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Presbyterianism:

ITS TRUE PLACE AND VALUE IN HISTORY.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

REVERENCE for the past, when it does not degenerate into anility or superstition, is a noble sentiment. Honoring of ancestry has entered into the structure of all religions, and forms the entire basis of that of China, while to the Jews and Christians it was the first commandment revealed with promise.

God has employed the pen of the historian, as well as that of the prophet. Of the sixty-six books of holy Scripture, nearly a third part are historical. Prophecy itself is but history in anticipation. Isaiah was the annalist of futurity, the evangelist before the captivity, the harbinger in advance even of John. Prophecy was the earlier, as befitted the world's youth; for youth has no past, and loves to revel in expectations. History made its appearance later, for it was the record of experience. For awhile both synchronized; but now that the world has grown old, the seer hath ceased, the voice of oracles is dumb, no fresh inspirations are vouchsafed; and we are left to glean wisdom from those records only which former ages have bequeathed us.

Since the history of the Church has been the care of God himself, and since he caused it to be written by inspiration for our instruction, we may not regard it as below our notice. By

parity of reasoning we are not at liberty to undervalue whatever auxiliaries tend to its elucidation or development, whether illustrating the state of the Church Catholic, or of that particular branch of it with which Providence has ordered our connection.

Ours is a historical Church. It is no mushroom of a night; no Nile-born monster, sprung from some inundation of feculence and slime; no misshapen hybrid, engendered by fanaticism from ignorance, ashamed of its parentage, and incapable of perpetuation. It is as old as any of the great families of the Reformation, if not indeed the oldest. It is no chance off-shoot from some other Protestant sect, an abortive cohobation, a sort of tertiary formation; it is a branch, direct and lineal, of the venerable old Catholic, or, Universal Church, planted ages before, the Holy Catholic Church of the Apostles' creed; it is the National Church of Scotland, reformed, not by royal edicts, but by its free autonomy, and unchanged in aught, save in parity and purity.

As in Geneva, Holland, France, and England, so in Scotland, the history of the State cannot be written with the Presbyterian element omitted. Persecution emblazoned its genealogy in a bloody rubric, not easily hidden. What blanks would the sixteenth century exhibit, if the name of Knox were blotted out, along with those other illustrious names of Calvin and Coligny? The Solemn League and Covenant, and the Westminster Confession, were mixed up with the political affairs of the times so intimately, that it is impossible to disentangle them. At one period the established religion of Great Britain was Presbyterian, in England as well as Scotland; although in Southern Britain it was never permitted to go into actual operation, being repressed by the iron rule of Oliver Cromwell, whose preferences were for Independency.

It has not been the lot of Presbyterianism to be

“Carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease.”

On the contrary, if being “everywhere evil spoken against” could identify any one with the original sect of the Nazarenes, she might put in a claim of no ordinary force. Not only has she witnessed a good confession before many witnesses, and amidst persecutions of the severest kind; not only has she

numbered her martyrs and confessors by thousands; she has had little sympathy from mankind. She has suffered alone, and in silence. "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird; the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour." The reason of this isolation from general sympathy we shall not now pause to investigate; doubtless, it will be found to originate in the unaccommodating nature of the tenets she maintains, the unbending tone of morality she requires, and the strictness of discipline she administers to all ranks and classes with an impartial hand.

That the race of kings and nobles should have felt repugnance to this plain and unflattering system, is not surprising. Their fondness for pomp and power finds no scope for gratification. They feel instinctively that they have in it no sycophantic supporter. Royal apothegms are familiar. James I. uttered a *bon mot*, which, after all, justifies his title to the name of the modern Solomon more than many other things ascribed to him: "No bishop, no king!" He had sagacity enough, as Fox informs us, to suspect that the Presbyterians were naturally hostile to the principles of passive obedience. Charles II. renounced the Covenant which he had solemnly sworn to uphold, and abandoned to their enemies the men who had raised him to his throne, because "Presbyterianism was no religion for a gentleman."

Presbyterianism finds no better reception among the poets. Pope, who was himself of a sect that loved not the others too well, has depicted in broad caricature,

"The Quaker sly, the Presbyterian sour."

The pointed and pithy line has grown into a sort of axiom, the truth of which is not to be called in question. And yet it is no more true that every Presbyterian is sour, than that every Quaker is sly. Those manners which, to the fancy of the companion of Bolingbroke, were austere and sour, were nothing else than the seriousness and gravity enjoined by St. Paul, and natural to men

"Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band;"

men who felt that life to them had a purpose and an aim; men who were deeply conscious that they were not placed in this

world merely to amuse themselves; men who were aware both of their duty and their destiny; men who knew that for their sins a God had died, and the heavens had stood in mourning; men who were firmly persuaded that deathless sanctities and glories awaited them when the pomp of earthly thrones shall have ceased to dazzle, and the diadems of princes shall have lost their lustre.

Such men might be excelled in courtly compliments and carpet knighthood; they may have been untaught

“To crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning;”

but there were better things to which they were competent; they were of the right Themistocles' vein; they were of the stuff from which heroes are made; they feared God and knew no other fear; they had a work to do, and they did it; they made their mark on their generation; they lived not, neither did they die, in vain. To whom are the people of these United States under most obligation for their unparalleled liberties, for their singular independence, for their potential voice and rank among the nations? Are they most indebted to fiddling Italy, and dancing France, or to grave, austere, Presbyterian Scotland? Let Hume answer. Let Bancroft answer. Let the Mecklenburg Declaration answer.

“Sour!” So is leaven—*good* leaven. I would such leaven might leaven the whole earth.

