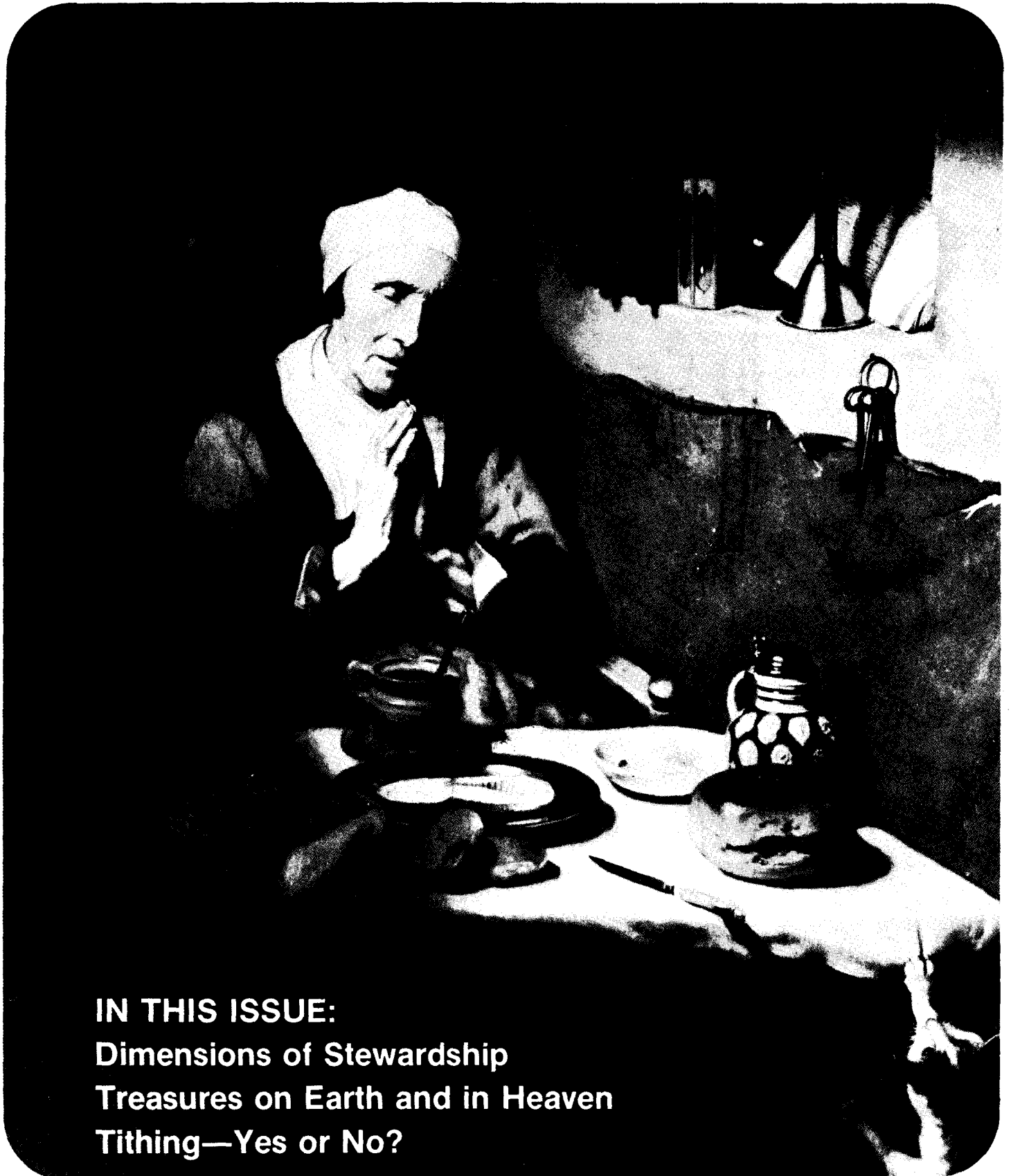


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New Testament Worship

In the Old Testament the people of God were taught, by various ceremonial laws, to revere God's presence and to consider rightly their calling as his holy people. These various laws distinguished between the holy and the profane, the sanctified and the unsanctified.

It was precisely this "law of commandments contained in ordinances" which Jesus abolished (Ephesians 2:14-15) and thereby broke down the middle wall of the partition between Jew and Gentile.

The center of ceremony was the temple, the symbol of God's presence dwelling with his people. However, even this was to be done away with in the new dispensation of the Spirit.

God's new temple is the people of God—they are "God's household, having been built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Not only is the church the temple of God, but all Christians are temples of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Not only does God's presence dwell among us corporately (2 Cor. 6:16-18), but God's presence indwells each believer: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

The ramifications of all this are far-reaching. It means, for example, that we should not think of the building where the church meets as a "sanctuary" or even as "God's house"—for such a distinction of honor has been reserved for the people of God and for them alone now that the temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed.

We should also be careful not to think of our weekly church collection as our "tithes and offerings." For an offering of money carries with it the same significance as an offering of lambs or doves upon the altar of the Jerusalem temple. However, in Christ we are the sacrifice, *we* are the offering. It is not without significance that the term generally used for the giving of money in the New Testament is not "offering", but "collection" (1 Cor. 16:1). Our giving is to be directed to three main areas: the support of our teachers (Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18); the needs of the saints (Romans 12:13; 2 Cor. 9:1f); the relief of the poor (Galatians 2:10; Matthew 26:11).

It is certainly true that the giving of our money for any of these purposes is in itself a sacrifice which is well-pleasing to God (Philippians 4:18); this is not, however, to suggest that any proper and God-glorifying use of our money is not similarly a well-pleasing sacrifice in the sight of God. For we are called to live "sacrificial" lives.

It is important that we Reformed Christians be consistent with our theology, even in what we might consider the smaller details of our worship.

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To Church Treasurers

For twenty-three years it has been my quiet privilege to work behind the scenes as a church bookkeeper. I have been allowed to wear the name of Church Treasurer but never to sit in on the meetings of the trustees so I have no delusions of grandeur and consider myself only as the bookkeeper. However, I am allowed a few privileges which I feel are scriptural and which should be considered by every church treasurer or bookkeeper as his duty before God. Who do I pay first? Which bill is the most important bill to be paid each month, every two weeks, or weekly—however the pastor wants it? The pastor's salary! To do less is to turn one's back upon the Word of God. It is to say that he who labors in the pulpit is less deserving than he who labors in the world.

Many who have the responsibility of paying the church bills and especially the mortgage payments feel that the bills should be paid before the pastor's salary. If anyone is to be left holding the empty bag let it be the pastor. This ought not to be so! If the congregation is holding back on the church, if they are not giving unto the Lord that which belongs to him, then let them sit in darkness (because the Power Company has turned off the electricity), or sit in a cold church (because the Gas Company has turned off the gas), or stand in front of a church whose doors have been locked because the mortgage company has taken possession of the property. This will bring home, as nothing else might, the need to be more faithful in the gifts they bring to the altar. It is a shame when these worldly and material matters are made of more importance than whether the shepherd of the flock has enough bread to feed his family.

Failure to provide the pastor's salary *on time* becomes a sin for the congregation, the Board of Trustees, and the treasurer, for the Word of God tells us "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his

own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8). Now the blessing of God is lost to both pastor and church. The offerings become less (for many do not even realize that the pastor is not being paid—proud fellow that he too often is, he fails to go around complaining of the injustice being done to him), and the church fails to grow and the love of all grows cold.

Let us consider the alternative. Treasurers and bookkeepers, this is to you in particular. For years a certain church with which I am acquainted had such financial problems as mentioned above. Then two changes took place. The pastor received his salary regardless of how much or how little was left after he was paid. Amazingly, there was always enough to pay the bills. Even after an addition was put on the church, for ten years the mortgage bill was paid on time each month and eventually paid off. The second thing that happened (and this is definitely not tied to the first) the benevolence fund was separated from the general fund. It was no longer possible to pay the electric bill with funds intended for missions. The Benevolence Treasurer took care of all monies collected for missions and paid them out immediately. The missionary giving in the church increased by leaps and bounds.

To all those in charge of church finances the Word of God would direct us to do all things with order. First things first if we are to grow and to be blessed. As individuals we are directed to bring our tithes into the storehouse and God will pour out such a blessing we will not be able to contain it. As treasurers and bookkeepers we stand in the breach between God's blessing on the congregation and his withdrawal of blessing because we are not being faithful to his Word. Jesus said, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." (Luke 10:7). Let it *come off of the top* and be paid first and on time. Above all, do not make your pastor ask you for his salary.

The above was written anonymously out of the writer's concern for churches' priorities in the use of funds.

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from the Editor

Dimensions of Christian Stewardship

Picture yourself in a restaurant with an eight-ounce steak in front of you. Then imagine the room filled with 45 to 50 people each carrying an empty bowl. Did you know that for the "food cost" of your steak each of these bowls could be filled with a full cup of cooked cereal grains? This is the startling conclusion of a book called *Diet for a Small Planet* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975) by Frances Moore Lappe'.

