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Baptismal Judgment

Peter J. Leithart, Th.M.

Though martyrdom is a reality in this century, and on a far vaster scale than at any previous time in the history of the church, the martyrs of the early church have secured a position of honor in the history of the Christian church. We modern Western Christians, still reaping the benefits secured for our civilization over a millennium ago, rightly wonder whether we would have endured persecution as courageously as the early martyrs, or the modern victims of Marxist and other utopianism. Even Roman pagan observers were impressed (and befuddled) by the courage of Christians as they faced the flames, gladiators, or wild animals. We can (properly, I think) ask whether there might not have been a way for some overly zealous souls to avoid both martyrdom and compromise. Still, we cannot help but think (again, correctly) that they were more faithful Christians than we.

What gave these early Christians such courage in the face of persecution? What did they have that we lack today? The author of the encyclical letter that described the martyrdom of Polycarp hinted at one source of their courage when he wrote concerning a group of early martyrs:

... they reached such a pitch of magnanimity, that not one of them let a sigh or a groan escape them; thus proving to us all that those holy martyrs of Christ, at the very time when they suffered such torments, were absent from the body, or, rather, that the Lord then stood by them, and communed with them.

In short, they genuinely believed that they had died, and their lives were hid with Christ in God. It was their biblical heavenly-mindedness that gave them the courage to challenge the Roman State (COL 3:1-2).

Viewed from another perspective, their courage may be attributed to their view of baptism. Many, in fact, saw martyrdom as the ultimate fulfillment of their baptismal vow. To understand how this could be the case, we need to look briefly at the biblical theology of baptism, particularly as it relates to judgment.

It is clear from the New Testament that baptism is a sign of God's judgment. The types of baptism from the Old Testament all have this judicial aspect. Baptism is compared to Israel's crossing through the Red Sea, which resulted in the destruction of the armies of Pharaoh (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Peter compares baptism to the flood, in which Noah and his family were saved by water, while the rest of the world perished (1 Peter 3:18-22). In each case, the types of baptism symbolize not only the acquittal of the faithful, but the destruction of the rebellious.

This judicial aspect of baptism is also prominent in the New Testament's account of Jesus' baptism by John. C.F.D. Moule has noted that Jesus' baptism was a sign of His perfect filial obedience. The elements of Sonship and obedience are both prominent in the Gospel narratives of the event: Jesus told John that He had to fulfill all righteousness, and during the baptism the Father announced that Jesus was His Son (Mt. 3:15,17). In Philipians 2:5-9, Paul tells us that the climax of Jesus' obedience was His willingness to die a cursed death on the cross. Putting these considerations together, Moule says,

... in a world where man's disobedience has already caused dislocation, perfect obedience

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An Open Letter from the Rev. Ray R. Sutton

(Although Geneva Ministries is not officially associated with any particular local church, as most of you know, we have enjoyed a close relationship with Westminster Presbyterian Church in the past. In fact, Geneva was originally started as a ministry of Westminster.

For that reason, and because of the number of calls and letters we have received inquiring about Westminster, I thought it appropriate to ask the pastor, Ray Sutton, to explain to our readers what's been happening at this local Church the last 14 months - MRG)

February 17, 1988

Dear Geneva Review Friends,

It's been along time since I last wrote for the *Geneva Review*, and I'm pretty sure that some of you have had the thought at one time or another, "I wonder why Ray Sutton is not regularly writing any mom" Believe me, I understand and I have truly missed all of you. So let me explain why I have been away for a while, beginning with a brief summary, and then anticipating some questions that may arise in your mind.

For the past year and a half, the officers of our congregation and I have been investigating the possibility of a new denominational home. Westminster Presbyterian Church was part of a small presbytery of men and churches, with whom I have been proud to serve, but we had come to the place what the needs of our church were such that a broader base was necessary. The local body was as large if not larger than the entire denomination, and it was starting to become more than our little denomination could handle.

So, we started a series of monthly congregational meetings to seek the counsel of Lord and one another. We began the process of sorting out a conservative, Bible-believing group compatible with our emphases: creeds and confessions, Reformed theology and government, a more historic view of the Church, liturgy, weekly communion, and paedocommunion.

We first considered the different Presbyterian bodies. Some would allow a few of the distinctive listed above, but we didn't find any that would tolerate all of them. (Please keep in mind that there are many individuals, some on our mailing lists, who share our concerns. I'm not referring to them. If you're one of them, please don't be offended. I'm talking about the official policy of these denominations.)

