirty-eight years of my life have been within the embrace of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I am grateful to God for this church.

What will happen when the "old guard" passes? We do not know. But we do know that, whether or not the Orthodox Presbyterian Church continues to be faithful to the sovereign Triune God, the truths to which this church now gives itself will not die. God's Word cannot return to him void.

The Rev. Calvin A. Busch is pastor of Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Whippany, New Jersey.

Pensacola Youth Crusade and Theological Institute

Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, Dr. Robert G. Rayburn, and the Rev. Frank Barker are among speakers scheduled for the 1975 conferences of the Pensacola Youth Crusade and Pensacola Theological Institute, according to a recent announcement by the Rev. Donald A. Dunkerley, director of the Crusade and Institute and pastor of the sponsoring church, McIlwain Memorial Presbyterian Church of Pensacola, Florida.

Complete information can be obtained by writing Mr. Dunkerley at the church, P.O. Box 2068, Pensacola, FL 32503.

The 16th annual Youth Crusade for senior high young people will meet July 6 through 12, 1975, with the following speakers:

- The Rev. Frank Barker, pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama, will be the evening speaker.

- The Rev. Bill Harding of the Sudan Interior Mission will be the missionary speaker.

The 19th annual Theological Institute and the Junior Institute for families will meet August 3 through 10, 1975, with the following faculty:

- The Rev. Dr. Peter Y. DeJong, pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church of Sioux Center, Iowa, will be the preacher to the Institute.

- The Rev. Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, president of Westminster Theological Seminary will teach on "The Mission of

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR

JOHN J. MITCHELL

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

the Church to the World."

- The Rev. Dr. Robert G. Rayburn, president of Covenant Theological Seminary will teach a course on "Reformed Worship."

- The Rev. Dr. Wilson Benton, Jr., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, Mississippi, will teach an expository Bible course on Revelation 2 and 3, "The State of the Church—The King's Report."

Invitation to Women at Assembly-Synod

The Women's Synodical Society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, cordially invites the women of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to attend its annual meeting on Saturday, May 31, 1975 from 9:30 a.m. to about 3:00 p.m. at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. There will be a luncheon and a program of interest. Details of reservations, programs, etc., will be announced when completed.

TEACHERS WANTED:

for (1) Kindergarten and for (2) Combined Grades 4-5-6.

Peninsula Christian School

22507 S. Figueroa St.

Carson, CA 90745.

-Adhering to Westminster Conf.

Spanish-speaking Assistant: The Sharon Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Hialeah, Florida, is looking for someone fluent in Spanish, Reformed in doctrine, to serve as assistant pastor. Church is located in area with large Cuban population, has Spanish-speaking members, but is concerned to reach those who have no ability in English. Contact:

Rev. Roger W. Schmurr

675 West 68th St.

Hialeah, FL 33014.

Pastor Needed: The Pulpit Committee of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pa., invites inquiries from ministers who may be led to explore the possibility of being a candidate for the church's pulpit. Please contact

Elder John C. Smith

195 Sycamore St. W.

Pittsburgh, PA 15211

(or phone: 412-431-2319).

WANTED: Allen's translation of Calvin's *Institutes* (with introduction by B. B. Warfield). Contact:

Stanley Long

1636 Birchwood

Anchorage, AK 99504.

Tongues: Sign of covenantal curse and blessing

PALMER ROBERTSON

This is the second and concluding portion of Dr. Robertson's discussion of tongues as a covenantal sign.

In 1 Corinthians 14:21, 22, Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11 to show that tongues were meant by God to be a sign of covenant curse on unbelieving Israel. Tongues thus serve as a covenantal sign, and Paul would have the Corinthian believers see them as the realization of God's curse on Israel for covenantal unfaithfulness. At the same time, tongues also confirm God's intention to extend his covenant mercies to men of every nation, kindred, and tribe.

A sign of transition

First, from 1 Corinthians 14:20-22 it has been noted that Paul identifies tongues as a sign of *covenant fulfillment*. Second, from this passage we note that Paul identifies tongues as a *sign*.