The novelist also has had his part in this wholesale misrepresentation. Sir Walter Scott, who counted it a chief glory of his life to bear away the glass from which George IV. had drunk, as a precious memorial of the royal libertine, and who was always ready to pardon the miseries of vassalage for the sake of the splendors of chivalry, has more of the responsibility of this mischief than any other man. He has wantonly exposed to ridicule the martyrs of his native land, whom he should have held in honor, and would have held in honor, had he not abandoned the faith of his fathers. Who could recognize in the grim, canting, whining, snivelling, ignorant fanatics, whom he has portrayed, a people that were the salt of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy; men of faith and prayer; sincere in their convictions; ready to dare or to endure all things for conscience' sake; the Stoics of

Christianity, whose virtue, i rigid, was at least irreproachable ; the Girondists of their day, but more reasonable and practical ; enlightened and earnest champions of popular rights, beyond any other country in Europe, owing to that very biblical knowledge which the novelist depreciated.

Nor has the historian refrained from bringing his heavier artillery to bear. It is enough for him that a man be a Presbyterian, and a mist is at once spread over the most shining virtues and the most disinterested patriotism. Why, it may be pertinently asked, is the name of John Calvin perpetually defamed, unless because he is regarded as the most conspicuous advocate and intrepid champion of those scripture truths which are eminently repulsive to the unrenewed heart? The very latest biography of this Reformer, that of Dyer, teems with oft-refuted misrepresentations, and paints him in the most unamiable and revolting colours.

If you examine his character and history, where will you find a man more illustrious in all that constitutes true nobility of soul? Where will you find a man with a juster title to the esteem of his contemporaries and the applause of posterity? The father of Genevese liberty, he founded a republic, which, amidst the convulsions of Europe, has endured in prosperity and peace for three centuries. Such was his merit as a statesman. Among men of letters he took his place as an acknowledged chief, without effort, and without rivalry. In the ever blessed Reformation he was a principal leader; his writings were the text-books whence the whole Protestant world drew instruction; and well would it have been had all imitated the sober simplicity of Geneva. That scheme of theology which has been the favourite of the deepest thinkers and the superior minds of various communions, of a Luther, an Owen, a Pascal, a Dickinson, an Edwards, bears the designation of his name, a tribute paid to his intellectual and theological merit most remarkable, and beautifully uniting the churches of the Reformation with Augustine, Athanasius, and Paul.

No single mind, perhaps, has ever wielded such extensive influence, and wielded it for good. And yet, with such acknowledged merit as a statesman, as a man of learning, as a leading Reformer, than this man few have been more calumniated. From those whose rule and domination he overturned, we might expect an overflow of gall and bigotry; but why do

others join in the unreasonable proscription? The man of taste and the sentimental artist, who excuse the most pernicious errors so they be splendid, are loud in denunciation of his rigor; the musician takes occasion from the Reformer's rejection of instrumental music to vent his spleen; the anatomist digresses to rake up the ashes of the Spanish Arian, because he had a glimpse of the circulation of the blood; and the historian blackens his character as a bigot, a tyrant and a traitor. Why should there exist this wide conspiracy against a man so truly great, so irreproachable in his personal character, and so repeatedly vindicated with triumphant success—why, we ask, unless the prejudice is prompted by a common hatred to his doctrines? One exception we must make, and strange to say, that exception is Bulwer, who, in his *Miscellanies*, written on Lake Lemman, saw the mighty shade of Calvin rise before him, great without peer or second.

A like mishap has befallen the reputation of John Knox. The very times in which he lived, and the nation to which he belonged, have been described as rude and barbarous, “unacquainted with the pleasures of conversation, ignorant of arts and civility, and corrupted beyond their usual rusticity by a dismal fanaticism, which rendered them incapable of all humanity or improvement.”* And be it observed, it is not of the commons, but of the Scottish nobles, that Hume uses this language. And this is said in face of the fact that Buchanan was a poet celebrated for the elegance of his Latinity, and John Row's children were not only able to read Greek, Latin and Hebrew, but conversed in the family in no other language than French. The gentlemen and scholars of that day, as now, were in the habit of receiving a liberal education, of being acquainted with ancient and modern learning, of studying the leading languages of Europe, and of improving their taste by foreign travel.

As for Knox himself, Hume lavishes contumelious epithets upon him, holding him up to scorn as a fierce, rough, unmannerly bigot, an iconoclast of the rudest stamp, devoting to devastation the first works of art. In Geneva “he had imbibed,” we are informed, “from his connection with Calvin, the highest fanaticism of his sect, augmented by the native ferocity of his own character.”†

* Hume's *Engl. c.* xxxviii. vol. i. p. 727, Philad. ed.

† Hume, vol. i. p. 718.

On the other hand, the Humes, and Robertsons, and Stricklands, have exhausted their skill in painting Mary Queen of Scots as an incarnation of loveliness, adorned with all accomplishments, and shining with a sweet and serene lustre like the meekest of the evening stars.

To John Knox Scotland owes her liberty and her religion. Intrepid, ardent, prompt, firm of purpose, and of untiring energy; bold in plan, and vigorous in execution, he was fitted by nature for the work of a Reformer. The qualities which made him less amiable, made him more efficient. A yielding Melancthon in his situation would have compromised all. The lion stamp of his face was but the index of the powerful workings within. He was compounded of the elements of power and greatness. His spirit was impetuous, his temperament fiery. His wide-sweeping and comprehensive views were always in advance of other men. While the more timid cowered in the cave, it was his province to

“Ride on the whirlwind, and direct the storm.”

Never was a truer eulogium than that of the Earl of Morton at his grave. “There lies he who never feared the face of man.” “This man’s voice,” wrote another contemporary, “puts more courage into us than the braying of a thousand trumpets.”

