

# THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XIII.—NO. 4.

---

JANUARY, MDCCLXI.

---

## ARTICLE I.

NATIONAL SINS.—*A Fast-Day Sermon, preached in the Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Wednesday, November 21, 1860.*

By REV. J. H. THORNWELL, D. D. Columbia: Printed at the Southern Guardian office.

“And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.”—*Isaiah 37: 1.*

I have no design, in the selection of these words, to intimate that there is a parallel between Jerusalem and our own Commonwealth in relation to the Covenant of God. I am far from believing that we alone, of all the people of the earth, are possessed of the true religion, and far from encouraging the narrow and exclusive spirit which, with the ancient hypocrites denounced by the Prophet, can complacently exclaim, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we. Such arrogance and bigotry are utterly inconsistent with the penitential confessions which this day has been set apart to evoke. We are here, not like the Pharisee, to boast of our own righteousness, and to thank

## ARTICLE IV.

## PRINCETON REVIEW, ART. VI., JULY, 1860.

When Milo was prosecuted for the murder of Clodius, Cicero appeared as his counsel, but the great orator was so intimidated by the turbulence of the crowd and the array of soldiers whom Pompey had introduced into the forum, that his presence of mind forsook him, and instead of the splendid defence which was expected from him, he made a miserable and disgraceful failure. His unfortunate client was condemned and sent into exile. Partly to soothe his wounded vanity, and partly as a token of sympathy with his friend, Cicero subsequently wrote out and transmitted to Milo the oration which he ought to have delivered, and which Milo congratulated himself was not delivered, as it would probably have saved him from banishment, and deprived him of the luxury of the luscious fish he was then enjoying at Marseilles.

Dr. Hodge, of course, was not intimidated in the last Assembly by any of the circumstances which frightened the Roman orator, and yet he certainly failed, as signally as Cicero, to deliver the kind of speech which was expected from him. Conscious of the fact, upon his return home, he retires to his study, reviews his ground, undertakes to retrieve his misfortunes, and the result is the article before us; which may, therefore, be accepted as a revised edition of the speech which he ought to have delivered. It is something worse than an effusion of mortification. It has the marks of a spiteful ebullition of resentment. Its distortions of our opinions are so persistent and perverse, that charity itself can hardly be persuaded that they are not wilful; and the personal insinuations are so ungenerous that it is impossible to attribute them to accident. The

want of candor and of manly fairness is so conspicuous that we hesitated, for a time, whether we ought to take any notice of an antagonist, who seemed to hold himself free from the most sacred obligations of refined and honorable controversy. We confess that the article gave us great pain. We have been the more wounded, because we have been taken by surprise. As soon as we had reason to believe that we had said any thing in the last Assembly personally offensive to Dr. Hodge, we made a public and cordial explanation. We were under the impression that our explanation had been accepted. We bade him farewell with nothing but feelings of personal kindness in our heart. During our absence from the country, we had occasion to pay more than one tribute to his worth, as a scholar, a teacher, and a divine, and we did it warmly and earnestly. We had no suspicion of the state of things in relation to ourselves that existed in his mind. It never entered our heads that while we were contributing to his great reputation, and deservedly great reputation, abroad, we were the object of little passions and resentments in his breast, at home, which, we think, reflect no honor upon the magnanimity of the man, to say nothing of the generosity of the Christian. In our estimate of the animus of this article, we have not relied upon our own judgment. We have been fortified by the opinions of brethren whose opinions we respect, some in this, and others in distant States, and they have all concurred in representing it as bearing upon its face the marks of being prompted by wounded pride and personal resentment.

However our personal relations to Dr. Hodge may be affected, nothing shall tempt us to do injustice to his real excellence. He is a scholar, "aye, a ripe and a good one," a critic and an expositor of preëminent abilities. His commentaries are an honor to the Church and to the country. In the departments suited to his genius, he has no superior. But there are departments to which he is not adapted.

Whether it be that Dr. Hodge has never been a pastor, and knows little of the actual working of our system, or whether his mind is of an order that refuses to deal with the practical and concrete, it so happens that he has never touched the questions connected with the nature and organization of the Church without being singularly unhappy. It would be invidious to mention illustrations. The article before us will furnish proof, without going beyond it.

In replying to it, we shall reduce our remarks to two general heads: I. Strictures upon Dr. Hodge's representation of the debate in the last Assembly; and, II. An examination of his revised theory of Presbyterianism.

I. Under the first head we shall consider three things: 1. His statement of the precise point at issue; 2. His charge that, in the conduct of the debate, we evaded the issue; and, 3. His review of our objections to the theory of Presbyterianism, which he broached in the Assembly.

1. As to the precise point at issue, Dr. Hodge is mistaken in supposing that we denied absolutely *all* discretion to the Church. We contended that, as a positive institution, with a written charter, she was confined to the express or implied teachings of the Word of God, the standard of her authority and rights; that, as in the sphere of doctrine she had no opinions, but a faith, so, in the sphere of practice, she had no expedients, but a law. Her power was solely ministerial and declarative. Her whole duty was to believe and obey. We, of course, insisted, in conformity with this view, that whatever is not commanded, expressly or implicitly, is unlawful. We repudiated the doctrine that whatever is not forbidden is allowable. According to our view, the law of the Church is the positive one of conformity with Scripture: according to the view which we condemned, it is the negative one of non-contradiction to Scripture. According to us, the Church, before she can move, must not only show that she is not prohibited; she must also show that she is actually commanded: she must produce a

warrant. Hence, we absolutely denied that she has any discretion in relations to things not commanded. She can proclaim no laws that Christ has not ordained, institute no ceremonies which He has not appointed, create no offices which He has not prescribed, and exact no obedience which He has not enjoined. She does not enter the wide domain which He has left indifferent, and by her authority bind the conscience where He has left it free.

But does it follow, from this, that she has absolutely no discretion at all? On the contrary, we distinctly and repeatedly asserted that, in the sphere of commanded things, she *had* a discretion—a discretion determined by the nature of the actions, and by the Divine principle that all things be done decently, in order. This assertion is found in the report of our speech on page 362 of the July number of this journal. It is implied in the report of the same speech in the Princeton Review of the same month. It is wrong, therefore, to say that we excluded “*all discretionary power*” in the Church. We only limited and defined it. We never denied that the Church has a right to fix the hours of public worship, the times and places of the meeting of her courts, the numbers of which they shall be composed, and the territories which each shall embrace. Our doctrine was precisely that of the Westminster Standards, of John Calvin, of John Owen, the Free Church of Scotland, and the noble army of Puritan martyrs and confessors. “The whole counsel of God,” say the Westminster divines, “concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or by traditions of men.”\* This is clearly our doctrine of the law of positive conformity with Scripture as the measure

---

\* Conf. Faith, chap. i., § 6.

of the Church's duty. Again: "God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left us free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His word, *or beside it*, in matters of faith or worship."\* Here we are clearly taught that the silence of Scripture is as real a prohibition, as a positive injunction to abstain. Where God has not commanded, the Church has no jurisdiction. Now, as to the real nature of her discretion: "Nevertheless," says this venerable Formulary, in continuation of the section from which our first extract has been taken, "nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and *there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.*" Here the discretion is limited to *some circumstances*, and those *common to human actions and societies*. Now, the question arises, What is the nature of these circumstances? A glance at the proof-texts on which the doctrine relies, enables us to answer. Circumstances are those concomitants of an action without which it either can not be done at all, or can not be done with decency and decorum. Public worship, for example, requires public assemblies, and in public assemblies people must appear in some costume, and assume some posture. Whether they shall shock common sentiment in their attire, or conform to common practice; whether they shall stand, sit, or lie, or whether each shall be at liberty to determine his own attitude—these are circumstances: they are necessary concomitants of the action, and the Church is at liberty to regulate them. Public assemblies, moreover, can not be held without fixing the time and place of meeting: these, too, are circumstances

---

\* Conf. Faith, chap. xx., § 2.

which the Church is at liberty to regulate. Parliamentary assemblies can not transact their business with efficiency and dispatch—indeed, can not transact it decently at all, without committees. Committees, therefore, are circumstances common to parliamentary societies, which the Church, in her parliaments, is at liberty to appoint. All the details of our government in relation to the distribution of courts, the number necessary to constitute a quorum, the times of their meeting, the manner in which they shall be opened, all these, and such like, are circumstances, which, therefore, the Church has a perfect right to arrange. We must carefully distinguish between those circumstances which attend actions as actions, that is, without which the actions could not be, and those circumstances, which though not essential, are added as appendages. These last do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Church. She has no right to appoint them. They are circumstances in the sense that they do not belong to the substance of the act. They are not circumstances in the sense that they so surround it that they cannot be separated from it. A liturgy is a circumstance of this kind—as also the sign of the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus. Owen notes the distinction.\*

Calvin's view of the nature and limitation of the discretion of the Church, is exactly the same as that of the Westminster standards.†

“We have, therefore,” says Calvin, “a most excellent and sure mark to distinguish between these impious constitutions, (by which, as we have said, true religion is overthrown, and conscience subverted,) and the legitimate observances of the Church, if we remember that one of two things, or both together, are always intended, viz: That in the sacred Assembly of the faithful, all things may be done decently, and with becoming dignity; and that human society may be maintained in order by certain bonds, as it were, of moderation and humanity.” After explaining what he means by decency and order, Calvin proceeds to remark, that, “as there is here a danger, on the one hand, lest false bishops should thence derive a pretext for

---

\* Vol. 19, p. 437.

† Inst. IV., X., 28, 31.

their impious and tyrannical laws, and on the other, lest some, too apt to take alarm, should, from fear of the above evil, leave no place for laws, however holy; it may here be proper to declare, that I approve of those human constitutions only which are founded on the authority of God, and derived from Scripture, and are, therefore, altogether Divine. Let us take, for example, the bending of the knee, which is made in public prayer. It is asked whether this is a human tradition, which any one is at liberty to repudiate or reject? I say that it is human, and that at the same time it is Divine. It is of God, inasmuch as it is a part of that decency, the care and observance of which is recommended by the Apostles; and it is of men, inasmuch as it especially determines what was indicated in general, rather than expounded. From this one example, we may judge what is to be thought of the whole class, viz: That the whole sum of righteousness, and all the parts of Divine worship, and every thing necessary to salvation, the Lord has faithfully comprehended, and clearly unfolded in His oracles, so that in them He alone is the only Master to be heard. But as in external discipline and ceremonies, He has not been pleased to prescribe every particular that we ought to observe (He foresaw that this depended on the nature of the times, and that one form would not suit all ages), in them we must have recourse to the general rules which He has given, employing them to test whatever the necessity of the Church may require to be enjoined for order and decency." Institutes, book IV., c. 10., § 28, 30.