It is appropriate to note the covenantal role of tongues. It is equally significant to note the sign-character of tongues. After quoting Isaiah 28:11, Paul offers his own interpretive remarks: "Tongues," says Paul, "are for a sign."

Both the essential nature of tongues and the context of Paul's Old Testament quotation (as discussed in the first portion of this article) help to define the precise "sign-character" of tongues. Tongues serve as a sign to indicate that God's redemptive program has shifted from a Jewish-centered activity to one involving all the nations of the world.

God's New Testament prophets suddenly burst out spontaneously in declaring the wonderful works of God in all the languages of mankind. The sign is unmistakable. The transition has occurred. God no longer speaks singularly to a singular people. He speaks in the many tongues of the many peoples of

the earth.⁵ The sign of tongues is a sign of transition. A new day has dawned for the people of God.

It has been indicated already that the context of Paul's quotation from Isaiah 28 has to do with God's judgment on Israel for their hardness of heart. The reference to the "costly cornerstone" of Isaiah 28:16 as it is employed in the New Testament supports the suggestion that the context of Paul's quotation has to do with the removal of the kingdom from Israel.

"Tongues" functions in this context as a "sign." It is a sign that this judgment on Israel has been accomplished. It is a sign of the covenantal curse on Israel, a sign that God addresses himself no longer in a special way to a special nation in their special language. Instead, the sign of tongues indicates that God addresses himself manifestly to men of all nations.

A sign to unbelievers

Perhaps this perspective may aid in the understanding of the subsequent comments of the apostle. Paul says tongues are for a sign, "not to those who believe, but to unbelievers" (1 Corinthians 14:22). What do these words mean?

Notice that Paul connects this remark immediately with his quotation from Isaiah. "So then," because of the judgmental character of tongues as manifested in Old Testament covenantal contexts, "tongues are for a sign . . . to unbelievers." Because of their particular role as sealing God's judgment on unbelieving Israel, tongues communicate a special message to contemporary unbelievers. Whether Jews or Gentiles, unbelievers ought to take special note of tongues.

Unbelievers need to realize that tongues testify to God's fidelity to the word of his covenantal curses. Israel persisted in unbelief, and God brought the threatened judgment. Tongues give witness to God's judgment on Israel.

Clearly God no longer deals particularly with a single people. By tongues he testifies to his turning to men of all nations.

At the same time, tongues testify to the unbeliever of the worldwide dimensions of the grace of God. A transition has been accomplished. The gracious intention of God has been manifested. God has displayed his determination to speak the language of men of all nations.

So, tongues are for unbelievers. They serve primarily as an evangelical tool. When understood properly with this background of the Old Testament in view, tongues offer their sign-testimony to the unbeliever.

Prophecy for the believers

However, this sign of transition has a role of minor significance to someone who has already entered the fellowship of believers. "Tongues are for a sign . . . to unbelievers; but *prophecy* is to those who *believe*" (1 Corinthians 14:22).

God has not assigned the gift of tongues for the consistent upbuilding of the believer. By their very nature, tongues have a concrete role in redemptive history to play. Like most "signs," tongues give direction along the way. But once the signpost has been passed, it has no further active function.

At this point, it is necessary to make some further comparison of the gifts of prophecy and of tongues as they functioned in the New Testament era. The two gifts had significant points of similarity, while at the same time manifesting unique distinctives.

Both prophecy and tongues represented gifts of a verbal nature. Gifts such as "giving" and "showing mercy" (Romans 12:8) were not gifts by which words were communicated. But prophecy and tongues had this verbal quality in common.

Furthermore, both prophecy and
(Continued on next page.)

tongues appear to represent gifts of inspired utterance. In the case of tongues, the correctness of this evaluation seems apparent. Since God was making the mouth move, the utterance in a tongue had to be a directly God-inspired statement conveying infallible and inerrant material. The interpretable quality of tongues-utterances (1 Corinthians 14:5) would appear to rule out the possibility that tongues were nonsense syllables. They did communicate divinely inspired truth.