This Scottish Luther, this Voice crying in the wilderness, this John Baptist, clad in camel’s skin and leathern girdle, has been censured for the very qualities which rendered him equal to the times. War and peace require different instruments. The rubbish of the temple will never be removed by silver pickaxes, and silken aprons, and dainty fingers. The circumstances of the times were enough to rouse the gentlest, and put courage into the most faint-hearted. The martyrdom of the early reformers, Wishart and Hamilton; the machinations of a perfidious court; the personal ill-treatment of Knox himself, to effect whose banishment, and the extirpation of all Protestants, the Queen had registered a vow; the vacillation and cupidity of the Protestant lords; here were causes, sufficient not merely to excite discontent, but even to exasperate.

That the hunted, persecuted, defamed, and exiled Knox should speak with tenderness and honeyed accents of the authors of his calamities, was hardly to be expected. Yet we

believe him when he solemnly assures us, that he was not actuated by vindictive feelings, but solely sought the welfare of his country, and to discharge his conscience under the pressure of duty. It was the vice, not the person, that was the object of his hatred; the sin, not the sinner, that he wished to extirpate. That he spoke of things by their right names, he would not deny; he called a fig, a fig, and a spade, a spade. His tender intimacy with Buchanan, (an intimacy like that of Robert Hall and McIntosh, originating in a congeniality of tastes;) the devotion of his private secretary, Richard Bannatyne; the attachment of his wife, and his kind treatment of her; his repeated intercessions for the pardon of criminals; and his pacific intervention in the Frankfort disputes, show that he was neither savage nor hard-hearted. In him it was principle that spoke and moved, and his fearlessness stopped not to count the cost of opposition.

His conduct to the young and beautiful Queen has been severely condemned as rude and disrespectful in the extreme. But we must remember that his country and the cause of Christ were dearer to his heart, and of more consequence in his estimation, than the favor of one who had been trained up under the Guises. His own words, as cited by Miss Strickland herself, should be allowed some weight. In one of his interviews with Mary, he thus vindicated himself from the charge of undue sternness. "Without the preaching-place, Madam," said he, "I think few have occasion to be offended at me; and there, Madam, I am not master of myself, but maun obey Him who commands me to speak plain, and to flatter no flesh upon the face of the earth."* It has been insinuated, that to see the Queen bathed in tears of vexation gave him the highest pleasure; let us hear his own account of his feelings, and we will see that this apparently iron man was not a stranger to some of the finest traits of humanity. "Madam, in God's presence I speak, I never delighted in the weeping of any of God's creatures; yea, I can scarcely well abide the tears of my own boys whom my own hand corrects; much less can I rejoice in your Majesty's weeping. But seeing that I have offered unto you no just occasion to be offended, but have spoken the truth as my vocation craves of me, I maun

* Miss Strickland's *Queens of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 327.

rather sustain, albeit unworthily, your Majesty's tears, rather than I dare hurt my conscience or betray my commonwealth through my silence."*

Here we have the key to this brave man's doings; and we honor that firmness which would no more allow itself to be shaken by the tears of a young and beautiful queen, to the detriment of the Reformed religion, than by the obstinacy or opposition of mailed men. To that firmness Scotland is indebted for her kirk and her schools, and all that has made her what she is.

One of the foul slanders which were levelled at Knox came from the pen of Patrick Fraser Tytler, in his History of Scotland, charging him with having been privy to the murder of the unfortunate Rizzio. This base accusation he has persisted in without retraction, notwithstanding Dr. McCries luminous exposure of its groundlessness, and after he had himself quoted the letter of Morton and Ruthven to Cecil, distinctly exonerating the ministers of Scotland from having instigated or participated in the act. "We assure your lordship," they said, "however, upon our honor, that there were none of them act nor part of that deed, nor were participate thereof." Language could not be more definite; yet Mr. Tytler never took back his assertion.†

But we will not enlarge further on this theme. We perceive what varied forces have been arrayed against Presbyterianism—historians among the rest; to say nothing of co-religionists, from whom better things might have been expected. And we may infer the cogent need of all sorts of historical aids and appliances for the eviction of the truth, and the vindication of Christ's faithful servants. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, may Israel now say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then had they swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth! Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Our remarks have been hitherto confined to the venerable old Mother Kirk of Scotland. It is time that we turn our at-

* Miss Strickland's Queens of Scotland, vol. iii. p. 329.

† McCrie's Sketches of Scottish Ch. Hist. vol. i. app. p. 311.

tention to this side of the Atlantic, and consider the historical status of that body in the United States with which we are immediately connected.

The introduction of Presbyterianism into America, though not an event marked with such sharp and well-defined outlines as the landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, nor capable of being restricted, like that, to a single date, has yet had its historical connections, and has formed an incidental record on the page of secular history. The Presbyterian Church in America owed its origin to the intolerance of the Old World; and wherever that intolerance has come under review, mention has necessarily been made of consequent and numerous emigrations to this inviting Hesperia of equal brotherhood. Mr. Bancroft, in his recent volume, the fifth, presents us with a glimpse of the truth, and in the same paragraph has done justice to the character and moral influence of the parties thus compelled to choose between oppression or exile.

“At different times,” says he, “in the eighteenth century, some had found homes in New England, but they were most numerous south of New York, from New Jersey to Georgia. In Pennsylvania they peopled many counties, till, in public life, they already balanced the influence of the Quakers. In Virginia they went up the valley of the Shenandoah; and they extended themselves along the tributaries of the Catawba, in the beautiful upland region of North Carolina. Their training in Ireland had kept the spirit of liberty, and the readiness to resist unjust government as fresh in their hearts, as though they had just been listening to the preaching of Knox, or musing over the political creed of the Westminster Assembly. They brought to America no submissive love for England; and their experience and their religion alike bade them meet oppression with prompt resistance. We shall find the first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain, came, not from the Puritans of New England, or the Dutch of New York, or the planters of Virginia, but from Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.” Hist. vol. v. p. 76. Mr. Bancroft refers, beyond doubt, to the celebrated Declaration of the county of Mecklenburg, in North Carolina, which preceded the National Declaration of Independence by more than a year, viz., in May 20, 1775. Dr. Hawks, in a recent discourse before the Historical Society of New York, has, with great

candor and liberality done ample justice to the integrity, virtue, and patriotism of the Presbyterian colonists of North Carolina. The account of the Mecklenburg Declaration may be found at length in Dr. Foote's Sketches of North Carolina, and Dr. Smyth's monograph on the subject.

