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THE SPIRIT OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

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IN order to give some definite shape and form to our thoughts in considering this subject, let us inquire, first, what Presbyterianism is. In prosecuting this inquiry, we must eliminate all those elements or features which it has in common with other forms of ecclesiastical polity. Church Government is the genus, Presbyterianism is one of its species, coördinate with other species, such as Prelacy and Congregationalism. We are to consider only specific differences. According to this rule, we shall be forced to condemn a definition or description of Presbyterianism to which great currency has been given in our Church in this country by the reputation of its distinguished author. This definition makes Presbyterianism to consist of three things: (a) The parity of the ministry. (b) The participation of the people in the government of the Church. (c) The unity of the Church. Now, according to the rule we have laid down, the first of these features must be eliminated, because it is not distinctive, does not make Presbyterianism specifically different from another species of Church government with which we are all familiar. Congregationalism recognises as fully as Presbyterianism the parity of the ministry. The second must be eliminated also, but for a different reason. It is no feature of Presbyterianism at all. This form of government does not recognise the right of the people to take part in the government in the sense of governing. They take a part, and a very important part, in constituting the government, but not in governing. Papists and Congregationalists agree in the principle that the power of electing officers is a power of government, while they draw very different, and even contradictory, conclusions from it. The Papists conclude that, as the power of governing does not belong to the people, the right of electing their rulers does not belong to them. The Con-

gregationalists conclude that, as the people have the right of election, therefore some power of government belongs to them. Presbyterians deny the principle in which Papists and Congregationalists are agreed, and affirm against both, that the power of election belongs to the constituting of the government, but is not an act of government. The second element in the definition under criticism is therefore entirely out of place. The definition thus far is faulty in the same way as “feathered biped” would be faulty as a definition of man. The criticism on this last would be obvious—that there are many bipeds besides man, and that man is not a feathered biped. So there are other polities besides Presbyterianism which recognise the parity of the ministry, and Presbyterianism does not recognise the right of the people to take part in the government at all. The third element, in the form in which it stands, must be objected to on the same ground as the first. It is not distinctive. Papists and other Prelatists hold to the unity of the Church. But of this more anon.

A better definition is one which was given by a great teacher in the Seminary whose semi-centennial anniversary we are now celebrating. He defines Presbyterianism as a form of Church government “by parliamentary assemblies composed of two classes of presbyters, and of presbyters only, and so arranged as to realise the visible unity of the whole Church.”

1. It is a government by parliamentary assemblies. In this it is contrasted, on the one hand, with Congregationalism, and on the other with Prelacy. The term Congregationalism is here used in a very definite sense, as descriptive of a species of Independency. The Independents of the Savoy Confession were not Congregationalists, in the sense of lodging the power of government in the congregation or brotherhood of believers. John Owen, their great leader, in his treatise entitled “The True Nature of a Gospel Church,” might be mistaken for a Presbyterian, when he is treating of ecclesiastical power and government, as exemplified on the scale of a single congregation or assembly of believers. But such a congregation is held by Independents to be a complete church, and not to be associated with any other like congregation under the same government, Presbytery, or

Synod. The Congregationalists hold the same views ; but they also hold (which Independents, as such, do not) that the government is lodged in the congregation or brotherhood. John Owen held¹ as we do, that a single congregation is to be governed by an eldership or Presbytery ; that is, a bench or college of presbyters chosen by the people as their representatives, not as their deputies or proxies ; chosen to govern not according to the will of the people, but according to the will of Christ, who ordained the constitution of the Church, created its officers, and defined their functions. The parallel is exact between the idea of Presbyterianism and the true and original idea of the civil constitution of this country, and if Edmund Burke is to be trusted, of the British constitution also. Parliaments are assemblies of representatives, not of proxies, of the people ; they are not to utter the voice of the people unless it be the voice of wisdom and justice ; they are not responsible to the people in the sense of their constituents who elected them, but to the people in the sense of the sovereign people who ordained and established the constitution. To this sovereign people, whose voice is uttered and whose will is expressed in the fundamental law, every true representative will appeal from the judgment of his constituents. In the Church there is no sovereign people. Her constitution comes from Jesus Christ, her Head, and to him only the last appeal is made.

