

The Southern
PRESBYTERIAN
Journal

VOL. XVIII NO. 22

SEPTEMBER 30, 1959

\$3.00 A YEAR

A Personal Word

With this issue of The Southern Presbyterian Journal we will complete our work as Editor. In May of 1942 we were asked by Dr. L. Nelson Bell and others associated with him in this new venture, to become Business Manager and Editor. Feeling that we were very poorly qualified we agreed to take over the responsibility until a suitable Editor could be secured. The "temporary position" stretched out to over seventeen years. We praise God for His great blessings upon the Journal's ministry and for the many friends who have helped at all times and in so many ways. We will continue to serve as Managing Editor and Business Manager and will help with this work in every possible way.

We pray for God's rich blessings upon Dr. G. Aiken Taylor as he now takes over.

H.B.D.

come quickly," John, representing the whole church of all ages, gives joyful assent, saying: "Amen: Come, Lord Jesus." This is an Amen to the most tremendous event that lies on the horizon of the future for the church and the world — the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts in these dark days with the same eager longing for the speedy coming of the Lord Jesus. "Amen: Come, Lord Jesus."

V. It is used as a designation of Christ in Revelation 3:14 in His address to the self-deceived and over-confident Laodicean Church: "These things saith THE AMEN, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." This is the most significant use of the word in the Bible, and the only time that it is so used. Note that it is so used by Christ Himself. The word Amen occurs throughout the Bible, but only here is it used as a proper name. Here Christ is represented as the personalized divine AMEN, the guarantor in person of the truth declared by Himself. All that He says is absolutely true, because He is Himself the eternal Truth of God incarnate, THE AMEN. In Isaiah 65:16, according to the margin of the Revised Version, God is called "God the Amen." So here is another divine title appropriated by Christ to Himself. This title describes God as the One who is utterly reliable, who accomplishes all His purposes and all His promises. As such He is THE AMEN, and calls forth from the human heart the deep responsive AMEN of faith. The Lord Jesus Christ is this "God the Amen." "For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us" (II Cor. 1:20).

What a flood of illumination this title of Christ as THE AMEN sheds upon the use of Amen by our

Lord in the Gospel! In the Synoptic Gospels He constantly introduces some unusually important teaching or statement of truth by "Verily"; and in John's Gospel uses the repeated "Verily, Verily." In the original these verities are Amen. "Amen, I say unto you . . ." "Amen, Amen, I say unto you . . ." It is most fitting that He who is THE AMEN, in His solemn proclamation of God's eternal truth to men, should be constantly saying: Amen, Amen. Blessed is he who in faith can say Amen to all the Amens of Him who is THE AMEN. To Amen the Amens of THE AMEN is to have eternal life.

At the end of the benediction in the last verse of the Revelation occurs the last Amen of the whole Word of God. "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all saints. Amen." This benediction differs from all the others in that it alone uses the word "saints," and so is worthy of special note. "The saints, the men of consecrated lives, are, in the Apocalypist's view, the men for whom the whole course of human history is being carried to its end; who are destined as a body to survive the wreck of cities and empires, and in the end to dominate a new world. But the grace of the Lord Jesus is the only source of their strength, and the guarantee of their triumph; and the last words of the Apocalypse are at once a reminder of this primary condition of success, and a prayer that it may be realized in the experience of believers, both in the cities of Asia, and throughout the world." Then the apostle adds the last Amen of the Bible. What a wonderful volume this last great Amen brings to a close! From "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), God's revelation has majestically moved forward to this final Amen. God gives each one of us the grace and faith to say Amen to the whole Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. Amen.

The Christian's Three-Fold Cord

By Rev. Oswald T. Allis, Ph.D., D.D.

The obvious fact that in union there is strength has been expressed in many different ways. Students of American history will recall the words said to have been uttered at the signing of the Declaration of Independence; "We must indeed all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." They were timely words. For then division meant destruction, the loss of a great cause. The saying has proved true again and again in the political sphere. It is no less true in the religious. We read in Scripture that "A three-fold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccles. 4:12). The Christian has a great cause, a great creed, a great heritage. It is strong because it is three-fold. Let us look at the three strands which constitute its strength.