Such were the consequences of the odious Test Act, and of the disfranchisement of Protestant Ulster. The Presbyterian Exodus from the North of Ireland appears to have attracted as much attention in those days, as the Roman Catholic Exodus from the Southern counties in our own. Little did the British Government dream, when they enforced their rigorous measures, that they were preparing a nursery, in their Transatlantic provinces, of the most active and successful hostility, from the bosom of which, on the banks of the Catawba, should spring up the seventh President of an independent republic, and the conqueror of those veterans who were afterwards themselves the victors of Waterloo.

Wodrow has preserved the names of 2000 persons proscribed in Scotland after the insurrection of the Covenanters and the battle of Bothwell Bridge; and it is likely that some of their descendants are now in this country, and might verify their genealogy by means of this list. But as a general thing, the Presbyterian exiles came hither in small companies, at successive intervals, and on their arrival dispersed themselves wherever they could find desirable settlements; for which reasons we are, to a great degree, ignorant of the leading fathers and pioneers of our communion. They were not the high and titled, from baronial halls and civic dignities, but, to borrow a felicitous phrase from an eloquent foreigner, "the unnamed demigods of the people." It would be indeed gratifying to possess some memorials of those men who prized civil and religious freedom above the endearments of home and country, that we might give them monumental honors, and embalm their names in grateful eulogies, as the South has done for the Huguenots, and the North for the Pilgrim Fathers. But, as Sir Thomas Browne quaintly remarks, "To be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name than Herodias with one. And who would not rather have been the good thief, than Pilate?"

. . . . "Who knows whether the best of men be known, or

whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time?"*

Two expeditions, about which we have definite information, turned out unsuccessful. In 1636, one hundred and forty of the non-conformists of Ulster equipped a small ship, of 150 tons burden, with the design of sailing to New England. To this vessel they gave the name of *THE EAGLEWING*. Considering their circumstances of trial and persecution, it is not at all unlikely that this name was suggested by Rev. xii. 14. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness." Driven back by contrary winds, they found themselves compelled to drop anchor in Loch Fergus, and becoming discouraged, abandoned the project, and took up their abode in the western parts of Scotland. It is not worth while to speculate now on the probable result had this plan been carried out, or what important institutions of a civil or religious character may have been nipped in the bud; we must refer it to D'Israeli's curious chapter on the "History of Events that have not happened." To ourselves it may be a matter of pardonable regret, that we have no story of an "Eaglewing" to enshrine in the annals of our forefathers' colonization, as a match to the celebrated "Mayflower" of the Puritan exiles.

The other expedition to which allusion has been made, was that of Lord Cardross, in 1682. Lord Cardross, afterwards Earl of Buchan, was a Scottish nobleman who had been subjected to no small persecution for his religion, and in consequence resolved to seek a country where he might live undisturbed in the enjoyment of his rights as a freeman and a Christian. From the Duke of Lauderdale, who was then at the head of affairs, he received no opposition, as the Duke was apprehensive of a fresh rebellion if the malcontents remained. Under the conduct of Lord Cardross, a small colony of persons, like-minded with himself, set sail, and finally settled on Port Royal Island, where they obtained from the proprietors of Carolina a grant of equal rights with the city of Charleston. But unfortunately, in 1686, an armed force, sent by the Spaniards against the province, attacked and broke up the colony, whereupon most of them returned afterwards to their native country.

* *Urn-burial, Works, pp. 259, 260.*

It is not intended to dilate at present on those times of sore trial. The theme is not a welcome one; but those who have a curiosity to investigate it thoroughly, will find more ample materials than the world is generally aware of, scattered through the pages of those historians who have treated of European or American affairs for the last two centuries. The inquirer may be referred to Burnet, Wodrow, Hume, Lingard, Crawford, Gordon, Plowden, Neal, Holmes, Haweis, Gillies, Reid, Ramsay, and Bancroft.

An occasional recurrence to such reminiscences may be very useful. Especially is it desirable to have the means of information at hand. If it is proper, as the wise Florentine insisted, to reduce governments at intervals to the first principles on which they are based, not less so is it in regard to ecclesiastical bodies. The baptism of blood and tears by which the church of our forefathers was consecrated to God cannot be recalled to mind without administering a stern rebuke to all latitudinarian, erastian, or monarchical tendencies. Ignorant or strangely oblivious of the stern virtues and heroic sacrifices of the defenders of Christ's crown and covenant, or strangely indifferent must he be, who can coldly desert, or lightly speak evil of, the venerable Kirk of the olden time. And though numbers are now embraced in our wide-spread connection, who trace no descent from Caledonian confessors, still to such the study may be profitable and interesting, as it corroborates the fact, which we are proud to record, that the Presbyterian has never been a persecuting, though often a persecuted, church. Her hands are unstained with the blood of saints, even in her brief days of palmy power. The thumb-screw, and the iron-boot, fines, prisons and scaffolds she has indeed known, but not as the teacher, only as the taught; not as the inflicter, but as the unflinching sufferer alone.