As Presbyterianism is thus contrasted with the government of the people assembled *en masse*, or by their delegates or proxies, in being a government by assemblies of representatives, so it is contrasted, on the other hand, with Prelacy, which is a government of one man. Yet even in Prelacy the principle of Presbytery will make its authority and wisdom to be felt, as is shown in the holding of councils, provincial and general. It is a very instructive fact, mentioned by Prof. Baird, of the University of New York, in his recent "History of the Rise of the Huguenots,"

¹ See his True Nature of a Gospel Church, Chap. VII. Works (Russell's Ed., London, 1826), Vol. 20, p. 480. Compare the Savoy Declaration of 1658, the Institution of Churches, and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ, Arts. VII. and IX. Schaff's Creeds of Christendom, Vol. III., pp. 724, ff.

that their enemies of the Papal party, seeing the energy, wisdom, and effectiveness given to the movements of the Huguenots by their Presbyterian organisation, actually imitated them, and organised a *quasi* Presbyterian system for themselves. The same kind of concession has been made from time to time by our Congregational brethren also.¹ It is from this feature of Presbyterianism that its name has been derived. It is not a government by presbyters merely, but by presbyters assembled in Presbyteries.

2. Another distinctive feature of our government is that these presbyters are of two sorts—presbyters who rule only, and presbyters who both rule and teach. This feature is found also in our civil constitutions. There are two classes of representatives in our Legislatures; and the principle of two classes of representatives has been deemed by statesmen and political philosophers as great an improvement on the representative principle as that principle itself was on the principle of democracy. The representative principle was a check on popular passion and prejudice; the principle of two classes of representatives is a check added to a check.

3. The third distinctive feature of our government is found in the mode by which it realises the idea of the visible unity of the Church. Popery realises the unity by a graded hierarchy, by a hierarchy consisting of officers of different ranks, and culminating in one man at Rome, called the Pope. This system secures unity, indeed; but it is a terrible unity, sacrificing all individual life, and binding all abjectly to a single throne. Our system, on the contrary, realises the idea of the unity by the elasticity of its representative system. All its courts are Presbyteries; that is, courts composed of presbyters. The same elements are found in all of them, from the lowest to the highest. The unity is secured not by the subjection of one class of rulers to another class, but by a larger number of rulers governing a smaller number of the same class. The representatives of the whole Church govern the representatives of each part, and that not by a direct control of

¹ See Miller on Ruling Elders, Chaps. VII., VIII.; King on the Eldership, Part I.

the part, but by controlling the power of the part. All the local Presbyteries are combined by representation in one Presbytery, called with us the General Assembly. "Of this General Assembly" we might say, in the language of Milton, "every parochial consistory is a right homogeneous and constituting part, being in itself a little Synod, and moving towards a General Assembly upon her own basis, in an even and firm progression, as those smaller squares in battle unite in one great cube, the main phalanx, an emblem of truth and steadfastness."¹

Now, the system thus described, we hold to be found in the New Testament, and to be that in substance which was adopted by the apostles. We say "in substance," and by this is meant that the principles are there. The scale on which the principles are applied and exemplified will of course determine differences of detail and variety, to a certain extent, in the "circumstances" which are common to the Church with human societies; but the principles themselves of government by representative assemblies, of representatives of two sorts, and of the unity of the Church, are all there; and they must be found in every form of ecclesiastical polity which claims to be Presbyterian in the full sense of the term.

The government by Presbyteries was no new thing in the days of the apostles. The word Presbytery occurs three times in the New Testament; and in two of these (Luke xxii. 66, and Acts xxii. 5) it denotes the well known council among the Jews which is commonly called the "Sanhedrim," a name which is itself Greek, and equivalent to Session or Consistory. It is not at all necessary to trace the origin of that court, or of the smaller sanhedrims of the Jews to the time of Moses. It is enough to know that they existed in the time of the apostles, and that the apostles adopted a similar government for the Christian Church. That the Church derived its government from the Synagogue, is a fact upon the proof of which, in the present state of theological learning, it is needless to expend many words. This is the con-

¹ Milton's Reason of Church Government against Prelacy, B. I., Chap. 6.

cession of a learned minister of the Church of England.¹ The choice lay between the temple model and the synagogue model; and the apostles chose the synagogue. We need not be afraid to meet the defenders of Prelacy at the bar of antiquity. The apostles are the most ancient and venerable of the “fathers.” Let them decide.²

But the Church, in its Jewish form, was not, and was not designed to be, aggressive. Provision was made for the reception of the Gentiles, but not for going after them. Those who were received, were *proselytes*, indeed; *comers to the fold*; not people who were sought after, to be gathered in. Even in “the missionary age,” as it has been called, of the Jews—the age that followed the conquests of Alexander, when the Jews were widely dispersed, and their synagogues were established in all the chief cities of the Greek Empire, they were a missionary people rather by the ordering of divine providence than by any conscious purpose or effort of their own. God brought his word near the Gentiles, and into the very midst of them, and constrained them to attend the services of the synagogues; but he ordained and sent forth no missionaries. The function of the evangelist was not yet engrafted upon the office of the presbyter or ruler. It was not until the Redeemer had risen from the dead that the universal commission was given, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;” “disciple all nations.” This aggressive propagandist feature of Christianity is one of its distinguishing features; a feature by which it is distinguished not only from Judaism, but from Paganism. Mahomet copied it, but in a totally different spirit, and with means diametrically opposite.