The notion of Calvin, and our Confession of Faith, in other words, is briefly this: In public worship, indeed, in all commanded external actions, there are two elements, a fixed and a variable. The fixed element, involving the essence of the thing, is beyond the discretion of the Church. The variable, involving only the *circumstances* of the action, its separable accidents, may be changed, modified, or altered, according to the exigencies of the case. The rules of social intercourse and of grave assemblies in different countries vary. The Church accommodates her arrangements so as not to revolt the public sense of propriety. Where people recline at their meals, she would administer the Lord's Supper to communicants in a reclining attitude. Where they sit, she would change the mode.

Dr. Cunningham, the noble principal of the Free Church College at Edinburgh, and one of the first Divines of Europe, has not scrupled, amid the light of the nineteenth century, to teach the same doctrine:



Of the views generally held by the Reformers on the subject of the organization of the Church, there are two which have been always very offensive to men of a loose and latitudinarian tendency, viz: the alleged unlawfulness of introducing into the worship and government of the Church any thing which is not positively warranted by Scripture, and the permanent, binding obligation of a particular form of Church government. The second of these principles may be regarded, in one aspect of it, as comprehended in the first. But it may be proper to make a few observations upon them separately, in the order in which they have now been stated.

The Lutheran and Anglican sections of the Reformers held a somewhat looser view upon these subjects, than was approved of by Calvin. They generally held that the Church might warrantably introduce innovations into its government and worship, which might seem fitted to be useful, provided it could not be shewn that there was any thing in Scripture which expressly prohibited or discountenanced them, thus laying the *onus probandi*, in so far as Scripture is concerned, upon those who opposed the introduction of innovations. The Calvinistic section of the Reformers, following their great master, adopted a stricter rule, and were of opinion that there were sufficiently plain indications in Scripture itself, that it was Christ's mind and will that nothing should be introduced into the government and worship of the Church, unless a positive warrant for it could be found in Scripture. This principle was adopted and acted upon by the English Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians; and we are persuaded that it is the only true and safe principle applicable to this matter.

The principle is, in a sense, a very wide and sweeping one. But it is purely prohibitory or exclusive; and the practical effect of it, if it were fully carried out, would just be to leave the Church in the condition in which it was left by the Apostles, in so far as we have any means of information; a result, surely, which need not be very alarming, except to those who think that they themselves have very superior powers for improving and adorning the Church by their invention. The principle ought to be understood in a common-sense way, and we ought to be satisfied with reasonable evidence of its truth. Those who dislike this principle, from whatever cause, usually try to run us into difficulties, by putting a very stringent construction upon it, and thereby giving it an appearance of absurdity, or by demanding an unreasonable amount of evidence to establish it. The principle must be interpreted and explained in the exercise of common sense. One obvious modification of it is suggested in the first chapter of the Westminster Confession, where it is acknowledged "that there are some circumstances, concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed." But even this distinction between things

and circumstances cannot always be applied very certainly; that is, cases have occurred in which there might be room for a difference of opinion, whether a proposed regulation or arrangement was a distinct thing in the way of innovation, or merely a circumstance attaching to an authorized thing, and requiring to be regulated. Difficulties and differences of opinions may arise about details, even when sound judgment and good sense are brought to bear upon the interpretation and application of the principles; but this affords no ground for denying or doubting the truth or soundness of the principle itself.—(Review of Principal Tulloch's *Leaders of the Reformation*, p. 28.)

These citations are sufficient to show that the doctrine which we advocated in the General Assembly, touching the power and discretion of the Church, so far from being "a peculiar theory of Presbyterianism," is the doctrine of our standards, the doctrine of the Prince of the Reformers, and the doctrine of the soundest exponents of Presbyterianism across the waters. If we have erred, we have no reason to be ashamed of our company.

Now, what is the counter doctrine of Dr. Hodge? He holds that, beyond the positive injunctions of Scripture, the Church has a wide discretion, determined only by its positive prohibitions; that the rules of Scripture are general and regulative, and not constitutive and prescriptive—that, consequently, the Church is not restricted to any one mode of organization, but may change her forms according to the exigencies of times and circumstances. "There are fixed laws assigned by God, according to which all healthful and normal development of the body is regulated. So it is with regard to the Church. There are fixed laws in the Bible, according to which all healthful development and action of the external Church are determined. But, as within the limits of the laws which control the development of the human body there is endless diversity among different races, adapting them to different climes and modes of living, so also in the Church. It is not tied down to one particular mode of organization and action, at all times and under all circumstances."—(P. 552.) So long as the Church keeps within the limits of these general laws, she may create

new offices, erect new courts, and ordain new organs and organizations, at pleasure. The limit of her discretion is the principle of non-contradiction to Scripture. She is not bound to produce a warrant, and "thus saith the Lord," for all she does. Nay, more, she has a right to delegate her powers. She is not obliged to exercise them "through officers and organs prescribed in the Scriptures." She is competent, if she chooses, to appoint a vicar—the opposite doctrine being an element of a "peculiar theory of Presbyterianism." These are astounding pretensions—they carry in their bosoms the deadly tyranny of prelacy and popery. Dr. Hodge maintains the very same principles, only a little more extravagantly, which were maintained by Hooker, in the third book of the Ecclesiastical Polity, and he parades the same objections against us which Hooker paraded against the Puritans of his day. We want the reader distinctly to apprehend the point at issue. It is not, as Dr. Hodge represents it, whether the Church has *any* discretion—that is conceded on both sides—but what is the measure or limit of that discretion. We hold it to be the *circumstances* connected with commanded duties, and hence affirm, that whatever is not enjoined is prohibited. He holds that it pertains to actions themselves, and maintains that whatever is not prohibited is lawful. We make the Church a ministerial agent, he, a confidential agent, of God. We hold that her organization is given—he holds that her organization is developed. He holds that any system which shall realize the parity of the clergy, the rights of the people, and the unity of the Church, is a *jure divino* government; we hold, that if these principles are realized in any other way except through Presbyters and Presbyteries, the government is not scriptural. It is not our purpose to argue the question here; we only propose to put the matter in dispute in a clear light.

There are two sophistical illusions, however, in relation to this subject, which it is due to truth that we should

dispel. It is commonly said that the essential principles of Church government are laid down in the Scriptures, but not the details. These are left to human prudence and discretion. The sentence is ambiguous. General principles are of two sorts, regulative or constitutive. Regulative principles define only ends to be aimed at, or conditions to be observed—constitutive principles determine the concrete forms in which the ends are to be realized. Regulative, express the spirit—constitutive, the form, of a government. It is a regulative principle, for example, that all governments should seek the good of their subjects; it is a constitutive principle that power should be lodged in the hands of such and such officers, and dispensed by such and such courts. Regulative principles define nothing as to the mode of their own exemplification—constitutive principles determine the elements of an actual polity. When, therefore, it is said that only the general principles of Church government are laid down in the Scripture, and not the details, if the allusion is to constitutive principles, the sentence is perfectly just—it conveys precisely the truth. The essential principles, in that case, mean nothing more nor less than the positive prescriptions of Scripture in relation to the office-bearers and the courts of the Church; the details mean those circumstances, common to human actions and societies, which it is confessedly within the province of the Church to regulate. If the allusion is to regulative principles, which prescribe the end without condescending to the means, which convey nothing definite as to the mode of concrete realization, then the proposition is certainly false—the Scriptures descend to what, in that case, would have to be considered as details. We signalize the ambiguity, in order that our readers may not be deceived by words. Dr. Hodge means by *general principles*, regulative laws. Presbyterian writers generally, mean what we have called constitutive principles. The circumstance, therefore, that any one limits the teaching of Scripture, as to Church

government, to general principles, to the exclusion of details, is no presumption that he agrees with Dr. Hodge. We have often done it, and expect often to do it again, but we always mean by general principles, those which are constitutive and prescriptive. We believe that the New Testament has put the permanent government of the Church in the hands of Presbyters, and of Presbyters alone, and that she has no power to create any other spiritual office—this is one general principle—prescriptive, and not simply regulative. We believe that the New Testament requires these Presbyters to constitute parliamentary assemblies, and that the power of rule is lodged in these courts—this is another general principle—also prescriptive, and not regulative, and the Church has no right to ordain any other spiritual court but a Presbytery. But when it comes to the actual constitution of these courts, the number of Presbyters that shall compose them, the territories embraced in their jurisdiction, the times and places of their meeting, these are details—circumstances without which the existence and action of the courts become impossible—and, as circumstances inseparable from the commanded duties, they are discretionary. Hence, this form of expression creates no manner of presumption against the doctrine which we have maintained. Upon Dr. Hodge's theory, we can have other spiritual officers beside those specifically designated in Scripture; we can have other courts beside those composed exclusively of Presbyters. As long as we do not violate the equality of the clergy, nor exclude the people, nor break the unity of the Church, we may organize as largely and as freely as the times may seem to demand.

The other illusion is, that our doctrine reduces the Church to something like Jewish bondage. Dr. Hodge affirms that "it makes the Gospel dispensation, designed for the whole world, more restricted and slavish than the Jewish, although it was designed for only one nation, and for a limited period."

(P. 518.) Other speakers in the Assembly indulged in the same idle declamation. The simple question is, What was the bondage of the Jewish dispensation? Did it consist in the subjection of the people to the Divine will? Was that their grievous and intolerable burden, that they were bound in all things to regulate their worship by the Divine Word? Is God's authority a yoke so heavy, that we sigh until we can throw it off? One would think that it was the great advantage of the Jews, that they knew their worship was acceptable, because it was prescribed. Moses evidently regarded it as a singular favor, that the Lord was nigh to them, and directed them in all their ways. He knew nothing of that freedom which counts every man a slave who is not permitted to walk in the light of his own eyes, and after the imagination of his own heart. Jewish bondage did not consist in the principle, that the positive revelation of God was the measure of duty—that was its light and its glory—but in the *nature of the things enjoined*. It was the minuteness and technicality of the ritual, the cumbersome routine of services, the endless rites and ceremonies—these constituted the yoke from which Christ delivered His people. He did not emancipate us from the guidance and authority of God; He did not legitimate any species of will-worship; but He prescribed a worship simple and unpretending, a worship in spirit and in truth. God's will is as much our law and our glory as it was to the Jews; but God's will now terminates upon easy and delightful services. Those who contend that all things must be done by a Divine warrant, can be charged with putting a yoke upon the necks of Christian people only upon the supposition, that the worship commanded in the Gospel is analogous to the worship of the law. The truth is, that the only worship which approaches to bondage is among those who hold the principle of Dr. Hodge. Prelacy and Popery have their ritual and their ceremonies; but Puritans, the world over, have been conspicuous for the simplicity of their

forms. They have stood fast in the freedom wherewith Christ hath made them free, and have cheerfully gone to the gibbet and the stake, rather than be entangled again in a yoke of ceremonial bondage.