It will not be regarded as impertinent here to remind you that, as in the mother country, so in this, the Presbyterian church was the nursling of the storm. Where the peaceful policy of Penn prevailed, was found an undisturbed asylum; but where an established order existed, there intolerance launched its vetoes. Makemie, the patriarch of American Presbyterianism, was cast into prison in New York by the infamous Cornbury, for preaching and baptizing, and though at last acquitted by a jury, was compelled to pay the heavy costs

of prosecution. The Presbyterian congregation gathered in that city were repeatedly hindered from obtaining a charter of incorporation by the interference of the Vestry of Trinity church, and were in consequence prevented from enjoying several valuable legacies. They therefore, in 1730, made a formal conveyance of their church property to the Commission of the Church of Scotland and others. This state of things continued till after the Revolution. It may be added, that during the war, about fifty houses of worship belonging to the Presbyterians and Dutch Reformed were converted into barracks, jails, hospitals and riding schools. In Virginia, Mr. Morris, of Hanover, was fined twenty times for non-conformity; and the amiable Rodgers was formally expelled by the General Court, and forbidden to preach within the bounds of the colony, under penalty of £500 fine, and a year's imprisonment without bail or mainprize; the Chairman avowing, "we *have* Mr. Rodgers out, and we mean to *keep* him out." Mr. Davies narrowly missed sharing the same fate. It might be thought that a more welcome reception would have been given in the country of the Puritans, who had been fugitives themselves for conscience' sake. But we find Samuel Finley actually cast out of Connecticut as a common vagrant, by the sons of the Pilgrims. Mr. Finley had been sent thither by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, in 1743. On his way to church in New Haven he was seized and confined. The Grand Jury presented him, and he was adjudged to be carried from constable to constable, and from town to town, till he was placed out of the limits of the colony. He had been also expelled, prior to this, from Milford. Yet the congregation at Milford had declared itself Presbyterian, and had been constituted according to the laws of the colony. They had voluntarily put themselves under the care of the New Brunswick Presbytery; and it was in accordance with their application for a preacher that Mr. Finley was sent to them. But the Association of New Haven county formally resolved, that no member of the Presbytery should be admitted into any of their pulpits, till satisfaction had been made for sending Mr. Finley to preach within their bounds.* David Brainerd was obliged to flee from the Second church, New Haven, as soon as he had finished preaching in it, to avoid arrest. It is due to candor to

* See Tracy's Great Awakening, pp. 307, 368.

qualify these statements by adding, that this opposition may not have been so much to Presbyterianism *per se*, as to the peculiar views of the New Side preachers. There was in Connecticut, as in Scotland, a party of Moderates, who were opposed to all exuberant zeal, and who looked on the Revivalists as wild, disorderly, and mischievous men.*

These things are not pleasant to recall to mind, nor are they now mentioned to awaken any vindictive feelings; but they are historical facts which should not be forgotten, for they attest the transmission of the character of the good old stock to the sturdy scion, and illustrate the difficulties through which that scion struggled into life.

Another advantage of the studies recommended, is their tendency to shed light on the character of the early Presbyterianism of this country. Scanty are our materials, and we can ill afford to spare the lost leaf which recorded the opening of the first Presbytery. Diligent research has done something, and may do yet more, to supply the deficiency.

This is by no means a trivial matter, but worthy of all the pains that can be expended upon it. If it can be shown that the source was turbid, it is an impertinent and irrelevant inquiry, who muddied the stream in its subsequent flow. It is important to know whether Presbyterianism was first introduced under the patronage of a London society, and in a diluted form, or whether its founders, like the Presbyterians of Ulster, in the words of Wodrow, "reckoned themselves upon the same bottom with, and as it were, a branch of the Church of Scotland."† The reputation of the denomination for consistency is at stake, and it becomes therefore highly desirable to trace the antecedents, and detect the leanings, of the fathers of the church. This is now left to inference alone, inasmuch as the first Presbytery, at their coming together, seem to have entered on the record no formal act of adhesion to any given formularies, but to have quietly addressed themselves to their duties, to all appearance, as if it had been an adjourned meeting of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus.

It is important, by means of such investigations, to arrive at the significance of that much discussed paper, the Adopting

* I am indebted for this suggestion to the Rev. Dr. H. Atwater of Fairfield, Conn., and refer the curious to Trumbull's History of Connecticut for fuller information.

† Wodrow's Hist., vol. i. p. 324.

Act; and a point is gained where we can probably infer the *animus imponentis* in such an instrument. Did that Act open the door to latitudinarian interpretations, or did it only refuse to endorse the strict view of the Old Confession on the interference of the magistrate in the convening of Councils and in the regimen of the Church? This is a question which would acquire intense interest, and the answer would glow with luminous clearness, if it could be shown beyond reasonable cavil, that the instrument was framed by men who had suffered, or who were the sons of such as had suffered, for conscience' sake.

The Great Schism in 1741, of which Gilbert Tennent was the life and soul, is a memorable epoch, deserving of careful examination. Important deductions have been, and still are drawn from the events, reasonings and examples of that day, by way of precedent, and by way of warning. It is humiliating to look back and see good men yielding to the infirmities of poor, partially-sanctified human nature; disputing round the wells of salvation like the herdmen of Gerar and the herdmen of Isaac, saying, "the water is ours;" and at last after a separation of seventeen years, when they had had time to cool down, making the discovery that the controversy had turned not at all on essentials, but on circumstantials alone. Such was the memorable confession of the great Gilbert himself. "What was then," he asked, in his *Irenicum*, "the core of the controversy? Why, some circumstantials in government; in other words, some rules and acts of discipline formed by the majority, and reckoned prudential and expedient by them, but on the contrary, prejudicial and sinful by the minor party." Yet for these circumstantials and lesser points, which were not worth contending about, this great and good man, with the party of which he was the head, rashly and obstinately rent the seamless robe of Christ, and sundered the beautiful communion of saints. Here is a sober lesson for all that are too ready to make a man an offender for a word, and plunge the church into the seething-pot of unnecessary schism. Coming down to later times, we find a second Schism resulting in the extensive Cumberland organization in 1810, of which we have full accounts; and a third and greater Schism permitted by Providence to take place in 1838, to humble the Church for her too great readiness to imitate the sin of David, in number-

