

The Pattern of the House;

OR

A Catechism upon the Constitution,
Government, Discipline and Wor-
ship of the Presbyterian Church.

BY

Rev. L H. Wilson.



Presbyterian Committee of Publication,
Richmond, Va.

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Presbyterian Committee of Publication
Richmond, Va.

THE
Pattern of the House ;

(“Shew them the form of the house.”—Ezek. xliii. II.)

OR,

A CATECHISM UPON THE CONSTITUTION,
GOVERNMENT, DISCIPLINE AND WOR-
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CHURCH

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Rev. L. H. WILSON

RICHMOND, VA. :
PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

INTRODUCTION.

This Catechism has been prepared and is published by the Executive Committee of Publication under the action of the General Assembly, which directs "That the Committee of Publication take into consideration the expediency of securing the preparation and publication of a brief Catechism on the Polity of our Church, suitable for use in our Sunday-schools." (See Minutes, 1891, page 247.)

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THE PATTERN OF THE HOUSE,

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Question 1. What do Presbyterians understand by the term "church"?

Answer. The people of God in all ages of the world, including both adults and children.

Q. 2. How is this church usually spoken of?

A. As the "visible" and the "invisible" church

Q. 3. What is meant by the "visible church"?

A. The visible church consists of all those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children.

Q. 4. Why are such persons called the visible church?

A. Because their number, character, and profession are open to the world, and can be seen by any one.

Q. 5. How is this visible church often spoken of in the Scriptures?

A. As "the Congregation of the Lord," "the Household of Faith," "the Church of the Living

God," and sometimes simply as "the Kingdom of Heaven."

NUM. xvi. 3: "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" GAL. vi. 10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." 1 TIM. iii. 15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." MATT. xix. 13, 14: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Q. 6. What is meant by the invisible church?

A. All who really and truly belong to Christ, whether adult or infant, who were given to him in eternity, and who are washed and sanctified by his blood and by his Holy Spirit.

ACTS xx. 28: "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." EPH. v. 25, 26: "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." REV. i. 5, 6: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

REV. vii. 9: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

Q. 7. Where is this invisible church to be found?

A. Partly on earth, and partly in heaven.

EPH. iii. 15: "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

Q. 8. How is it sometimes spoken of in the Bible?

A. As "the elect of God, holy and beloved," "the Family of God," and "the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

COL. iii. 12: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. EPH. iii. 15: "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." ACTS xx. 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Q. 9. Why are they called the invisible church?

A. Because no one but God can tell just who belong to this number and just who do not.

JOHN x. 14: "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." 2 Tim. ii. 19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

Q. 10. Are all who belong to the visible church necessarily true members of the body of Christ?

A. By no means.

MATT. vii. 22, 23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." GAL. iv. 19, 20: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

Q. 11. Are all who belong to the invisible church necessarily true members of Christ's body?

A. Yes, because the invisible church includes in its number all, in every land and nation, who have been or ever will be saved.

(See REV. vii. 9; Under question 6.)

Q. 12. Has God always had a people upon earth from the first who were called by his name and were devoted to his service?

A. He has.

GEN. iv. 26: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." PS. lxxxiii. 3: "Thy hidden ones. IS. xliii. 1: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

Q. 13. When did this people, so far as we know, first receive its separate and distinct organization from the world?

A. In the days of Abraham.

Q. 14. When and where did Abraham live?

A. About two thousand years before the coming of Christ, and in the land of Canaan.*

Q. 15. What transaction took place in Abraham's day confirming and establishing this separation from the world?

A. God made a covenant with Abraham, bestowing certain rights and privileges upon him and his household, and upon certain conditions.

GEN. xvii. : "I will make my covenant with thee," etc. (read the whole chapter).

Q. 16. How is this covenant usually regarded by the church?

A. As the charter of the church.

Q. 17. What is a charter?

A. Any official writing or document, properly sealed and confirmed, which bestows certain rights and privileges.

Q. 18. By what other name is this covenant with Abraham sometimes known?

*Chronologists differ in the *exact* date of Abraham's call and removal to Canaan, but in round numbers it was about two thousand years before Christ.

