

space there can be no doubt. Every year it manifests itself more plainly. But, as in the State, so in the Church: the one question is, "How shall the limbs of the gigantic frame which spreads through the world be one body still?"—each limb free for its own function, yet with the common life-blood, the common nervous energy, thrilling through the whole? For any approach towards the solution of that question we may thank God. For a far fuller solution of it, under His Providence and by His Spirit, we may earnestly pray.

ALFRED BARRY.

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ART. II.—PRESBYTERIANISM.

PRESBYTERIANISM, as against Episcopacy, may be said to describe all the various larger nonconforming bodies. Speaking generally, we may say that Dissent is, as a whole, non-Episcopalian. An exception to this statement is scarcely supplied, contradictory as it may sound, by the Episcopal Methodism of America. For it is to be remarked that Wesley's transatlantic bishops were not bishops in a Church of England sense of the word. They were rather governing presbyters than Church officers, possessed of distinctive functional powers. They did in that country what the district Methodist committees did in the British Isles. While, however, the word "Presbyterian" might with tolerable accuracy be taken to describe many communities, varying widely in other respects, it has been appropriated by certain of these in a special manner; and it is with these that our present inquiry lies. These bodies are the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, comprising the National Church, the Free Church, and the United Presbyterians, and the Presbyterian Church in England. The existence of these offers a protest against the theory that Episcopacy is necessary to a Church.

Is Episcopacy necessary to a Church? It may be expedient at the outset to point out, what perhaps is not sufficiently observed, that the Church of England's attitude towards this question is one of cautious reserve. Nowhere in her formularies does she dogmatize with any arrogance on the point. The late Archbishop Benson was her mouthpiece when a year or two ago he accepted in a public utterance the view that the Episcopal form of government was of the *bene esse* rather than of the *esse* of the Church—a most important concession to the persuasions of that large body of Churchmen who have

never been able to lift the doctrine of the Apostolical succession out of the speculative and the sentimental sphere.

Moreover, the orthodox Churchmanship of such leaders of theological thought within the borders of our communion as the late Bishop Lightfoot and Dr. Hatch has never been called in question. In their elaborate dissertations on the origin of the Christian ministry—the latter delivered from the University pulpit at Oxford—they have given their adherence to a theory of the rise of the Episcopal order.

These two writers do not, indeed, travel quite along the same lines; but their conclusions may be fairly considered identical. The reasoning cannot be presented here which conducts to this conclusion. But the unbiassed reader will find it hard to escape the inference that in the earliest times the bishop was a chief presbyter, with no official functions separate from his fellow-presbyters, whom indeed he sometimes addresses as such in his correspondence with them; that gradually the higher order rose out of this presidency over the college of elders. In those days every town, however unimportant, had its bishop, who occupied much the same position as our vicars or rectors do now. Indeed, the word "rector" is a survival of this governing class among the elders, carrying with it the idea of *ruling* over subordinate incumbents. Again, the term "episcopos" is an importation from heathen town or district councils, and meant an *over-seer*; ruling power, in short, and not ministerial superiority, being the thought it expresses. In course of time the advantage impressed itself of giving more distinctive powers to the presiding and supervising elder. Authority was supported by investiture with rights and privileges, which lifted the possessor higher and higher above his brethren, and spiritual functions peculiar to him distanced them from him. To the discipline and consolidation of the Church this process contributed much. Catholicity became possible when representative men from all the scattered communities could come together on the common footing of their order, and act independently of the concurrence of their clergy left at home.

If this view of the origin of Episcopacy be regarded as derogating from the dignity of the order, and reflecting on the wisdom of the Apostles in leaving the constitution of the Church inchoate and crude, let two pleas be urged. First, there is no manner of doubt that expediency gave birth to the diaconate. A dispute arises touching the daily doles to the Christian widows, home-born and foreign Jewesses. Appealed to, the Apostles decline to "serve tables," to have their precious ministerial time taken up in the material business of the little commune. So they create the diaconate. The deacons

shall do all this petty though necessary work, and leave the Apostles free to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. But for this emergency, who can tell how many years might have elapsed before deacons had been thought of? Now, if this accounts for one order, is there any difficulty in accepting a similarly unforced and natural account of the rise of another?