The gift of prophecy also appears to have been an utterance derived directly from God's inspiration. The gift is discussed in terms of its "revelational" quality in 1 Corinthians 14:29-31. Although the case is not as clear as tongues, prophecy does appear to manifest the character of revelation.

Prophecy and tongues distinguished

But these two gifts also manifest marked distinctives. While they both fit into the same basic category, they display significant differences.

Most important for the present discussion is the distinctive characterization that Paul assigns to each of the gifts in the life of the church. "Prophecy" is for the edification, exhortation and consolation of men. "Tongues" have the effect of edifying only the speaker unless they are interpreted (1 Corinthians 14:3-5).

This relative value of the two gifts finds permanent confirmation in the fact that chosen words of "prophecy" have been preserved in the Scriptures for the continual edification of the church. We still possess the "more sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19) which is adequate to make the man of God "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). Because of their continual value in edifying the church, inspired words of prophecy have been preserved in Scripture.

The gift of tongues, however, did not possess inherently this value for the edification of God's people. Therefore, tongues utterances would have had no such lasting value in preservation. "Tongues" served as a "sign" that communicated to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22). Prophecy ministered instead for the edification of the believers.

A "difference of species" therefore separated the gifts of "tongues" and of "prophecy" despite their similarities. One partook of the limitations char-

Tongues gave witness to God's judgment on Israel. But by tongues God also testified to his turning to men of all nations. Now that the transition has been made tongues have no abiding value in the life of the church.

acteristic of a "sign." The other did not possess these limitations. It is this radical "difference of species" that serves to resolve the interpretive problem associated with Paul's next remark in verses 23-25.

An apparent contradiction

Paul had just assigned tongues for unbelievers and prophecy for believers. But then in verses 23-25, he seems to reverse himself entirely, so much so that the following comment is found in a footnote of J. B. Phillips' translation of the New Testament:

This is the sole instance of the translator's departing from the accepted text. He felt bound to conclude, from the sense of the next three verses, that we have here either a slip of the pen on the part of Paul, or, more probably, a copyist's error.⁷

In verse 23, Paul says that the effect of tongues on the unbeliever will be to lead him to conclude that those in the Christian assembly are "mad."⁸ He will not be able to comprehend the significance of the phenomenon.

But, continues the apostle in verses 24 and 25, if all are engaged in prophesying in the assembly when an unbeliever visits, he shall be convicted and converted. While tongues lead the unbeliever to the conclusion that Christians are mad, prophecy leads him to salvation.

How is this apparent contradiction in the apostle to be resolved? In verse 22, he commends tongues for the unbeliever; in verses 24 and 25, it is prophecy he commends.

The answer to this question lies in the distinction made earlier between the basic nature of tongues and of prophecy. Tongues are a "sign"; prophecy is not. Tongues possess a character that inherently limits their function to a narrower scope than the ministry enjoyed by prophecy. Tongues serve as an indicator; prophecy serves as a communicator. Tongues call attention to the mighty acts of God! prophecy calls to repentance and faith in response to the mighty acts of God.

The relation to Pentecost

If Paul's line of reasoning in 1 Cor-

inthian's 14:20-25 is considered in the light of Acts 2, it will become apparent that Paul is recommending for the unbelievers of Corinth nothing more than the procedure followed at Pentecost.

First, tongues serve as a sign to the unbeliever. Then prophecy elicits repentance and faith from the unbeliever. First, the apostles manifested the gift of tongues, which converted no one. As a matter of fact, it only led the crowd to attribute drunkenness to the apostles (Acts 2:13). Paul says in like manner the Corinthians may expect unbelievers to conclude madness from the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:23). But by the gift of prophecy, the phenomenon of tongues may be explained, the declaration of the word may proceed, and the lost may be won.

The history of redemption makes plain the truth. Tongues, while significant as a sign, have a most limited usefulness for deepening the understanding of the church. According to Paul, tongues marked unmistakably the point of judgment on Israel and the point of transition to the nations. As such, they served as a sign of covenantal curse and blessing.