Certainly we could wait until one of these groups comes into conformity with the distinctives listed above. But what if they don't and what happens to our congregation in the mean time?

Besides, perhaps more important than the individual distinctives, Westminster Presbyterian Church has had to deal with somewhat of a perceived identity problem related to liturgical worship. As you may know, we have been a liturgical church for a number of years. We have had a difficult time, however, trying to find a liturgical service and service book that could be used. If you think about it, the Presbyterian Church does not have a set liturgical service per se, although there have been some Presbyterian books of worship that combine the Lutheran and Episcopal services. So what do you do if you are Presbyterian and you want to be liturgical? You have to try to weave together liturgies from other churches, or you have to adopt one of them in its entirety, 'lock, stock, and barrel.'

When we first started to use liturgy, we created an eclectic service, drawing mainly from Episcopal and Lutheran worship practices. This was not practical because we did not have a set service book for congregational use. We needed something more definitive and concrete, and most importantly, a book the congregation could easily follow.

To deal with this problem, we decided to adopt the Lutheran Service Book (1946), a delightful liturgy and one that our congregation has truly enjoyed. But even though it was satisfying to the congregation, it created an identity problem. Visitors did not know whether we were Lutheran or Presbyterian, and quite frankly, some of our members were not sure either. Also, we have found that conservative Presbyterians identify liturgy with liberalism, and are not used to it. Some are even offended.

So we were forced to ask, "Where does a liturgical Calvinist find a home?", which brings me to the next option our congregation has explored.

We have become acquainted with several conservative Episcopal denominations over & yearn through some of our travels and writings. We've even realized that a number of readers and subscribers are involved in the Anglican Church, especially the conservative break-away denominations that are part of what is called, 'The Continuing Church.' We have been told, "You'd be a lot more comfortable with us because you're liturgical Calvinists. The historic expression of this conviction is Anglicanism. Thomas Cranmer, the author of the Book of Common Prayer, the prayer book of our church, went to Europe and combined the worship of Luther and the theology of Calvin, and brought it back to England. We think that's where you are and we also think you'll be much happier and have a much more fruitful ministry in the Episcopal Church."

A "New" Episcopal Parish

Westminster Presbyterian Church has decided to follow their counsel, because Anglicanism allows us to

continue our present practices without **disruption** and hassle to our local congregation. At the same time k provides pastoral **care** and **government**. Anyway, the Anglican **Church is really not** all that far from the view of the church that we have presented in our writings.

We have spoken of **the** need to be truly **confessional** and historical, while also being truly **Reformed** in **theology** and **worship**. The Anglican **Church** is both It **pre-dates** the Reformation and even the Roman **Catholic Church**, so that it is a thoroughly old catholic church dating back to at least the **Second** Century in England. Yet it is a Reformed **church** with a thorough-going Reformed **doctrinal statement**, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, on which the Westminster **Confession** was based. It is **Catholic and Protestant**, what I once called "Reformed Catholicism," which is closer to what **the Reformers** really wanted. If you **recall**, I wrote on this in an article, "Reformed _____ ?" (*The Geneva Review*, no. 20, July 1985), **taking note** of the fact that **the** word "Reformed" is an adjective, intended to be used with the word "catholic."

Thus, God has shown our congregation with near unanimous consensus that the Anglican **part** of His **Church** would be the best home for us. Last Summer (1987), we decided to adopt the new name, Good Shepherd **Episcopal Church**, and in December of the same year, the congregation voted to begin using this name on January 1, 1988. I have since that time been received into **the American Episcopal Church**, the Anglican Diocese of the **Southwest**, which consists of approximately 35 congregations and whose bishop is Edwin **Caudill** in San Antonio, Texas. It is a **conservative**, Bible-believing denomination that adheres to the Thirty-Nine **Articles** and the **1928 Book of Common Prayer**. Its size numbers **between 130-140** congregations.

Now I know that this **raises** several questions in your mind. I can't address all of them, and I certainly cannot provide a complete apologetic for Anglicanism in a brief essay such as this. I don't know that I should. But I can speak to the **governmental** differences between **Presbyterianism** and Anglicanism, which may **concern** some of you.