A. As "the household covenant."

Q. 19. *Why is it so called?*

A. Because the promises and blessings of the covenant included the household as well as the believing parent.

Q. 20. *Were these blessings there promised spiritual or temporal?*

A. They were both spiritual and temporal.

Q. 21. *How was this covenant with Abraham confirmed?*

A. By the seal of circumcision.

Q. 22. *What did circumcision denote?*

A. The cutting off of the body of sin, and the renewing of the inward nature of man.

DEUT. x. 16: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of *your heart*, and be no more stiff-necked." ROM. ii. 28, 29: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is *that of the heart*, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Q. 23. *Has this covenant ever been repealed or changed?*

A. It has not.

Q. 24. *Did God declare that it would ever be repealed, altered, or set aside?*

A. On the contrary, he declared that it was to be an "everlasting" covenant.

GEN. xvii. 7: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." GAL. iii. 17: "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

Q. 25. Was this covenant not repealed or changed at Mount Sinai?

A. It was not.

(GAL. iii. 17, quoted above.)

Q. 26. Nor at the coming of Christ?

A. Instead of this, it was "confirmed of God in Christ."

(GAL. iii. 17, quoted above.)

Q. 27. Is that Abrahamic covenant, therefore, still in force, and the church now living under it?

A. Yes, it is still in force, and the church is now living under it.

Q. 28. Why, then, does not circumcision continue to be administered in the church now, as it was before the coming of Christ?

A. Because, while the same covenant is still in force, it is, nevertheless, a *New Dispensation* under which the church now lives, and is accompanied by a *new seal*.

Q. 29. What do you mean by a "New Dispensation"?

A. I mean a new or different manner of administering the covenant.

Q. 30. How is this new administering of the covenant sometimes spoken of in the Scriptures?

A. As "the ministration of the Spirit."

2 COR. iii. 7, 8: "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?"

Q. 31. Do you understand, then, that the Holy Spirit is the one who now administers or carries out this covenant of grace?

A. I do, because the Bible speaks of it in this manner.

PROOFS.—All those passages in Scripture which speak of the office and work of the Holy Spirit in convincing, converting, regenerating souls, enlightening the understanding, teaching the truth in Jesus, guiding the apostles, directing the movements of his ministers, watching over and fostering, nursing and blessing the church, the duties of Christians towards him, and the sin that becomes unpardonable because committed *against him*, etc., etc.

Q. 32. As the church is now living under a new dispensation, what is the new seal of the

household covenant now in the place of circumcision?

A. It is Baptism.

Q. 33. Does baptism show forth the same great truths as did circumcision?

A. It does

Q. 34. What are those great truths?

A. Putting away sin, and cleansing sinful nature.

(Proofs under question 22. Also PHIL. iii. 2: "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus." COL. ii. 10-12: "And ye are complete in him, . . . in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism," etc.)

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

Question 1 Has there ever been more than one true church upon earth?

Answer. There never has.

Q. 2. What does this "one true church" include?

A. All the true children of God, wherever they are found.

JOHN viii. 47: "He that is of God heareth God's words." JOHN xix. 37: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." JOHN xviii. 9: "Them which thou hast given me ; for they are mine."

Q. 3. May some of these true children of God be found among all the various bodics of professing Christians?

A. Yes, great numbers of them.

Q. 4. Does not this division into so many different denominations of Christians destroy the oneness of God's church?

A. It does not, although it greatly obscures it.

Q. 5. When did the Presbyterian Church first begin to be known by the name "Presbyterian"?

A. Soon after the great Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Q. 6. What Reformation was that?

A. The celebrated period of history when such multitudes of God's people renounced the superstition, errors, and teachings of the Church of Rome.

Q. 7. Why is it called a reformation?

A. Because it was a return to the faith and practice of the early church.

Q. 8. Who were some of the principal leaders in this great religious movement of the sixteenth century?

A. Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon in

Germany, Ulrich Zwingle in Switzerland, John Calvin in France, John Knox in Scotland, and many others in different parts of Europe.

Q. 9. Did any of these eminent and distinguished men originate the Presbyterian Church?

A. No, none of them.

Q. 10. Had the Presbyterian Church been in existence before?

A. Yes, from the very days of the apostles.

Q. 11. Had it been known all this time by the name "Presbyterian"?

A. It had not.

Q. 12. Why, then, do you say that the Presbyterian Church had been in existence all that time if it had not been known by that name?