It is in this context that the temporally circumscribed character of the gift of tongues becomes most apparent. Tongues are a sign attached vitally — but irretrievably — to a particular juncture in the history of redemption. As such, the gift of tongues cannot be expected to fulfill actively its assigned role indefinitely. By the very nature of the case, the gift of tongues could fulfill its God-appointed function only in the historical context divinely designed for such a sign.

At the crucial point in history, necessity required that God's judgment on Israel be sealed by a sign. God's intention to minister his gospel equally to men of all nations needed to be made manifest by a sign.

- Tongues were that sign.
- Tongues served well to show that Christianity, though begun in the cradle of Judaism, was not to be distinctively Jewish.
- Tongues aided significantly the transition from a Jewish to a worldwide gospel.
- Tongues provided signal support to

the foundational structure of Christianity.

- Now that the foundation has been laid, the continuation of the sign of tongues would serve no significant function.
- Now that the transition has been made, the sign of transition has no abiding value in the life of the church.

Today there is no need for a sign to show that God is moving from the single nation of Israel to all the nations. That movement has become an accomplished fact.

As in the case of the founding office of apostle, so the particularly transitional gift of tongues has fulfilled its function as a covenantal sign for the Old and New Covenant people of God. Once having fulfilled that role, it has no further function among the people of God.

⁶The fact that Paul applies the prophecies concerning foreign languages to the problem at Corinth argues very strongly (to the present writer, conclusively) in favor of the view that would see the tongues of Corinth as being of the same nature as the tongues of Pentecost. Unquestionably the "tongues" referred to by the Old Testament prophets were foreign languages. Since Paul applies the prophecy to the situation at Corinth, it may be assumed these also were foreign languages. While there are problems admittedly, there is no conclusive argument against the suggestion that the "tongues" of Corinth were the same as the "tongues" of Acts.

⁷These assertions about prophecy's continuance are not intended to suggest that the gift of divinely inspired and infallible utterances continues after the completion of the New Testament canon. From Paul's perspective, at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians, "prophecy" in this narrower sense was flourishing. It would be necessary to understand accurately the altered situation with respect to divine revelation in the church today before attempting to make current application of Paul's words about "prophecy."

⁸*The New Testament in Modern English.* A translation by J. B. Phillips. London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1958, p. 346, note.

⁹This remark, when compared with Acts 2:13, adds further confirmation to the theory that the tongues of 1 Corinthians were not different from the tongues in Acts. The initial effect of the phenomenon is the same in both cases.

We have presented this rather detailed study of some difficult Scripture verses because a right understanding of them is crucial for a right understanding of tongues. In a final summary article, Dr Robertson will draw together the various strands of Scripture teaching on this subject.

April, 1975

Andres approved by R. P. presbytery

The Presbytery of California of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, meeting on February 15, examined and received the Rev. Lawrence G. Andres. The presbytery also determined to investigate the Westminster Chapel group meeting in San Jose with a view to its possible reception as a congregation of the presbytery.

Mr. Andres, former pastor of Faith R. P. Church in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, had been called to serve as pastor of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Sunnyvale, California. After a lengthy examination, much of which was judged to be satisfactory, the Presbytery of Northern California (OPC) determined not to receive Mr. Andres or install him as pastor in Sunnyvale. This decision was complained against, but the 1974 General Assembly refused to overturn the presbytery's decision.

During the summer of 1974 several members of the Sunnyvale congregation, including one elder, withdrew and began worshipping together under the ministry of Mr. Andres. The group, adopting the name Westminster Chapel, has applied to the R. P. Presbytery of California for admission as a member congregation.

The action of the R. P. presbytery in receiving Mr. Andres is in effect an approval of his activities in encouraging former members of the O. P. congregation in Sunnyvale to separate themselves from that fellowship. The action was taken after a lengthy discussion in executive session during which fraternal delegates from both the Northern and Southern California presbyteries of the OPC were excluded.

Comment: The exclusion of the O. P. fraternal delegates at just that point where fraternal relations were most severely strained was hardly a "fraternal" way to handle the problem. Approval of Mr. Andres and of his ministry in the Sunnyvale-San Jose area can and will be judged by many as an approval of a schismatic movement.