¹ Litton on the Church of Christ, Chap. III.. Sec. 3, p. 185, of the American edition, Philadelphia, 1869. So, also, Lightfoot (now a Bishop) on Philippians, p. 94 and p. 191.

² The famous rule of Vincent of Lirinum, “*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*,” may be allowed, if, with H. Rogers, we make the apostles our *omnes*, their age our *semper*, and their writings our *ubique*. Compare Milton’s Reason of Church Government against Prelacy, B. 2, Chap. I.—the passage beginning with the words, “Mistrusting to find the authority of their order,” etc.

Presbyterianism could not vindicate its claim to be divine if it were not an aggressive polity, if it were not missionary in its constitution, in its spirit and its aims. The first missionaries formally ordained and sent forth to the Gentiles, were ordained and sent forth by the Presbytery of Antioch, the Presbytery of the first church which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and therefore the first church in which the fellowship of all the races of mankind in the man Christ Jesus was visibly embodied and exemplified.

If it be true, as the enemies of Presbyterianism assert, and as some of its friends seem disposed to concede, that it lacks the feature of aggressiveness, then it must be confessed that, to this extent, it lacks the credentials which a system claiming to be divine ought to possess. The assertion of our enemies is not borne out by history. We have not, indeed, sacrificed the individuality of our ministers to the unity of the Church, making them mere spokes in the great wheel, without any life, sphere, movement of their own. We have allowed them to be themselves, after the manner of the apostolic Church, in which the labors of apostles bore the stamp of their individuality, in which the Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine types were recognised as distinct, although they all preached the gospel. Presbyterianism makes its ministers wheels within a wheel; thus combining efficiency of aggressive operations with the full preservation and development of individual life.

Now, this polity so clearly sanctioned and even ordained by the apostles at first was, as it is alleged, very soon exchanged for Prelacy; so soon, indeed, that the change must be supposed to have received the sanction of the Apostle John at least. This is not the place to handle the argument in full. Only certain heads will be suggested.

(a) There is not one particle of proof that prelatical bishops existed in the time of John, or even at the close of the first century. On the contrary, we find Clement of Rome at the close of the first century writing to the church at Corinth, and Polycarp at the beginning of the second century writing to the church at Philippi, and both of them recognising no other officers than pres-

byters and deacons. In the case of Clement, this fact is the more noteworthy, as his Epistle is mainly an exhortation to unity and concord. Jerome ascribes the invention of Prelacy to factions and dissensions as being the best remedy for them.¹ What a fine opportunity, then, for the Bishop of Rome to glorify the Bishop of Corinth; or if, as our prelatical friends suggest, the Bishop of Corinth was dead, and the see vacant, how urgent the necessity for filling the vacancy, and how strange the absence of any exhortation to fill it!

(b) In the second place, even in later writers, it is too generally taken for granted that the “bishop” spoken of is a prelatical or diocesan bishop. In the Epistles of the Pseudo-Ignatius, for example, where is the proof that the bishop he so absurdly magnifies is a prelate? For all that we have seen, *his* bishop may have been (and probably was) a parochial bishop, and *his* presbyters “ruling elders.” We must always be on our guard against the “fatal force and imposture of words.” According to the scriptural usage of the word *schism*, the Papal and Anglican Churches are amongst the most schismatical bodies in the world; according to the ecclesiastical usage of the word, a plausible argument might be made to show that the Papal body is not schismatical at all.

Another fruitful source of delusion is in taking it for granted that the polity of the Church was uniform in the early ages; that because Prelacy existed in Rome (if it did exist there) at the close of the second century, therefore it existed throughout the Church, whereas there is abundant reason to believe that it spread very gradually. The schism of Felicissimus at Carthage (A. D. 250) seems to have been the result of a struggle between the defenders of the old government of Presbytery and an “episcopal” party. This, at least, is the opinion of Neander.² This view is confirmed by the existence of the “*seniores plebes*” in the North African Church, described by Kurtz as “lay elders” and probably

¹ See the fine passage—beginning with the words, “Prelacy ascending by a gradual monarchy,” in Milton’s Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy, B. I., c. 6.