A. Because there were bodies of Christians existing all that time that were Presbyterian in their form of government and in their doctrines, even though not called by the name "Presbyterian."

Q. 13. Who were some of these bodies of Christians?

A. Principally the Culdees and the Waldenses.

Q. 14. Who were the Culdees?

A. A body of Christian people living in Scotland and the north of Ireland, whose ministers and missionaries carried the gospel through England and various parts of Europe.

Q. 15. Were their doctrines, preaching, principles, and government of the church the same as those of the Presbyterian Church now?

A. As far as can now be ascertained they were precisely the same.

Q. 16. Why were they called "Culdees"?

A. The origin of this name is not certainly known, but its meaning appears to be the "worshippers of God."

Q. 17. Why were they probably so called?

A. Because in a day of great ignorance and darkness they maintained the true worship of God, in its simplicity and purity.

Q. 18. Who were the Waldenses?

A. A greatly persecuted, but faithful, people of God, inhabiting the mountain valleys of the Piedmont.

Q. 19. Where are these valleys?

A. In the northern part of Italy.

Q. 20. By whom were they so cruelly persecuted?

A. By the Church of Rome.

Q. 21. Why were they so persecuted?

A. Because they bore so clear a testimony against the errors, corruptions in doctrine, and idolatrous practices of that church.

Q. 22. Were these persecutions long continued?

A. Yes, for many centuries.

Q. 23. Were they very severe?

A. Yes, extremely so, and the faithful Waldenses were nearly exterminated more than once.

Q. 24. Were the government, belief and practices of the Waldensian Church similar to those of the Presbyterian Church now?

A. Yes, as nearly as can now be ascertained, they were almost identically the same.

Q. 25. What were the government and practice of the old Jewish Church from the days of Moses to those of Christ?

A. They also were Presbyterian, as well as can now be ascertained.

Q. 26. What are the proofs, tracing back the history of the Presbyterian Church through the Culdees, Waldenses and old Jewish Church, usually called?

A. The historical proofs.

Q. 27. Have we any other proofs besides the historical?

A. Yes, we have the scriptural proofs.

Q. 28. What are these?

A. Presbyterians believe that the truth of their doctrines, government, and modes of worship may all be abundantly proved from the Scriptures.

Q. 29. What is the one standard to which Presbyterians habitually appeal in confirmation of their belief?

A. The Bible alone.

Q. 30. *Are Presbyterians known by any other names now than "Presbyterian"?*

A. Yes, they are sometimes known by different names in different countries.

Q. 31. *What are some of these different names?*

A. The Reformed Church, The Evangelical, The Calvinistic Methodist, etc.

Q. 32. *How many professing Christians are there in connection with the various Presbyterian bodies in the world?*

A. More than four millions.

Q. 33. *How large a Presbyterian population does this represent?*

A. More than twenty millions.

CHAPTER III.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Question. 1. What do you mean by the "Constitution" of the Presbyterian Church?

Answer. I mean the fundamental principles, rules, and ordinances which the Presbyterian Church has approved and adopted for her belief, guidance, and government.

Q. 2. *What is the Constitution of "The Presbyterian Church in the United States"?* *

A. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States consists of its doctrinal symbols, embraced in the *Confession of Faith*, and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, together with the *Book of Church Order*, which comprises the *Form of Government*, the *Rules of Discipline*, and the *Directory of Worship*.

Q. 3. *Are there any other set or specific "rules" by which the Presbyterian Church is governed?*

A. None whatever.

Q. 4. *What is the "Westminster Confession"?*

A. It is a Confession of Faith prepared and drawn up by a very able body of divines in the seventeenth century.

Q. 5. *When and where did this Assembly meet?*

A. In London, England, during the years 1643 to 1648.

Q. 6. *Why is it called the "Westminster Confession"?*

A. Because the Assembly that prepared it held its sessions in one of the chambers of the celebrated Westminster Abbey.

* This is the official title of the *Southern* Presbyterian Church.