The Plurality of Elders

What about the matter of **plurality of elders**? Anglicanism and **Presbyterianism** believe in plurality of elders, but **Presbyterianism** believes that plurality at the local church level is **mandated** by the New Testament. Anglicanism only **requires** plurality at the diocesan (presbytery) level. Who is right, and how can we justify a move from plurality of elders at the local level? First, let's start with common ground. The Anglicans and Presbyterians have always been **agreed** on the principle of **governmental connections beyond the local congregation; b o t h**

have connected, *standing* (as opposed to the **Congregationalists**) presbyteries or synods. So, **we're not** talking about systems that **are** all that far apart.

Second, the **church** of the First Century was **organized geographically in a parish system: countries, cities** and neighborhoods. It was organized **dominically**; it was not organized **denominationally**. The New Testament, strictly speaking, **refers to three** levels of church **government: regional-church** (synod, diocese, or presbytery), **city-church** and **house-church**. It only **mandates** plurality of **elders, however**, at the **regional-church and city-church** levels (Acts 15; Titus 1:5). At the **home-church** level, **more** analogous to what modern Western **Christianity** calls the local church, the Bible allows but does not necessarily **mandate** more than one elder. The plurality passages to which Presbyterians appeal for **mandatory plurality** are **actually city-church references**: the "appointment of **elders in every church**" probably refers to **various** cities noted in the immediate context (Acts 14:21-23), if you **compare this passage** with the appointment of **elders "city by city"** in Titus 1:5.

The point is that the Bible is flexible at the **house-church** level. It **allows** for **more** than **one** elder, and although it maybe **preferred** in some situations, it is not necessary. Even **Presbyterianism** has **recognized** the need for this kind of flexibility in its view of the office of **Evangelist**; it temporarily permits him to **be** the **only** elder in a small congregation.

What of the **reference** in James about going to the "elders" of the church (**James 5:14**)? We should be **careful** not to cram our modern sociology of **the church** into the New Testament. Even if one wanted to see the **James 5:14 reference** as speaking about a **house-church, and** not a city-church, I think **there are** a variety of ways of seeing this passage **faithfully** applied. Going to one elder is the same as going to the **elders** of the church in a similar way that going to one policeman is the same as going to **the police**. When you go to a **representative** official, you **are** going to **the** whole body of who and what that **representative represents**! Of course, if you can **secure** more than one elder to lay on hands, great! But the passage is not speaking to the issue of how many elders need to be involved; it is simply saying to **go** to the **elders of the church**.

Lay Leadership

The real issue touching the **plurality** question seems to concern a general philosophy of how to implement **lay leadership**. Presbyterians have traditionally chosen lifetime "ruling" elders to assist in **the government** of the church. Anglicans have called their lay leaders vestrymen, who function in much the same capacity as a ruling

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elder in the Presbyterian church. The difference is that they are not ordained for life! They rotate every three years. Recently, however, Presbyterianism has moved toward a rotational system for obvious practical reasons. So at the local level I don't think there is all that much of a functional difference between a vestryman and a ruling elder. The biggest dissimilarity between Anglicanism and Presbyterianism is over the role of the Bishop.

The Bishop: Pastor of Pastors

Anglicanism has historically recognized the place of a pastor to pastors, the Bishop. He does more than this, but he is a chief pastor under the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, designated by the shepherd's Staff (a "Crozier") that the bishop usually carries in worship. In one sense, historic Presbyterianism has seen the need to have a pastor to pastors; it used to recognize the position of superintendent (see Geddes MacGregor, *Corpus Christi*, p. 80). But modern American Presbyterianism has never incorporated such a position. The closest thing to it is the Stated Clerk, but his position is administrative and not pastoral. So the function of a bishop is new to us; yet, it should not be new and shocking in theory for someone who has been around the theonomic camp for several years.

Anyone who has followed my writings (and other catholic[as opposed to anabaptist] reconstructionists) knows that I have an Old-to-New-Testament-hermeneutic, a creation-to-redemption method of interpretation. I don't start at the end of the Bible and work backwards. I believe that creation and the Old Testament establish the tracks on which the New Testament runs by the power of the Holy Spirit. The New Covenant is the Old transformed, but it is not an anti-creation covenant—it is a recreation covenant.

For years James Jordan and I have argued that we should see the whole question of the Church's government structure in light of Exodus 18 and Deuteronomy 1, where there are captains over tens, fifties, hundreds, and so forth. And if we consider Titus' function of appointing and shepherding elders in light of this whole-Bible-context (Titus 1:5), it seems to me that this provides a Biblical rationale for the office of bishop.