ing the people from motives of pride. The history of this last division is yet to be written. The materials are extant and abundant, and now while they are readily accessible, is the time to gather them into a convenient repository, for some future Gad or Iddo the Seer to sift, and arrange, and shape them into lucid order. The proper time for such a narration has not yet arrived. The ground-swell of the agitation has not completely subsided. On the part of the New School body, publications have recently been made, both by authority and on individual responsibility, to which replications may be expected; and in the course of time, and by an impartial generation, the true state of the case will be educed. That the breach will yet be healed, and a re-union take place, is devoutly to be hoped, since the existence of fragmentary churches is a great obstacle in the way of convincing the world of the divine origin of Christianity; but bitterness and asperity, crimination and recrimination, or even "holding the *truth* in *unrighteousness*," will inevitably retard the consummation. Homogeneous and harmonious as is our branch of the church at present, it would be unwise to make a sacrifice of our strength, prosperity, and peace, for the shadow of a merely *nominal* re-union; but that day when the Lord will lead the watchmen to see eye to eye, and with the voice together, and not discordantly, to sing; that day will be a new Gilgal, for the reproach of Egypt shall be rolled away from off us; Esek and Sitnah shall be succeeded by Rehoboth, for then will the Lord make room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

In the remarks that have been submitted, we have attempted to show that ours is a historical church. She has a history; and that history has, from the beginning, been one, not of ease and triumph, not of wealth and honour, but of suffering and struggle. She has been a Militant Church, and her mission was to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." She has been a Helkuth Hazzurim—a Field of Rocky Men. In all her trials little has she had of sympathy, and little has she sought it. Perhaps it has been a fault that she has been more conservative than aggressive, waiting to be attacked instead of attacking, reposing in the consciousness of being right instead of making her system and her services attractive, abounding in fruit, but not causing the spices to flow forth. Duty, self-abnegation, truth, the clear mind of God, an

equal readiness to do or to suffer the Lord's will, have been her stern watchwords. It is to the system these traits are to be credited; for wherever it prevails, we see a remarkable uniformity of results, whether among Huguenots or Covenanters, Hollanders or Swiss, the 2000 Bartholomew non-conformists of England, or the Vaudois "on their Alpine mountains cold," the Free Church of Scotland giving up churches, glebes and manses, or the children of the Scottish Kirk in America. The emblem of one is the emblem of all—the bush of Moses begirt by flames, yet unconsumed. "*Nec tamen consumebatur.*"

It is not the design of such a discourse as the present, which is of a preliminary and tentative character altogether, so much to elaborate any one great topic, as rather to indicate, in a desultory way, the rich lodes that may be pursued to advantage; let us proceed, therefore, before we draw to a close, to enumerate a few things that may be regarded as *Desiderata*, and which appropriately fall within the purview of a Presbyterian Historical Society.

DESIDERATA.

1. Collections of pamphlets, tractates, controversial and other essays, bearing on the history of the Presbyterian church in this country, especially touching the Schism of 1741. These should be bound in volumes, and arranged in chronological order, handy for reference. No time should be lost in this work, for pamphlets are very perishable commodities, and speedily vanish out of sight. A copy of Gilbert Tennent's Remarks on the Protest cannot now be obtained. One was understood by Dr. Hodge, when he wrote his History, to be in the Antiquarian Library, in Worcester, Mass., but the work is reported by the librarian as missing. This shows us that we should hoard old pamphlets and papers with Mohammedan scrupulosity, especially when there are no duplicates.

2. Collections, like Gillies', of accounts of Revivals, and other memoranda of the progress of vital religion. Such collections would be supplementary to Gillies' great work, which does not embrace the wonderful events of the present century in America.

3. Collections of memoirs of particular congregations, of

which quite a number have been at various times printed, and which ought to be brought together and preserved.

4. Collections of occasional Sermons, both of deceased and living divines. As old productions are of interest to us, so such as are of recent publication may interest posterity. Such collections would furnish good specimens of the Presbyterian pulpit, and might be either chronologically or alphabetically arranged.

5. Collections of discourses delivered about and after the era of the Revolution. They would exhibit in a striking and favorable light the patriotic sympathies of the clergy at that period, as also the popular sentiment on the independence of the States, and their subsequent union under the present constitution.

6. A similar collection of Discourses preached on the day of Thanksgiving in the year 1851, would be very interesting; exhibiting the various views held on the Higher Law, and the preservation of the Union, and also the value of the Pulpit in pouring oil on the strong passions of mankind.

7. Biographical Sketches of leading Presbyterian divines and eminent laymen. It is understood that one of our most esteemed writers is engaged in the preparation of a work of this sort, embracing the different Christian denominations. Whatever emanates from his elegant pen will be sure to possess a standard value; but it is thought, from the very structure of his projected work, such a one as is now recommended will not interfere with it, nor its necessity be superseded. Mark the stirring catalogue that might be produced, names which, though they that bare them have been gathered to their fathers, still powerfully affect us by the recollection of what they once did, or said, or wrote, and by a multitude of interesting associations that rush into the memory: Makemie, the Tennents, Dickinson, Davies, Burr, Blair, the Finleys, Beattie, Brainerd, Witherspoon, Rodgers, Nisbet, Ewing, Sproat, the Caldwells, S. Stanhope Smith, John Blair Smith, McWhorter, Griffin, Green, Blythe, J. P. Campbell, Boudinot, J. P. Wilson, Joshua L. Wilson, Hoge, Speece, Graham, Mason, Alexander, Miller, John Holt Rice, John Breckinridge, Nevins, Wirt. Here is an array of names which we need not blush to see adorning a *Biographia Presbyteriana*. And the materials for

most of the sketches are prepared to our hand, and only require the touch of a skilful compiler.