Q. 7. By whose authority was this famous assembly of divines called together?

A. By the authority of the English Parliament.

Q. 8. What was the character and standing of these divines?

A. They were among the ablest, most learned, and pious theologians of that day, or of any age of the church.

Q. 9. How long were they in session?

A. Nearly five years.

Q. 10. What Presbyterian bodies accept these standards?

A. All English-speaking Presbyterians, with but few exceptions, accept them.

Q. 11. Do these standards take the place of the Bible?

A. They do not.

Q. 12. Where does the Presbyterian Church obtain her authority, rule of faith, life, and daily practice?

A. Solely and entirely from the Scriptures.

Q. 13. Of what use, then, are these standards if they do not take the place of the Bible?

A. They are merely a statement of her belief as to what the Scriptures teach.

Q. 14. How should they be received and treated?

A. With great respect and reverence.

Q. 15. *Why should they be so treated?*

A. Because prepared by eminently learned and pious men, and because also they are the authoritative statement of her belief by the church.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Question 1. Is there more than one form of government to be seen in the church visible?

Answer. Yes, there are several forms of church government.

Q. 2. *Mention some of the more common and important?*

A. The Papal, Episcopal, Congregational, and Presbyterian.

Q. 3. *What is the Papal form of church government?*

A. That form of church government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of one man, who is the sovereign ruler of that church.

Q. 4. *How is he usually styled?*

A. The "Supreme Pontiff," "Universal Bishop," etc., but more commonly known as the "Pope."

Q. 5. What body of professing Christians hold to this form of church government?

A. Only the Church of Rome, commonly called the Roman Catholic Church.

Q. 6. What is the second or "Episcopal" form of church government?

A. The government of the church by certain persons styled "Bishops."

Q. 7. What bodies of professing Christians hold to this form of government?

A. All those denominations of Christians who are governed by bishops in the prelatical sense of that term. *

Q. 8. Mention some of these bodies who are thus governed by bishops in this sense of the term?

A. The Greek Church, the Church of England, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, and nearly all the Methodist bodies. †

Q. 9. What is the third, or Congregational, form of church government?

*A "prelate" is a clergyman of a superior order or rank, and having authority over the lower clergy. And a bishop in a "prelatical sense" is a bishop having authority over other ministers of the gospel lower in rank than himself.

†In the government of the Methodist bodies, the conference has a large share. But the authority and government are lodged principally in their bishops; hence that church is called the "Methodist Episcopal Church."

A. That form of church government in which the supreme power resides in the congregation.

Q. 10. *What bodies of professing Christians hold to this form of church government?*

A. Principally the Congregationalists, Baptists, and Independents.

Q. 11. *What is the fourth, or Presbyterian, form of church government?*

A. That form of church government in which the supreme power is entrusted to certain men chosen by the church as her rulers and representatives, and known as "Elders."

Q. 12. *What bodies of professing Christians hold to this form of church government?*

A. Presbyterian, Reformed, etc.

Q. 13. *Can any pope, king or queen, or human being whatever, in any proper sense of the term, be the "head of the church"?*

A. In no sense whatever.

Q. 14. *Who is the only Head of the church, in heaven and on earth?*

A. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 15. *Does the Scripture plainly assert this?*

A. Yes, quite frequently.

EPH. i. 22: "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church." EPH. v. 23: "Christ is the head of the church."

Q. 16. When did the papacy set up its claim to being the head of the church universal?

A. Not until the Church of Rome became very ignorant, corrupt, and idolatrous.

Q. 17. Was this claim to universal headship of the church set up at once by the popes of Rome?

A. No, it was advanced only by degrees, and as the Romish Church became more ignorant and corrupt.*

Q. 18. When did the Greek Church separate from the Church of Rome?

A. The schism first began in the ninth century, and was finally completed in the eleventh century.

Q. 19. What are the highest rulers in the Greek Church styled?

A. "Patriarchs."

Q. 20. When did the Church of England break away from the Church of Rome?

A. During the sixteenth century, and in the days of Henry VIII. of England.

Q. 21. What is the Church of England sometimes called?

A. The Anglican Church.

*The papacy had put forth some of its arrogant pretensions as early as the beginning of the seventh century, but it was not until the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, under Gregory VII., Innocent III., and Boniface VIII., that it made its highest claims and reached its highest point of insolence, arrogance, and impiety.