The whole situation regarding Mr. Andres has certainly cast a cloud over the proposed merger of the OPC and the RPC/ES. The OP Presbytery of Northern California saw every member voting to refuse admission to Mr. Andres except for the one elder who has since joined in forming the West-

minster Chapel. The RP Presbytery of California saw every member voting to admit Mr. Andres and to approve his work except for one elder, who has since asked for dismissal to an Orthodox Presbyterian congregation.

It is hardly conceivable that these presbyteries, either the OP or the RP ones, will vote in favor of merger. Or if a merger does take place, it is even more difficult to imagine these presbyteries coming together to a working relationship. We are aware of no formal actions being taken or proposed that would bring the decisions of the R.P. presbytery to the attention of its Synod; presumably the decisions will stand. That leaves it as a situation in which an RPC/ES judicatory has approved the activity of one of its ministers in a case that is deemed to be schismatic by most of the members of an OPC judicatory.

—J. J. M.

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Heavenly Homes

JEAN CHAMPNESS

"I go to prepare a place for you." This was our Lord's promise as he prepared to go the cross (John 14:2).

As women, wives, homemakers, and mothers, what *kind* of a place are we preparing for those who enter the doors of our homes? In recent years, I've heard it said more than once that our homes should be a taste of heaven on earth.

Not long ago I was further challenged by the thought that just cleaning a house until it passes the "white glove test" is not the same as *preparing* a place for those who live there, as well as for those who visit. It made me curious as to what the Bible says about heaven that could be related to my home and homemaking in general. To my amazement, I found nineteen things—and that was only scratching the surface!

The Lord is head of the house

Perhaps it is Revelation that most clearly shows us that everything in heaven revolves around the Godhead. But our homes should also revolve around the Lord. It is his ideas and rules that should govern our lives.

God has placed the husband in the home as an example or representative of himself. Just as in heaven everything revolves around the Lord, so in our homes everything should be related to God's representative, the husband and father.

We can do this by providing for physical needs, emotional support, making available the space and equipment for hobbies, taking time to visit together, and above all giving him room and encouragement to take spiritual leadership. Excellent books are available giving detailed help on the biblical relationship between husbands and wives. By finding out the husband's goals and fitting in with them, we can

make our homes more like heaven!

The family is assembled

Planning family times and family gatherings follows a biblical pattern! Throughout the Bible there are celebrations in which the people gather either in families or larger groups. In heaven the Lord receives the believers; in our homes the husband receives the family and guests.

At special times of the year, such as Thanksgiving, we invite relatives and close friends into our homes. The Lord has a list of names of those who are the children of the Father, and only those whose names are written there can enter in. And we follow the same pattern in family gatherings. How wonderful it is to be on that heavenly list; how wonderful too to be part of a family gathering to rejoice in the Lord together.

Mark 13:27 is especially impressive: "Then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." Do we make the effort to "gather" our families? An evening of singing, games, or sharing together, can make our homes a reflection of heaven's wonder.

The atmosphere is planned

It takes a lot of planning to control the "atmosphere" of a home. Several biblical principles need to be kept in mind.

- God does not tolerate sin in heaven! If our homes are to be more like heaven, we must work diligently to rid them of any sin we've been given grace to see. Dr. Jay Adams gives some very good suggestions to help in dealing with sin in our children. But what about our own sins? Are we overly critical of our children while ignoring

our own downfalls? Let each of us pray through this whole area of handling sin in ourselves and our children—that our homes might be more like heaven.

- Heaven is a beautiful place. What do our homes teach about our understanding of beauty and creativity? Physical surroundings must meet the needs of the occupants; one of those is to see a reflection of heavenly beauty in our homes.

- Heaven is also a place of hope, laid up now to be fulfilled in eternity (Colossians 1:5). When the various family members go forth to their daily duties, they need to know there is a place of security and rest from the struggles of the day, a place for rejoicing in the successes. Home should offer encouragement even when everything outside is falling apart. We must be careful to nurture the courage and hope of our mates, children, or visitors.