The United States, according to Lappe', feeds half of its harvested acreage to animals. For every seven pounds of grain fed to our livestock (taking the average capacity of cattle, sheep, chicken, and so forth), only one pound's worth is returned to us in meat. Therefore, she concludes, a diet which consists predominantly of meat is not an efficient use of our resources.

The problem can be dealt with in a two-fold way. First, we should incorporate more non-meat proteins into our diet (some recipes are provided). Second, the surplus of our grain obtained by not feeding so much of it to our livestock—who don't need such high quality food anyway—should be exported to the poorer nations which need it most. So runs the argument of the book.

Now, why am I taking up space in the *Guardian* to tell you how to plan your diet? Am I trying to introduce some new sect advocating good health in the name of religion? Or is this editorial for housewives only?

No, I believe it concerns us all. For Lappe's book caused me to reflect on a question very basic to our Christian lives—the extent of Christian stewardship. I invite you to join me as we reflect on it together.

World and Life View

Whether or not we agree with Lappe'—and she makes no claim to be writing from a Christian perspective—we who hold to a Reformed world and life view know that the question of how we use our God-given resources is a matter of profound significance not only for ourselves but for our fellowmen.

The Bible speaks eloquently of this responsibility. The Year of Jubilee was an Old Testament provision to ensure justice and equity among God's people. It was the sin of Israel that this law was never properly en-

forced. God himself set the pattern with the gift of manna, where "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (Exodus 16:18; cf. 2. Cor. 8:14-15).

The same emphasis is to be found in the New Testament as when Paul exhorts Timothy to "instruct those who are rich in this present world...to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" (1 Timothy 6:17-18; cf. Romans 12:13; 2 Cor. 9:1f).

Response to God's Call

Fundamental to the whole idea of stewardship is the recognition that God is sovereign over all of life. At the dawn of history, God made all things by his power. The earth is his by dominion. The cattle on a thousand hills are his. You and I are his.

If Christian stewardship begins with a recognition of God's sovereignty, it comes to expression in obedient response to his sovereign call. For as surely as God made all things for his own glory, so surely did he place Adam as custodian of the natural creation. "Be fruitful and multiply" Adam was told, "and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion..." (Genesis 1:28). When Adam sinned, the earth was cursed and his descendants swept away in a flood. Yet, God mercifully preserved Noah and his family, promising that "while the earth remains, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

The clear inference would seem to be that God had covenanted to supply the earth with adequate resources until the end of time. Then, when the creation will have ceased to groan and travail in pain, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, where Adamic dominion shall have been perfectly restored in Christ.

Why then are there starving masses in India? Because of sin. Why do North Americans waste their grain resources? Equally because of sin.

No Easy Answers

Before I am accused of being too simplistic, let me admit that there are no easy answers. Lappe's two-fold solution (eat less meat and export the extra grain) is functionally impractical, given the present economic system. The American agricultural economy depends to a large extent on the feeding of grain to livestock. The quality of food as well as its efficient use enters in (the higher quality grain a cow is fed the better the beef tastes). And the government is attempting to aid underdeveloped nations, is it not?

Then there are other factors, such as natural disasters, which are themselves the result of sin. Often ignorance and superstition prevent a nation from fully exploiting its natu-

ral resources. Again, there is the black market and bureaucratic inefficiency which wastes much of the aid that is sent to poorer nations.

My only point is that more can, indeed must, be done both individually and nationally. God requires it of us if we are to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with him (Micah 6:8). To say that the problems are complex is no excuse for folding our hands and doing nothing. We are responsible for our own sins. We are responsible for the stewardship of our own resources as well as for informing others of the problem (sin which is selfish and wasteful) and the solution (the gospel which is gracious and free, proclaiming release to the captives, freedom to the oppressed—Luke 4:18). And perhaps if we all wrote to our congressmen it might get those in government concerned.

Genius of Reformation Theology

A thoughtful consideration of how we use our resources as well as a concern for problems such as world hunger is not only compatible with the gospel; it is part and parcel of the gospel. It is surely the genius of Reformation theology to recognize that God does not save souls in isolation from the whole man. Rather, as new creatures in Christ and stewards of his grace, we are to present our souls and bodies as living sacrifices.

Practically, what does this mean for you and me? It means that Christian stewardship follows us to the kitchen as we thoughtfully prepare our food so that our bodies will be nourished in God's service, not wasted in worldly extravagance. It follows us to the grocery store and department store as we plan our menu and our wardrobe. It follows us to the ball game and the television set as we seek to be stewards of our God-given time. It follows us to our closet as we spend time in prayer for a lost and needy world. It follows us to the office and the classroom as we seek to be stewards of our gifts, manifesting the industry that is essential to true prosperity. For some, it will take us to the ghettos of New York and the slums of Bombay as we take stock of our gifts and in obedience to the call of God we carry the message of reconciliation into the racial and social strife of our generation; as we take the light of the Word of God into the dark places of the earth; or as we take medical and industrial skills to the underdeveloped nations.

So when your mother told you to eat your dinner because there were children starving in India, she wasn't so far off the mark after all. Perhaps she had caught a glimpse of the wide-ranging dimensions of Christian stewardship.

J. Cameron Fraser

Treasures on Earth and in Heaven

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

*The following is a slightly abridged republication of a sermon taken from Dr. Lloyd-Jones' book, **Studies in the Sermon on the Mount** (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970) vol. 2. It is reprinted here with the permission of the publishers.*

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. (Matt. 6:19, 20)

In this passage, our Lord puts his teaching first of all in the form of a blunt assertion, which is also an injunction. He lays down a law, a great principle. And having given the principle, he then, in his infinite kindness and condescension, supplies us with various reasons and considerations which will help us to carry out his injunction. As we read words like these, we must surely again be amazed and impressed by his condescension. He has a right to lay down laws and then leave us with them. But he never does that. He states his law, he gives us his principle, and then in his kindness he gives us

reasons, he supplies us with arguments which will help us and strengthen us. We are not meant to rely upon them, but they are a great help, and sometimes when our faith is weak, they are of inestimable value.

First and foremost then, here is the injunction: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." That is the injunction, that is the exhortation. The remainder, you see, goes into the realm of reason and explanation. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." But look first of all at the exhortation itself. It is a twofold one—negative and positive. Our Lord puts the truth in such a way that we are left without excuse. If any of us Christian people find ourselves receiving a very poor reward when we come to the great judgment of rewards, we shall have no excuse at all.

Negatively, then, he says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." What does he mean by this? First of all we must avoid interpreting this only with respect to money. Many have done that, and have regarded this as a statement addressed only to rich people. That I suggest is foolish. It is addressed to all others also. He does not say, "Lay not up for yourselves money," but "Lay not up for yourselves treasures." "Treasures" is a very large term and all-inclusive. It includes money, but it is not money only. It means something much more important. Our Lord is concerned here not so much about our possessions as with our attitude towards our possessions. It is not what a man may have, but what he thinks of his wealth, what his attitude is towards it. There is nothing wrong in having wealth in and of itself; what can be very wrong is a man's relationship to his wealth. And the same thing is equally true about everything that money can buy.

Indeed we go further. It is a question of one's whole attitude towards life in this world. Our Lord is dealing here with people who get their main, or even total, satisfaction in this life from things that belong to this world only. What he is warning against here, in other words, is that a man should confine his ambition, his interests and his hopes to this life. That is what he is concerned about, and viewed in that way, it becomes a much bigger subject than the mere possession of money. Poor people need this exhortation about not laying up treasures upon earth quite as much as the rich. We all have treasures in some shape or form. It may not be money. It may be husband, wife or children; it may be some gift we have which in actual worth and monetary value is very small. To some people their treasure is their house. That whole danger of being

house proud, of living for your house and home is dealt with here. No matter what it is, or how small it is, if it is everything to you, that is your treasure, that is the thing for which you are living. This is the danger against which our Lord is warning us at this particular point.

That gives us some idea of what he means by "treasures upon earth," and you see it is almost endless. Not only love of money, but love of honor, the love of position, the love of status, the love of one's work in an illegitimate sense, whatever it may be, anything that stops with this life and this world. These are the things of which we must be wary, lest they become our treasures.

Having said that, we come to a very practical question. How does one "lay up" treasures on earth with respect to these things? Once more we can merely give some general indications as to what it means. It may mean living to hoard and amass wealth as wealth. Many people do that, and our Lord may have had that chiefly in mind. But surely it has a wider reference. Our Lord's injunction means avoiding anything that centers on this world only. It is, as we have just seen, all-inclusive. It applies to people who, though they may not be interested in wealth or money at all, are yet interested in other things which are entirely worldly in the last analysis. There are people who have often been guilty of sad and serious lapses in their spiritual life because of this very thing we are considering. They cannot be tempted by money, but they can be tempted by status and position. If the devil comes and offers them some material bribe they will smile at it. But if he comes with guile, and, in connection with their Christian work, offers them some exalted position, they persuade themselves that their one interest is in the work, and they accept and receive it, and you soon begin to observe a gradual decline in their spiritual authority and power. Promotion has done endless harm in the church of God to men who have been quite honest and sincere, but who have not been on guard against this danger. They have been laying up treasures on earth without knowing it. Their interest has suddenly been moved from that one center of pleasing God and working for his honor and his glory, and has turned, almost without their knowing it, to themselves and their own engagement in the work.