Q. 22. Who is the earthly head of that church?

A. The reigning sovereign of England.

CHAPTER V.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT—CONTINUED.

Question 1. What is the meaning of the word "Presbyterian," as applied to the church?

Answer. It means governed by elders.

Q. 2. From what is it derived?

A. From a Greek word meaning an elder.

Q. 3. What is the meaning, then, of a "Presbyterian" Church?

A. It means a church that is governed by elders.

Q. 4. Were God's people so governed under the Old Dispensation?

A. They were.

Q. 5. Was any change made in the government of the church during the life of our Lord, or in the days of the apostles?

A. None that we read of.

Q. 6. How many kinds of elders are spoken of in the New Testament?

A. Only two—teaching elders and ruling elders.

I TIM. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."

Q. 7. *What are "teaching" elders?*

A. Those who "labor in word and doctrine"

Q. 8. *What does that mean?*

A. Those who preach and teach the gospel.

Q. 9. *What are "ruling elders"?*

A. Those who assist in the government of the church, but do not officially preach the gospel.

Q. 10. *What is the meaning of the word "bishop," as found in the New Testament?*

A. It means simply an "overseer."

Q. 11. *Why were bishops so called?*

A. Because made "overseers" over the flock of God by the Holy Ghost.

ACTS xx. 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Q. 12. *Is this term "bishop" applied in the Holy Scriptures to both teaching elders and ruling elders?*

A. It is.

I TIM. v. 17: "Let the elders ('bishops') that *rule* well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who *labor in the word and doctrine*," *i. e.*, who preach and teach the gospel.

Q. 13. Is there any other kind of bishop spoken of in the New Testament than teaching and ruling elders?

A. None whatever.

Q. 14. What, then, is the meaning of the term "bishop," as used in Scripture?

A. It means simply a teaching elder or a ruling elder, as already explained.

Q. 15. Are there any true scriptural bishops in the Presbyterian Church?

A. Yes, every ordained minister of the gospel is one.

Q. 16. Has the teaching elder, or preacher of the gospel, any more authority in the government of the church than the ruling elder?

A. None whatever.

Q. 17. In what respect, then, does he differ from the ruling elder?

A. He is called and set apart by the Holy Ghost to officially preach the gospel, and the ruling elder is not.

Q. 18. Has one minister of the gospel any higher rank or position in the church, or any more authority over it than another?

A. He has not.

Q. 19. What is this equality of all ministers of the gospel in rank, position and authority in the church called?

A. The "parity of the ministry."

Q. 20. *When did the idea of a prelatical bishop, or one minister of the gospel exercising more power and authority over others, first creep into the church?*

A. Not until the church began to lose its early simplicity of worship and piety.

Q. 21. *What should be the character of all true bishops, both preachers of the gospel and ruling elders?*

A. Irreproachable in life and character, and examples to the flock.

I TIM. iii. 2-7: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." TITUS i. 6-9: "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be

able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." I PETER v. 2, 3: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

Q. 22. What are the duties of these "overseers" over the flock of God?

A. To feed the flock of God and act the part of under-shepherds.

JOHN xxi. 15-17: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." ACTS xx. 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." I PETER v. 2, 3: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

CHAPTER VI.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT—CONTINUED.

RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS.

Question 1. What is the character of ruling elders, as laid down in the Bible?

Answer. Like the teaching elders, they should be men of blameless life, and sound in the faith.

Q. 2. What are the duties of the ruling elder?

A. To exercise government and discipline in the church, and to look after its spiritual interests.

(See references already quoted.)

Q. 3. How should they live and act?

A. In such a manner as to be examples to the flock over which they have been made overseers.

Q. 4. Is there any other class of officers in the church besides teaching and ruling elders?

A. Yes, there are deacons.

Q. 5. What is the meaning of the word "deacon"?

A. It means a "minister," or "servant."

Q. 6. Why are deacons so called?

A. Because they are to minister and serve in the church.

Q. 7. Where do we first read of their appointment?

A. In the early church in Jerusalem.

Q. 8. Why were they then appointed?

A. To attend to the wants of the Lord's poor.

Q. 9. What are the duties of the deacon?

A. To attend to the care of the poor, and to the collection and distribution of the offerings of the people for pious uses, under the direction of the session.