Before we close this part of the subject, there is one statement of Dr. Hodge, in relation to the Puritans, so extraordinary that we must advert to it for a moment :

Dr. Thornwell told us that the Puritans rebelled against the doctrine that what is not forbidden in Scripture is allowable. It was against the theory of liberty of discretion, he said, our fathers raised their voices and their arms. We always had a different idea of the matter. We supposed that it was in resistance to this very doctrine of inferences they poured out their blood like water.—(P. 666.)

When we first read this remarkable passage, we rubbed our eyes, and thought we must be mistaken. It is so flagrantly untrue that we can not imagine how Dr. Hodge has been deceived. We have not been able to lay our hands upon a single Puritan Confession of Faith, nor a single Puritan writer, having occasion to allude to the subject, who has not explicitly taught that necessary inferences from Scripture are of equal authority with its express statements. The *principle of inference* they have unanimously affirmed. Our own Confession of Faith—and surely that is a Puritan document—does it, in a passage already cited. “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or, by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture.” Without going into a paroxysm of quotations upon so plain a point, we shall content ourselves with a short extract from Neal, which shows that Dr. Hodge is not only out in this matter, but in several others pertaining to these illustrious men.

“It was agreed,” says the historian, in contrasting the court reformers and the Puritans, “it was agreed by all that the Holy Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith ; but the bishops and court reformers did not allow them a standard of discipline or Church government, but affirmed that our Saviour and His Apostles left it to the discretion of the civil

magistrate, in those places where Christianity should obtain, to accommodate the government of the Church to the policy of the State. But the Puritans apprehended the Holy Scriptures to be a standard of Church discipline as well as doctrine; at least, that nothing should be imposed as necessary but what was expressly contained in or derived from them by necessary consequence. \* \* \* \* The Puritans were for keeping close to the Scriptures in the main principles of Church government, and for admitting no Church officers and ordinances, but such as are appointed therein."—(Vol. I., pp. 101, 102, Tegg's edition. London: 1837.)

As to the Scotch Reformers, Hetherington\* emphatically testifies that, "regarding the Sacred Scriptures as the supreme authority in all matters pertaining to religion, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head and King of the Church, the Scottish Reformers deemed it reasonable to expect in the code of laws given by their Divine King enough to guide them in every thing relating to His kingdom. But, while they were men of undoubting faith, they were also men of strong intellect. Faith directed them to the Word of God, as their only and all-sufficient rule; but that Word bade them in understanding be men. They dared, therefore, to conclude that Divine authority might be rightfully claimed, not only for the direct statements contained in the Scriptures, but also for whatsoever could be deduced from Scripture by just and necessary inference. Taking Scripture truths as axiomatic principles and admitted premises, they boldly and manfully exercised their reason in tracing out the consequences involved in and flowing from these truths."

It is true that the Puritans discarded the kind of inferences which Dr. Hodge has mentioned. But the discarding of a false inference, and the discarding of the principle of inference, are two very different things. The best principles may be perversely applied. They discarded, also, Pelagian and Arminian interpretations of Scripture. Does it follow that they discarded the principle of interpreting Scripture at all? Because they denied that the command to be subject unto the higher powers taught the doctrine of passive obedience, does it follow that they also denied that the immateriality of God could be rightly inferred from the spirituality? It was only false inferences that they rejected, as they rejected, also, false interpretations; but legitimate inferences were as valid as legitimate expo-

---

\* *Hist. Ch. Scot. I.*, p. xv., *Edin. Ed.*, 1848.



sitions. But how were men to judge of the soundness of an inference? Exactly as they judged of the soundness of an interpretation. Both were functions of the reason, enlightened by the Holy Ghost—men might err in either case, and in both they might reach the truth.

Dr. Hodge tells us, further, that the Puritans resisted the corruptions of worship introduced by the Prelatists, on the ground, that these corruptions rested only on inferences. History tells us that they resisted on the ground that they were not commanded in Scripture, and could not, therefore, be enjoined by any human authority. "The principle," we use the words of Neal,\* "upon which the Bishops justified their severities against the Puritans, was the subjects' obligation to obey the laws of their country in all things indifferent, which are neither commanded nor forbidden by the law of God."

Dr. Hodge waxes warm and valiant as he contemplates the dangers of the doctrine of inferences. Dungeons and racks rise before his troubled imagination, and he is prepared to die like a hero, rather than yield an inch to the implied authority of God. "It was fetters forged from inferences our fathers broke, and we, their children, will never suffer them to be rewelded. There is as much difference between this extreme doctrine of Divine right, this idea that every thing is forbidden which is not commanded, as there is between this free and exultant Church of ours and the mummied forms of mediæval Christianity." This is really spirited—the only thing which it lacks is sense. The idea, that if the Church is restricted exclusively to the Divine Word, and to necessary deductions from it, if she is made a ministerial, and not a confidential, agent of God, she will become a tyrant and an oppressor, is so preposterously absurd, that a statement of the proposition is a sufficient refutation. Is the law of God tyranny? and

---

\* Vol. I., p. 108.

does man become a slave by being bound to obey it? Is not obedience to God the very essence of liberty, and is not the Church most divinely free when she most perfectly fulfills His will? What is that has made this free, exultant Church of ours, but the sublime determination to hear no voice but the voice of the Master? and what made the mummied forms of mediæval Christianity, but the very principle of the Princeton Doctor, that the Church has a large discretion? She claimed the right to command where God had not spoken—she made void his law, and substituted her own authority and inventions. We love freedom as dearly as Dr. Hodge, and it is because we love the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, that we renounce and abhor the detestable principle of Prelatists, Popes, and loose Presbyterians, that whatever is not forbidden is lawful. The Church may be very wise, but God is wiser.

Dr. Hodge's imagination is haunted with the vision of swarms of inferences, like the locusts of Egypt, darkening and destroying the prosperity of the Church, if the principle of inference is allowed at all. But who is to make these inferences, and who has authority to bind them upon the conscience of the people? We have no Prelates, no Pope. We acknowledge no authority but the authority of God, sealed to our consciences by His own Spirit, speaking through His own Word, and dispensed through officers whom we have freely chosen. Who is to impose inferences which the Christian understanding repudiates? The Church, as a whole, must accept them before they can have the force of law, and if there is tyranny, the people are their own tyrants. Precisely the same kind of sophistry may be employed against all creeds and confessions. If we cannot *reason* from the Word of God without trespassing upon freedom of conscience, we cannot expound it. The instrument which we employ in both cases is the same, and he that begins with denying the authority of legitimate inferences, cannot stop short of renouncing all creeds.

Although our design has not been to argue the point in dispute betwixt Dr. Hodge and ourselves, yet we think that enough has been said, not only to indicate what that point really is, but what are also the *fontes solutionum*. We have marked the fallacies to which the Doctor has resorted, exposed the blunders into which he has fallen, and vindicated ourselves from the charge of being out of harmony with the great teachers of Presbyterian and Puritan Theology. We stand upon the principle that whatsoever is not commanded is forbidden. The Church, like the Government of the United States, is a positive institution, with positive grants of power, and whatever is not given is *withheld*.

The question concerning limits to the discretionary power of the Church, is the pivot upon which the question concerning the lawfulness of the Boards revolves. If she is restricted to the circumstantialia of commanded things, she must be able to show that Boards belong to this category, being evidently not commanded things themselves, or she must renounce the right to appoint them. Committees are obviously lawful, because they are circumstances common to all parliamentary bodies, and indispensable to their orderly and efficient conduct of business.

2. We come now to notice the charge of Dr. Hodge, that, in our reply to him, in the last Assembly, we evaded the only point which was properly at issue, and confined ourselves almost exclusively to attempting to prove that the brother from Princeton was no Presbyterian. It is a pity that we suffered our souls to be vexed about so personal a matter. The brother himself has saved us the trouble of any future concern. The article before us contains his matured opinions, and, as we shall soon have occasion to show, if he had written it for the express purpose of revolutionizing the Church, he could not more completely have contradicted her standards without renouncing the very name, Presbyterian. But to the point immediately in hand. Our reply, as to aim and purpose, was precisely what it should have

been, according to the rules of fair and honorable debate. It will be remembered that, in our opening speech, we had distinctly asserted that the question concerning the lawfulness of Boards resolved itself into another question, concerning the nature and organization of the Church—that the differences of opinion upon the one subject were only reflections of analogous differences upon the other. We proceeded to indicate two types of opinion in regard to the Constitution of the Church which he had reason to believe prevailed. According to one type, which we characterized as a strictly *jure divino* theory, God has given us a government, as truly as He has given us a doctrine. He has left nothing to human discretion but the circumstances, the things common to human actions and societies. According to the other, He has ordained government in general, but no one government in particular. He has laid down the laws—the regulative principles by which a government must be organized—but He has left it to human wisdom to make the organization, by determining the elements, and the mode of their combination. This class gave a large margin to the discretion of the Church. As the question concerning Boards is a question concerning the discretion of the Church, and as the question concerning the discretion of the Church is a question concerning the nature of her organization, the debate was obliged to turn upon the true theory of Church government. That became the first issue. Dr. Hodge, in his speech, accepted this issue, and accordingly levelled his batteries against our *jus divinum* scheme. He knew that if he could overthrow that, all went with it. In contrast, he developed his own scheme, a scheme upon which the Boards were perfectly defensible. In reply, we undertook to demolish his scheme, and to illustrate the superiority of our own. Where was there any evasion of the issue here? If the attempt to demolish his scheme is to be construed into the attempt to prove that he is no Presbyterian, then his attempt to

demolish ours was equally an assault upon us. We were compelled to show that his principles were not Presbyterian, or abandon the whole point in debate. No other course was left us. The real grief is, not that we evaded the issue, but that we stuck to it closely. The arrow went to the heart. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ?*

3. Let us now notice the Doctor's review of our objections to his scheme of Presbyterianism. That scheme, as detailed in the Assembly, and as now developed in the article before us, embraces four propositions: 1. The indwelling of the Spirit, as the source of the attributes and prerogatives of the Church; 2. The parity of the clergy; 3. The right of the people to take part in government; and, 4. The unity of the Church. Dr. Hodge represents us as having denied that the first proposition was true, and the other three *fundamental*. He is not precisely accurate in either statement. What we really assailed, was the unqualified dictum, that where the Spirit is, there is the Church. The Spirit may be in individuals, or in families, or in societies, without giving to them the attributes and prerogatives of the Church. It is universally true, that where the Spirit is *not, there* there is no Church, but it is not universally true, that where the Spirit is, *there* is the Church. Some thing beside the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is necessary to convert a collection of believers into a Church. A dozen men may meet for purposes of prayer, and Jesus may be present in His Spirit to bless them—they may meet stately and regularly—but all this does not make them a Church. There is an outward as well as an inward, order established by law—an organization, imposed by authority, which is the condition of the healthful development of life, but not the product of that life. The outward God has adjusted to the inward, as the body to the soul. Neither springs from the other—they coexist according to a preëstablished harmony. The Word reveals the outward—the Spirit imparts the inward. Spiritual

impulses do not *generate* the Church—they only *correspond* to it. The Church was made for them, as the world of sense was made for the body. The Spirit, as a principle of life, therefore, is not the *source* of the attributes and prerogatives of the Church. A society that claims to be the Church must show some thing more than the possession of the Spirit. The Reformers always pleaded some thing more in their own behalf. They always insisted that they had the *ministry* and *ordinances*, that is, in its main features, the external order, which Christ appointed. Without the Word, without the positive appointments of the King, without a constitution made to our hands, and adapted to our spiritual needs, we should have succeeded about as well in framing a Church, even with the help of regulative principles, from our spiritual life, as the soul would have succeeded in framing a body for itself. We never could have risen above the level of Quakerism. No body of men is a Church without the Spirit. That is admitted. Every body of men is a Church with the Spirit. That is a very different proposition. Against the proposition in its negative shape we have never uttered a syllable; we have had “no passing phase of thought” inconsistent with a cordial reception of it. We never denounced it as preposterous, under the exigencies of debate or any other exigencies, and we are willing, albeit no lawyer, to be held responsible for every thing we have said in relation to it. In its affirmative form, the proposition can not be maintained—in its negative form, it is the fundamental element of Evangelical religion. If Dr. Hodge can not see the difference, we commend him to the study of some good treatise of logic.