I would not go so far as to say that the office is of the essence of the Church, meaning a true church does not exist where there is not a bishop. Nor would I go so far as to say that there shouldn't be room for differences of opinion among Anglicans over the question of whether the office of bishop grew out of the presbytery, or the presbytery grew out of the office of bishop. Regardless of my personal view, it is interesting that there are possibly examples of both in the New Testament. Nevertheless, the Reformers were certainly not opposed to

the office of bishop per se; they simply wanted god-fearing ones. When Elizabeth needed bishops to fill vacant positions, she acquired many of them from Geneva, all former students of John Calvin, Bucer, and Beza (see Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism*, p. 105).

Anticipating just a few of your concerns, this brief explanation is designed to point out that we have not left the Reformed faith. I still plan to write for the *Geneva Review* from time to time, keeping in mind that my local church's needs have top priority. I still consider my Presbyterian and all other Reformed brethren my very closest of friends. I in no way view them as inferior, and I hope that they will not feel as though I have given up the faith. Furthermore, I do not see my life's calling to try and convert everyone into Anglicanism, and I will not use Geneva Ministries to this end. Its purpose is to bring families to a thoroughly covenantal worldview. If you've read my books, then you know that I'm preaching what I've already said them. And if you've read Christianity and *Civilization 4: The Reconstruction of the Church*, you shouldn't be too surprised at my move.

I did want you to know, however, about our move. I understand that Anglicanism is not a panacea; it too has its own problems. But the wider ecclesiastical connection for our congregation, and the pastoral relationship with my bishop has already been of immense spiritual help. I hope that you will be able to appreciate what I am saying, even though you may not agree with it.

By the way, I think it's OK if you don't agree! In fact I want you to understand that you don't have to agree with everything I write or think (heaven forbid!) to be my Christian Friend. We can still work toward the same ends. Indeed, we shall together be more than conquerors by the grace of God!

Thank you for taking the time to read through this lengthy letter, and thank you for your support of Geneva Ministries. I hope you will support it even more in 1988 because judging by its expanding mailing list and ministry, it has a great future.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Ray R. Sutton

[As editor, I would simply like to underline one thing for our readers to avoid any misunderstanding: Geneva Ministries is not now an "anglican" ministry. As the Rev. Sutton remarked, our goal is to apply a covenantal worldview. It is not our intention to become advocates for anglicanism. Please do not view the above letter as a portent of things to come. This letter has been published for the information (four readers. Any comments or observations would be welcome. MRG)]

Prophetic Stars Studies in Genesis One

James B. Jordan, Th.M.

*And God **made** the two great lights; the greater **light** to govern the **day**, and the **lesser** light **along** with the stars to govern the **night**. (Genesis 1:16).*

Some scholars **feel** that this is a belter translation of Genesis 1:16 than what we usually **read** ("and the lesser light to govern the **night**; **He made the stars also**"). **Certainly the stars are** indeed symbols of governors, and the astral cycles of both the planets and fixed **stars** do **serve** as clocks to **measure** ("govern") **time**. **Thus**, if **correct**, the above **translation** would square with the rest of the Bible, and it would also fit the immediate context better. I am in no position to pass judgment on the matter, however.

(And sadly I am unable to lay hands on an essay I **read** a while back that discusses this. Students with access to a seminary library can doubtless find it in one of the **religious** periodical **readers** guides. I cannot **recall** if it was in VT, or **ZAW**, or **JSOT**, or something else. Next time I get to a seminary **library**, I'll be **sure** to get it. Write me if you're dying to know, and I should have the information by **then**.)

At any rate, **verse 14** implies that **all the astral lights were** given as clock-signs for governments, and so **regardless** of how **verse 16** should be translated, the **stars** are signs.

I want briefly to survey the passages **where** sun, moon, and **stars are** used in a prophetic-symbolic sense. A failure to **understand** the symbolic **nature** of these passages has led a few popular **writers** to assume that such expressions as "the sun turned to sackcloth and the moon to blood" can only be **understood** as referring to the **collapse** of the physical cosmos. Nobody takes these verses **literally**, after all. The question is, what kind of event does this symbolic language **refer** to? For modern man, it seems **that** it can only be speaking of **the** end of the world. For ancient man, it **was** indeed the end of the "world" that such language indicated, but not the "world" in our modern scientific sense. Rather, it was the end of the "world" in a socio-political sense.