Q. 10. What else?

A. To the deacons, also, may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church.

Q. 11. What should be the character of the deacon?

A. Like that of the ruling elder, he should be blameless in life, and sound in the faith.

I TIM. iii. 8, 9: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

Q. 12. Do deacons have anything to do in the government and discipline of the church?

A. No, nothing whatever.

Q. 13. By whom are ruling elders and deacons chosen?

A. By the members of the church who are in good and regular standing.

Q. 14. For how long are both ruling elders and deacons elected?

A. For life.

Q. 15. May they never be deprived of their office?

A. In some cases they may be honorably relieved of the duties of their office, in other cases they may be deposed.

Q. 16. How are they set apart to their office?

A. By prayer and the laying on of the hands of the church session.

1 TIM. v. 22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man."
 ACTS xiv. 23: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

Q. 17. What is this called?

A. Ordination.

TITUS i. 5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

Q. 18. Where is this usually done?

A. In the presence of the congregation.

Q. 19. How should elders be held and esteemed in the church?

A. Very highly, because of their character and their office.

I THESS. v. 12: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." HEB. xiii. 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you."

Q. 20. What other class of persons is necessary to constitute a regularly organized Presbyterian Church?

A. The private members.

Q. 21. How are they described in the New Testament?

A. As "saints," and as "the faithful in Christ Jesus."

EPH. i. 1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus."

Q. 22. What three classes of persons, then, are necessary to constitute a fully organized Presbyterian Church?

A. Ruling elders, deacons, and private members.

Q. 23. How does Paul describe them in his epistle to the first Christian church he organized in Europe?

A. As "saints, bishops, and deacons."

PHIL. i. 1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

CHAPTER VII.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT—CONCLUDED.

THE COURTS OF THE CHURCH.

Question 1. What is the first or lowest court in the Presbyterian Church?

Answer. The church session.

Q. 2. Of whom does the church session consist?

A. Of the pastor and ruling elders of a particular church.

Q. 3. If the church should happen to be without a pastor, who will constitute the session?

A. The ruling elders alone.*

Q. 4. What are the duties of the church session?

A. The spiritual government of the church.

Q. 5. What does that mean?

A. Everything connected with the government, discipline, welfare, growth, and prosperity of the church.

*In case of there being only one elder, he can represent the church in the various courts of the church, and can attend to various other duties. But in cases of discipline, etc., the Presbytery would take the oversight.

Q. 6. What is the second, or next lowest, court in the Presbyterian Church?

A. The Presbytery.

Q. 7. Of whom does the Presbytery consist?

A. Of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each church within a certain district.

Q. 8. How many ministers and ruling elders must always be present to enable a Presbytery to meet and transact business?

A. At least three ministers, and one ruling elder.

Q. 9. What is this called?

A. Having a quorum.

Q. 10. What are the duties of the Presbytery?

A. To exercise an oversight over all the ministers and churches under its care.

Q. 11. What else?

A. To attend to whatever pertains to the welfare, growth, and prosperity of those churches.

Q. 12. Who only can ordain ministers, and license men to preach the gospel?

A. The Presbytery.

Q. 13. Is this one of their duties?

A. Yes, whenever they are satisfied with the piety and proper qualifications of those seeking ordination or licensure.

2 TIM. ii. 2: "And the things that thou hast heard

of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Q. 14. How often does Presbytery meet?