² See Art. “Felicissimus” in Herzog’s Cyclopaedia.

the “venerable monuments” in the fourth century of the race of “ruling elders” then passing away.¹

(c) But, in the third place, if the change had taken place so soon, it might be still a corruption. Greater and more important changes—changes affecting vital points of Christian doctrine and Christian morality—occurred in the very times of the apostles, as is plain from their Epistles and from the Lord’s epistles to the seven churches of Asia. “I marvel,” says Paul, “that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” “Who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth?” “Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” The apostle of love also discerned the rising spirit of Prelacy in Diotrephes, “who loved to have the preëminence” and “cast out of the church” people better than himself. There is not much cause to marvel that men speedily exchanged the ordinances of God for their own inventions; on the contrary, considering the power of sin and the subtlety of Satan, the marvel is that the ordinances of God are allowed to exist at all.

After the time of Constantine, Presbyterianism seems well nigh to have vanished from the Church for a thousand years, and all spiritual worship and all scriptural discipline seems to have vanished with it. It is no slight proof of its divine origin that sound doctrine and spiritual worship should have declined with its decline and should have revived with its revival. There must be an internal and vital connexion among these things; and if it cannot be demonstrated that the decline of Presbyterianism in those early ages was the cause or the effect of the corruption in doctrine, worship, and discipline, it can at least be shown that the corruption was stimulated and aggravated by the prelatical

¹ In Act. Perpetua et Felicitas, 13, and in the 29th Ep. of Cyprian, we read of “*presbyteri doctores*,” showing that even then the work of teaching was not absolutely indispensable to the presbyterial office (Lightfoot on Philippians, p. 193). Lightfoot speaks in another place (p. 222) of “the enormous number of African bishops as incredible, were it not reported on the best authority.” The number is incredible if they were prelatical bishops, but not if they were Presbyterian.

hierarchy that rose upon its ruins. One of the grossest and most comprehensive of these corruptions was that of converting the Christian ministry into a priesthood; and this corruption was closely connected with the overthrow of Presbyterianism and the triumph of Prelacy. "As Cyprian," says Bishop Lightfoot,¹ "crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief or disguise those sacerdotal assumptions." It is true, no doubt, as Lightfoot suggests, that this horrible corruption came from heathenism and not from Judaism; but, as he also suggests, it took its form from the hierarchy of Judaism; and it scarcely could have maintained itself without a corresponding hierarchy in the ministry of the Christian Church. The Church of England is the only one of the Reformed Churches which retained the prelatical form of government, and it is precisely in the Church of England that the tendency to sacerdotalism is the strongest.

If the ministry become a priesthood, other changes are inevitable. A priest must receive his call from God without the intervention of the people. Under a priestly rule, the privilege of election by the people is felt to be out of place; and accordingly even in Judaism, in which the priesthood was regarded in some sort as representative of the whole nation as "a kingdom of priests," the people had no power of election. The priesthood was an aristocracy of birth, an order of nobility created by God himself, and maintained and perpetuated by his special providence without the choice of the people. In the system of the Roman Antichrist, the priesthood is in no sense representative of the people; it is a close corporation, self-maintaining and self-perpetuating, and the people are mere "mud-sills" for the priesthood.

The prelatical Protestant Church of England denied the Papal doctrine of the priesthood and of apostolical succession, but retained the word *priest* in its liturgy. In this it has been followed by the daughter Church in the United States, which uses the word "sacerdotal" also to describe the functions of the rector of a parish. When it is considered that "priest" in the English

¹ Essay on the Christian Ministry—*ad calcem* of his Commentary on Philippians, p. 257.

Bible everywhere stands for an officer who offers expiatory sacrifices, it is obviously a very insufficient vindication of the use of the word in the liturgy, to say that it (the English word *priest*) is historically the same as the word presbyter—"presbyter writ short." The Reformed Episcopal Church has shown the sincerity of its detestation of the sacerdotal idea by dropping the word, and substituting that of *presbyter*; but its reformation will never be complete nor lasting until Prelacy is also dropped.

A priest must have somewhat to offer; and if the minister of the word is converted into a priest, he must offer a sacrifice. Hence the conversion of the Eucharist into a sacrifice. That which God ordained to be "a feast of filial grace" came to be "pageanted about as a dreadful idol." Here, again, we find Presbyterians defending the truth, and protesting against the enormous abuse and corruption. At the era of the Reformation the Lutheran body adopted a view of the real presence of the body and blood of the Lord in the Supper little, if at all, less absurd and monstrous than that of the Papal apostasy; while the Reformed or Presbyterian branch of the seceders from Rome taught the scriptural doctrine. The Church of England's teaching is clear against both transubstantiation and consubstantiation (though clearer and more emphatic against the former than against the latter); but by virtue of the tendencies already signalled towards the priesthood, it has shown a strong tendency also to the Papal abomination of the Mass, though denounced by itself in its 31st Article as "a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit."¹