In such ways a man can be laying up treasures on earth, and it is so subtle that even good people can be a man's greatest enemy. Many a preacher has been ruined by his congregation. Their praise, their encouragement of him as a man, has almost ruined him as the messenger of God, and he has become guilty of laying up treasures on earth. He tends almost unconsciously to be controlled by the desire to have his people's good opinion and praise, and the moment that hap-

pens a man is laying up treasures on earth. The possible examples are almost endless. I am simply trying to give you some slight indication of the realm and scope of this amazing injunction, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Whatever the *form* may be, it is the *principle* that matters.

Let us look now at the positive side of the injunction, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." It is very important that we should be clear about this. Some people have interpreted it as meaning that our Lord is teaching that a man can achieve his own salvation. "Treasure in heaven," they say, "means a man's salvation and his eternal destiny. Therefore, is not our Lord exhorting a man to spend his whole life in making sure of his eternal destiny?" Patently that is wrong. That is to deny the great central New Testament doctrine of justification by faith only. Our Lord cannot mean that, because he is addressing people of whom the Beatitudes are true. It is the man who is poor in spirit, who has nothing, who is blessed. It is the man who mourns because of his sinfulness who knows that, at the end, in spite of all he may or may not have done, he can never achieve his own salvation. That interpretation, therefore, is clearly wrong. What then does it mean? It means something that is taught in many places in the Scriptures, and two other passages will help us to understand the teaching here. The first is in Luke 16 where our Lord deals with the case of the unjust steward, the man who made a quick and clever use of his position. You remember he sums it up like this. "Make to yourselves," he says, "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Our Lord teaches that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. They make sure of their own ends. Now, says our Lord in effect, I am going to take that as a principle and apply it to you. If you have money, so use it while you are here in this world that, when you arrive in glory, the people who benefited by it will be there to receive you.

The apostle Paul expounds this in 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." In other words, if you have been blessed with riches, use them in such a way in this world that you will be building up a balance for the next. Our Lord says exactly the same thing at the end of Matthew 25 where he talks about the people who gave him meat when he was hungry and who visited him in prison. They ask, "When saw we thee an hun-

gered, and fed thee?...or in prison, and came unto thee?" And he says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." You do not realize it, but in doing these good deeds to these people, you have been building up your balance in heaven. There you will receive your reward and enter into the joy of your Lord.

That is the principle which our Lord constantly emphasizes. He said to his disciples after his encounter with the rich young ruler, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." It is this trusting in riches, it is this fatal self-confidence, that makes it impossible for you to be poor in spirit. Or again, as he put it to the people one afternoon when he said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." That is the kind of thing he meant by "laying up treasures in heaven."

How do we do this in practice? The first thing is to have a right view of life, and especially a right view of "the glory." That is the principle with which we started. The great fact of which we must never lose sight is that in this life we are but pilgrims. We are walking through this world under the eye of God, in the direction of God and towards our everlasting hope. That is the principle. If we always think of ourselves in that way, how can we go wrong? Everything will then fall into position. That is the great principle taught in Hebrews 11. Those mighty men, those great heroes of the faith had but one purpose. They walked "as seeing him who is invisible." They said they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," they were making for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." So when God called out Abraham he responded. He turned to a man like Moses who had amazing prospects in the Egyptian court and commanded him to leave it all and to become a miserable shepherd for forty years, and Moses obeyed, "for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." And so with all of them. What made Abraham ready to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac? What made all the heroes of the faith prepared to do the things they did? It was that they desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly."

We must always start with that great principle. If we have a right view of ourselves in this world as pilgrims, as children of God going to our Father, everything falls into its true perspective. We shall immediately take a right view of our gifts and our possessions. We begin to think of ourselves only as stewards who must give an account of them. We are not the permanent holders of these things. It matters not whether it is money, or intellect, or ourselves, or our personalities, or whatever gift we may have. The worldly man thinks he himself owns them all. But the Christian starts by saying, "I am not the pos-

essor of these things; I merely have them on lease, and they do not really belong to me. I cannot take my wealth with me, I cannot take my gifts with me. I am but a custodian of these things." And, at once, the great question that arises is. "How can I use these things to the glory of God? It is God I have to meet, it is God I have to face, it is he who is my eternal Judge and my Father. It is to him that I shall have to render up an account of my stewardship of all the things with which he has blessed me." "Therefore," the Christian says to himself, "I must be careful how I use these things, and of my attitude towards them. I must do all the things he tells me to do in order that I may please him."

There, then, is the way in which we can lay up treasures in heaven. It all comes back to the question of how I view myself and how I view my life in this world. Do I tell myself every day I live, that this is but another milestone I am passing, never to go back, never to come again? I am pitching my moving tent "a day's march nearer home." That is the great principle of which I must constantly remind myself—that I am a child of the Father placed here for his purpose not for myself. I did not choose to come; I have not brought myself here; there is a purpose in it all. God has given me this great privilege of living in this world, and if he has endued me with any gifts, I have to realize that, although in one sense all these things are mine, ultimately, as Paul shows at the end of 1 Corinthians 3, they are God's. Therefore, regarding myself as one who has this great privilege of being a caretaker for God, a custodian and a steward, I do not cling to these things. They do not become the center of my life and existence. I do not live for them or dwell upon them constantly in my mind; they do not absorb my life. On the contrary, I hold them loosely; I am in a state of blessed detachment from them. I am not governed by them; rather do I govern them; and as I do this I am steadily securing, and safely laying up for myself, "treasures in heaven."

"But what a selfish outlook," says someone. My reply is that I am but obeying the exhortation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He tells us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, and the saints have always done so. They believed in the reality of the glory that awaited them. They hoped to get there and their one desire was to enjoy it in all its perfection and in all its fullness. If we are anxious to "follow in their train" and to enjoy the same glory we had better listen to our Lord's exhortation, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

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TITHING YES!

John J. Mitchell

Tithing. An Old Testament law no longer binding, or a permanent obligation for God's people? Perhaps it is just that way of putting it that has led many Christians to reject the practice of tithing. Perhaps, too, simple covetousness—surely a most insistent temptation—has had its effect as well.

Still, many Christians do tithe and the blessings to follow can be rich indeed. That is not to say that each tither will automatically achieve material prosperity. If anything, there are more tithers with limited incomes than there are wealthy ones. The widow who gave her last penny is one biblical example.

The problem with talking about tithing is that too often we come at it from the wrong starting place. In the back of our minds the question is, how much of *what I have* must I give to the Lord? Sometimes that leads to the Pharisee who tithed even the produce of his herb garden (which Jesus did say he should have done!) while feeling free to ignore such things as justice and mercy. Or we hear some pious-sounding declaration that "Everything I have belongs to the Lord" even when the speaker seems to be living very well indeed off the Lord's property.

Actually, everything I have does belong to the Lord. He made it all and I am but a caretaker for a portion of it. And this was as true for the Israelite in the promised land as it is for me in today's world. Everything belongs to the Lord. The question is in determining how free I am to use the Lord's possessions.

And this brings us to where we should be when talking about tithing. The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. But our God means for us to use and enjoy his creation, to delight in the products of the earth and in the work of our own hands. Tithing, far from being a sort of Form 1040 we grudgingly fill out for God, is really the key that unlocks our full enjoyment of God's bounty.

Abraham's tithe

The first mention of tithing, or the giving of a tenth, is that of Abram to Melchizedek (Genesis 14). After Abram and his allies from Mamre had rescued Lot and the other

captives from Sodom and Gomorrah, together with all the loot, he was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem. This priest of the most high God blessed Abram and the God who had given him the victory. And then Abram "gave him tithes of all" that he had recovered.

As the writer of Hebrews says, "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils (Hebrews 7:4) This man who was not of the priesthood of Aaron "received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises" of God (verse 6).

If Abraham, the father of the faithful, readily gave a tenth of all he had gained to Melchizedek, how much more should we give tithes to our great high priest, Jesus Christ, "a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"?

To be sure, the tithes required of the Israelite to support the Levites and priests are not required for us. The law has indeed been changed because the priesthood has passed from Aaron to Christ (Hebrews 4:12). That does not change the basic principle of tithing; it only transfers it from the order of Aaron back to the order of Melchizedek. We are not Israelites with the tabernacle to maintain, but we are heirs of Abraham and our priest is Christ himself.

When Abram gave a tenth to Melchizedek, he was demonstrating the basic principle of the tithe. To give the Lord *a tenth* is to acknowledge that *everything* is truly the Lord's. Abram had gained the spoils and was fully entitled to keep them—and insisted that his allies get their fair share.

But when the king of Sodom suggested that Abram return the captives and keep all the loot, Abram refused. He was unwilling to let it even appear that anyone had made him rich but the Lord only. All that Abram had came from the Lord. And that was the way Abram wanted it.

Melchizedek himself had acknowledged that it was God who had given the victory. In giving a tithe, Abram was simply acknowledging openly the truth of what this priest of the most high God had said. To tithe is to say that all I have belongs to the Lord, even as keeping the Sabbath is to say that all my days are the Lord's.