A. At least twice a year, and oftener if necessary.

Q. 15. What is the next higher court to the Presbytery?

A. The Synod.

Q. 16. Of what does Synod consist?

A. Of three or more adjoining Presbyteries.

Q. 17. What is the meaning of the word Synod?

A. It means a coming or assembling together.

Q. 18. What are the duties of the Synod?

A. To exercise a review and control over the Presbyteries belonging to it.

Q. 19. How often does the Synod meet?

A. Usually once a year.

Q. 20. What is the next highest court to the Synod?

A. The General Assembly.

Q. 21. Of what does the General Assembly consist?

A. Of ministers and ruling elders chosen from each of the Presbyteries of the whole church.

Q. 22. What are these persons called?

A. Commissioners to the Assembly.

Q. 23. Why are they so called?

A. Because they are commissioned by the Presbyteries to meet together and transact the business of the church.

Q. 24. Who elects or appoints them?

A. Each Presbytery elects its own commissioners.

Q. 25. How many are elected from each Presbytery?

A. One minister and one ruling elder, unless the Presbytery is entitled to more.

Q. 26. How large must the Presbytery be to entitle it to more than one set of commissioners?

A. It must consist of more than twenty-four ministers.

Q. 27. What is the presiding officer in each of these church courts called?

A. The Moderator.

Q. 28. What are the duties of the General Assembly?

A. To exercise a control and oversight over all the churches.

Q. 29. How are its decisions to be regarded?

A. With great respect and veneration, because being the decisions of the highest court in the church.

ACTS xvi. 4: "And as they went through the cities,

they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem."

Q. 30. Are they to be regarded as infallible or free from mistake?

A. By no means, because all councils of the church may, and do sometimes, err.

Q. 31. What do you mean by infallible?

A. Incapable of erring or making mistakes.

Q. 32. Are there any infallible persons on the earth, either in the church or out of it?

A. No, there are none.

Q. 33. Does any body of men make such a claim?

A. Yes, the Church of Rome claims infallibility for its Pope.

Q. 34. In what does it claim this infallibility for its Pope?

A. In all his official decisions and judgments.

Q. 35. What do you mean by his official decisions and judgments?

A. When he speaks, decides, or pronounces judgment as Pope.

Q. 36. Who is the only infallible Head of the church?

A. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Q. 37. What is the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

A. The Bible.

PSALM xix. 7: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." PSALM cxix. 105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." 2 TIM. iii. 15: ". . . the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

Q. 38. Should all decisions and judgments of church courts and church councils be judged by that standard, the Bible?

A. Yes, they should always be so judged.

Q. 39. How would you now describe the Presbyterian Church in her form of government as distinguished from other bodies of Christendom?

A. The Presbyterian Church has four principal features in her church government which distinguish her from all other Christian bodies.

Q. 40. What are they?

A. Her government is by elders chosen by the people, as their representatives and rulers, whether in the highest or lowest courts.

Q. 41. What is the second distinguishing feature?

A. All her ordained ministers of the gospel are equal in power and authority in the church, and no one is superior to another in rank and position.

Q. 42. What is this called?

A. The "parity of the ministry."

Q. 43. What is the third distinguishing feature?

A. Her system of courts of review and control.

Q. 44. What does that mean?

A. That each court, beginning with the Session and extending to the Assembly, has a higher court above it to review its proceedings and correct whatever mistakes may have been made.

Q. 45. What advantage is there in this?

A. It secures the rights of every individual in the church, and lessens the liability of inflicting wrong or injustice upon any one.

Q. 46. What is the fourth distinguishing feature?

A. The supreme Headship of Jesus Christ as Lord alone of the conscience and Head of the church.

Q. 47. These are features that distinguish her in her constitution and principles of government. Are there any other things for which the Presbyterian Church has been particularly distinguished?

A. Yes, there are quite a number of things.

Q. 48. What are some of them?

A. Insisting on an educated ministry; attaching great importance to family training; having the people educated in sound doctrine; inculcating obedience to all lawful authority; respecting the rights of conscience; besides earnestly emphasizing all those great doctrines on which all evangelical churches agree, such as repentance, faith, regeneration, atonement, justification, sanctification, and godly living.

Q. 49. *What form of civil government most nearly resembles the Presbyterian Form of Church Government?*

A. The Republican form of government.*

*There can be little doubt but that the Constitution of the United States was modeled after that of the Presbyterian Church, or at least that the influence of the eminent Presbyterians who assisted in its formation was greatly felt. Besides having some very able men who were Presbyterians, both ministers and ruling elders, among the framers of the Constitution, the system of government by representatives chosen by the people, and the system of courts of review and control, to which appeals can always be made, show such a marked similarity to the Presbyterian Form of Government as to leave little doubt that the similarity was something more than accidental. The *Presbyterian bias* of the men who framed that Constitution appears in all the principal features of its frame-work.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCIPLINE.

Question 1. What is the meaning of the word "discipline" ?

Answer. In church usages, it means instruction, correction, control, and the execution of the laws by which the church is governed.