- Heaven is a place of joy. This thrills me! The Psalms give many examples of the joy that comes from God and from serving him.

A specific joy is that of Luke 15:7, where Jesus says to us "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

This should be the reaction when a family member confesses a specific sin. "Mommy, I did it." If we react with horror, denunciation or rejection, we have destroyed the picture of heaven that we should convey. There is *joy* in heaven over a repentant sinner, and we should show similar joy when true sorrow for sin is expressed within the family.

- Heaven is a place of peace. In our homes there should also be a peace of inner calm. That should be reflected

also in our surroundings through music, tone of voice, and good relationships with family members. Serenity and quietness are truly gifts from God.

- Heaven is a place where patterns are set up. The patterns of heavenly things governed the Old Testament rituals of worship (Hebrews 9:23). So also the heavenly patterns should govern our lives of daily service to the Lord, in the patterns we set for mealtime, holidays, style of dress, dealing with problems, in our bedtime and waking habits also. We should evaluate the patterns of our homes to see if they are for the glory of God.

- Heaven is a place of reconciliation. God has reconciled us to himself. How then can we work to bring reconciliation within the family? At the very least, let our homes be places where anger is quickly resolved and no family member is permitted to continue in a state of unforgiveness.

- Finally, heaven is a place of refreshment. When heaven was "shut up," the people of God no longer felt the refreshing dew of God's blessing. But heaven does send forth "showers of blessing," and our homes should provide, not only a cup of cold water in Christ's name, but words of encouragement and refreshing.

Benefits shared, rewards given

How excited God must get sometimes in planning our inheritance! It is surely a biblical pattern that we pass on to the next generation some of the material gain we have made. But so too are we to rejoice in passing on the promises of God's blessing to our children.

And even as God gives us eternal life, not because we earned but because Christ merited it for us, so too our homes should reflect a pattern of loving reward even in the midst of necessary discipline. Instead of taking good behavior for granted, perhaps we could more creatively use such meaningful rewards as "Thank you," and "I love you."

How does your home measure up? Let it be an example of the heavenly home our Savior has gone to prepare!

Mrs. Champness provides the home environment for her children and husband, the Rev. Thomas S. Champness, pastor of the Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

April, 1975

Dear Sarah:

I read the letter from the parents who said they made too many decisions for their son. You encouraged them to let him start making his own decisions. O.K. I'm sixteen and my parents still tell me what time I have to be in at night. Where in the Bible does it say I have to be in by 11 o'clock?

—Upset.

Dear Upset:

First, you did not tell me whether you are a boy or a girl. But in either case, here are a couple of things to think about.

Of course we both know that the Bible says to "obey your parents in the Lord," and that's the answer to your specific question. Your parents have to be the ones who know you best and know what time is best for you to be home under various circumstances.

As you show them that you have good judgment and respect them as God-given guides (Proverbs 1:8), they will undoubtedly give you more freedom in this as well as other decisions.

Hang in there! And be sure to talk with your parents about the things that concern you. Don't wait until you are going out the door on a date or to a game and then suddenly unburden yourself when you are reminded by your parents of certain ground rules. Good timing and a real desire to understand them, as well as have them understand you, will go a long way in convincing them of your respect and good judgment. I'm rooting for you.

—Sarah.

WANTED:

Readers with ideas shaping into written words. Sarah gladly answers letters in her column. Helpful new books need reviewing. Many, many things should be examined together—Should wives work outside the home? Is it enough to depend on the Sunday school's training for your child's Bible knowledge and spiritual growth? Is your minister's wife lonely? What makes a good summer camp? Any new DVBS ideas lately? What's unique about *your church*, home, Christian walk?