Rejoicing in the tithe

Jacob too knew the principle of the tithe. As he journeyed out of the land of promise, he met the Lord at Bethel. The Lord spoke in the dream of the ladder: "Behold, I am with

thee, and will keep thee wherever thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land" (Genesis 28:15). And Jacob, acknowledging that it would be truly the Lord who gave him anything during his journey, vowed that "of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (verse 22).

The principle is clear. And later on the Lord simply exercised his rights by assigning the tithe to the Levites. But the Lord also made it clear that tithing for the Israelite was not supposed to be a burden to be resented.

The Israelite was supposed to set aside his tithe over a period of three years. Then he was to take it, or the money value of it if he lived a long distance away, and go to the house of God and turn it over to the priests and Levites. But that was not the end of it. He himself was to share in the joy of eating his own tithe. In fact, if he had exchanged his own produce for money, he could buy anything he wanted, "whatsoever thy soul lusteth after...and thou shalt eat there before the

If Abraham, the father of the faithful, readily gave a tenth of all he had gained to Melchizedek, how much more should we give tithes to our great high priest, Jesus Christ, "a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"?

Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household" (Deuteronomy 14:26).

He was to rejoice. He had given his tithe to the Lord. He rejoiced in knowing that the Levites, the Lord's particular servants, were provided for. He rejoiced in sharing the delight of the feasting itself. And he returned home, knowing that the remainder was the Lord's as well, but that the Lord had given it to him to enjoy.

It is as wrong to feel guilty about enjoying the good things of God's creation as it is to be covetous for those you have not been given by God. And the giving of a tithe, even sharing in it, is God's way of assuring us that the rest is truly ours to enjoy. The Lord asks one day in seven especially for himself; the other six days are the Lord's, but are given us to do our own work in. The Lord asks one part out of ten of all we have gained; the other nine tenths is the Lord's, but is his gift to us to enjoy and to live on.

A promised blessing

It is hard to see how those who deny the continuing principle of the tithe can find much of a lesson for themselves in Malachi 3:8-12. Which is sad, for there is a wonderful promise of blessing here.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be provision in my house, and prove me now with it, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that you will not have room enough to hold" (verse 10).

This is *not* a promise to individual tithers. It is a promise to "you," the people of God as a body. The Lord does not promise to make an individual wealthy; he promises to give more than enough to his faithful tithing people. The tithe itself, besides supporting the Levites and priests, was to supply the poor and needy among God's people. The prom-

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ise is of an abundance more than enough for the needs of all.

Nor is that all the blessing promised. The Lord also promises to protect his tithing people and to bless their fields and produce. So much is this so that the heathen shall see it and recognize the hand of God (verses 11, 12).

Figuring a tithe

It was easy enough in those days to compute a tithe. If you gained a hundred bushels of grain, ten bushels went to the Lord. If your flock increased by ten lambs, one lamb went to the Lord. But it was a tenth of the increase, a tenth of the net gain that was devoted to the Lord.

How do you translate bushels and lambs into our modern money economy? Is the base figure our gross income before taxes, or is it our "take-home pay" after all the deductions—or after only some deductions? What if I have unusual medical expenses? What about all the taxes I pay? (Samuel warned that a king would take a tenth of all

the produce and sheep; we pay three tenths or more!) And what about the person on a fixed retirement income? What with inflation, many cannot even afford decent food and housing.

There is simply no way to answer all these questions. Every individual will have to work it out before his Lord. But Paul does seem to provide a basic guide when he sought a contribution for relief of the saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Paul seems clearly to be assuming that his readers already know about regular proportionate giving—tithing, in other words. They are to do it—as an act of worship—on the first day of the week. They are to lay it up in store, even as the Israelite did for a three-year period. Then it will be ready when Paul comes as it was ready when the Israelite went up to Jerusalem.

But Paul does not require any fixed percentage. It is to be proportioned in accord with the degree of prosperity God has given. And that, it seems clear, does provide the freedom to keep tithing from being a sort of Christian pharisee practice. It is between the individual and his Lord to determine how well the Lord has provided and thus how much he should give to the Lord. Or, to put it another way, it is a matter for the individual and his Lord to determine just how much real increase there has been after all the costs of earning the income have been accounted for.

The tithe and you

To be sure, a tenth of gross income would be easy to figure and would certainly meet the Lord's minimal requirement. (We need to remember, however, that beyond the tithe the Israelite was required to give the firstfruits of his fields and herds, to make substantial sacrifices at the stated feasts, to take care of the poor around him, and was urged to make free will offerings besides!)

But it seems clear to this writer, after studying how the tithe worked, that our obligation is a tenth of our net income after deducting most of the business costs that IRS allows plus the cost of commuting which IRS does not allow. Since much of our excessive tax bill is used to relieve the poor and needy, I would even suppose that part of our taxes might be deducted also. (And the church in its proper concern for the poor in its own midst ought at least to provide them help in obtaining the various benefits our tax money provides, even after admitting that our failure to care for the poor in the past is

one reason we have such heavy taxes today.)

For the person on fixed income in this time of raging inflation, it is extra hard to be too dogmatic. Let him give as he is able, but he should feel no guilt if he cannot manage a full tithe—the Lord has not seen fit to prosper him as much as others. But if he simply cannot afford to give a tithe, let him take account of other assets he can use for the Lord. Most retired people have time, time to call on the sick, time to pray for others, time to give in a variety of services to the Lord. Let them use that time as part of their tithe to the Lord!

And in all that has been said so far about giving a tenth to the Lord, let no one suppose that a tenth is the maximum we should give. (Remember those Israelites and all the other offerings they made!) It is true that if God's people faithfully tithed, the storehouse would be full and the work of God's house would be more than adequately provisioned. But it is also true that those who have been blessed with more than an adequate living should give as God has prospered them—be that a tithe, a double tithe, or however much they can.

Hilarious giving

Back to the joy of tithing. There is real joy in faithful tithing, faithful giving of the increase God has provided. It is the joy of providing for the house of God and those who labor for us in it. It is the joy of God's assurance that we are to enjoy what our labor produces. It is the joy even of sharing in the tithe itself, of sharing in the blessings of the ministry and fellowship in God's house, of sharing in the delight of seeing God's kingdom enlarged.

"Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The word "cheerful" comes from a Greek word from which we get "hilarious." And though that may suggest a bit more abandon than Paul had in mind, it does point us to the joy there is in purposeful, planned giving to the Lord.

If Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek, and if Christ is our priest after the order of Melchizedek, should our hearts not respond in joy, in hilarity even, at the privilege of giving a tithe of our increase to our Lord, our Savior, and our great high priest?

The Rev. John J. Mitchell is General Secretary of the Committee on Stewardship in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

TITHING NO!

Jack J. Peterson

How does the Lord want us to support his work? With opportunities opening all around us for gospel witness, does the Word of God tell us how to support the outreach of the church? What does the Bible tell us about Christian stewardship, and more specifically, the financial support of the Lord's work?

One ready answer is that the Lord has commanded tithing for the church. Tithing is that approach to stewardship which says that one-tenth of our income belongs to the Lord, and is to be spent in his service.

The first mention of tithing in the legislation given by the Lord to Moses and Israel from Mount Sinai is recorded in Leviticus 27:30-33. The tithe is not specifically commanded in these verses. However, verse 34, which is the last verse of the book, summarizes the book of Leviticus by saying, "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai."

In Leviticus 27:30 we read, "...all the tithe of the land...is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord." The tithe was one-tenth of the produce of their farming plus one-tenth of the livestock, as belonging to the Lord. Provision is made for the produce for selling it, then adding one-fifth to the value for the tithe. The livestock was not to be sold ("redeemed", verse 33).

Numbers 18:21-32 contains a much fuller treatment of the tithe. The Lord explains the meaning of the "tithe...is the Lord's" and how that is to be implemented in the life of Israel by saying, "...and to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their services which they perform, the service of the tent of

meeting" (Numbers 18:21). The tithe is given to the Levites who were set aside to work in the tabernacle, and later in the temple (Numbers 18:1-20). Because of that work, the Levites had no inheritance; that is, no tillable land of their own. The tithe from the rest of Israel was to make up for that inheritance. In fact, the tithe is called their inheritance (verse 21). Further, the Levites were required to pay a tithe of the tithe that they received (verse 26).

Deuteronomy (12:5-19, 14:22-27) presents the tithe as a meal eaten at the sanctuary ("the place in which the Lord your God shall choose for his name to dwell," Deuteronomy 12:11). Verhoef calls this a "eucharistic meal" (Peter A. Verhoef: "Tithing—A Hermeneutical Consideration," in *The Law and The Prophets*, Edited by John H. Skilton: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. 1974, p. 116).

Though there are other details connected with the tithe in the law, these are the basic instructions. The tithe was part of the system of offerings of the law of Moses which the Israelites were obligated to give. This is underlined by the familiar passage in the third chapter of Malachi. The tenth verse of that chapter is often quoted to the New Testament church as though the words were written directly to us and to be obeyed as written, without even raising the question, "Does this command apply to the New Testament church, living after the work of Christ?"