Q. 2. Is it ever used in a more limited sense ?

A. Yes, it is sometimes used simply to describe the treatment accorded by the church to offenders.

Q. 3. In the exercise of discipline what censures may church courts inflict ?

A. Admonition or warning, suspension, excommunication, and deposition.

Q. 4. What do you mean by admonition or warning ?

A. The formal reproof of an offender, accompanied with counsel against a fault.

Q. 5. What do you mean by suspension ?

A. Depriving one of church privileges, either indefinitely or for a limited time.

Q. 6. What do you mean by excommunication ?

A. Expulsion from the communion of the church, which is inflicted by pronouncing a

solemn sentence, in the name and by the authority of Christ, against the offender.

I COR. xvi. 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema." I TIM. i. 20: "Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." I COR. v. 3-5: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Q. 7. What is deposition?

A. The degradation of an officer from his office.

Q. 8. By whom is discipline to be exercised?

A. The Presbytery exercises discipline over ministers, the Session over the members of its own church.

Q. 9. What is the design of discipline?

A. To benefit both the offender and the church.

Q. 10. How should it always be administered?

A. In meekness and gentleness, and with parental kindness and love.

2 TIM. ii. 25, 26: "In meekness instructing those

that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

Q. 11. How should discipline be received?

A. In humility and meekness.

Q. 12. What effect should it have?

A. It should lead the disciplined person to repentance for the offence committed, and to a return to duty.

Q. 13. What should be the aim and endeavor of every member of the church?

A. So to live as not to require the exercise of discipline.

CHAPTER IX.

WORSHIP.

Question 1. To whom only should religious worship be paid?

Answer. To God only.

EXODUS xx. 4, 5: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth gen-

eration of them that hate me." DEUT. vi. 13, 14: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you."

Q. 2. Why to him only?

A. Because he only is our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and therefore he only is entitled to it.

Psalm xlv. 11: "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him."

Q. 3. What day has God especially set apart for his public and private worship?

A. The Sabbath day.

Q. 4. In what commandment is the worship of this day particularly enjoined?

A. In the Fourth Commandment.

Q. 5. Repeat the Fourth Commandment?

A. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Q. 6. How should the Sabbath be spent?

A. As a day of spiritual rest, refreshment and devotion.

Q. 7. Why is it called the "Lord's day"?

A. Because it commemorates the resurrection of our Lord from the dead and is consecrated peculiarly to him.

Q. 8. What should be the character of all worship to God, in public or in private?

A. It should be reverent, devout, and sincere.

Q. 9. In whose name should all our worship to God be offered?

A. In the name of Christ only.

Q. 10. Why so?

A. Because "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," and there is no other "mediator between God and men" than "the man Christ Jesus."

Q. 11. What constitute the principal parts of public worship?

A. Prayer, praise, and the reading of God's word and the expounding of it, commonly known as preaching.

Q. 12. Are there any forms of worship laid down in Scripture to which our worship is to be conformed?

A. No, none whatever.

Q. 13. Is not the Lord's prayer such a form, and one that should always be used?

A. The Lord's prayer may be used very properly and acceptably in public worship, but it is not obligatory on the worshipper so to use it.

Q. 14. How should the reading and hearing of God's word always be done?

A. God's word should always be read and heard, both in public and in private, as *the word of God*, and reverently heeded and obeyed.

Q. 15. Is it material what posture in prayer is adopted by God's people?

A. No, because acceptable worship does not depend upon our posture in prayer.

Q. 16. What different positions in prayer are mentioned in Scripture as having been adopted by God's people at different times and under different circumstances?

A. Standing, kneeling, sitting, and prostrating one's self on the ground.

1 KINGS viii. 22: "And Solomon *stood* before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: and he said, Lord God of Israel," etc. LUKE xviii. 13: "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." PSALM xcvi. 6: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us *kneel*

before the Lord our maker." 2 SAM. vii. 18: "Then went king David in, and *sat* before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God," etc. PSALM lxxii. 11: "Yea, all kings shall *fall* down before him: all nations shall serve him."

Q. 17. Why does the Presbyterian Church generally adopt the standing posture in her public worship?

A. Because standing with bowed and uncovered head, besides being scriptural, is the posture everywhere recognized as the posture of reverence and deference to a Superior Being.

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