Again, the Doctor says that we denied that the parity of the clergy, the right of the people to participate in government, and the unity of the Church, are *fundamental* principles of Presbyterianism. This, also, is a mistake. Whatever may be our opinion on the subject, what we really

denied was, that these are *distinctive* principles of Presbyterianism. We maintained that, as far as we held them at all, they were principles which we held in common with others—they were generic, and not differential, attributes. This is very different from saying that they are not *fundamental*.

And here we may notice his singular defence of the definition of Presbyterianism, which he constructed out of these generic properties. These principles, he told us, constituted the true idea of Presbyterianism. We ridiculed, as utterly illogical and absurd, the notion of a definition in which there was nothing to distinguish the thing defined. This Dr. Hodge denounces as extraordinary logic. Are we, then, to understand him as saying, that a definition can put us in possession of an adequate notion of a subject, without any allusion to the properties which make it what it is, rather than any thing else? The design of the real definition of the logicians, as interpreted in the language of modern philosophy, is "to analyze a complex notion"—we use the words of Mansel—"into its component parts." These parts are some of them common, some special; but both must be considered, or the notion is only partially decomposed, and the subsequent synthesis must be incomplete. Dr. Hodge affirms that there are two modes of defining, one by genus and differentia, the other by enumeration of attributes. Did it not occur to him that these are precisely the same thing? The genus and differentia, taken together, constitute the *whole* of the properties. They are only a compendious method of enumeration. You may mention properties one by one, or you may group several together under a common name. If the name is understood, those properties which it expresses are, in fact, mentioned. What we objected to in Dr. Hodge was, not that he did not technically state the genus and differentia, but that he made no allusion to the differentia at all. He defined Presbyterianism only by those attributes which it

has in common with other systems. If the "merest tryo in logic can see the fallacy" of this objection, it is more than we can. To make the thing still more absurd, he gives us an example of definition by genus and specific difference, to show how complete a definition may be without the difference. "We may define man," says he, "to be a rational creature, invested with a material body. Should any professor of logic ridicule this definition, and say it includes nothing distinctive, he would only show his logic was in abeyance."—(P. 557.) We presume that no professor of logic is likely to object to this definition, as it contains the genus, rational creature, the differentia, a material body. It is true that the genus contains nothing distinctive. "God, angels and demons are all rational." Neither is a material body *characteristic*, but when beings are thought under the general notion of rationality, the possession or non-possession of a body does become differential and divisive. If, however, there were other rational beings besides men possessed of bodies, differing in shape and structure, the mere mention of a body, without reference to the distinctive form, would not be sufficient. A difference may consist of a single attribute, or of a collection of attributes, each of which, singly, may pertain to other subjects, but all of which exist no where else in combination. We presume that what Dr. Hodge means to censure in us, is not that we demanded a specific difference, but that we expected from a difference which was constituted by combination, that each element should itself be differential; in other words, that we took in a divided, what was only true in a compounded sense. If so, our error was, not that we laid down a wrong rule of definition, but that we misapprehended the definition which was actually given. The differentia was there—the three principles in combination—but we mistook it. This plea, however, can not be admitted. In the first place, Dr. Hodge announced his three principles *singly*, as the distinctive principles of our



Church. He called them *our great distinctive principles*. Each is ours, in the sense that all are. They do not distinguish us as a whole, that was an after-thought; but they distinguish us as individual elements. In the second place, the combination, as explained by Dr. Hodge, is admitted by no denomination under the sun. It is a trinity of his own making. In the third place, if these principles were all held by us, they would only express the *heads* under which our peculiarities might be considered, but not the peculiarities themselves. Every thing would depend upon the mode in which we realized them. The truth is, in the sense of Dr. Hodge, Presbyterianism is not specific, but generic. It does not describe a particular form of Government, but consists of principles which may be found in divers forms. Any scheme in which they were embodied would be as much entitled to the name as our own Divine system. Considered, therefore, as a definition of Presbyterianism, in the specific sense of one particular form of Government—the form, for example, of our own or the Scotch Church—Dr. Hodge's three principles must be condemned as a wretched failure. Our extraordinary logic, which the merest tryo is competent to expose, stands impregnable. The shifts and evasions of Dr. Hodge in defending his poor little progeny, remind one of the amusing story of the cracked kettle. In the first place, he did not mean to give a definition by genus and differentia. He had discovered a more excellent way. He can "individualize and complete" an idea without such ceremony. But the more excellent way turns out to be the old way, only a little lengthened. What then? Why, the Doctor faces about, and insists that he did give the real differentia, in his famous three principles. But upon examination, it appears that these three famous principles are categories in which the differentia may be sought, but which the Doctor has failed to find. What his next shift will be, we can not

imagine. Perhaps he will attempt to show that the Categories and Predicables are the same thing.

Dr. Hodge sets off our blunders in logic with a prelusive flourish about our extravagant pretensions to superior skill in the science. We would seem to have been prodigiously vain. It was kind, therefore, to expose our ignorance and humble our pride. We are deeply conscious that we are no better than we should be, but we should be sorry to have our brethren regard us in the light in which Dr. Hodge has been pleased to place us. The remarks were playfully made, and the anecdote to which they were an introduction was recited in a playful spirit, and from an innocent desire to mingle the gay with the grave in debate. Our words are not correctly reported by Dr. Hodge. They are given, with a single exception, exactly as we uttered them, in the July number of this Review. What we said was: "I have paid some little attention to logic. I once wrote a book which that good brother criticised in his Review, as having too much logic. I have dipped into Aristotle and several other masters of the science, and have probably the largest collection of works on the subject to be found in any private library in the whole country." This, surely, was not very bad. But if sportive remarks are to be construed in sober earnest and men are to be hung for jests, it is quite certain that no man's character is safe. And, since we have seen the use which Dr. Hodge has made of what was uttered in the presence of brethren, with the kindest feelings, and without, we can confidently say, the least emotion of arrogance, we have been impressed with the importance of Robert Hall's remark, that the imprudent should never come into company with the malicious. The harmless story which we told, and in which we did not mean to wound—we ourselves had taken no offence at Dr. Hodge's ridicule of our first speech—that harmless story has done all the mischief. The real interpretation to be put upon the gross and exag-

gerated picture which Dr. Hodge has contrived to make by converting pleasantry into sober earnest, is, that, as he was sore himself, he wanted a companion in his pains.

Dr. Hodge endeavors to show that his three principles involve, substantially, the same definition of Presbyterianism which was given by ourselves. That Presbyterianism may be referred to these *three heads*—as the powers of a government may be reduced to the heads, executive, judicial and legislative—whatever we may believe, we never denied. We only said that the vague generals did not “individualize and complete the idea.” They were no definition. No doubt gold may be found in the category of substance, but the definition of substance is not the definition of gold. Ours was a proper definition. It distinguished Presbyterianism from every other form of Church government. It explained the *mode*, which is our peculiarity, in which we accept and realize the three great principles. The government of the Church by parliamentary assemblies, composed of two classes of elders, and of elders only, and so arranged as to realize the visible unity of the whole Church, this is Presbyterianism. It contains our officers, Presbyters, ruling and teaching. It contains our courts, Presbyteries, rising in gradation until we reach the General Assembly, the representative parliament of the whole Church. It differences us from Congregationalism by our representative assemblies, and from Prelacy and Popery, not only by the assemblies, but by the officers of whom they are composed.

The reason of Dr. Hodge’s preference for his vague generalities is not far to seek. He holds that the Church is tied down to no particular mode of organization. She has a right to create new offices and appoint new organs, whenever she thinks it wise or expedient. He abhors the doctrine that whatever is not commanded is forbidden. He wants scope to play in. Now, our definition restricts the Church to one *mode* of organization. It ties her down to

one particular form of Church government, and to one particular order of officers. Such a government as *jure divino*, he cannot accept. But give him regulative principles only, and not prescriptive laws, he can change modes and forms at pleasure, and, so long as they are not repugnant to these principles, they are all Divine; not in the sense that God has appointed this rather than the other, but in the sense that they are all equally allowable. It is to give this latitude to human discretion, that he makes Presbyterianism a generic and not a specific thing. He accepts our theory as *Divine*, because he thinks that we are at liberty to apply his three principles in the form we have done; but any *other mode* in which they are realized would be equally Divine. The real point at issue, therefore, is, whether any particular form of Church government is prescribed in the Scripture. Not whether any regulative principles are there, but whether the elements and the mode of their combination are there. Do the Scriptures put all permanent Church power in the hands of Presbyters? Do the Scriptures recognize more than one class of Presbyters? Do they require that these Presbyters shall be organized into parliamentary assemblies? Do they exclude from these assemblies all who are not Presbyters? Do they restrict the Church to one kind of spiritual court? and do they define the powers with which these courts are entrusted? Is the whole system, with the exception of the circumstantial details, revealed in the Word of God, and bound upon the conscience by the authority of law? This is the real question. And, with all his parade about *jus divinum*, Dr. Hodge denies it to our system in the sense in which the fathers of Presbyterianism understood it. The whole head and front of our offending is, that we have exposed the laxity of his views.

II. We propose now to examine Dr. Hodge's theory of Presbyterianism, and test it by the authority of our standards and the most approved Presbyterian writers. The

points which we shall select are those in which we conceive he has departed from the faith. He professes to differ from us only in three things; 1. In relation to the office of ruling elders; 2. In relation to the nature of Church power, which he represents us as making joint and not several; and, 3. In relation to the measure and limit of the Church's discretion. Upon the second point, we shall soon see that he has fallen into error. The third does constitute an impassable gulf betwixt us. But that has been sufficiently adverted to in another part of this article. There remains, then, the office of ruling elder. But is that all that divides us? At the close of the discussion in the last Assembly, we had been led to believe that, with the exception of his letting down the doctrine of Divine right, and his dangerous theory of the discretion of the Church, this was all. And, in logical consistency, it is all, but this all includes immensely more than those apprehend, who look upon the question as simply one of words and names. His theory of the elder's office is grounded in a radically false view of the relations of the people to the government of the Church. This is his *πρώτον ψεύδος*. The denial of the Presbyterian character of the elder, follows as a legitimate consequence. We shall, therefore, discuss the theory in both aspects; its assumption touching the place of the people, and its conclusion touching the place of the elder.