I. *The Incarnate Word.* When John the Baptist sought to make perfectly clear the difference between himself and the One of whom he was the forerunner, he said: "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly and speak-

eth of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard that he testifieth." With these words John divided all who have ever lived on earth into two classes, the heaven-born and the earth-born; and he placed the Christ whom it was his mission to proclaim in the one class and all mankind, himself included, in the other. A tremendous claim! What is the warrant for it? What does the Bible tell us about Jesus Christ?

1. *His Coming was the fulfillment of Ancient Prophecy.* He did not come unannounced. Many times the Old Testament speaks of His coming. He is the seed of the woman which shall bruise the serpent's head. He is the seed of Abraham in which all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. He is the prophet like unto Moses to whom the people are to hearken. He is the servant of the Lord of whom Isaiah foretold, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He is the king in whom all the sure promises to David are to have their fulfillment.

He is Immanuel, the mighty God of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

2. *He was born of a Virgin.* No other ever entered upon the stage of human history as He did. No one could claim, as He did, that God was His Father, that He came forth from God. And this unique event was foretold by Isaiah more than 700 years before it came to pass.

3. *He lived a perfect, a sinless life.* "All have sinned", the Apostle reminds us, "and come short of the glory of God." The best men are the most conscious of their own imperfections and sins. But Jesus who set the highest, the impossible standard, never confessed that He had come short of it in the slightest degree. "I do always those things which please Him," He said of His relation to the Father. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?", was His challenge to the Jews. "This man hath done nothing amiss", was the testimony of the dying thief. Jesus' moral perfection is the pattern and the despair of all who would fulfill His command, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

4. *He spoke with authority and not as the scribes.* He declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away." The common people heard Him gladly. The officers sent to arrest Him said, "Never man spake like this man." The Sermon on the Mount is alike wonderful in its simplicity and its profundity. He spake of heaven as one whose home was there. He not merely claimed to come from God: He claimed to be God, "I and the Father are one."

5. *His mighty claims were accompanied by mighty deeds.* He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, fed the hungry, raised the dead, cast out devils; and He gave power to His apostles to do the same. When His own death was near at hand, He declared Himself to be the Resurrection and the Life and He proved the truth of His words by raising Lazarus from the dead.

6. *His death was voluntary and vicarious.* For Him as for no other death was the fulfillment of His mission. He came to die. John said of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He came "to give His life a ransom for many" as the good shepherd "to give his life for the sheep, to die that men might have life, and have it more abundantly."

7. *He rose from the dead* and was thereby declared to be the Son of God. The angel said to the women at the sepulchre, "He is not here: for He is risen as He said." And of Him the Apostle wrote, "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." And again he tells us, "For now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." "He is risen" is the shout of triumph of the Christian as he faces death and the grave.

8. *He is the Ascended and Glorified Christ.* He is now seated at the right hand of God and to Him all power is given in heaven and in earth. He ever liveth to make intercession for His people. He is their

only and their all prevailing mediator and intercessor. They have no need of human priests or of beatified saints or of angels. For "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

9. *He is the Everpresent Christ.* He said to His disciples before He was parted from them, "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world." High and lifted up, where no mortal eye can see Him, He is also nearer to us than breathing, nearer than hands or feet.

10. *He is to Come Again.* Not in humility and humiliation, but in glory and power, to judge and to reign. He will come with the angels and the saints who have gone before, and they that are alive and remain of His people here on earth will be caught up to join Him in the air and to be forever with Him in that world in which "God will be all and in all."

These are the wonderful credentials of the Christ of Christian faith. Why do we stress them? They are all set forth in the Bible; and ought to be familiar to every Christian. We do this to remind ourselves that these great facts and doctrines are set forth *only* in the Bible. All that we certainly know about Jesus, except for the barest mention of Him by the classical writers, is contained in the Bible. Countless books have been written about Him. But in so far as they are true and dependable, they derive all their knowledge of Him from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

II. *The Written Word.* Since all our knowledge of Christ and of the saving Gospel which He proclaimed is to be found in the Bible, it is of supreme importance to us to know and be assured that this Bible which brings us this glorious Good News is thoroughly dependable. For were this not the case the wonderful story which it tells us might be a romantic tale, a dream, beautiful, glorious, but lacking the great essential, reality, actuality, certainty. So we need to have not only the story, but the proof that it is wholly true, entirely dependable. This assurance is given to us in such words as these: "the Word of our God shall stand forever"; "the Scripture cannot be broken"; "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God". Cf Luke 1:1-4 and many other passages. It is because of its high claim to be the Word of God and its glorious disclosure of the things of God, its witness to the Christ of God, that the Bible has been cherished as no other book has been cherished; and it has been preserved in a way which is a miracle of Providence. For no other book can such convincing evidence of its faithful transmission be produced as for the Bible.