These reflections suggest one capital office which has been given to Presbyterianism to perform in the history of the Church; and that is to uphold the supremacy of the word of God as the

¹ When the "teaching" of the Church of England is spoken of, it must be borne in mind that the teaching of its *formularies* is referred to. This is the standard that all parties in that communion appeal to—High, Low, and Broad, and all the subdivisions thereof enumerated by Conybeare in his famous article in the Edinburgh *Review*. If the formularies contradict each other, that is their concern, not ours. It might puzzle us plain Presbyterians to divine how certain people could have subscribed to the "Articles of Religion," if we had not been enlightened by "No. 90" of the "Oxford Tracts."

only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. This was done by the Waldenses in the Dark Ages in their protest against Rome, which had exalted tradition (or the wisdom and conceit of man) above the word, and so like the Pharisees of old had made the word of none effect. "If we will love Christ and know his doctrine," says the "Noble Lesson," "we must watch and read the Scriptures." This was done by the Reformed or Calvinistic branch of the Protestant body to a higher degree than by the Lutheran branch. "The divinely historical in the Church," says Kurtz, the Lutheran historian of the Church, "was not recognised by the Reformed Church, but all tradition was rejected, and with it all historical development, normal or abnormal, was cut off." This is an exaggerated statement, intensely German in its form, of the Reformed Church's position that the Bible is the statute-book of Christ's kingdom, a positive and sufficient rule of faith and practice, the source as well as the measure of doctrine and law; and therefore that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitory. Again, in contrasting Luther and Zwingle, the same writer says: "The former (Luther) rejected only such things as were irreconcileable with the Scriptures, the latter (Zwingle) everything not *expressly* taught by them." "Luther retained images, altars, the ornaments of churches, and the sacerdotal character of public worship, simply pruning off its unevangelical excesses and deformities. Zwingle rejected all, unconditionally, as idolatry, and even abolished organs and bells." Without stopping to point out the exaggerations in this passage, it is sufficient to say that Zwingle did hold the Scriptures to be a complete and positive rule, while Luther admitted many things in the worship of God, upon the ground of their not being prohibited in his word. The Church of England, although counted a branch of the Reformed Church, took, with respect to the Scriptures, much the same ground as Luther. The controversy began among the exiles at Frankfort-on-the-Main, and grew out of the discussion concerning the comparative merits of the Liturgy of Edward VI. and that of Geneva. Upon the return of the exiles to England, after the death of "Bloody Mary," the controversy was transferred to that country; and the defenders of the principle of the

sufficiency of the Scriptures got the name of Puritans. The Puritans, in their origin, be it remembered, were a party in the Church of England ; and they were inclined to the forms of Geneva, or, in other words, to Presbyterianism. A Presbytery was actually formed within the Church of England as early as 1572. Prelacy could not maintain itself logically on the basis of the Bible and the Bible only ; on that basis, and that only, can Presbyterianism be maintained. There is an unconscious as well as a conscious logic which joins and disjoins things.

There never has been a time within the memory of man, as it appears to us, when it was more necessary than it is now to recall the attention of Presbyterians to that fundamental and all-comprehensive principle for which their fathers witnessed and suffered even unto death. Potentially, it is the question between Christ and Antichrist ; the question whether the authority of the Head and Saviour of the Church is to be supreme, and the liberty of his people to obey him only to be maintained ; or whether that authority is to be overlaid and his people to be made the slaves of men. Now, while it may be true that no party calling itself Presbyterian has formally denied the sufficiency of the Scriptures ; yet it cannot be questioned that there is a tendency in our Church to assimilate itself in worship and manners to those Christian communities which have denied it.

At the era of the Reformation, the Reformed were reproached by the Lutherans as well as by the Papists for their iconoclastic spirit as to departure from the simple worship of the primitive Church. "Old-fashioned" Presbyterians have to bear the burden of a similar reproach now. The answer to the reproach is the same now as then, that "the word of God is the only rule of faith and practice to his people ; that 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 ; unto which nothing is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and socie-

ties, 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 ;”¹ that, therefore, everything in public worship which cannot be shown to be a necessary adjunct of the action, or necessary to decency and order, is to be disowned and rejected ; that there is no middle ground between this position and the position that the word of God is a negative rule, only a *veto* or check upon the power of the Church to ordain anything she pleases ; and that the ancient doctrine of the Presbyterians is the only safeguard of the liberties of God’s people, the only security that they will not be made “the slaves of men.”

Our people are too ready to concede that our forms of worship are “bald.” They are too ready, when God’s ordinances fail of their appropriate effect, to resort to the devices of human wisdom, instead of humbling themselves before the Holy Ghost in earnest prayer for his quickening power, which alone can make any ordinances efficacious for salvation.