"Bring all the tithe into the storehouse... says the Lord of Hosts"—to the storehouse, the treasure-house—that is, to the sanctuary, to the temple of the Lord. They had been robbing God. They had been holding back, even defrauding the Lord. And Israel asked (verse 8), "How have we robbed you?" And the Lord answers: "In tithes and offerings." They had robbed the Lord by withholding the full tithe and offering. And often today that is interpreted to mean the first tenth of the income plus any money over and above that as an offering to the Lord. But that is not the message of Malachi. The offerings referred to in Malachi 3:8 includes such cer-

emonial elements as the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the ram. The tithes and offerings, tied together in Malachi 3, are part and parcel of the ceremonial law.

The tithe of the Mosaic law, of the old covenant, is inextricably tied to the ceremonial legislation. It was given to support the Levites in their work in the sanctuary; it was given in the context of other offerings (cf. the Deuteronomy and Malachi passages); it was brought to the sanctuary (Deuteronomy).

*To return to the
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elements.*

The law and these offerings find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The sanctuary and its attendant offerings all pointed to the Savior. This is the message of the Epistle to the Hebrews. To return to the ceremonies and prescriptions of the old covenant is to return to weak and beggarly elements.

There are two examples of tithing that occurred before Sinai which must be examined. One occurs in Genesis 28:22. After the vision of the ladder or stairway to heaven, the vision of the Lord in which he reaffirms the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob, Jacob vows: "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I will return to my father's house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give a tenth to you" (Genesis 28:20-22).

The other example is in Genesis 14:20. Abraham, returning from the successful battle with certain kings, meets Melchizedek the king of Salem, who is also a priest of the Lord. Melchizedek blesses Abraham and

Abraham gives him a tithe of the spoils of war.

So the argument runs, if Abraham and Jacob tithed, then they must have received a commandment to do so. And then the argument would strongly resemble the argumentation for the Sabbath—that God had commanded the Sabbath before the law of Moses, that that command continues into the new covenant as a perpetual obligation.

The argument is reinforced by the passage in Hebrews 7:1-10. There the tithing of Abraham is mentioned. But a careful examination of that passage reveals that the author's point is not the contemporary requirement of paying a tithe, but the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek, because the Levites (who later received tithes) paid tithes to Melchizedek through their forefather Abraham.

Further, the fact that there are two occurrences of tithing before the giving of the law does not make tithing of perpetual obligation. We don't know if God commanded the tithe. That is an argument from silence. And even if there was a command, it certainly was not a creation ordinance like the Sabbath. There were other pre-law ordinances which have been done away with in Christ. One obvious example is the offering of sacrifices before the Exodus. And if there is a predisposition suggested by our study thus far, it would be to place the tithe in the same general category as the offering of sacrifices.

If a command for tithing for new covenant Christians is to be based on the example of Abraham and Jacob, it rests on questionable ground.

There is one other place in the New Testament where the tithe is mentioned. Jesus is denouncing the scribes and pharisees and says to them, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of (you tithe) your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You ought to have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23, parallel in Luke

11:42). Jesus here commends the scribes and pharisees for tithing—tithing even the small spices grown in their garden. And the mention of tithing the produce of the land certainly reminds us of the requirements of Leviticus 27. Certainly what Jesus commends is their scrupulous attention to the law of Moses.

On the other hand, the New Testament is full of references to giving of money and possessions. Its silence regarding a command to tithe is significant.

In the light of the above survey of the biblical data, it is not an overstatement to say that the tithe was part of the old covenant legal system and is not binding on believers under the new covenant.

What does the New Testament have to say about giving? How has the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, his death, resurrection and ascension affected this part of the worship of the child of God? What is the revelation of the new covenant to the new people of God, the church, regarding the finances, their material goods, their giving to support the work of the Lord?

The emphasis of the New Testament is that Jesus is Lord by virtue of his redeeming work, in a new and living way (Acts 2:32-36). The redeemed people of God owe him nothing less than everything. He gives to his people gifts to use in his service. Our task is to use everything we have to the glory of God.

Our sacrifice is to "offer yourselves as living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1). "Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:15-16).

And that means that *all* of our money belongs to the Lord. The rich young ruler was told to sell all he possessed. All of the money we have and make it dedicated to the Lord. It is *all* to be used for his glory. We are the stewards of the riches of God that he gives us. Great care must be exercised so that we may be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

That same attitude is taught in giving to the specific work of the Lord done by his church. In the liberty of the new covenant, no specific figure such as a tenth is given to the believer. Our giving is to be proportionate (1 Corinthians 16:2). What proportion we are not told. For some it may be ninety percent—I heard one man make that claim when I was a child. For Zaccheus it was half. For others less.

The attitude to this giving is underlined in the new covenant. A need arose among the saints in Jerusalem. Paul pleaded with his fellow Christians to give help. And in his plea for the diaconal offering for the saints in Jerusalem he lay down his theology of giving for the new covenant Christian. That instruction is found in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

He says that the Macedonians gave "out of the most severe trial," with "overflowing joy," and "their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Corinthians 8:2). They gave "beyond their ability" (verse 3). "They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints" (verse 4).

*All of the money we have
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The key to their giving was that "they gave themselves first to the Lord" (verse 5). And then the apostle says, "see that you excel in this grace of giving" (verse 7).

The *how* of giving is found in chapter 9, verse 7: "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." And if their faith was low he adds, "God is able to make all grace abound to you."

Paul writes in a similar way in Philippians 4:14-19. There the gifts are financial support to him in his work. He was in need (verse 16) and the Philippian church generously gave more than once (verse 16). He says, "...the gifts you sent...are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (verse 18), and then responds, "My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (verse 19).

Church of Christ, that's how our Lord wants you to give.

The Rev. Jack J. Peterson is pastor of Bethel Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Carson, North Dakota.

Great is His Faithfulness

John O. Kinnaird

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." How precious to every Christian is this promise of our gracious Lord. From time to time it has come to this writer's attention that the Spirit of the Lord often moves in unexpected ways his wonders to perform.

The founding fathers of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were men of great courage and faith. They moved, without thought of the cost to themselves, to sever themselves from position, friends, and income and went forth to establish a renewed testimony to the redeeming work of the Lord. This they did gladly, seeking only the glory of God and the good of his people. For many years these men labored long and hard, receiving only such small salaries as God's people were able to provide. Most of the congregations had lost their church buildings and manses in the separation from the old church. Now in the lean years following the great depression, the people of God were called upon for great sacrifices to re-provide places of worship and ministerial housing. There was not much money left for salaries. Many pastors lived in "upper rooms"—small apartments, built onto the back of the church. Few of these men were able to lay much aside for rainy days or for retirement.

Now, 40 some years later, these men are going into retirement. The church has been greatly concerned to find means for providing for their housing and other needs. An Aged and Infirm Ministers Fund was established years ago operating on a very limited budget. A pension plan has been developed to provide a small monthly retirement income. More recently a Founder's Day offering was collected and used to augment the pension fund. This year at the General Assembly a report was presented which outlined the many ways in which various congregations have proceeded to provide housing for their ministers. This report will be published in the minutes of the 45th General Assembly and is highly commended for study by the sessions. Most of these plans were designed to help ministers who are currently still employed in the Lord's service to prepare for their retirement needs. Some few met the needs of the already retired.

One very interesting report was heard, illustrative of God's faithfulness to his ser-

vants. A particular congregation was led to provide its retired pastor a lifetime pension income that amounts to approximately \$10.00 per month for each year that the pastor had served the congregation. It having been one of the longer pastorates, the total monthly income will be adequate to rent a modest retirement apartment or to meet other needs of the pastor.

The session of the church, after having received the permission of the congregation, consulted a lawyer and then proceeded to set up the pension plan according to his advice. The lawyer advised that a church can determine to provide a pension to its pastor at any time during his active ministry or during his retirement. The pension can even be awarded after his death payable to his dependents and beneficiaries. However, he advised against providing funds either as a "gift" or as "compensation for past services." Upon receipt of his advice the session determined to recommend to the congregation that the church corporation should enter into a legally binding commitment to provide a lifetime monthly pension to the pastor (who had previously retired) and, upon his death, a somewhat reduced monthly pension to his wife. The pension funds were budgeted to come out of the general fund (as opposed to the deacons' fund) so that they would come off the "top of the barrel" just as all other current liabilities. Further provision was made for the pension to begin retroactively on a certain date and for annual review for possible increase (but not decrease) due to inflation or other factors. The lawyer was then commissioned, upon approval of the congregation and the corporation, to draw up a legally binding letter of commitment advising the retired pastor of the provision, plus advice pertaining to the tax exempt status of the pension.