The other consideration is this. In no way, we venture to think, was the wisdom of the Apostles more strikingly shown than in the refusal thus early to crystallize a Church system. The unique adaptability of Christianity is the direct result of this. Elasticity has been secured in the sphere of discipline and régime.

And this appears to us a better line to take, when the subject of the various external organizations is before us, than for the champions of each to appeal in behalf of their own case to Holy Scripture, and seek therefrom to prove it right and all others wrong.

This question is either a fundamental one or it is not. If it be, then either the Church of Scotland or the Church of England is a non-Christian community. If the question be not a fundamental one, then we see abundant cause for thankfulness that the Holy Spirit has left it an open one, and thus has made it possible for Christ's people in one fold to recognise as fellow-Christians those in another, and this without the slightest surrender of personal conviction. By requiring of her clergy the conviction that government by bishops is not contrary to the teaching of the Apostles, the Anglican Church does not also demand from them the declaration that no other form of government is admissible.

It is time we turned to the sister communities which divide with us the adhesion of the inhabitants of Great Britain.

The deplorable struggles with a distasteful form of Church constitution which had been proceeding for more than thirty years were brought to a close at the Revolution of 1688, with the establishment of the Kirk in Scotland. For years after this English Churchmen still hoped for the restoration of Episcopacy. At the beginning of Anne's reign, in 1703, an Act of Security allayed the fears of the Presbyterians. As was to be expected in those days, intolerance was not all on one side. The Presbyterians on their part strongly objected even to the bare toleration of Episcopalian congregations over the border. But the worst days of the strife were over. The dawn of conciliation was not far, though something of the old spirit of the Protectorate still lingered, which had provoked Milton's caustic comment that "new 'presbyter' was but old 'priest' writ large." During the reign of Anne the

attitude of the northern Church was a guarded one in its external relations. Within the cold, speculative eighteenth century wrought danger, and two formidable secessions occurred, one in 1733, a second in 1751. A report presented to the General Assembly in 1765 stated that there were then 120 meeting-houses, to which more than 100,000 persons resorted who had formerly been attached to the Church.

A singular inversion of earlier political influences was favourable to the Presbyterians of the north during the period we have reached. While Episcopacy sided with the Stuart pretenders, Presbytery was loyal to the House of Hanover. Hence the Government fostered the latter. Independence of the control, and often, too, the wishes, of their congregations growingly characterized the ministers of religion. But it was the thorny question of patronage which mainly led to the dissenting movements alluded to. The so-called "Moderates" remained, and under their guidance—more or less latitudinarian, more or less politic and astute—the national Church grew in dignity, intellectual power, and material prosperity. As one writer has said, "she became more of a dignified ruler, less of a spiritual mother."

Then came at the close of the century the devoted labours of the brothers Robert and James Haldane, the Wesleys of the north, beginning life, like John Newton, as sailors. James's influence in the revival of evangelical piety was deep and wide, though he cannot be strictly regarded as a genuine son of the Scotch Church, dying a Baptist, into which body he had passed many years before. Robert gave an early impetus to the sacred cause of foreign missions. For a number of years the development of these activities furnished the chief annals of the Church. The foreign mission committee was formed by Dr. Inglis in 1825. Dr. Duff sailed for India in 1829. In 1836 the colonial scheme was inaugurated, and the Jewish mission in 1838. The following year M'Cheyne and Andrew Bonar went as deputation to inquire into the condition of the Jews in Palestine, Turkey, and elsewhere.