The sacramental machinery of the Papal apostasy, and the unsacramental machinery of our own invention or adoption, are alike impotent to raise a soul from death or to impart the wings of devotion to a soul that is alive. The true glory of Christian worship consists in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost ; and without the Holy Ghost, all our paraphernalia of “long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,” of painted windows and “dim religious light,” of symbols of lamb and dove, of pealing organs and what not, are but the paraphernalia of a corpse lying in state. It is a vain attempt to conceal the painful reality of death.

One thing, we confess, that commends Presbyterianism to us is, that it cannot be worked by mere human wisdom or power ; that it must either have the power of the Spirit to work it, or be nothing.

Presbyterians have been distinguished as the defenders of the

¹ Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. I., Art. 6. Compare Calvin’s Inst., B. 4, Chap. 10 ; Principal Cunningham’s Reformers and Theologians of the Reformation, p. 31 ; also, his Church Principles, pp. 235, ff. ; Gillespie’s Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies, Part III., Chap. 7 ; Thornwell’s Writings, Vol. IV., pp. 250, ff.

great doctrines of grace ; and it is to their sense of the supreme importance of these doctrines, and their zeal in defending them, that the absence of a mere *proselyting* zeal has been due. All honor to them for it ! May it always be their distinction, their crown of glory ! But let them remember how close is the connexion between purity of worship and purity of doctrine.

The design of external worship is not only to give expression to those states of the soul in which internal worship consists, but also, according to a well known law of our nature, to impress more deeply upon the heart and conscience of the worshippers those truths concerning God and themselves which the Scriptures reveal, and from which the worship itself has sprung. In the act of adoration, for example, which is evoked by the revelation of the glory of God, we obtain, if the act is sincerely performed, a profounder impression of what that revelation teaches concerning God. In making a sincere confession of our sins, we get a deeper impression of what the Scriptures teach concerning the exceeding sinfulness of sin. In commemorating the death of our Lord in the ordinance of the Supper, if the act be done in the exercise of a lively faith, there is a more vivid apprehension of the great facts and truths signified by the elements and actions of that ordinance of the Saviour. Now, all these parts of worship were ordained of God ; and the modes in which they are to be observed are prescribed, either through precept or example, by him who knows what his truth is, and what our nature is.

To change, then, the modes is to incur the risk of changing the faith of God's elect. This is not a mere *a priori* speculation ; it is one of the lessons of the history of the Church. The dreadful perversion of the truth concerning the sacrifice of Christ by the Papacy began with a tampering with the ordinance of the Supper. The corruption of the ordinance reacted upon the faith of the Church, and corrupted it still more ; and this again reacted upon the ordinance, and so on, until the Supper became the blasphemous abomination which we see to-day in the mass, and the central truth of Christianity was virtually denied. It was not for nothing that our Presbyterian forefathers fought so earnestly against the "significant ceremonies" of the Papists and

their imitators. The forms of the good sometimes survive the substance; the forms of evil perpetuate the substance, and not seldom produce it. The forms of heathen worship brought heathenism into the Church. The Holy City was trodden under foot of the Gentiles. It ought to humble us in the very dust that the Church should always have shown this disposition to meddle with that concerning which her Head has always shown himself exceedingly jealous. The wickedness and folly of this meddling have been demonstrated on a fearful scale in her history. The Lord deliver us from walking in the light of our own eyes, and after the imaginations of our own hearts!

Once more: Presbyterians have been honorably distinguished among other branches of the Church of Christ by the importance which they have ascribed to a faithful discipline. So it was at the time of the Reformation. The eminent Lutheran historian before cited, in a description of the internal character of the Reformed Church, says: "Presbyteries exercised a more rigid external discipline. Civil and domestic life assumed a strictly legal, often a gloomy, rigorous, character (especially in the Scotch Church and among the English Puritans); but along with this developed a wonderful degree of moral energy, which, however, too often ran into extremes."¹ On the other hand, another Lutheran historian (Mosheim), more eminent and more candid than the one just quoted, says of his own Church: "The ancient regulation which has come down to us from the earliest age of the Church, of excluding the ungodly from the communion, the Lutheran Church at first endeavored to purify from abuses and corruptions, and to restore to its primitive purity. . . . But in process of time it gradually became so little used that, at the present day, scarcely a vestige of it, in most places, can be discovered; . . . a multitude of persons living in open transgression everywhere lift up their heads."² If the reports of travellers in Germany are to be credited, the only distinction made between

¹ Kurtz's Church History (Bomberger's Trans.), Vol. II., p. 148, § 23.