1. Dr. Hodge lays it down among the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, "*the right of the people to a substantive part in the government of the Church.*"—(P. 547.) "As to the right of the people to take part in the government of the Church, this also is a Divine right. This follows because the Spirit of God, who is the source of all power, dwells in the people, and not exclusively in the clergy; because we are commanded to submit ourselves to our brethren in the Lord; because the people are commanded to exercise this power, and are upbraided when

unfaithful or negligent in the discharge of this duty ; because the gift of governing or ruling is a permanent gift ; and because, in the New Testament, we find the brethren in the actual, recognized exercise of the authority in question, which was never disputed in the Church until the beginning of the dark ages."—(P. 555.) This is a capital argument for Independency. Here, it is plainly and unequivocally asserted, not that the people have a right to choose their rulers, but they have a right of rule themselves. They are as truly *rulers* as the *Presbyters*. The exercise of government is, indeed, distributed betwixt them and Presbyters. It is a joint business. A substantive part in government means, if it means any thing, a right to take part in the actual administration of discipline. The people, *qua* people, have a vote.

Is this Presbyterianism? What say our standards? "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government *in the hand of Church officers*, distinct from the civil magistrate." Not a word is said about the share of the people. The *whole* is put into the hands of *Church officers*. Again: "*to these officers* the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures, and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require." \* If the keys are exclusively in the hands of Church officers, and these keys represent the whole power of the Church, as exercised in teaching and discipline, the *clavis doctrinæ* and the *clavis regiminis*, we should like to know what is left to the people? But, to cut the matter short, we shall adduce a passage from a very admirable pamphlet of Principal Cunningham of Edinburgh, *clarum and venerabile nomen*, which saves us

---

\* Conf. Faith, chapter 30, §§ 1, 2.

the trouble, in the references it makes, of appealing to any other witnesses. We beg the reader to weigh the extract with care.

The substance of Dr. Muir's whole argument, on the ground of which he has accused the great majority of the Church of "subverting," "violating," and "extinguishing an ordinance of Christ," when thrown into the form of a syllogism, is this :—

Christ has vested the exclusive power of governing and ruling the Church in ecclesiastical office-bearers.

To require the consent, or to give effect to the dissent, of the people in the settlement of ministers, is to assign to them a share in the government of the Church.

Ergo, the principle of the veto act is opposed to the appointment of Christ.

Now, Dr. Muir knows well enough that his opponents concede his major proposition, and deny the minor, and yet his main efforts are directed to this object of proving the major, which he does, by quotations from the standards of the Church, just as if the orthodoxy of his opponent had been liable to any suspicion, while he made no attempt to establish the minor, which we meet with a direct negative. It was the more necessary for him to establish the minor proposition by satisfactory evidence, because in past ages it has been maintained chiefly by Papists and Independents, and has been strenuously opposed by the ablest and most learned defenders of Presbyterianism, who have contended that even giving to the people the right of electing their ministers, a larger share of influence than the right of consenting or dissenting, did not imply that they had any share in the government of the Church. If the election of ministers by the people does not imply their ruling and governing in the Church, still less does their consenting to, or dissenting from, the nomination of another. Cardinal Bellarmine, the great champion of Popery, lays down the same principle as Dr. Muir, in arguing against the right of the Christian people. Bellarmine's doctrine upon the point is this : "Eligere pastores ad gubernationem et regimen pertinere certissimum est, non igitur populo convenit pastores eligere."—(de Clericis, c. vii., tom. II., p. 981.) Ames's answer, in full accordance with the views of Presbyterian divines, was this :—"Electio quamvis pertineat ad gubernationem et regimen constituendum, non tamen est actus regiminis aut gubernationis."—(Bellarminus Enervatus, tom. II., lib. III., p. 94.)

The same principle was brought forward for an opposite purpose, at the time of the Westminster Assembly, by the Independents. They argued in this way : Presbyterians admit that ministers ought to be settled upon the choice, or with the consent, of the people. This implies that the people have some share in the government of the Church, and, therefore, the Presbyterian doctrine, which excludes them from government, must be false. Now, it is manifest that the

essential medium of proof in this argument is just the very doctrine asserted by Bellarmine, and assumed by Dr. Muir, in arguing against the rights of the Christian people. How, then, did the ablest and most learned of our forefathers meet this argument of the Independents? Not by disclaiming the doctrine that ministers ought to be settled upon the choice, or with the consent, of the people, but by maintaining that this did not involve any exercise of government or jurisdiction on their part. They established, in opposition to the Independents, and in vindication of the Presbyterian principle about the government of the Church being vested in the office-bearers, the falsehood of the very doctrine on which Bellarmine and Dr. Muir found their opposition to the rights of the Christian people in the settlement of their ministers. Dr. Muir will find the proof of this in Gillespie's *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 116 and 117; Baillie's *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, part I., c. ix., pp. 194 and 195; Wood's *Refutation of Lookier*, part II., pp. 214 and 244; and when an attempt is made to answer their arguments, it will be time enough to enter upon the discussion. In the mean time, we take the liberty of declaring that Dr. Muir has presumed to condemn the majority of the Church as guilty of "violating and extinguishing an ordinance of Christ," while the charge rests solely upon a proposition, in support of which he has not produced one particle of evidence, which has hitherto been maintained only by Papists and Independents, and which has been strenuously opposed by the ablest and most learned defenders of Presbytery.—(Strictures on the Rev. Jas. Robertson's *Observations on the Veto Act*, pp. 23, 24. Edinburgh; 1840.)

Dr. Hodge can not extricate himself from his anti-Presbyterian position, by saying that he attributes the power of rule to the people only *in actu primo*. In that sense, *all* power, whether of rule or teaching, resides in the Church as a whole, without reference to the distinction between officers and people. Dr. Hodge himself admits it. "All power," says he, "is, *in sensu primo, in the people*."—(P. 547.) The life of the Church is one; officers are but the organs through which it is manifested, in acts of jurisdiction and instruction; and the acts of all officers, in consequence of this organic relation, are the acts of the Church. They are the *principium quo*; she is the *principium quod*. The power inheres in her; it is exercised by them. According to this doctrine, it is obvious that as to the exercise of power, her relation to ministers is precisely the same as her



relation to ruling elders. It is the *Church* that *preaches* through the one, as really as it is the *Church* that *rules* through the other. Ministers are her mouth, as elders are her hands. Both equally represent her, and both are nothing except as they represent her. In *actu primo*, it is nonsense to talk about the people having a *part* in the government, they have the *whole*. And so they have the whole inherent, radical, primary power of preaching and of dispensing the sacraments. All lawful acts of all lawful officers are acts of the Church, and they who hear the preacher or the Presbytery, hear the *Church*. The case is analogous to the motions of the human body. Vital power is not in the hands or the feet, it is in the whole body. But the exercise of that power, in walking or in writing, is confined to particular organs. The power is one, but its functions are manifold, and it has an organ appropriate to every function. This makes it an *organic* whole. So the Church has functions; these functions require appropriate organs; these organs are created by Christ, and the Church becomes an organic whole.

Now, according to Dr. Hodge, the people, as contradistinguished from the clergy, are *one* of the organs of government, or, if not a whole organ, a part of one. If they are not a hand, they are a finger. They have a *substantive part* in *government*, in a sense in which they do not have a substantive part in preaching or in dispensing the sacraments. Dr. Hodge divides the Church into two castes, with separate, and even antagonistic, interests; and government—although he repudiates the notion that all power is joint—is the joint product of two factors. The division is thoroughly Popish, though the use made of it is not. On the contrary, we contend that the Church is an indivisible unit, and that government is one of the forms in which it realizes its Divine life. The distinction between clergy and people—a distinction always offensive to Presbyterian ears—is not a distinction of parts into which a compound whole may be

divided, nor a distinction of ranks, like that of the peerage and commons, but a distinction of functions and relations in the same whole. It is a confusion of ideas upon this subject, which gives rise to Dr. Hodge's exaggerated picture of a clerical despotism.

Here, then, is Dr. Hodge's first great blunder. He makes the people, in *secundo actu*, rulers in the Church. He gives them a right, *as people*, to exercise power in acts of government. They and the clergy, as separate and distinct elements, like the vulgar and nobility in aristocratic States, constitute the Church, and each party has its separate rights and interests. There is a House of Lords and a House of Commons. And, instead of using the terms office-bearers, or Presbyters, or elders, all which denote the organic relation of the rulers to the Church, presenting them simply as the media of *exercising* power, he adopts clergy, which, from its Popish associations, is better suited to designate a privileged *rank* above the laity.

2. Setting out with this fundamental misconception, he has failed to seize the true idea of the elder's office. He looks upon it, in the first place, as a mere expedient by which the people appear, as a separate class, in our Church courts. The elder represents not the Church, as a whole, but a particular interest or party. This leads to a second error, by which a representative is merged into a deputy, and the elder becomes the mere factor of the people. Both errors spring from a radical misunderstanding of the genuine nature of representative, as distinguished from every other species of government.

(1.) That Dr. Hodge makes the elder the representative of the *people*, not in the general and scriptural sense of the *Church*, but in the restricted and contracted sense of a *class*, a *party*, in the Church, is evident from every line that he has written. In the extract from page 555, which we have already cited, it is the right of the people, as distinguished from the clergy, to take part in government, that

he is defending, and his first reason is, that the Spirit of God dwells in them, and not exclusively in the clergy. It is this right which they exercise through representatives, and these representatives are ruling elders. These elders are, consequently, the expedient by which the *people* appear in our Church courts. Through the ministers the clergy appear—through the elders the people appear.

(2.) If they are the *appearance* of the people, it is obvious that they are simple deputies. They are the people, in the same sense in which ministers are the clergy. They must, therefore, do what the people would do, say what the people would say, approve what the people would approve, and condemn what the people would condemn. We might say that they are the Commons, and the clergy the Peerage; but the illustration would fail in this respect, that the Commons in Parliament are not mere exponents of the will of their constituents. They have a higher and a nobler function. The whole worth of the office of ruling elder, in the eyes of Dr. Hodge, turns upon the fact that the “elder is a layman.” It is this that “makes him a real power, a distinct element, in our system.” This is what secures the Church against clerical despotism. The popular will has an exponent adequate to resist the clerical will. The whole argument is absurd, unless the elder is the *locum tenens*, the deputy of the people. What makes it decisively evident that this is Dr. Hodge’s conception of the relation of the elder to the people, is the circumstance that he resolves the necessity of the office into the fact of the impossibility of the people appearing in mass, from their enormous multitude. He admits that in a single small congregation, it might be done, but on a large scale, as when the Church embraces a city, a province, or a kingdom, it is clearly impossible. *But for this impossibility*, there would be no need of elders. In *consequence* of this impossibility “the people must appear by their representatives, or not appear at all.” If, therefore, the ruling elder is only the appearance of the

people, that is, if he is the whole people condensed into one man, he must be the mere organ of the people. Their will is his law.