For instance, Isaiah 13:9-10 says that "the day of the LORD is coming," and when it comes, "the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light." It goes on to say in verse 13, "I shall make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken in its place at the fury of the LORD of hosts in the day of His burning anger."

Well, this **sure** does sound like **the end** of the work! **But**, if we **read these verses** in context, we have to change our initial **impression**. Verse 1 says, "**The oracle concerning** Babylon which **Isaiah** the son of **Amoz** saw," and if we **read on**, we find **nothing** to indicate any **change** in **subject**. It is the end of Babylon, not the end of the world, that is spoken of. In fact, in **verse 17**, God says that he will "stir up the **Medes** against them," so that **the** entire chapter is clearly **concerned** only with Babylon's destruction.

If we **read** Biblically, this won't seem so **strange**. What **verse 10** is saying is that Babylon's lights are going to **go OUL**. Their **clocks are** going to stop. Their day is over, and it is the Day of Doom for them. Their time has run out, and the cosmic clocks **are** going to be **turned off** as far as they **are** concerned. And, since these astral bodies symbolize governors and **rulers**, their **rulers are** going to have their lights put out as well.

The "heavens and earth" in verse 13 **refer** to the socio-political organization of Babylon. The "heavens" **are** the **aristocracy**, roughly speaking, and the "earth" **are** the **commoners**. (For a discussion of "heavens and earth" as referring, sometimes, to society, **see my tape series, The Garden of God**, available from Geneva Ministries for \$39.95.)

We **find** the same kind of thing in Ezekiel 32. In **verses 7-8** of that chapter God **declares**, "And when I extinguish you, I will cover **the** heavens, and darken their stars; I will **cover** the sun with a cloud, **and** the moon shall not give its **light**. All the shining lights in the heavens I will **darken** over you and will set **darkness** on your land." The end of the world? Yes indeed, but not for **everybody**. If you don't remember this passage, don't look it right up, but think about **it**. What ancient **people** might **God** be speaking of in using this language? The idea in the Babylon **oracle** was that the astral bodies would not shine forth any **light**. **Here** the idea is that they will be covered over. God's **glory** cloud will interpose itself **between** this nation and the heavenly lights. While God's glory cloud shines brightly for His people Israel, it is dark and **foreboding** to His **enemies**, with the **result** that they **are** in darkness when **He** appears to **them**.

These people **experienced** (his once **before**. Their whole land was **darkened**, and when they **pursued** the Israelites, God's cloud **came between** them and Israel and put them in darkness. Remember? (Wk. 32:2, cp. Ex. 10:21-23; 14:19-20). *(to be concluded)*

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Restoring the Classical Christian Curriculum



Question-Posing as the Initiation to Learning

Gary Hafer, M.A.

Before a particular subject or topic can be explored, studied, and researched, the student must first consolidate inquiry skills. These skills teach students three specific tasks: (1) how to ask questions that funnel into productive avenues of research, (2) how to conduct inquiry that approximates possible answers, and (3) how to revise and refine questioning when previous inquiry seems to predetermine the answer(s) or digresses from the nature of the research exercise. (A table of criteria is provided to judge the quality of the posed questions.)

How to Ask Questions

Let's deal first with the task of learning how to ask questions that dovetail into research topics. As was suggested previously in this series, initiating any study with a question aids the student in narrowing a topic of research and also in providing him with a sense as to when his research is completed. A topic, in this instance, could be defined as the context and scope for research. If a student is assigned a paper in his American literature class, he is bound by certain exigencies, or pressing constraints on the assignment. Often a teacher may feel this is as narrow as he can define the assignment that is, confining the paper to American literature. But the student still has to choose from a range of topics within American literature, and so it is often far more profitable for the teacher to break the topic into discrete parts, as in the following:

Context: *Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Scope: 200 word paper

Then the student is permitted to invent a question to be answered in the paper. If he has just been introduced to question-posing, several questions can be submitted to him as models, his task being to choose just one. Here are some possibilities:

What interpretations for the scarlet letter do various characters offer?

How does Chillingworth's appearance reflect his spiritual condition?

Why does Dimmesdale believe he must decline his sin before the congregation?

