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something which brings peace in the midst of chaos; hope when all seems hopeless; joy when there is so little to be joyful about; cleanness when there is so much filth; strength where so many are weak."

Surrounded by the serried ranks of witnesses — that great host of men and women who have given up everything for the privilege of knowing Christ and making Him known — we who today name the name of Christ need to renounce conformity to a lost and dying world and live as new creatures in Christ. We need to confront the sin in our own lives and by God's grace renounce it and live for His glory.

To keep our perspective we need to fix our eyes on the One who is the source and goal of our faith and live as His good soldiers. This will mean a renouncing of those entangling alliances with the world in order that we may please Him.

Ours is a precious birthright. Dare we sell it for anything which perishes with the using.

—L. N. B.

The Altar Is Inappropriate for Presbyterian Worship

This may be shown in several ways. Jesus and the Apostles celebrated the Last Supper about a Table not an altar. In I Cor. 10, the Apostle Paul speaks of "the Table of the Lord" in contrast to the altar of Judaism. In the catacomb of St. Callistus the early Christian is pictured standing behind a modest Table on which is a small loaf of bread. This was the custom in Rome until Bishop Felix ordered the use of the altar-tombstones of the martyrs in 272. A wooden table is accepted by the archaeologists as the form used in the ancient Church at Dura-Europas. The "altar" which Athanasius' presbyter was accused of overturning in 332 could only have been such a simple wooden table not a stone altar; and so must have been the "altars" under which the threatened people of Rome hid when the city was sacked. In England whenever the truly Reformed position came into power the altars were replaced by tables, namely, by Bishop Ridley and others under Edward VI, again under Elizabeth I, and a third time at the request of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In the first Church erected at Jamestown there was a walnut Table.

There are strong doctrinal reasons why an altar is inappropriate in a Presbyterian Church. Hurrell Froude of the Oxford Movement wrote in 1832 that it matters not where the pulpit is placed, if it does not "stand in the light of the Altar, which is more sacred than the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple." For the Anglo-Catholic there is a real, though spiritual, presence of Christ on the church altar and this explains why it is regarded as a sacred place. But for the Presbyterian or Reformed Faith, the risen body of Christ is in heaven not on the church altars. The risen living Christ actively communes with His people by the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. The Anglo-Catholic doctrine is that the real (*in re*) presence is spiritual; but the Calvinistic doctrine is

that the spiritual presence is real. And though this takes a bit of thinking through, it is not a mere playing with words. For us the bread on the Table, in the hand, and in the mouth is the seal that Christ is present by and in His Spirit feeding us with the blessings of His Person and His Work unto everlasting life. The preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, as every other part of the worship, in a truly Presbyterian Church ought to direct the eyes of faith to Christ at the right hand of God interceding for His people . . . and away from any sacred spot in the earthly sanctuary as an altar or a picture worship center.

Again at an altar a sacrifice is offered to appease an otherwise angry deity. Thus the altar means that the sacrifice of Christ is either continued or repeated. But the Reformed Faith teaches that Christ has offered the one sacrifice once for all at Calvary by which the wrath of God was averted and the Holy God reconciled to sinful man. Accordingly, we need no altar for other propitiatory sacrifices, but a Table which testifies that God is feeding His people out of His mercy and love unto life everlasting. An altar calls on men to sacrifice to God, a Table tells us of the gracious Father in heaven who pours forth His love and lavishes His bounty on His redeemed people.

The placing of the altar back where it was in pre-Reformed days at the head of an elevated chancel where it is the focal center of a Gothic structure testifies that the sacraments are the primary things in worship. For the Roman and for the Anglo-Catholic this is true. The Oxford Movement rejected Luther's justification by faith alone based on the all-sufficiency of Christ's work for us. It restored the altar that sacrifices offered there might afford acts to comfort penitents whose sins were not completely forgiven by faith and baptism. On the other hand, the Reformed order is not the sacraments and the Word, but the Word and the sacraments. Calvin holds that the Church rests upon the Word as her foundation and that the two sacraments are supporting stays. For the Catholics the sacrament conveys what it signifies, but for the Reformed it seals what it signifies. We use the sacraments to confirm to our hearts the promises of the Word. We have no better Christ to offer on sacrament Sunday, but we do call on our people to exercise not only their ears, but also their eyes, their hands, their taste, to lay hold on this same Christ with their whole being. "Taste and see that the Lord is Good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Calvin took the altar out of the focal center at the head of the high chancel and instead put a modest, unobtrusive Table on the same level as the congregation beside the high pulpit. Since the Word is first, the pulpit rather than the Table is the center of interest in St. Pierre in Geneva.