III. *The Witness of the Holy Spirit.* The Bible is the best loved and the most hated book in the world today. This has always been the case. The reason is that "spiritual things are spiritually discerned" and "the carnal mind is enmity against God." So Jesus promised the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit: "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will lead you into all the truth." This witness of the Spirit to the Scriptures is supremely important. For as the hymn beautifully expresses it,

"The Spirit breathes upon the Word,
 And brings the truth to sight;
 Precepts and promises afford
 A sanctifying light."

For it is a tragic fact that there are many wise men in our midst today who are searching the Scriptures earnestly, who cannot find in them the Divine Saviour of men, because they are using only the wisdom of men and are not seeking guidance of the Holy Spirit or heeding His voice. For the Christian's "full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority" of the holy Scriptures "is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts".

This then is the Christian's Three-fold Cord: the Incarnate Word, the Written Word, and the witness of the Spirit to the Word. The Preacher assures us that "a three-fold cord is not quickly broken." And when we think of the strength of each of the single strands of this cord and of the added strength which each gives to the other two, we need not hesitate to say that this is a three-fold cord that cannot be broken.

It is important to bear this great truth in mind. For the attempt has often been made and is being made today to separate these three great strands of witness, to set them one against another, to weaken or destroy them separately. The reason that the Bible-believing Christian takes the high view of Scripture, holding it to be "the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice," is not because he is a bibliolater, but because it is the Bible that tells him about Christ and His great salvation. Yet a prominent Protestant theologian in reviewing a book which sets forth and defends that doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible which is set forth in the Credo of the Church in which he is an office bearer recently made this utterly unwarranted statement: "It seems that there are circles in Protestantism in which acceptance of a certain theory of Inspiration rather than belief in the Lord Jesus is considered the criterion of true Christian faith." This is a misrepresentation of which a learned professor should not be guilty. It is an attempt to introduce false antithesis where there should be the utmost harmony. The Bible-believing Christian is not primarily concerned about theories regarding the inspiration of the Bible. He accepts its claim to be the Word of God and the assurance of Christ that the Scripture cannot be broken. He knows that if the Bible is true, he can claim all of its precious promises and know that they are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. If he cannot be sure that the Bible is fully dependable, then he must put a question-mark over against one or more, perhaps all of the great facts and doctrines which it contains. A favorite point of attack is the Virgin Birth of Jesus, which is one great element in the Scripture's witness to the person of Christ and very clearly stated in it. There are others who would go still further and empty the Bible completely of its Supernatural content. In this way the strands of saving Gospel truth are severed one by one until the cord becomes so weak that it can easily be broken. Then the Christian's faith is

gone or ceases to be really Christian. But the true Christian rejoices in the strength of his Three-fold Cord and will allow no man to tamper with it.

INSTITUTES of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION

By JOHN CALVIN

Two Volumes \$7.50

With his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the magnum opus of Christian theology since the times of the Reformation, Calvin undergirded the entire Protestant enterprise. History proves that, while Luther was the divine instrument to begin the work of the Reformation, Calvin was just as clearly the man to carry it forward, to develop its principles and to exhibit their bearing on life in all of its relationships. The *Institutes* was, and remains today, the fundamental theological treatise in the development of a Protestant theology. "All subsequent attempts to state and defend that theology," said Benjamin B. Warfield, the great Princeton theologian, "necessarily go back to it as their starting point, and its impress upon the history of evangelical thinking is ineffaceable. Even from the point of view of mere literature, it holds a position so supreme in its class that every man who would know the world's best books, must make himself familiar with it. What Thucydides is among Greek, or Gibbon among eighteenth-century English historians, what Plato is among philosophers, or the Iliad among epics, or Shakespeare among dramatists, that Calvin's *Institutes* is among theological treatises."

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