"Richness" & "Rightness"

In the secondary task, the student is looking to predict, or approximate, his answers by asking questions. In this context, *predict and approximate* mean looking for new insights (richness) that may answer his questions, leaving some time for incubation before evaluating them later (rightness). In the *Scarlet Letter* example, the student can generate and reorganize questions via the triadic exploration—static, dynamic, and relative views—and then answer these questions to see relationships and correspondences in these views. Later, the student may decide on one question to answer in his paper, that answer now becoming a thesis statement. Or he first can invent a single question, as in the first task, and search his own memory for possible answers. If he is unable to arrive at a tentative thesis (evaluation after exploration) that can answer his question, he will at least be able to review the *Scarlet Letter* for answers because he already has a question in mind. (In my Geneva Ministries' tape series, *Seeing and Believing*, I deal with this and the following task more comprehensively.)

A final question-posing task can aid in asking new questions: redirecting research when previous questions skew results. The old "Have you stopped beating your wife yet?" is such an example. The answer to such a question, whatever it is, must still lie in the field of the affirmative; "no" is assumed, in the question, to be an illegitimate response. Research questions can also fall into this predetermined category.

A few years ago, a major manufacturer found that the chief problem in the designing of new products was a communications, or rhetorical, problem. Designers in different departments found they were answering questions that had never been posed; that is, the original questions were so poorly constructed and predetermined (not predicted, which always allows for revision of questions) that design problems were unaddressed in the language of their questioning. When the engineers learned how to ask questions, and how to revise previous ones, they found major obstacles topple!

Consequently, question-posing, or inquiry skills, intensifies student activity in further defining, reclassifying, narrowing, and expanding the very nature of the research-learning to be conducted.

The "Genesis Effect"

Moreover, the "genesis effect" in learning—that effect which starts the learning process—is question-posing

This initiatory stage commutes the student from the known (how *to ask questions*) to the unknown (the subject-topic to be investigated). Here "form" and "freedom" find harmony in Christian learning: the structure in questioning (form) produces new expressions and new insights (freedom of expression in the triadic perspectives). When the student learns how to ask questions, he is not only framing his skills according to a world-and-life view, but also providing a base of reference—the questioning—to explore the triads of God's world.

It's Not *That* Difficult!

A common misconception among students, and even teachers, is that inquiry skills are difficult to develop because the task of forming questions about what isn't known seems insurmountable. In other words, the process of asking questions is construed to be ambiguous, undefined, arid probably unteachable because the answer at first appears elusive and indeterminate.

But the confusion is sorted (for some!) when Genesis is consulted. Here, question-posing is posited as a means of arriving at an expression of an answer that is known to the asker. In Genesis 3:9, God asks Adam to identify where he is located in the garden. Inverse 11, He asks Adam who told him that he was naked. In both cases God already knew the answer. It isn't as if God posits questions because he is ignorant of the answers. Rather, God inquires into the motivations and situations of Adam so that Adam may recite his covenantal disobedience, not only to the Lord, but to himself (notice the liturgical action of proclamation-question and response). Similarly, the questions that Jesus posits to the Pharisees and his disciples often presume a transparent answer, known jointly by Jesus and his audience. Thus, question-posing initiates the search for an expression of an answer, one that may be partially (in the case of man) or fully known (in the case of God) before the question is first posed.

Then why ask questions if the answer is already known? And isn't man in another category, since God is omniscient, even in asking questions, but man is not?

In answer to the first question, one often proposes questions whose answers are partially but not fully known. The student may know that there are symbols represented in the *Scarlet Letter* and yet not know what they represent without directed study on the question. So the student's ignorance is always redeemable, because he knows how to ask questions.

In answer to the second question, I frankly confess that I do not know how much man knows. But I do know that all men know there is a true God, though they deny it, one from whom they are alienated (Rem. 1). So when people ask if there is a God, aren't they already "predicting" an answer, one which St. Paul tells us, they knowingly affirm every day? Sin had a tremendous effect on

Question-Posing Criteria

(Good Questions = No to all questions posed below)

Is the question answered by a simple yes/no response?

Does the question have a predetermined answer?

Will the answer to the question fall outside the assigned topic?

Does the question contain grammatical errors?

Is the question illegitimate, unethical, or unproductive for investigation?

our thinking processes. Language, in a sense, is a God given means in redeeming some of our knowledge, and question-posing fits within this realm. Witness the instrumentality of language on the Day of Pentecost and in recording God's testimony in the Bible, God's Word.