² Mosheim's Institutes (Murdock's Trans.), Vol. III., p. 131, B. 4, Century 16th, Sec. 3, Part 2, c. 1.

Christian people and the world is that between baptism and no baptism.

Now, what a dark picture for any Church ! The people are Christian in a lower sense, much lower, than that in which the Turks are Mahometans, or the Chinese Pagans ; for these last are at least as good as their religion requires them to be in their outward life ; while the professing Christian, a member of that body whose very purpose and mission is to promote the interests of holiness, treads these interests under foot, if he does not scout the very idea of holiness as being incapable of being realised. Such is the inevitable effect of the absence of discipline. There is no judicial application of the law of Christ to the lives of the people, no judicial recognition of the difference between the sacred and the profane, no purging of the old leaven of corruption out of the mass, and, therefore, nothing to prevent that leaven from transforming the whole mass into the likeness of itself. The Church, as the visible body and kingdom of Christ, has disappeared in the practical annihilation of discipline. No censures are inflicted except by the State for *crime* ; *sin* has ceased to be rebuked. In the punishment of crime, according to the common theory of criminal law, it is the interests of the Commonwealth that are chiefly regarded ; and if the Commonwealth alone punishes, there is no judicial testimony against *sin*, and none even against *crime* as a thing of inherent ill-desert. Further, if the Commonwealth alone should punish, there will be no exhibition of that love which yearns over the offender, which longs for his repentance and restoration, and chastises in order that he may be brought to repentance and be restored. The government of the Church is paternal or rather maternal, inflicting its censures to uphold the authority of her Lord, but at the same time proclaiming that the love of her Lord for the soul that has got entangled in the meshes of the devil is as great as his abhorrence of the sin. There are two evils she has to cope with—ignorance and malice. “Against ignorance,” to use the words of the author of *Paradise Lost*, “she provides the daily manna of incorruptible doctrine, not at those set meals only in public, but as oft as she shall know that each infirmity or constitution requires. Against malice with all the

branches thereof, not meddling with that restraining and styptic surgery which the law uses not against the malady but against the eruptions and outermost effects thereof; she, on the contrary, beginning at the prime causes and roots of the disease sends in those two divine ingredients of most cleansing power to the soul, admonition and reproof; besides which two there is no drug or antidote that can reach to purge the mind, and without which all other experiments are but vain, unless by accident.” If these fail of their effect, the illustrious author goes on to say, the Church proceeds in the last resort to use “the dreadful sponge of excommunication and to pronounce the offender wiped out of the list of God’s inheritance and in the custody of Satan till he repents. Which horrid sentence, though it touch neither life nor limb, nor any worldly possession, yet has it such a penetrating force that swifter than any chemical sulphur, or that lightning which harms not the skin and rifles the entrails, it scorches the inmost soul. Yet even this terrible denunciation is left to the Church for no other cause but to be as a rough and vehement cleansing medicine, where the malady is obstinate; a mortifying to life, a kind of saving by undoing. And it may be said truly, that as the mercies of wicked men are cruelties, so the cruelties of the Church are mercies.”¹ The concession of the Lutheran author, before cited, that the rigorous discipline of the Reformed or Calvinistic Church developed, in its civil and domestic life, a wonderful degree of moral energy, is more comprehensive than the author intended it to be. It means this, that the discipline developed the power of the Church and enabled it more fully to accomplish its mission in the calling and training of God’s elect, in moulding its members according to the word of God, in causing the Church to respond to its vocation in its religious life as to God, in its fraternal life as to the members in their mutual relations, and in its missionary life as to the world without. It means also a larger measure of true happiness to its members, for “happiness is the reflex of energy.” What the world and worldly Christians call pleasure, is not happiness. It is mere excitement and intoxication which is followed by lassitude

¹ Milton’s Reason of Ch. Govt. urged against Prelaty, B. 2, C. 3.

and disgust, and in the case of professing Christians, it is to be hoped, by a feeling, if not of degradation, at least of a falling short of their high calling. "She that liveth in pleasure," says the apostle, "is dead while she liveth." Nothing can be imagined nearer a living death than the life of a "fashionable" man or woman. But happiness is a "home-bred delight," the glow of the soul in the enjoyment of health and vigor. The true secret of happiness is to be found in denying one's self for the good of others: for the glory of God and the good of our fellow-creatures. This may seem a paradox, but it is the gospel paradox, and is solved by the principle that happiness is the reflex of energy. In self-indulgence we are the passive recipients of pleasure; in self-denial we are active, and find that it is indeed "more blessed to give than to receive." We enter into the joy of our Lord, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. If the maternal discipline of the Church, like every other discipline of love, produces or invigorates the habit of self-denial, it develops energy, and thereby causes happiness. When the Church frowns upon her children who are addicted to "worldly amusements," it is the frown of a wise and benignant mother who desires the happiness of her children, and knows that nothing is more fatal to it than a life of pleasure.