The genius of the plan of this particular congregation is that such a pension can be established based on the years of service by the pastor in a particular congregation. This would permit each congregation, according to its capabilities and to the years of service, to award a small pension to a previous pastor upon the pastor's entering retirement. The cumulative effect, if such a plan were developed by several or all of the congregations served by the pastor in the course of his ministry, would be to provide the retired pastor with a significant pension while at the same time not laying a heavy burden on any one congregation. The fact that pastors typically move from congregation to congregation in the course of their ministry works to both spread the burden among the congregations, and, within particular congregations, to keep the burden small and more or less levelled over a long period of time. To see how this would work out for a particular congregation, a session might make a list

of all previous pastors together with their years of service in the congregation, the expected year of their retirement (say at age 65), and the expected length of payment from an annuity viewpoint (life expectancy for a man of his current age less expected retirement age). The amount of the monthly payment can be estimated based on the congregation's ability to pay and the perceived need of the former pastor. Thus for each previous pastor the monthly payments and the period of time over which the payments would be made could be estimated.

The Lord is greatly to be praised for the many bold and imaginative plans being used in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to solve the problem of housing for our ministers. We call the attention of the sessions to the summary of these plans contained in the report of the Committee on Housing for Retired Ministers published in the minutes of the 45th General Assembly and trust that it will inspire many of us to seek out new and novel solutions to suit the needs of each congregation and pastor.

The Lord is greatly to be praised, for indeed he is a good shepherd and his servants need not want.

The Rev. John O. Kinnaird is Chairman of the Committee on Housing for Retired Ministers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Bible Lands Tour

How would you like to leave Chicago with a group of fellow Christians on Christmas Day afternoon for a trip to Israel and Greece? Such a ten day tour is being planned by the Rev. Carl J. Reitsma, teacher of Bible at Timothy Christian High School. Besides being an exciting and relaxing vacation, visiting sites of the Bible helps to understand history in a new way and the Bible in a new light. While most of our time will be spent in Israel we will have two days in Athens and Corinth. Return date: Wednesday, Jan 3. First class hotels and all meals are included in the price of \$1199 from Chicago. For itinerary and complete information phone (312) 620-5657 or write the Rev. Carl J. Reitsma, 714 E. Emerson, Lombard, ILL. 60148.

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Christian Education

Philip Keller

"And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." (Deut. 6:6, 7) "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4)

The education of children is the responsibility of their parents, and Christian education is the responsibility of Christian parents. Parental knowledge is limited and their time is taken up with other tasks, so that the actual educating is most often done by others outside the home. Nevertheless, education is initially the job of the parent, not the church, nor the state, nor the school, and God holds the parent responsible for it.

But for what does God hold Christian parents responsible in the teaching and rearing of their children? The nurture, admonition, and commandments of the Lord are all found in the Word of God and nowhere else. The Bible then should be taught diligently to children of Christians in order to fulfill this responsibility. But there is more to education than just learning the Bible, isn't there? Yes, all that we see around us has been created and is sustained by God, and we are commanded to subdue and have dominion over all of it. There is also much to learn about our society in order to live and work. We learn math, science, history, language, and the list can go on. One might suggest that in education we learn all that is necessary and add the Bible on as another subject. In that way one might say, we can complete the education of our children.

That would be a good and proper thing to do but true Christian education doesn't end there. Let's not forget the unique position of the Bible. As the Word of God it is above all books of men. It's authority is complete and final and it's principles cover all areas and aspects of our lives. "Thy word is truth" says Christ and if this is so we must know it, understand it, believe it, obey it, and cause it to become a part of our very selves. There is much more to be learned besides the Bible, but the Bible is above all else and must be made to apply to all else.

Let's remember also that there would be no need for the Bible if mankind had not fallen in sin. No need for the plan of salvation recorded and taught throughout it's pages for there would be nothing to be saved from —no need for the law of God expounding the fine points of God's holy standards because we would each meet all of them perfectly, loving God first and each other as

ourselves. No need for any written revelation of God because the light of nature would be sufficient and the fellowship in the garden would never have been lost. But man did fall and is now dead in his sins until the Holy Spirit through the same Word of God makes him alive when he creates saving faith in Christ and in his work on the cross and when he gives man a new nature which loves and obeys the law of God. Yet even then man still has his old nature until the day he dies.

So then man being sinful, whether Christian or non-Christian, cannot always be trusted to give us truth, and we cannot trust ourselves to find it. The corrupting influence of sin on man's academic pursuit can be seen in such characteristics as its glorifying of man, its humanistic morality and situation ethics, it sexually permissive and animalistic literature, and of course, in the grand theory of evolution in which man considers himself and the world around him as a freak of chance. In everything, the natural man puts God out of his mind and puts himself or anything he can in God's place.

In true Christian education the Bible is not just another subject to be treated as if equal in value to such subjects as literature, government, or psychology. It is the final test of truth. Where man's book is not in harmony with God's book, man's book must be rejected. How then should we treat our subjects? Paul, the Apostle writes in II Corinthians 10 about "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Every philosophy and reasoning of men therefore must be evaluated in the light of Scripture and where they are found wanting they must be "cast down." This of course, first requires a very thorough knowledge of the Bible. Christian education is, first of all, education in the Bible, God's Word, and in all that it teaches. Secondly, it is education in all that we want and need to know of the world around us with a biblical foundation and center. This then is true Christian education, and its importance should be obvious.

"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." (Prov. 21:16). Without the light of God's work man only has the influence of the world, that sinful world of which he was born a part and which God tells us is dead.

The above was originally prepared as a special feature on the occasion of the baccalaureate service of the class of '78 of the Modesto Christian School, Modesto, CA, June 4, 1978. Philip Keller is a grandson of the Rev. Russell D. Piper, pastor of Mission Valley Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Ronan, Montana.

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Tax Support for Christian Schools— Could it Become a Reality?

Andrew Wilholm

How can Christian schools secure adequate financing? In many settings, this question seems to have no satisfactory answer. Many, if not most, Christian schools exist in a state of constant financial crisis. Teachers' benefits can be rated on a scale ranging from non-existent to very poor, equipment is frequently outmoded and inadequate, and supplies must be dispensed with a frugality which is scarcely paralleled in our affluent society. Recently, however, our federal government has been considering the idea of tuition tax credits for Christian colleges.

It is not surprising that some people would vehemently oppose government aid of any type being assigned to non-public schools. A letter printed recently in a local newspaper was one of vigorous opposition to federal aid in any form to private schools. And, in fact, this opposition is the main reason for this letter.

Careful consideration of the letter led to my making reply by way of a letter of response to the newspaper which carried the original letter. It was printed. We praise the Lord for this. In addition, our study of this letter led us to conclude that it contained many if not all of the basic types of opposition which we may expect, should the passage of this bill into law become likely. For this reason, we offer a brief analysis of the three types of argument against tuition tax credits (or any other type of government aid to private schools) which this letter presented.

1. Scare Tactics.

"The tax credit plan would wreck our public schools...divide our children along religious, class and other lines...is being promoted largely by sectarian special interests and politicians seeking sectarian bloc votes...would entangle religion and government and poison the political waters with sectarianism...would undermine our basic values and democratic institutions."

By way of reply, we need only point to the long history of private schools, including sectarian schools, and note that throughout their long and distinguished existence in our

nation up to this time, they have produced none of the problems mentioned. Further, in some situations in our country, the burden carried by public schools has been significantly lightened by reduced enrollment due to the presence of private schools. In some places, the added burden of students currently using private schools could impose an unbearable load upon already overloaded and problem-ridden public schools, should they have to absorb these students.

2. Pseudo-Scholarship.

"In the opinion of most experts...most Americans oppose...we Virginians do not favor..."

A careful look at these broad generalizations, totally unsupported by facts, is adequate to show that they are mere opinions, the actual factuality of which needs to be demonstrated. Further, we must be aware of the danger of equating what is either right or true with the opinion of the majority. This is the way to the loss of rights by minorities as well as to the substitution of majority opinion for divine revelation as the standard of truth. The danger of assuming that truth is defined by majority opinion has been well stated by Francis Schaeffer:

"Let us remember that on the basis of the absoluteness of the 51-percent vote, Hitler was perfectly entitled to do as he wished if he had the popular support. On this basis, law and morals become a matter of averages. And on this basis, if the majority vote supported it, it would become 'right' to kill the old, the incurably ill, the insane and other groups could be declared non-persons. No voice could be raised against it."¹

3. Basic Misunderstanding of the American System.

The writer of the letter assumes that sectarianism is antithetical to our democratic institutions and basic values. This is utterly incorrect. One of the basic rights and benefits of our American political system is that it grants full freedom to all Americans to be sectarian. The right of sectarian schools is but one application of this general principle which is foundational to the American way of life. On the contrary, it is totalitarianism that restricts the right to be sectarian. Here is the real "poison" of which every American ought to be wary.

Anja Mackie was born and raised in Finland and came to the U.S. in 1976 bringing her two children to join her husband. She recently wrote:

"We've seen countries where Communism takes control and how they work to take over a country eventually. One of their first methods or one of the first things they do is to do away with private schools... When Communism takes control the desires of the individual are condemned."²

Regarding the specific issue of tuition tax credits, I firmly believe that far from being dangerous to "our basic values and democratic institutions," they are a mandatory application of one of our basic American democratic principles. The current system of financing schools in our nation which denies support to sectarian schools actually penalizes Americans for exercising one of their most basic rights.

¹Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1976), p. 223.