Send your thoughts — and they needn't be in polished form—to

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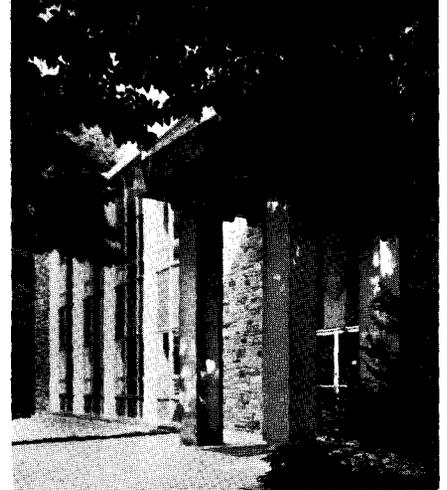
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MY LIFE

Clothed in a spotless robe,
A garment God hath made,
I live and walk in my abode,
Thankful and unafraid.

Still standing to the strife
While here on earth I stay,
Still looking into life
And longing for the day:

The day that is so kind,
The day of days for me,
The day I leave this world behind
To live eternally.

—John C. Rankin (1968)

Worcester, N.Y.—The poem above was read at the funeral service of the Rev. John C. Rankin, who went home to his Lord on March 8. The Rev. John H. Skilton conducted the service. Mr. Rankin was a long time ministerial member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Though he had been retired from active pastoral duty for some years, he did contribute articles to the *Guardian*, and was the author of *A Believer's Life of Christ*. Mrs. Rankin continues to reside in Worcester, where she is esteemed as a Dorcas.

Sunnyvale, Calif.—The Rev. Robert L. Atwell, former pastor of Grace O. P. Church in Westfield, N. J., has arrived to take up pastoral duties with the First O. P. Church here. Mr. Atwell's address is: 7411 Rainbow Dr., Apt. 11, San Jose, CA 95129.

Westfield, N. J.—Meanwhile, Grace Church has wasted no time. Having heard various candidates, it called the Rev. Albert G. Edwards, presently pastor of the First O. P. Church in Portland, Oregon.

Santee, Calif.—The Presbytery of Southern California has dissolved the pastoral relation between the Rev. Bruce M. Brawdy and the Valley O. P. Church here. The action comes after a long period of dissension in the congregation. Mr. Brawdy has resigned as a member of the presbytery. The Rev. Robert H. Graham has been sent to minister to the remaining members of the church.

Rochester, N. Y.—The Rev. George J. Willis recently resigned as pastor of Memorial O. P. Church here. The congregation has determined to call the Rev. John J. Barnett as their new pastor. Mr. Barnett is presently the pastor of Spencer Mills O. P. Church in Michigan.

Gresham, Wisc.—The Rev. Henry D. Phillips has resigned, after many years of service, as pastor of the Old Stockbridge O. P. Church here and missionary to the Menominee Indians at Zoar. Mr. Phillips hopes to take up new duties in Escanaba, Michigan.

Oostburg, Wisc.—At its regular meeting here on March 6, the Presbytery of the Midwest determined to overture the General Assembly to change the present system of representation at assemblies so as to give more representation to those presbyteries with larger communicant memberships. The present system is based on the number of churches and number of ministers.

Green Bay, Wisc.—The O. P. Chapel here has been formally received as an organized congregation of the Presbytery of the Midwest. The Rev. John Fikkert, who has been serving as a missionary to the group, was named moderator of the congregation.

REFORMED CONFERENCE HELD IN PITTSBURGH

The fourth Reformed Conference was held at the First R. P. (Covenanter) Church of Pittsburgh, Pa., on March 21, 22, 1975. The featured speaker was the Rev. John R. de Witt of the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church in Kingstree, S. C. The conference is sponsored by the local presbyteries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

NEW ADDRESSES

Dr. George W. Knight, III—1417 Christine, St. Louis, MO 63131.

Rev. David W. King—747 S. Linden Ave., Alliance, OH 44601.

Rev. Eugene Grille (note change in spelling)—P. O. Box 1653, Janesville, WI 53545.

Also, the Trinity O. P. Chapel is now meeting at the Rock County National Bank, 2636 Center Ave., Rockford, Illinois.

Rev. Henry W. Coray—6647 El Colegio Rd., Goleta, CA 93017 (where he is assisting the Rev. Dwight H. Poundstone of El Camino O. P. Church).