Finally, the altar implies not only a sacrifice but a mediating priest. So one hears in our own communion of congregations which have so arranged their services that neither member nor deacon, nor elder may approach the high altar, only the clergyman may minister there. One result of this kind of thinking is that even ruling elders are now called laymen. Thornwell and Dabney called them clergy. The use of

layman for a ruling elder is a relatively recent innovation in our Book of Church Order. In the Reformation "the poorest washer woman" was as truly a priest at the Table of the Lord as was the presiding minister. Calvin and Knox brought the Table into the midst of the congregation and invited the people to come to the Table of the Lord that they might know they had in Christ a share in the Father's heart and in the bounty of His hand.

—W. C. R.

John Wesley On The Image Of God In Man

In an earlier editorial, we pointed out that John Calvin, like Luther, rejected the Thomist doctrine that by the fall man lost only the likeness not the image of God. He used an Augustinian statement that fallen man was wholly deprived of his supernatural talents, while the natural ones were corrupted. By means of this distinction Calvin as well as the Calvinistic Creeds, e.g. the Scots', the Gallic and the Westminster Confession, describes the deflection of the first man as sufficient to obliterate the divine image and render man dead in trespasses and sin in reference to the things of God. But in references to the things of his fellow men, Calvin speaks of the divine image as not entirely annihilated, so that man still has excellent talents in matters of civil polity, domestic economy, and mechanical and liberal arts.

It is not so well known that John Wesley's greatest book was ON ORIGINAL SIN, a defense of the gravity of the fall and the needs of the renewing grace of God against John Taylor, an English professor of theology who moved from Presbyterianism to Unitarianism. In this work and in his sermon on THE HEAVENLY TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS, Wesley speaks of man as "totally corrupt". The original likeness to God has been destroyed. Man has lost both the knowledge and the love of God without which the image of God could not subsist. Every single individual has totally lost, not only the favour, but likewise the image of God.

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN he denies that there are any innate ideas of God at all. Apart from early instruction, children have no knowledge of God. Natural religion abstracted from the traditional and from the influences of God's Spirit leaves us atheists, without God in the world. As Calvin went beyond Luther in finding a beginning of the restoration of God's image in regeneration, so Wesley exceeded Calvin in teaching the restoration of the image of God by sanctification.

Whatever our several positions on details of these matters are, it becomes us to be accurate with Christian history and to portray Calvin and Wesley as they actually wrote, not as one might have preferred that they write. And it is a matter of significance that those who have been men of distinction in the field of Christian theology, such as, Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, have taken sin and the fall seriously. He who knows himself a great sinner glories in the Greatness of his Saviour.

—W. C. R.

The Journey Heavenward Is All Uphill

Uphill! Uphill! Always uphill. Are there no level places on this road where we can walk without effort and are there no downhills where we can coast a little and enjoy the attractions of the world as we pass them by? And the road always seems so rough, so rocky. Invariably it is unpaved and leads eternally upward, upward the hard way. And as we go toiling along we frequently come to beautiful side roads which seem to go around the hill rather than over it; they are generally smooth roads, too, and the traveling appears so much easier on them, but strange it is the sign "Heavenward" never points down them.

Our steps are so stumbling, so uncertain, so unsteady as we climb, that often it seems as though we take one step forward and slip back two or three. And sometimes we slip and fall down and at these times the thought comes, "I'm tired, I must rest", and we look and right there on the side of the road is a nice, cool, comfortable seat. But every climber knows that if he stops he gets cold and generally stagnates.

Take courage, Christian, this road is the road of Pilgrims' Progress. Keep your eyes fixed on the distant goal. On top of the hill the sun is shining and the mountain peak merges with the skies. Christ Himself climbed this hill and blazed the trail for us.

Yes, the journey heavenward is all uphill, but the downhill leads to Hell.

—R. LeC.



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