8. Lives of the Moderators. There have been sixty-four Moderators of the General Assembly; and as it is usual to call to the Chair of that venerable body men who enjoy some consideration among their brethren, it is fair to infer that a neat volume might be produced. Many were men of mark; and where this was not the case, materials could be gathered from the times in which they lived, or the doings of the Assembly over which they presided.

9. A connected account or gazetteer of Presbyterian Missions, both Foreign and Domestic, with sketches of prominent missionaries, and topographical notices of the stations. Dr. Green prepared something of this sort, but it is meagre, and might be greatly enlarged and enriched.

10. Reprints of scarce and valuable works. It may be objected that we have already a Board of Publication, who have this duty in charge; but it is not intended to do anything that would look like interference with that useful organ. The Board are expected to publish works of general utility, and likely to be popular, and so reimburse the outlay; this society would only undertake what would not fall strictly within the Board's appropriate province, or would interest not the public generally, but the clerical profession.

11. A continuation of the Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church to the present time. The valuable work of Dr. Hodge is unfinished; and whether his engrossing professional duties will ever allow him sufficient leisure to complete it is, to say the least, doubtful.

12. Should that not be done, then it will be desirable to have prepared an authentic narrative of the late Schism of 1838; or materials should be collected to facilitate its preparation hereafter, when it can be done more impartially than at present. Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge did a good service in this way, by publishing a series of Memoirs to serve for a future history, in the Baltimore Religious and Literary Magazine.

13. It might be well to compile a cheap and portable manual for the use of the laity, containing a compact history of the Presbyterian Church in America.

14. An account of the Rise and Decline of Presbyterianism in England. This is a much neglected and obscure, but highly

interesting subject. Its gradual growth, its culmination under the Commonwealth, its sudden check, its subsequent coalition with Independency at Pinners' Hall, and its sinking at last into insignificance beneath that stifling Plan of Union, are all interesting topics, and fraught with weighty instruction. It will be useful also to enable us to discriminate between the various classes, who are all, by Neal and the biographies, confounded together under the vague title of non-conformists. It will be gratifying to be informed distinctly whether Baxter, Owen, Bates, Charnock, and other contemporary worthies, were Presbyterians or Independents.

15. A history of the Huguenots is a desideratum. They were a branch, and a very conspicuous one, of the great Presbyterian family, and many of the fugitives from the dragoons of Louis XIV. became incorporated into our communion.

16. A history of the Reformation in Scotland is very important. There is no lack of materials in Wodrow, Hetherington, and McCrie. Gilfillan has just put out a small work in his peculiar and florid style, which is adapted to be useful, though wanting completeness, and superficial. Our people know a great deal more about the English bishops than the Scottish martyrs. The Board of Publication have done a good service in publishing the little work entitled "Traditions of the Covenanters." It is important to rebut the stigmas that have been affixed to the old Mother Church. It is time that the noble spirits who battled against unjust and usurped authority, in behalf of covenanted right, should have justice done them.

"What though the Sceptic's scorn hath dared to soil
The record of their fame! What tho' the men
Of worldly minds have dared to stigmatize
The sister-cause, Religion and the Law,
With superstition's name! yet, yet their deeds,
Their constancy in torture, and in death,
These on tradition's tongue shall live, these shall
On history's honest page be pictured bright
To latest times. Perhaps some bard, whose muse
Disdains the servile strain of Fashion's quire,
May celebrate their unambitious names."

17. Biographical sketches of eminent Scottish divines would furnish rich reading. The pages would glow with portraitures

of Knox, Melville, Welsh, Blair, Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford, Erskine, Brown, Livingston, Chalmers, McCheyne, Gordon, Thomson, Cunningham, Candlish and Duff.

18. A General Ecclesiastical History from a Presbyterian stand-point might prove a very serviceable and timely work. We mean nothing sectarian, nothing illiberal, nothing bigoted; but simply a production which would set forth the history of the Church of Christ in such a light as a staunch friend of the doctrines of grace and the parity of the clergy would naturally view it in. Why should our students be under the necessity of seeing the important past through the eyes of historians prejudiced against the theological and disciplinary system which we decidedly and honestly conceive to be taught in the holy Scriptures? In the speech of an advocate at the bar, the *narrative* forms an important part of his argument. A man who is permitted to tell his story in his own way, may safely leave the inferences to be drawn by his hearers. All we propose, therefore, is that we should not be left entirely at the mercy of our adversaries.

19. A History of Doctrines is a great desideratum. Such a book should note the progressive modifications and various phases which have deformed and obscured the leading truths of Christianity, under the pretence of improvements and new light, down to the present day, both in the Old World and the New; it should trace the periodical reappearance of stale and exploded errors, starting up again, like the river Arethusa, in some distant and unexpected quarter; it should keep the polemical theologian posted up in the changes that from time to time have taken place in the mode of attack, so that he may not be wasting his strength in refuting heresies long consigned to the tomb of the Capulets. It is believed that a work of this description in our own vernacular is very much wanted. Münscher's Dogmatic History, or Hagenbach's, might serve as the basis, with such alterations, amplifications and additions, as would be adapted to our own time and country.*

20. Statistical Tables should be prepared under the direction

* Hagenbach coolly ignores, with a sweep of his pen, the contributions of American Polemics. "The rise of new sects," he says, "both in England and the United States of America, is of no importance for the history of doctrines." Vol. ii. p. 395. In perfect consistency with this statement, there is not a solitary American writer named in his work, not even Edwards.

and patronage of this society, like those which were published several years ago in the American Quarterly Register. These tables might present, in separate columns, a number of interesting items, such as the date of the organization of the churches in a given Presbytery; the successive pastors, with the dates of their installation, and their death; the colleges where the ministers were educated; the elders and deacons; the number of communicants; the amount of annual contributions; the value of the church property; the number of individuals furnished from each church to the ranks of the ministry, &c. Some Presbyteries have already taken action in this matter, and instructed their churches to draw up such tables for the use of this society. Tables might be prepared of the various American colleges, showing how many have been founded directly or indirectly by Presbyterian influence and liberality; together with sketches of their history, lists of their presidents, professors, total of graduates, permanent funds, &c. The pleasing task might be extended farther, and exhibit the statistics of all the branches of the great Presbyterian family throughout the world; thus making them acquainted with their true strength, and perhaps paving the way for a closer union among them.