Thus, question-posing can motivate the student to probe into God's world or to incite the sinner to confront his alleged ignorance and his actual ethical disobedience to God.

As a friend once confessed to me regarding this series, that's some pretty heavy stuff! That may be, but the education of another generation is at stake, and we must not faint or weary in restoring our Christian past and in building new foundations upon it, "heavy" though it may be.

Where We're Going...

What's upcoming? During the coming months, I will be working on an application of these principles for parents of 11-18 year olds in a workbook and tape series to be produced by Geneva Ministries, entitled *Research for Life*. This set will be the first in a library of Christian teaching methods, which will culminate in a curriculum plan that builds from particular tasks and course to a "master plan" for every course.

Also, I am presently making plans to apply the principles of biblical worship to an educational setting, showing how we can "learn ethically" no matter what our age or educational background; this series is actually

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necessarily **means death**; and **voluntary** accepted death, like Christ's in **the** expression of his perfect obedience to God's will, is the only gateway to man's destiny. That is why the **cross** is the key to "the **restoration** of **all** things."

It is significant in this **connection** that Jesus explicitly **linked baptism and the cross** in Mark 10:38 and Luke 12:50, describing His **crucifixion** as a baptism. Thus, we may conclude that for Jesus to submit **to** baptism meant that He submitted to the death penalty against sin, voluntarily accepting God's **verdict**.

In keeping with this understanding of Jesus' baptism, Paul described our baptism as a death and **resurrection** (Rom. 6). **This** takes us a step **further**. We **are** not united to **Christ only** in **His death**, but in His **resurrection**. In baptism, the Christian in **principle** accepts the death of **Christ, the final judgment of God against sin, but is then** raised with **Christ** and even seated with Him in the heavenly places. Thus, as **Moule** argues, the Christian in baptism is, in a sense, taken past the final **judgment**, and, if **faithful**, **enters** the life of the age to come. To borrow the **language** of **Meredith Kline**, the **baptized** Christian **passes through** the water-ordeal, is **quitted**, and **receives** the earnest of the promised inheritance.

Jesus said this explicitly in reference to faith in **the** **Wed**: Whoever **hears** and believes has eternal **life** (Jn. 5:24). **The same can be said of a faithful response** to baptism: Baptism is the sign that **for** the Christian the **final judgment** is **past**, and his **life** is no longer his own, but with **Christ**. Hence, Luther in the midst of his many **trials strikes his forehead** and **reminds himself**, "Ich bin getauft," I am baptized.

Baptism is rightly considered a symbolic **martyrdom**, a **surrendering** of our life to God's just judgment, a **self-accusation**, and a **self-maledictory** oath. The wonder of biblical Christianity is that God took this judgment upon Himself, passing **through** the **split carcasses** and going down into **the** water. He was cut off; He endured the

baptism of blood. In **Christ, the judgment** of God becomes **our justification**, and we enter into **the** enjoyment of the heavenly life and **resurrection** power. Such a God, **as the early martyrs understood, is One for whom we can** gladly live, and die!

[Peter J. Leithart, a frequent contributor to *The Geneva Review*, holds a Th.M. from Westminster Theological Seminary. He is the co-author (with Gary DeMar) of *The Reduction of Christianity* and (with George Grant) *A Christian Response to Dungeons and Dragons*. He is currently working on a series of articles for *The Geneva Review* on the Kingdom of God. The first installment will appear in the May 1988 issue. Next month look for the conclusion to his series on judicial theology, *Eucharist and Judgment*.]

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a **course** I will be teaching in Pennsylvania this summer and will be entitled **Liturgy and Life**. Geneva Ministries will be making this available, along with its workbook component. It can also be used as the basis for a Sunday school course.

During the next few installments, I will be doing a **short** series on grammar, followed by a few articles explaining how **the curriculum** fits together **from** the **foundation** I've discussed thus far. Would you be interested in **more** detailed explanations? Are **you** interested in seeing **adult** education **addressed**, possibly Sunday School teaching methods? I would appreciate hearing **from YOU, regarding what topics YOU would like to see** covered in the ensuing months. Although I cannot **promise** personal replies **at this time**, I will try to deal with questions you **raise** in upcoming columns. My address until May 5 is 719 Young Graduate House, West Lafayette, IN 47906. Thank you.

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