(3.) Now, all this proceeds upon a fundamental error in relation to the nature of representative government. In it the people do not appear in *propria persona*, not because they *can not* appear, but because they *ought not* to appear. Mass meetings would make poor legislatures, and still poorer judges and magistrates. The end of all civil government is justice. To determine justice in concrete circumstances, and to secure it by fixed institutions and impartial laws, exacts wisdom and deliberation, and wisdom and deliberation exact a restraint upon human passions and prejudices. Parliamentary assemblies, consisting of chosen men, are a device through which the State seeks to ascertain the true and the right. They are a limitation or restraint upon the caprices, the passions, the prejudices, of the masses. For the same reason, the State administers the law through judges. Parliamentary assemblies, in most free States, are, themselves, checked by division into two chambers. The end is still the same: to guard against all the influences that might be unfriendly to the discovery and supreme authority of truth. These bodies are, therefore, the organs of the commonwealth, by which she seeks to realize the great idea of justice. They are not the exponents of the will, but of the wisdom, of the State.

In strictly representative governments, the people only choose their rulers—they never instruct them; or, if they do instruct them, they depart from the fundamental idea of the theory. When they wish to impeach them, or to throw them off, unless in cases of violent revolution, they still proceed through representative bodies.

Obedience to God is the end of the government of the Church. The design is to ascertain and enforce His law. The same necessity of deliberation, prudence, caution and wisdom obtains here as in civil affairs; and, therefore, the

Church, as a commonwealth, does all her legislative and judicial thinking through chosen men. Her assemblies are also checked by what is equivalent to two chambers. Her rulers are of different classes, in order that every variety of talent and intellectual habits may enter into her councils. These courts are organs through which the *Church*, and *the Church* as a whole, expounds and enforces the law of God; and every ruler is a man solemnly appointed to seek and execute the will of the Master. Our Church courts contain no deputies to utter a foregone conclusion—no exponents of the opinions and decrees of any set of men—but counsellors, senators, met to deliberate, to conclude, to decide.

From this view, it follows that the minister sustains precisely the same relation to the Church with the ruling elder. They are both representatives, not of an order or a class, but of the *Church* of God. Their duties in the Church courts are exactly the same. Both have to seek the Word from the mouth of the Lord, and to declare what they have received from Him. BOTH ARE CLERGYMEN AND BOTH ARE LAYMEN. Let us explain ourselves: for the explanation will detect an illusion which vitiates much of Dr. Hodge's article.

Clergy and laity are terms which, in the New Testament, are indiscriminately applied to all the *people* of God. About this there can be no question. In the New Testament sense, therefore, every minister is a layman, and every layman is a clergyman. In the common Protestant sense, the origin of which it is useless to trace, the terms express the distinction between the office-bearers of the Church and the people in their private capacity. A clergyman is a man clothed with the office of a Presbyter. Now, an office in a free government is not a *rank* or a *caste*. It is not an estate of the realm. It is simply a public trust. A man, therefore, does not cease to belong to the people by being chosen to office. The President of the United

States is still one of the people. The Representatives in Congress are still among the people. Our Judges and Senators are still a part of the people. Office makes a distinction in relations—the distinction between a private and a public man—but makes no distinction in person or in rank. Office-bearers are not an *order*, in the legal sense. If a clergyman, therefore, is only one of the people discharging a public trust—if to be a clergyman means nothing more than that an individual is not simply a *private* man—it is clearly a title as applicable to the ruling elder as to the minister, unless it should be denied that the ruling elder's is an office at all. To convey the idea that the distinctions induced by ordination are official, and not personal, our standards have studiously avoided the word clergy, which had been so much abused in the papacy, and substituted the more correct expressions, officers and office-bearers. If a man chooses arbitrarily to restrict the term clergyman to preachers, then, of course, the ruling elder is not a clergyman, for he is not a minister of the Gospel. But if taken to designate office-bearers, then it applies to all who are not in private relations. The only point about which we are solicitous is, that the relations of the ruling elder to the Church are precisely the same as those of the minister. They are both, in the same sense, though not to the same degree, representatives of the people, the Church. The minister represents her in rule and in preaching the Gospel and dispensing the sacraments. The ruling elder represents her only in rule. The extent of their representation is the only official difference betwixt them.

If ruling elders are not exclusively the representatives of the people, why are they said, in our standards, to be properly the representatives of the people? The answer is obvious, because they *are* so. But to conclude that because an attribute is properly predicated of one subject, it is denied of all others, would be most extraordinary logic. To say that

because man may be properly called mortal, therefore nothing else is, would be a most "lame and impotent conclusion." The Senators in our State Legislatures are as really representatives of the people, as the members of the other house, yet the latter alone are technically styled representatives. Nothing is more common than to limit the use of a general term, or convert an appellative into a proper name. In that way minister and pastor have become restricted to a particular office.

The reason of restricting the term representative of the people to the ruling elder, was probably this: To the English mind, that term conveyed the idea of a chosen ruler. Now, the elder was nothing but a chosen ruler, and as his office answered precisely to the sense of the term, in its popular use, the framers of our standards adopted it. They had the English Parliament before them, and the only chosen rulers it contained were the members of the House of Commons. And as they were commonly called the representatives of the people, the ruling elder, who discharged the same functions in the Church, received the same appellation. Ministers being some thing more than rulers, were distinguished by titles which, to the popular mind, would not convey this narrow idea.

Having now exposed Dr. Hodge's blunders in relation to the right of the people to a *substantive part* in the government of the Church, and his consequent blunder in relation to the nature of the ruling elder's office; having shown that all office-bearers sustain precisely the same relation to the people; that it is the Church that rules and teaches, and dispenses the sacraments through them; that they are all, without exception, her representatives, in different departments of her work—her organs, through which she moves and wills and thinks and acts—we proceed now to what will be an easy task, the official title of the ruling elder in the New Testament. Is he, or is he not, a *Presbyter*? This is not a question of mere names. The *Presbyter* is

the *only* officer into whose hands, as a permanent arrangement, God has put the government of His Church. He is the only *instrumentum quo* through which the Church can exercise the power of rule, which inherently resides in her. If, therefore, the ruling elder is not a Presbyterian, he is an intruder, a usurper, in the courts of the Lord's house. He has no business in any Presbytery. Man may put him there, but it is without the authority of God. It is, therefore, a vital question, so far as concerns his office. In answer to this question, Dr. Hodge denies, and we affirm. As in the present article we occupy the position of a respondent, we shall content ourselves with replying to the objections which the "brother from Princeton" has been able to present. Let us look first to the state of the question, and then to his arguments in the negative.

Dr. Hodge tells us, that the real question is, whether the ruling elder is a clergyman or a layman. This is a great mistake; for we regard him as both, and we regard the minister of the Gospel as both. They are both clergymen, and they are both laymen, and any theory which denies this is utterly popish and prelatical. What we presume Dr. Hodge means is, that the real question is, whether the ruling elder is a preacher, a minister of the Gospel, or not? But this has never been disputed. Although he repeatedly affirms that the theory which makes the ruling elder a Presbyterian makes him a preacher, we defy him to produce a single respectable writer who has ever confounded the functions of rule with teaching. He knows, or ought to know, that such a confusion has been persistently denied. We give the ruling elder no official right to dispense either the Word or the sacraments. There is, and never has been, any question upon that point. Dr. Hodge is out-and-out wrong, with the exception of the ordaining power, when he charges us with holding that ruling elders have as much right to "preach, ordain, and administer the sacraments," as ministers of the Gospel. What, then, is the question?



The real question is, whether the term *Presbyter* means teacher or ruler; and if ruler, whether it is generic or specific; that is, whether all rulers are of one class? We affirm that *Presbyter*, in the New Testament, means *chosen ruler*, and that these rulers are of two kinds, differenced from each other by the property of preaching or not preaching. Here lies the real point in dispute. Does *Presbyter*, in the New Testament, mean only a minister of the Gospel, one commissioned to dispense the Word and sacraments, or does it mean one who has been set apart to bear rule in the house of God, whether he preaches or not? In other words, is it the generic title of all spiritual office-bearers, whatever may be their special functions? If it is, the ruling elder is a *Presbyter*; if not, he is nothing. Now, Dr. Hodge maintains that *Presbyter* means only a minister of the Gospel; that a man who is not authorized to preach and administer the sacraments, has no right to this name as an official title.

Let us look at his arguments. He pleads, first, the doctrine and practice of all the Reformed Churches. All have regarded *Presbyter* as equivalent to preacher. There never was a more unaccountable blunder. Surely, the Church of Scotland is to be ranked among the Reformed Churches, and yet that Church teaches expressly that the term elder, as an official title, is generic, and includes two classes, one who do, and one who do not, teach. "The word elder in the Scripture," says the second Book of Discipline, Chap. VI., sometimes is the name of age, sometimes of office. When it is the name of an office, sometimes it is taken largely, comprehending as well the pastors and doctors, as them who are called seniors, or elders," that is, ruling elders. Again: "It is not necessary that all elders be also teachers of the Word. Albeit, the chief ought to be so, and so are worthy of double honor." The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we suspect, may also be ranked among the Reformed Churches, yet its doctrine and practice are

directly contrary to the theory of Dr. Hodge. That Church divides elders into two classes, teaching and ruling, and makes each equally apostolic bishops.—(Constitution and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, §§ 3, 4.) This Church also requires that the ruling elder shall be ordained by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. (Chap. IV., § 2.) And in other Churches, where the ordination is by the minister alone, it is evidently by the minister as representing the parochial Presbytery.

But, to cut this matter of authority short, our own standards unambiguously affirm that the office of ruling elder “has been understood, by a *great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, to be designated in the Scriptures by the title of governments; and of those who rule well, but do not labor in the Word and doctrine. The reference is to 1 Tim., 5 : 17, and the allegation, consequently, is that a great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches has understood the official title, Presbyter, as including the ruling elder. What now becomes of Dr. Hodge’s assertion, that this is entirely contrary to the doctrine and practice of *all* the Reformed Churches? The Church of Scotland is against him; the Church in Ireland is against him, and our own standards are against him. What a proof of the reckless hardihood of his assertions! But the chapter of his misfortunes is not yet complete. He quotes Calvin, and quotes him in such a way as to make the impression that Calvin holds the same doctrine with himself. Calvin, indeed, held that the official Presbyters of the New Testament were bishops, but bishops and preachers are not synonymous terms. If Dr. Hodge means to say that Calvin did not regard the ruling elder as officially a Presbyter, he is in grievous error.