Thus have we taken a bird's eye view of the wide field legitimately open to this society. We have endeavoured to indicate, for time would allow no more, some of the services which it is in its power to render to the Church, and the general direction in which its labours should tend. To make these labours efficient and respectable, will require the energetic and hearty co-operation of all who feel an interest in the welfare of the Church through the entire length and breadth of the land. It will be an acceptable generosity in any, to present to this society suitable MSS., letters, records, books, pamphlets, orations, sermons, essays, poems, tracts, catalogues, magazines, reviews, newspapers, inaugurals, baccalaureates, biographical memoirs, portraits, engravings, or whatsoever, in the form of rare and valuable relics, might tend to throw light on any portion of the annals of the Church. Where required, any of such articles might be subject to be withdrawn at any time by the depositer; as is provided in the constitution of the Connecticut Historical Society.

The existence of an antiquarian spirit in this country, is evinced in the formation of numerous flourishing State societies for civil investigations; of the Presbyterian Historical Society a year ago; of the Baptist Historical Society and of the Lutheran Historical Society very recently; and in the creation, about nine years since, by the Protestant Episcopal Triennial Convention, of the office of Historiographer, and the appointment of the late Dr. Jarvis to the post. Two volumes were given to the world as the fruit of his labors, but he left ample materials for several more. Two years since an Episcopal Historical Society was formed, which has published a volume of documents, and is about to publish a second.

It would not be becoming to so old and numerous a body as ours to suffer itself to be outstripped in this honorable competition. The materials within our reach are abundant. Not a few pens among us have been busy. It is hoped that the historical collections about to emanate from this society will vie successfully with others in the rich, copious, and permanently valuable nature of their contents. And it is with no small pleasure we state, that this society has now in its hands, and ready for publication as soon as the opportune moment shall arrive, a historical account of our early church, by one of its members, whose accurate, profound and indefatigable research has hardly an equal. It has also procured a MS. treatise on the Atonement, prepared by Samuel Davies in answer to President Smith of William and Mary college. This MS. had been sent to Scotland, and was brought thence to Canada by the Rev. Dr. Burns, who has very kindly lent it to the society. Besides this interesting relic, the society has come into possession of the Bellamy MSS., comprising not less than 100 letters, from Edwards, Davenport, Brainerd, Burr, Finley, Bostwick, Caldwell, and Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh, chiefly in reference to Bellamy's call to New York, together with his own objections, embracing a correspondence from 1740 to 1790, opening a view of the doctrinal history of the last century, and throwing light on the restricting of baptism to the children of communicants alone. In the brief space of time which has elapsed since the formation of the society, it has accumulated a number of old and rare books, some of them of no small value and interest. Access has also been had to the MSS. and

correspondence of Cotton Mather and President Stiles, full of information concerning our church.

It is not necessary to expatiate upon the advantages of the objects proposed, before such an intelligent audience as this. It would be paying them but a poor compliment if we could not take this for granted. Suffice it therefore to remark, in leaving this subject to your consideration and action, that we owe it to the venerable church to which we belong, and we owe it to ourselves, to accomplish something notable in this behalf. "The people that do know their God," it is written, "shall be strong, and do exploits." And again, "they that understand among the people shall instruct many." There is a fine illustration of the influence wielded by well-trained and well-furnished minds, in the account given us of the tribe of Issachar. The heads of the tribe numbered not over two hundred on the roll; but "they were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." They were versed in history, statistics, chronology, the array of ancient precedents, and the intimations of solemn prophecies; and mark the pregnant record so naively subjoined, "*all their brethren were at their commandment!*" That might be truly called a specimen of commanding influence. In truth he who lives entirely in the present and for the present, can attach little more dignity or importance to his pursuits, at least as far as others are concerned, than the ephemeral insect whose life is comprised within the rising and setting of the sun, and which sports away its brief career on idle and careless wing. On the contrary, by studying the past, and throwing the lamp of its recorded experience upon the future, we, as it were, multiply our existence, and concentrate the light, the knowledge, and the glory of all ages on our own. We are following in the world's mighty wake; and we should profit by the mistakes, the struggles and the successes of those who have gone before us.

"How great soever," says Bolingbroke, "a genius may be, and how much soever he may acquire new light and heat as he proceeds in his rapid course, certain it is that he will never shine with the full lustre, nor shed the full influence he is capable of, unless to his own experience he adds the experience of other men and other ages. Mere sons of earth, if they

have experience without any knowledge of the history of the world, are but half scholars in the science of mankind; and if they are conversant in history without experience, they are worse than ignorant; they are pedants, always incapable, sometimes meddling and presuming. The man who has all three, is an honour to his country, and a public blessing.”*

May the favor of Him who is wisdom itself, to whom the end is known from the beginning, and by whom actions are weighed, crown with success the efforts of this society, and condescend to make use of their labors to advance the honor of Christ's name and the reign of truth and godliness over all the earth!

* Letters on Hist. p. 29.