²Anja Mackie, "Basic Freedom-Private Schools" (*Echoes from the Hills*, June, 1978; Annville Institute, Annville, KY.)

The Rev. Andrew Wilholm, is pastor of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church Lynchburg, VA.

DORDT COLLEGE STAFF OPENINGS 1979-1980

Dordt College, a private four-year college owned and operated by members of the Christian Reformed denomination, will have an opening in the BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT. Academically qualified individuals who are committed to the Reformed-Calvinistic-biblical theology and educational philosophy are invited to send inquiries to:

DR. DOUGLAS RIBBENS
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa 51250
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DORDT COLLEGE STAFF OPENINGS 1979-1980

Dordt College, a private four-year college owned and operated by members of the Christian Reformed denomination, will have openings in each of the following areas:

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
ECONOMICS
BUSINESS EDUCATION

Academically qualified individuals who are committed to the Reformed-Calvinistic-biblical theology and educational philosophy are invited to send inquiries to:

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News & Views

Christian Businessman Resigns Over Gambling

The president of Holiday Inns of America, Inc. which controls a network of 1,715 hotel-motels, steamships, and a major bus company, resigned his position as a protest against his firm's decision to join with L & N Walker Co. of Beverly Hills to put up a \$55 million casino in Atlantic City. This remarkable story appeared in the "religion" section of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* recently.

Mr. Lem. M. Clymer, 55, is taking early retirement and will be giving up a salary of \$162,845. He said through a company spokesman in Memphis: "It is my overriding regard and respect for my Lord Jesus Christ which has led me to this decision...It (the decision) has been discovered through prayer and study of his Word over many months."

In a day of increasing disregard for God's law it is gratifying to find those in high places still willing to take a stand for the Word of God.

Reformed Faith and Action Conference

The *RES News Exchange*, of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, reported recently on the meeting of the International Association for Reformed Faith and Action (IARFA) on the campus of Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 21-23. This was the first conference sponsored by the IARFA in North America after twenty-five years of existence. The theme of the conference was "God's People as Ferment", taken from Matthew 13:11 and Luke 13:21. Eight speakers from Asia, Europe, and America developed the biblical concept of God's people as the yeast that permeates the world. Dr. W. Stanford Reid, Professor of History at Guelph University in Ontario, Canada, was the theme speaker and Dr. P.E. Hughes, Visiting Professor of New Testament at Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa., was the expositor.

The IARFA is described as "a non-ecclesiastical, non-academic association of Christian people...deeply committed to spreading the Reformed faith and translating this world vision into action." It does this by means of translation work, literature distribution, lecture tours, and publication of the *International Reformed Bulletin*.

Chaplains Commission: Example of Unity

Thursday morning, September 21, 1978, saw the first and significant meeting of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel on the campus of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Approved by the national assemblies of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod in June in Grand Rapids, the inaugural meeting of the commission was chaired by the Rev. William B. Leonard, Jr., long time head of the RPCES commission on chaplains until former Army Chaplain, Col (Ret) John M. MacGregor, now serving as Chaplain of Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, TN was elected chairman, with Leonard being elected Executive Secretary and responsible for most of the active work of the commission. Col. Thomas G. Birr, United States Air Force, and a ruling elder in the First Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Valparaiso, Florida, will serve as vice chairman. Present officers will serve for one year until the new commission is officially recognized by the Armed Forces Chaplains Board in Washington, D.C. as the official endorsing agency for the three Presbyterian denominations. Qualifications for acceptance were met when it was reported that the total number of communicant members exceeded the 100,000 minimum now required for an endorsing agency. It is expected that approval will be granted following the meeting of the Endorsing Agents in Washington in mid-October. Col (Ret) John M. MacGregor will be officially representing the RPCES at that meeting, and unofficially the new commission. Leonard plans to represent the commission in the March 1979 meeting.

As elected by their respective assemblies last June, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is represented on the Commission by Dr. Elmer Dortzbach, of Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, and the Rev. Dennis J. Prutow, pastor in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Chaplain (Col) John W. Betzold, USA (Ret) was elected by the OPC, but was called to a higher ministry when the Lord called him home in September before the commission could meet. The PCA is represented by Lt. Col. K. Clements, Chaplain, U.S. Navy, now stationed in Pensacola, Florida, the Rev. James Pakala of Biblical School of Theology in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, and Col. Birr. The RPCES, in addition to Leonard and MacGregor, is represented by Navy Captain Robert A. Bonner, retired chaplain, of Seattle, Washington. Lt. Don Clements will chair a very important committee now drafting the by-laws.

The commission is concerned not only with the procurement, endorsement and care for military chaplains and personnel but for other chaplains as well, including the Veterans Administration, Industrial, Hospital, Prison and School chaplains. At the present time the commission represents one active duty OPC chaplain, eight PCA and 11 RPCES, plus additional reserve chaplains. In order to properly fulfill its responsibilities to the Lord and to our combined communions, the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel will be expecting the following: First—your prayer support for the commission and the personnel it represents; Second—names, current addresses (with zip codes), phone numbers of (a) all active duty, reserve, Civil Air Patrol, and retired chaplains, plus VA, Hospital, Industrial, Prison chaplains, (b) names of men and women currently on active duty in the Armed Forces and stationed away from their home churches; and Third—your regular financial support by giving to the commission. A receipt for tax purposes will be sent for all gifts mailed to:

The Rev. W.B. Leonard Jr.
Executive Secretary
Presbyterian and Reformed Commission
on Chaplains and Military Personnel
360-G West Rockrimmon Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO. 80919
Phone: (303) 599-9795 or
(303) 574-6700

Evangelicals Protest Carter's Appointment of Pro-Abortionist

Washington, D.C.—Leading evangelicals have registered their protest against President Carter's appointment of pro-abortionist Sarah R. Weddington as special assistant to the President in the area of minority and women's rights. The protest was lodged in a letter to President Carter dated September 7, 1978.

Jean Garten—President of Lutherans for Life, Robert Holbrook—National Coordinator of Baptists for Life, James M. Boice—Pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Harold O.J. Brown—Chairman of the Christian Action Council, and Curtis J. Young—Executive Director of the Christian Action Council, together urged the President to reconsider his appointment of Weddington in light of his own stated moral opposition to abortion.

Weddington, past president of the National Abortion Rights Action League and one of the private attorneys in the *Roe v. Wade* case before the Supreme Court in 1973 (which directly led to the Court's "abortion on demand" decision), has clearly distinguished herself as opposing the President's official position on abortion.

News & Views

Reformed Conference Considers Economic Justice

The Second International Conference of Institutions for Christian Higher Education was held on the campus of Calvin College, Grant Rapids, Michigan, August 13-19. More than 120 registered participants and representatives from more than 60 institutions in 17 countries were in attendance. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Klaas Runia of Kampen, the Netherlands, the conference addressed itself to the theme of "The Responsibility of Christian Institutions of Higher Education to Justice in the International Economic Order." An earlier conference was held in Potchefstroom, South Africa, in September, 1975.

The entire set of 25 cassettes from the conference may be ordered (for about \$80.00) from Thomas Media, Stahlstown, Pa. 15687.

Extension for Missionaries in Mexico

On petition from the Chiapas Presbytery, the General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico decided to extend till 1986 the deadline for foreign missionaries to leave the country. In 1972, the church's centenary year, it was decided to ask missionaries to leave by 1980.

Installation at Cerritos Valley

The Rev. Dr. Dominic A. Aquila was installed as pastor of Cerritos Valley Orthodox Presbyterian Church on Sunday, September 17, 1978. The service of installation which began at 3:30 p.m. was conducted on behalf of the Presbytery of Southern California by a commission of the presbytery. The Rev. George Miladin, pastor of the Point Loma congregation, preached the sermon and Mr. John Atwell, moderator of the Southern California presbytery and ruling elder of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Carson, gave the recitation of the presbytery's proceedings leading up to Dr. Aquila's call.

Dr. Aquila is a graduate of Belhaven College and Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi. He holds the Doctor of Ministry degree from Westminster Seminary. He came to Cerritos Valley from the Stony Point Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCES) in Richmond, Virginia. He is married with two children.

Children's Book Contest

To launch a new children's book imprint, Chariot Books, David C. Cook Publishing Co. is offering \$2000 for the best original book manuscript for children.

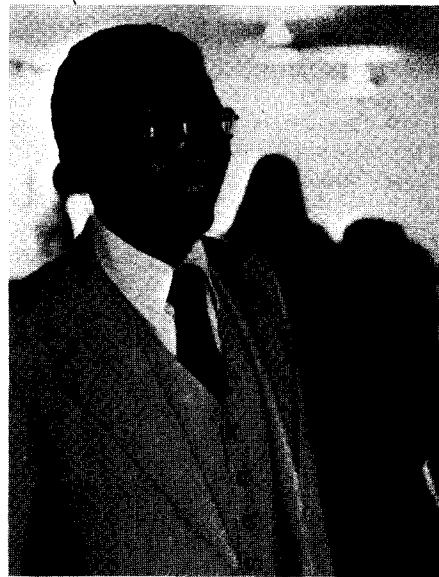
The manuscript—fiction or non-fiction—must be distinctly Christian and written for young people between ages nine and fourteen. The length should be from 23,000 to 33,000 words. Manuscripts are due anytime before June 1, 1979.