Home extension was not neglected. As ever, it flourished concurrently with the carrying out of our Lord's parting command. The Government built forty-two churches in the Highlands, still known as Parliamentary churches. The celebrated Dr. Chalmers collected £65,000, and in 1835 reported the building of sixty-two churches. Six years later these had been trebled.

The history of the disruption can only be touched. Our task, dealing with Presbyterianism as a whole, includes no review of the questions which led to this remarkable crisis.

As is well known, Chalmers threw the weight of his immense gifts of burning speech and administrative power into the Free Church scale. The issue in the studding of the whole land with rival churches, often confronting each other behind the same dedication, turning a saint of God into a two-faced Janus, is to-day deplorable enough. And, visiting the country, we have asked ourselves, Why should this dismembered condition of things be perpetuated? Surely reunion ought to find here its earliest and not least feasible work. One, perhaps the most prominent, preacher in the pale of the Established Church of Scotland was some time ago asked by us whether there was the slightest difference of doctrine to-day between the two great bodies of Scottish Christians. His reply was, "Absolutely none."

Yet for the spirit of self-sacrifice and noble affiancance to the sovereignty of conscience then displayed we can have nothing but admiration. History supplies few more thrilling and touching scenes than that of May 18, 1843, when in the General Assembly the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, in the presence of the High Commissioner, Lord Bute, read his protest against the State interference with the Church constitution, and then left his chair and passed down the aisle to the door. On his left Dr. Chalmers had been standing abstracted, deep in reverie. Roused by the action of Dr. Welsh, he seized his hat and strode after him. A few others followed, whereat a cheer broke from the galleries, which was instantly restrained. The whole audience stood gazing on the scene. "Man after man"—we quote Chalmers's biographer—"row after row, moved on along the aisle, till the benches showed scarce an occupant." More than 400 had gone. "Falling into line, and walking three abreast, they formed a column stretching a quarter of a mile. Spectators lined the streets and thronged the windows and doors. Some gazed in stupid wonder, more in silent admiration. Here and there, as wife or child caught sight of husband or father doing a thing which was to leave his family homeless and unprovided for, warm tears came, but were brushed away by the hand of faith."

In the throne-room at Holyrood hung a portrait of William III., who had given them their liberties. When the Commissioner's levée of that morning was at its fullest, this picture, loosened from its nails, had crashed upon the floor. Somebody called out, "There goes the Revolution settlement." If any of those who that day yielded up their manses and their means, hearing of the trifling incident, sadly recalled the words of the Prophet, "In that day shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down

and fall," they might have been excused. *Their* nails were no longer fastened in a sure place.

About the rights or the wrongs of the disruption we have nothing to do here. Good men and true were on both sides. If a Chalmers went out, a Macleod stayed in.

It does the heart good to read the comments of the latter in his letters on the action of the seceders: "They are off, 450 ministers and elders. Welsh's sermon was the beau-ideal of one. Everything in their conduct was dignified. God bless all the serious among them." . . . "The free Church is carrying it on most nobly. They know human nature better than we do." When one camp can review thus the action of the other, the spirit of Heaven's love can overrule the rest.

The several statistics of the three bodies which embrace the majority of the people of Scotland it might be a little tedious to present. Roughly speaking, we may say that the numerical strength of the National and the Free Churches is as two to one, while the United Presbyterians—a community formed in 1847 by the fusion of earlier secessionists—show a communicants' list of some 200,000—about a fourteenth of the population. A more interesting feature is the progress of liberality of sentiment in the pale of the National Church. On the part of the authorities there is strengthening reluctance to prosecute for opinions. A Church Service Society was established thirty years ago, for the purpose of promoting the study of ancient and modern Liturgies, with a view to the preparation of Forms of Prayer for public use. Its "Book of Church Order" has run through several editions, and the early suspicions attaching to it have been dispelled. It is now recognised as a helpful adjunct to congregational worship; Church music has been cultivated, and a fine collection of hymns now supplements the paraphrases and metrical Psalms.