In commenting on James 5 : 15, he says :

“ I include here generally all those who presided over the Church; *for PASTORS WERE NOT ALONE CALLED PRESBYTERS OR ELDERS, BUT ALL THOSE WHO WERE CHOSEN FROM THE PEOPLE TO BE, AS IT*

WERE, CENSORS, TO PROTECT DISCIPLINE. For every Church had, as it were, its own Senate, chosen from men of weight and of proved integrity."

On 1 Pet. 5 : 1 : "By this name (Presbyters) he designates pastors and ALL THOSE WHO ARE APPOINTED FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH."

On 1 Tim., 5 : 17, he observes, first, that "Elder is not a name of age, but of office," and then subsequently adds : "We may learn from this that there were at that time TWO KINDS OF ELDERS; for all were not ordained to teach. The words plainly mean, *that there were some who ruled well and honorably, but who did not hold the office of teachers.* And, indeed, there were chosen from among the people men of worth and of good character, who united with pastors in a common council and authority, administered the discipline of the Church, and were a kind of censors for the correction of morals."

1 Cor., 12 : 28 : "By *governments*, I understand elders, who had the charge of discipline. For the primitive Church had its Senate, for the purpose of keeping the people in propriety of deportment as Paul shows elsewhere, when he makes mention of TWO KINDS OF PRESBYTERS," cf. 1 Cor., 5 : 4.

So much for the doctor's first argument—the doctrine and practice of *all* the Reformed Churches. Now for the second argument. It is so rich, we give it in Dr. Hodge's own words : "In thus destroying the peculiarity of the office, its value is destroyed. It is precisely because the ruling elder is a layman, that he is a real power, a distinct element, in our system. The moment you dress him in canonicals, you destroy his power, and render him ridiculous. It is because he is not a clergyman, it is because he is one of the people, engaged in the ordinary business of life, separated from the professional class of ministers, that he is what he is in our Church courts."—(P. 560.)

If by layman is meant one of the people of God, we agree that every elder ought to be a layman, and should continue so to the end of life ; but we suspect that the qualification is not peculiar to him—that it is equally, perhaps more, important in the case of ministers. If by layman is meant a *private member* of the Church, then the importance of the office depends upon its being *no office* at all. But if by layman is meant one who is not a preacher of the Gospel.

then we accept the proposition. It is precisely what we contend for—that our spiritual rulers should be of two classes, distinguished from each other by their training, their pursuits, their daily associations, and their habits of thought. It is this variety of mental constitution and discipline which secures in our courts completeness of deliberation. Dr. Hodge says, that if you dress the ruling elder in canonicals, you make him ridiculous. We submit whether a Presbyterian *minister* would cut a much better figure in the same habiliments. But the illustration shows how deeply rooted in his mind is the Popish notion, that the clergy are not of the people—that they are some thing more than simple members of the Church clothed with office.

Dr. Hodge's third argument is the crowning glory of his logic. He has discovered that, if we make the ruling elder a clergyman, we reduce "the government of the Church to a clerical despotism." Let us now read officer or office-bearer in the place of clergyman—for they are the same thing—and then the position is, that a government administered by *officers* is an *official* despotism. We should like to know what government under the sun, upon these terms, can escape from the charge. How else it *can* be administered, we are wholly incompetent to understand! Is the government of the United States a despotism, because all power is exercised through representative assemblies and magistrates—through *officers*, chosen and installed, for the very purpose? We had always thought that it was a security for liberty to have an appropriate organ through which every department of power is exercised. The right of election connects these officers immediately with the people. But, says Dr. Hodge, the right of the people to choose their rulers does not keep their rulers from being despots, if the people exercise the functions of government only through these rulers. The illustration by which he commends this extraordinary thesis is still more marvellous. "If," says he, "according to the Constitution of

the United States, the President, Senators, Representatives, heads of departments, Judges, Marshals, all naval and military men holding commissions, in short, all officers, from the highest to the lowest, (except overseers of the poor,) must be clergymen, every one would see and feel that all power was in the hands of the clergy." And, on the same principle, if all the clergy were chosen from the class of shoemakers, it would put all the power of the Church into the hands of shoemakers. We should then have a despotism of cobblers. Dr. Hodge confounds, in the first place, the class from which an officer is chosen with the duties of the office—what the man was before his election, with what he becomes by virtue of his election. The President of the United States would have no other powers than he now has, whatever might have been his previous profession or pursuits. His office would be the same, whether he was previously a preacher or a rail-splitter. To limit eligibility to a single class of citizens, would be arbitrary and unjust. But this tyranny would not affect the duties of the office itself. He would rule only as President, and not as clergyman, doctor, or rail-splitter.

In the next place, Dr. Hodge overlooks the fact, that to make a man a clergyman is to do precisely the same thing in the Church which we do in the State, when we make a man a President, Senator, or Representative. The clergy are to the Church what these officers are to the State. If, now, we selected the clergy only from a single class—if none could be preachers but such and such professions in life—then we would do what Dr. Hodge's illustration supposes to be done in the State, when it limits the field of choice to the clergy alone. But there is no such restriction. The Church chooses her rulers from the whole body of her members. She cares nothing about their previous employments and occupations. The doors of the ministry are open to all that are qualified. This illustration, however, conclusively proves how thoroughly Popish the Doctor's

notions of the clergy are. It is an estate in the Church, and not simply *an office*.\*

But, in the third place, the argument is utterly rotten, as despotism does not depend upon the instruments by which power is exercised, but upon the *nature of the power itself*. The essential idea of despotism is a government of *will*, in contradistinction from a government of *law and right*. If the Church made the *will* of its rulers law, no matter what those rulers might be called, the government would be a despotism. The right of choice would not be freedom. The slave might, indeed, choose his master, but he would be a slave still, and for the simple reason that *the nature of the master's power* is despotic. But when a government has a constitution, and a constitution which provides for the supremacy of law and right, then the government, no matter who administers it, is free. Our Presbyterian rulers have a Divine charter to go by, and their authority is purely ministerial—it is to execute the provisions of that charter. Their will, as mere will, has no place in the government—it is the law of God, which alone is supreme, and that law is perfect freedom. If the rulers of the Church transcend their commission, no one is bound to obey them, and the constitution of the Church makes abundant provision for holding them to a strict responsibility. They stand in the same relation to the Church that the rulers of the United States sustain to the people, and if the one government is free, the other can not be despotic. The ideal of

---

\* Hence the common statement, that the government of the Presbyterian Church is aristocratic, is founded in error. If the choice of its officers were restricted to a single class of men, that class would then be an aristocracy, and the charge would be just. But, as there is no such restriction, the government is purely republican. It is no objection that the rulers hold their offices for life. In some of the States of the Federal Union the Judges are chosen for life, but that does not make them an order of nobility. As long as they are *chosen* to, and do not *inherit* their offices, or the right to be elected, they *are of the people*, and are distinguished from their brethren only as a public from a private man.

the freest, noblest government under heaven, which Milton so rapturously sketched, corresponds, without an exception, to our Presbyterian, representative republic.

It is true that we denounced Dr. Hodge's argument on this subject as *ad captandum*, and compared the logic which could deduce from the principles of a free representative republic a clerical despotism, to the logic of a hard-shell Baptist minister in Alabama, who found the destined prevalence of immersion in the simple statement, that the voice of the turtle shall be heard in the land. But we beg pardon of the hard-shell brother. His interpretation has the merit of ingenuity. Dr. Hodge's argument has only the merit of calling hard names. It was a vulgar appeal to the passions and prejudices associated with the notions of priestly supremacy. These associations have sprung from the abuses of Popery and Prelacy, and we are glad to see that, while the Doctor holds to their radical conception of the clergy, he is not prepared to develope and expand it into tyranny. Here he parts with his friends and allies.

Dr. Hodge says that, in the last extremity, \* we ourselves disclaimed the new theory. If this means that we conceded that the ruling elder is not officially a Presbyterian, or that the term Presbyterian, as a title of office, does not include

---

\* This "last extremity" of ours is amusing. The real state of the case was this: We were dealing out some pretty effective blows against Dr. Hodge's hybrid theory of Presbyterianism, when the Doctor, unable to contain himself, sprang to his feet in great excitement, as if the terrors of death were before him, and protested that he was of our way of thinking. In our simplicity, we verily thought that he was begging for quarter. We were sorry for him, and let him off.

Surprised, no doubt, upon his return home, to find himself alive, and certain that some one must have died in that hour of mortal agony, he quietly concludes that it was we, and proceeds to give our dying confession. We suppose that we must accept the statement, and in all future accounts of the scene imitate the Frenchman, who related to an English officer the story of a fatal duel in which he had been engaged. And what do you think, said he to the officer, was the result? Of course, was the reply, you killed your man. Oh, no! said the Frenchman, he killed me!

two classes, distinguished from each other by the possession or non-possession of the property of preaching, it is altogether a mistake. If it means, however, that we did not claim for the ruling elder the right of dispensing the Word and sacraments, it is true. We never held any such opinion. We have never been in any extremity which forced us to abandon what we never possessed. Dr. Hodge is willing to call the elder a *Presbyter*, in the sense in which Apostles are called deacons. But the point is, not as to what the Second Book of Discipline calls the common meaning of the word—in that sense, any old man is a *Presbyter*, and every believer is a deacon—but as to the official sense, the sense in which it expresses jurisdiction in the house of God. That is the sense upon which the question concerning the application of the title turns; and upon that question we have never had but one opinion.

If, after the specimens he has had, any blunders of Dr. Hodge could astonish the reader, he would open his eyes in amazement, when he hears the Doctor passionately affirm: "We do not differ from Dr. Miller as to the nature of the office of ruling elders." Oh, no! the only difference is about the method of proving it Divine! Let us see. Dr. Hodge says that the ruling elder is not a scriptural bishop. Dr. Miller affirms that he is. Dr. Hodge says that the ruling elder is only a layman. Dr. Miller affirms that he is also a clergyman. Dr. Hodge accepts the ordination of an elder by a single minister. Dr. Miller affirms that it should be by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. In what, then, do they agree? Echo answers, What. The pupil is evidently endeavoring to wipe out every trace of the master's instructions. And if Dr. Miller's theory shall continue to maintain its ground at Princeton, it will not be from any assistance at the hands of Dr. Hodge.



Let us hear Dr. Miller:

"Now it has been alleged," says he, "by the opponents of ruling elders, that to represent the Scriptures as holding forth TWO CLASSES of elders, one class as both teaching and ruling, and the other as ruling only, and consequently the latter as holding a station not exactly identical with the former, amounts to a virtual surrender of the argument (for the parity of the clergy) derived from the identity of bishop and Presbyter. This objection, however, is totally groundless. If we suppose elder, as used in Scripture, to be a generic term, comprehending all who bore rule in the Church; and if we consider the term bishop as also a generic term, including all who sustained the relation of official *inspectors* or *overseers* of a flock; then it is plain that all bishops were scriptural elders, and that all elders, whether both teachers and rulers, or rulers only, provided they were placed over a parish as *inspectors* or *overseers*, were scriptural bishops. Now this I have no doubt, was the fact."—(Essay on the Nature and Duties of the office of ruling elder. 1831; p. 68.)