Janet Thomas, David C. Cook children's book editor, said, "In fiction, we're looking for an entertaining story with a theme that conveys some truth about the Christian faith. It's important that the context of the story be within the framework of a young person's environment, not artificial, and that the story portray someone attempting to integrate Christian faith into day-by-day life."

"In non-fiction, we want stories of outstanding Christians, written for this age group. Here, too, we want to see people trying to make Christianity a part of their daily lives. We want to see spiritual struggle and growth."

The winner of the contest, to be announced in July, 1979, will receive standard royalties, plus the \$2000 prize.

Manuscripts and queries can be sent to: The Book Editors, David C. Cook Publishing Co., 850 N. Grove Ave., Elgin IL 60120.



Dr. Dominic Aquila, Pastor, Cerritos Valley OPC
Artesia, CA

Book Review

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

By Ferrell Jenkins. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976 (paperback reprint of 1972 hardcover edition), 151 pages, \$3.95. Reviewed by James R. Payton, Jr., pastor, Community Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Blue Bell, PA.

The mention of a book on John's *Revelation* by a Bible teacher at a small southern Christian college would normally conjure up rightly reprehensible images of numerous charts and fantastic drawings of horrible beasts ready to devour those unwilling to pore over the author's authoritative insights. All of those things are exactly what one will *not* find in this book. Rather than an exposition of dispensationalism at the expense of a careful examination of *Revelation*, one has here a worthwhile study of the symbols which are originally found in the Old Testament. As such it makes for very profitable reading and study.

In six chapters the author treats of *Revelation's* Old Testament background, of its place in the genre of apocalyptic literature, of the seven Old Testament books most frequently used, of the description of Christ in chapter one, of the Old Testament titles for Deity used in *Revelation*, and of the Old Testament imagery which appears. While all of the chapters are helpful, those on Christ as described in *Revelation 1* and on the titles of Deity are certainly the most stimulating. Very thought-provoking as they are, they would serve admirably for careful group Bible study or as stimulation for a series of sermons on the picture of Christ in this final word to the church from him who as the Prophet (Dt. 18:15) brought God's final word to us in these last days (Heb. 1:2).

When I first received the book, I was apprehensive about it and thought reading it would be a waste of time. It turned out to be a valuable investment of time. It is a book you will continue to refer to as you think of *Revelation*, if you take the time to read it. Such books on that most mysterious of all New Testament books are indeed rare: a word to the wise is sufficient.

COVER PICTURE: "An Old Woman" by
Nicholas Maer (1634-1693)

HOW TO READ SLOWLY: A CHRISTIAN GUIDE TO READING WITH THE MIND

by James W. Sire. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1978. 191 pp., \$3.95. Reviewed by Allen D. Curry, Director of Educational Services for Great Commissions Publications, Philadelphia, PA.

In our day when everyone wants to do everything quickly it is refreshing to find someone who encourages us to slow down. James Sire enjoys reading; in fact he enjoys it so much he tries to savor the words he finds on the pages. In his book *How to Read Slowly*, Sire tries to help Christians read books in such a way that the "world of the author becomes obvious". He gives helpful approaches to reading nonfiction, poetry and fiction and includes suggestions on finding the time to read. The book is filled with good advice for the reader of the budding reader.

In some ways this is a textbook on how to go about the enterprise of reading. Sire has exercises for the reader to do that will help him grasp the point the author is trying to accomplish. Some of the exercises may seem a bit tedious to those who read a great deal; but someone who struggles with poetry will find the exercises helpful.

Sire illustrates his points well from a varied background in literature. It is obvious from beginning to end of the book that Sire enjoys reading with his mind. As he deals with the works of other authors his appreciation for the craft of writing is obvious. He is the kind of reader that authors want to read their books.

Sire wrote this book to try to answer the question of how to discover the way an author views the world. He did not always stick to his purpose. It is my judgment that some of Sire's diversions make the book better. He states that one of the other reasons for writing the book is that "learning to read well is a step toward loving God with your mind." (12) He is right about that and does an admirable job in proving his case.

How to Read Slowly will be of interest to anyone interested in reading. Those who already read a great deal no doubt are aware of most of the things Sire puts forth. They will enjoy the book because it is written in such a way that makes it rewarding to read slowly. Students who are struggling with how to go about the task of reading for an understanding of what the author wants to convey will find this book to be a handy guide. Parents and teachers who have occasion to discuss reading with students will also find the book helpful. Finally those who want to read with better comprehension regardless of their age will find many helpful hints to achieving their goal. *How to Read Slowly* can be profitable to anyone who will read it slowly.

Praise the Lord

A Meditation on Psalm 103

Calvin A. Busch

Perhaps more often than we Reformed people are used to doing it, we should unashamedly sound forth a "Hallelujah." With unblushing faces we should shout out the blessings of our God. Whatever the deep feeling that each of us may cherish within our souls let us realize anew that the redeemed are to say so. Christian faith is not designed to be a silent and hidden treasure. It is a jewel to be displayed for the glory of God. Our good works are to be done before men and our light is to shine, not for men's praise, but to praise the Lord. He is the Master-workman who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Psalm 103 is part of inspired Scripture which elicits from us the note of hilarious praise.

There are no neutral sections within the anatomy of the soul where God's praise is absent. All that is within me: my mind, my emotions and will, and whatever faculties are lodged within by God's creative handiwork, are to burst forth in blessing to our God. We know by faith that God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his attributes. This is sufficient ground for us to express praise, but when we recount the benefits God has bestowed is there not a bubbling up of adoration and thanksgiving which nothing should restrain? When we pause to think of sins forgiven and at last all diseases healed; when we ponder the rescue from destruction and the crowning of lovingkindness and tender mercies; when we remember with satisfaction the discovered good things and the renewal of strength as the eagle gathers in it's mountainous flight, how can we resist joining David with "Bless the Lord, O my soul"?

It is the Lord who in the execution of righteousness justifies us by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to our account. Yes, let my soul burst forth in joyful

lays in the contemplation of sovereign grace. In a world gone mad in its sin and misery, ever ripe for the judgment of God, let us be glad that God takes note of the oppressed who cry day and night for his response. In a world suffocating in its reliance on its own ability to fathom the secrets of life we treasure the revelation God has given to Moses. We shall measure our song by the law and testimonies and grasp all of Scripture which unfolds the meaning and implications of what God revealed to Moses. Let us be deeply moved to Spirit-led utterance when we see the redeeming acts of God. It is impossible for us to remain quiet in the light of sins forgiven and wrath diverted from us to his beloved Son. This is not just a momentary pardon, but a separation from our sins that eternity can never bridge.

When we think of God's fatherly kindness and pity towards his children; when we are aware of the lifting of the curse that fell upon Adam and his posterity so that the dust has but a momentary apparent victory, we wait with exhilaration the final victory when Christ returns to call his own from their respective dust. And then we shall bless the Lord for his everlasting mercy in the atmosphere that will be free from the groans and sighs which mark our wilderness journey. The covenant keepers will be resplendent and angel voices will join the harmonious anthems of victory and blessing. At last the new world of created things will clap its hands and shake with joy as the reverberations of the saints' triumphant songs ripple everywhere.

Yes, bless the Lord, O my soul—even now!

The Rev. Calvin A. Busch is pastor emeritus of Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Whippany, N.J.

Mr. A. Kenneth Austin
Attn. L. Box 350
Lookout Mountain, TN 37088

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Praise him anyway

Terrific, the top of the juicer flew out of my hands, separated into its parts and deposited pulp, juice and slippery seeds all over the kitchen floor—a unique arrangement of grapefruit sections. I marvel at the now complete destruction of a floor that has been bombed with a splattered bottle of worchestershire sauce, a falling bowl of spaghetti, a dripping overflow of a too full milk glass and a shower of grapefruit in less than four days—a new record. The full mop-up job I had wanted to save for a couple of weeks until moving day is now unavoidable.

The message from a little plaque I'd once seen in a Christian book store flashed through my mind, "Praise Him Anyway". Am I really to praise God for an unwanted household job caused by my own butterfingers and two normal sloppy kids? Should I praise God for the unpleasant things that happen in my life? Do I praise God for floods or tornados or automobile accidents?

The answers are in God's Word. The people of God are to praise him for who he is, the mighty, holy Creator of the universe. The people of God are to praise him for what he does, his constant care, his faithfulness in times past. The people of God are to praise him for his promises, that nothing can separate us from his love, that we have a home in heaven, that he known all our needs and meets them for our good and his glory.

So that's it! The unchanging God is praiseworthy all the time. Our praises are not to be tied to our perception of our circumstances, but centered on the Eternal Lord of all life whom we will honor forever.

I can praise God in the midst of any trouble because he is there, he understands, he remains in charge through the highs and the lows. He uses everything in our lives for his glory. What a privilege to be a child of the God who converts even life's littlest experiences into a reminder of our need to praise him continually, simply because he is God.

Now, I wonder where I left the Mr. Clean?

Stelle Snyder