The frown of the Church! What lover of pleasure regards it now? Whatever the convictions of any pleasure-loving member may be as to the lawfulness of the amusements which the Church, through all her courts, condemns, one would think that the simple fact that the Church condemns would be sufficient to restrain her or him to forego the indulgence. Is it seemly in a follower of the Crucified One, whose soul was sorrowful even unto death, who endured the agony and bloody sweat of the garden and the bitter death of the accursed tree, in order "to deliver him from the present evil world"—is it seemly in such an one to be found wearing the badges of the world and communicating with it in its sacraments? O shame, where is thy blush?¹

¹ In the primitive Church candidates for baptism were required to renounce "the pomps of the devil;" and these pomps were interpreted to be "public amusements, dances, and spectacles" (theatrical, etc.). The

If the discipline of the Presbyterian Church be indeed powerless to arrest the tide of worldliness, then let “Ichabod” be written upon her walls; her glory is departed. Corruption of manners will be followed by corruption of doctrine, and there will be none so poor as to do her reverence. When the line of demarcation between the Church and the world has been obliterated, the Church must either reform or perish. If even a Church that hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans is threatened by the Saviour with the removal of its candlestick, unless it repent, how great is the peril of a Church that tolerates the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and of Balaam! “Repent,” says the Saviour, “or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

We mention, in conclusion, one more characteristic of the Presbyterian Church, and one of which we cannot fail to be reminded by the occasion which has called us together. It is its care to have a learned ministry; learned, not in the sense of great erudition, but in the sense of educated, trained to study, to expound, and to defend the word of God. This characteristic of our Church grows out of the same root with her zeal for purity of doctrine, simplicity of worship, and maternal rigor of discipline. The root is reverence for the Scriptures as the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners. It is too obvious to need remark that if the word of God is to be truly expounded and successfully defended, it must be understood, and that to be understood it must be studied; that the logical relations of its doctrines among themselves must be discerned and stated; that the history of the development of these doctrines and of their bearing upon the worship and polity and life of the Church must be mastered; in short, that theology must be exegetically, dogmatically, and historically studied.

Now, all this requires a large expenditure of time and money;

like engagement is now demanded by the Episcopal Church of adult candidates for baptism, and of “god-fathers and god-mothers” in behalf of an infant to be baptized. With what fidelity these engagements are kept in that Church, we do not know; probably not with more than in our own.

and there are signs in our own branch of the Church of a disposition to question the wisdom of insisting upon so high a standard of attainment. In a country whose population is growing with prodigious rapidity, when it seems almost impossible to supply the demand for ministers; when our Church is falling behind, as is alleged, the other Churches in numbers and influence; when many godly men, richly endowed by nature and grace for the ministry, but unable for want of time and means to get a scholastic training, are pressing upon us for some relaxation of the standard sanctioned by law and immemorial usage, it is asked, not without some plausibility, whether we ought not to make provision for at least another class of ministers in our Church. This is not the time to attempt a full answer to this question. It is enough to say, that it may be too readily taken for granted that there is a demand for *untrained* ministers; that the existence, side by side, of two distinct classes of ministers could not be permanent, any more than two kinds of money could be kept in circulation at the same time; that, as in the case of money, so in the ministry, the inferior article would almost certainly drive out the superior; that there is already a provision in our Constitution elastic enough to cover the “extraordinary cases” of godly men wisely endowed by nature and grace for the work of the ministry who are unable to get a scholastic training; that the power and influence of a Church does not depend on the numbers either of its members or its ministers, but on their character; and finally, that it could not but be regarded as an evil omen if a Church which has always distinguished itself for its zeal in the cause of education, and by its zeal hath provoked its sister Churches, should renounce its convictions and forsake its venerable traditions in this respect, and that, too, in the presence of a foe more enlightened, as well as more determined and relentless, than ever before.

The best answer, however, now and here, is to be found in the occasion that has brought us together. It is a grand rally for the revival of a Seminary which has done a noble work in times past for the Church by the training of her ministers; and he who speaks to you has the honor of bringing from a sister institution

the assurances of its hearty sympathy with you in all your trials and difficulties; its hearty congratulations on the success with which it has pleased God to bless the efforts which have thus far been made to put your Seminary on a sure foundation; and its earnest hope that he will continue and increase his blessing so that, great as has been your work for him and his Church in time past, it shall not “be spoken of or come into mind” by reason of the greater work which you shall have grace given you to do in the time to come.