Here we have *one order*, or *genus*, with two coördinate species, and the elder affirmed to be a scriptural bishop.

Again:

If this view of the nature and importance of the office before us be admitted, the question very naturally arises, whether it be correct to call this class of elders *lay* elders; or whether they have not such a strictly ecclesiastical character as should prevent the use of that language in speaking of them. This is one of the points in the present discussion, concerning which the writer of this essay frankly confesses that he has, in some measure, altered his opinion. Once he was disposed to confine the epithet *clerical* to teaching elders, and to designate those who ruled only, and did not teach, as *lay* elders. But more mature inquiry and reflection have led him, first to doubt the correctness of this opinion, and finally to persuade him, that, so far as the distinction between *clergy* and *laity* is proper at all, it ought not to be made the point of distinction between these two classes of elders; and that, when we speak of the one as *clergymen*, and the other as *laymen*, we are apt to convey an idea altogether erroneous, if not seriously mischievous.—(Essay, pp. 202, 203.)

As to the ordination of a ruling elder:

It seems to be a fundamental principle in every department, both of the natural and moral world, that every thing must be considered as capable of begetting its like. If this be so, does it not follow, as a plain dictate of common sense, that, in ordaining ruling elders, the members of the session already in office, should lay on hands with the pastor, in setting apart an additional member to the same office? In

other words, if there be such a body already in existence in the Church, THE HANDS OF THE PAROCHIAL PRESBYTERY ought to be laid on, in adding to its own number, and the right hand of fellowship given, at the close of the service, by each member of the session, to each of his newly-ordained brethren. This appears to me equally agreeable to reason and Scripture, and highly adapted to edification. And if there be no eldership already in the Church in which the ordination takes place, then the Presbytery, upon proper application being made to them, ought to appoint at least one minister, and two or more ruling elders, to attend at the time and place most convenient, to perform the ordination.—(*Ib.* p. 290.)

We have now reviewed all Dr. Hodge's objections to the theory which makes the ruling elder officially a Presbyter. He has not advanced a single argument which invalidates the position, that this term designates an order, or a genus, distributed into two species, whose divisive principle is the possession or non-possession of the property of preaching. The generic attributes of the species, in both cases, must be exactly the same. The genus is one, and that is what is meant by saying the order is one. The species themselves, of course, differ: otherwise they could not be species at all, and the difference is accurately signalized by the epithets teaching and ruling. Any other doctrine is stark Prelacy. If the ruling elder is a spiritual officer, and yet is not a coördinate species with the minister of the Gospel, there must be subordination. If not equal, one must be *higher* than the other. If they are not of the same *order*, then they are of *different* orders, and the parity of spiritual office-bearers is given to the winds. This is the legitimate conclusion of the whole matter, to convert Presbyterian ministers into prelates, and Presbyterian elders into their humble subjects.

We must advert to another point, which Dr. Hodge has signalized as a point of difference betwixt his theory and ours. He alleges that we teach "that all power in the Church is joint, and not several. That is, it can be exercised only by Church courts, and not in any case by individual officers."—(P. 547.) Now, the singular fact is, that,

in the whole course of the debate in the General Assembly, we never once adverted to the distinction in question. We carefully avoided it. It was another brother, a brother, we think, from Mississippi, who introduced it. We not only never taught ourselves that all power is joint, and not several, but we never heard of a single human being, on the face of the earth, who *did* teach it. We defy Dr. Hodge to produce an instance of a single writer, living or dead, who maintains any such nonsense. The very making of the distinction implies that *some* power is several. What *has* been taught, and justly and scripturally taught, is, that the power of *rule*, the *potestas jurisdictionis*, as it is called in the Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, as contradistinguished from the power of teaching, the *potestas ordinis*, is joint, and not several. But it has always been affirmed that the power of teaching is several, and not joint. There is, consequently, no difference betwixt Dr. Hodge and ourselves on this point. There is no difference in our Church upon it. There *is* a difference, however, upon another point connected with the distinction, but not involving the distinction itself, and that is, whether ordination belongs to the *potestas ordinis*, or the *potestas jurisdictionis*—whether, in other words, it is an exercise of joint or several power. Some have contended that it is a ministerial function; others have contended—ourselves among the number—that it is an act of government. But no one has ever maintained that *all* power is joint, and not several. What are we to think of a man who makes such reckless and sweeping assertions, without the slightest foundation in fact? How clear that truth has failed him, when he is compelled to resort to fiction!

Having now completed our examination of Dr. Hodge's revised scheme of Presbyterianism, we are prepared to sum up the result. In the first place, his persistent representation of the clergy as an estate in the Church, separate and distinct from the people, and his degradation of the office

of ruling elder to a lower order than that of the minister of the Word, are thoroughly *Prelatic*. To this extent, therefore, he is no Presbyterian. In the second place, his theory of the right of the people to a substantive part in the government of the Church—thus making them a second estate in the kingdom, and ascribing to them the functions of office-bearers—savours strongly of Independency. It has no smack of Presbyterianism. In the third place, his vague notions of the relations of the Spirit to the Church, taken in connection with his celebrated essay on the idea of the Church, has a striking affinity with Quakerism. His notion of the unity of the Church, as realized through the organization of its courts, is Presbyterian. He is, therefore, a little of every thing, and not much of any thing. His true position is that of an ecclesiastical eclectic. He looks out upon all sects with the eye of a philosopher, and as he does not feel himself tied down by the authority of Scripture to any one mode of organization, as he is quite at liberty to make new officers and organs, according to the exigencies of the times, so long as they do not contradict certain regulative principles, he selects what strikes him as good from all, and casts the bad away.

He comes short of a thorough Presbyterianism—1. By maintaining that the discretion of the Church is limited only by the express prohibitions of the Scripture. His motto is, whatsoever is not prohibited is lawful. The Church's motto is, whatsoever is not commanded is unlawful. 2. By making the people and the clergy two distinct estates, between whom the power of government is shared, and by whom it is jointly exercised; whereas, the Church makes the clergy to be only that portion of the people through whom she exercises the various functions of her spiritual ministry. 3. By making *two* orders of spiritual rulers, the Presbyter or bishop, and the ruling elder; whereas, the Church makes only *one* order, which she distributes into two classes, the teaching and the ruling

elder. 4. By making the ruling elder merely a deputy, to maintain the rights of a particular class; whereas, the Church makes him a representative, a chosen ruler, through whom she herself, and not a class, declares and executes the law of God. 5. By allowing the claim of a *jus divinum* only for regulative principles, and not for the mode of organizing the Church. 6. In order to afford freer latitude and scope for the exercise of discretion in creating new officers and courts, he absolutely repudiates the principle of inference, and denies that what is deduced from the Word of God, by good and necessary consequence, is of equal authority with its express statements. In all these points Dr. Hodge has departed from the faith of the Fathers. His doctrines in respect to them are not the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. We have maintained no new, no peculiar, theory of Presbyterianism. We have shown that, in all the points enumerated, we are standing upon the ground occupied by the purest Presbyterian Confessors, and especially upon the ground of our own venerable standards.

To guard against the possibility of misconception, it may be well to say, that while we insist upon the Divine authority of Presbyterian Church Government, we are far from unchurching or breaking communion with any evangelical denomination. Government, though Divine, is subordinate to faith in the Gospel. The most precious bonds of communion are inward, and not outward, and those who give evidence that they have been accepted of Christ, we are no more at liberty to reject for defects in their government, than for defects in their creed. All Evangelical Churches, moreover, have the essentials of the visible institute of Christ; they have a ministry and ordinances; they have *some*, though not *all*, the officers that He has appointed; they exceed or come short of the complement of rulers, and fail in the details of arrangement. but as long as the Word, in its essential doctrines, is really preached, and the sacraments truly administered, they

are true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be received to our communion and fellowship, as cordially as we receive the private believer who has not yet attained the full measure of knowledge. Our doctrines give no protection to bigotry. We are as consistent in our ecclesiastical fellowship, for example, with the Methodist Episcopal Church, while we reject their peculiar features of government as unlawful and unscriptural, as we are in our Christian fellowship with Methodist believers, while we reject, as grossly contradictory to Scripture, their Arminian creed. We, therefore, unchurch no sect that does not unchurch itself, by refusing to hold the Head. We can make the distinction between a defective and a perfect Church—between the essentials and the accidents of government.

While we admit that questions of government are subordinate in importance to questions of faith—mere trifles, compared with the great truths of the Gospel, as a scheme of salvation, it does not follow that they are of *no* value. Whatever God has thought proper to reveal, it becomes man to study. Every thing in its place, is a just maxim, but it by no means implies that comparatively small things are entitled to *no* place. Because Church government is not the great thing, it does not follow that it is nothing. We are as far removed from latitudinarianism as from bigotry. We wish to study the *whole* will of God, and we wish to give every thing precisely that prominence which He designs that it should occupy in His own Divine economy. None should be content with striving simply to save their souls; they should strive to be perfect in *all* the will of God. This obligation is an ample vindication of the repeated efforts we have made to explain and enforce the peculiarities of our Church's Divine polity, and to resist all schemes and contrivances in contradiction to the harmony of her system. She will yet awake to a full consciousness of herself. She will yet arise in the energy of a healthful life, and throw off the excrescences which circumstances

have gathered around her, and which are not truly of her. She will yet be brought freely to confess that her own wisdom is foolishness, and that her real glory is the strength and light of the Lord. She will take the Word as her sole guide, and renounce all human devices.

In relation to Boards, the subject which has provoked all this discussion, the Free Church of Scotland has led the way in the development of a sound and self-consistent Presbyterianism. At the last meeting of her venerable Assembly, she approved the very changes, in the construction of her Schemes, which were *quasi* Boards, that we, at the same time, were pressing upon the Assembly of our own Church. That Assembly has endorsed the principle, that these "Committees shall not hereafter appoint acting committees, nor consist of a greater number of members than the Assembly shall deem requisite for the efficient transaction of the matters committed to their care." The new arrangement could not, at once, be carried into effect, but the Board feature is to be entirely abolished, nothing is to be left but the Executive Committee, and the Assembly is to take the appointment of it in its own hands. This was done in an Assembly of which Robert Buchanan was Moderator, and William Cunningham a member—an Assembly, too, which devoted a whole day to the commemoration of the great principles of the Reformation. With such an inspiration, we do not marvel at the result. What, on this side of the water, is denounced as hair-splitting, is considered sound Presbyterianism by an enlightened Assembly as ever sat in Scotland.