Any sketch of the Church of Scotland would be incomplete without a reference to the admirable "Shorter Catechism." The work of the Westminster divines, it was adopted by the General Assembly. Its grand first question and answer place the opening of that of the English Church at a disadvantage. "What is the chief end of man?" "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever." The flavour of the document is Calvinistic. Particular redemption is taught in the 21st answer. An ambiguity lurks in the 37th: "The bodies of believers, *being still united to Christ*, do rest in their graves till the Resurrection." But the intention, doubtless, is not to inculcate the denial of a resurrection of the unjust. The exposition of the Ten Commandments would enrich our own Catechism. It is most excellent. To its stringent Sabbatarianism exception would be taken in some

quarters. In these lax days it errs, if it does err, on the safe side.

The exact language used of the two Sacraments is here given. It will be noticed that the merely commemorative view is considerably overstepped.

Q. 88. "What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?"

A. "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are His ordinances, especially the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation."

Q. 91. "How do the Sacraments become effectual means of salvation?"

A. "The Sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them."

Q. 96. "What is the Lord's Supper?"

A. "The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His Body and Blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."

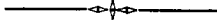
Q. 97. "What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?"

A. "It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's Body, of their faith to feed upon Him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves."

A concluding word: Someone has said, "The key to historical study is sympathy." One of the most sympathetic biographies we ever read was that of a devoted Presbyterian evangelist whose acquaintance we once enjoyed. It was penned by a High Church canon of the Church of England. Has his sympathy with his subject betrayed him into compromise? Not at all. Dr. Guinness Rogers, two years ago, sent a kindly message of welcome to the Bishop-Designate of London. Was Congregationalism compromised in him when he did so? Not at all. Dr. Creighton replied that "it would be his earnest endeavour that brotherly love should bind together all the followers of our common Lord and Master." Was Episcopacy compromised in him when he did so? Not at all. Broader than the measure of man's mind is the Heart

of the Eternal. And the more we cultivate the habit of sympathetically examining the actions and the beliefs of others, the riper we shall ourselves grow for an eternal home, in which not a Presbyterian, not a Baptist, not a Wesleyan, not an Anglican will be found, just because channels and ducts will be superseded when we reach the hidden source of grace and truth.

ALFRED PEARSON.



### ART. III.—OUR FATHERS IN THE FAITH.

#### ST. AIDAN.

**D**ARK days had fallen upon the great kingdom of Northumbria, and the fair name of the Christ was wrapped in the gloom of heathen carnage. In the year A.D. 633 Penda the Strenuous, the pagan King of Mercia, had joined forces with Cadwallon, King of the Britons, and had slain the great Edwin on the then marshy flatland of Heathfield (Hatfield), in south-east Yorkshire.

“When Edwin had ruled most gloriously for seventeen years, during six of which he was a soldier of the kingdom of Christ, Cadwallon, King of the Britons, rebelled against him, being assisted by Penda, a most strenuous man of the Mercian royal family, and a severe battle having been fought in the plain which is called Heathfield, Edwin was killed and his whole army either slain or dispersed.”<sup>1</sup>

But worse things were to follow. After the death of Edwin two princes of the Northumbrian line contrived to hold the kingdom for a while. Osric, Edwin’s cousin, ruled in Deira, the southern province of Northumbria, whilst Eanfrid, a son of Ethelfrid the Destroyer, received the northern province of Bernicia. Both had been baptized—the former “by the preaching of Paulinus had been initiated in the sacraments of the faith,” and the latter, who during the reign of Edwin had been in exile among the Scots, had there been “renewed by the grace of baptism.”<sup>2</sup>

But alas for their constancy! “Each of these kings,” says Bede, “when he obtained the insignia of an earthly kingdom, abandoned and anathematized the Sacraments of the celestial kingdom in which he had been initiated, and allowed himself to be polluted and destroyed by the filth of his former

<sup>1</sup> Bede, “Hist. Eccl.,” ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 1.