

What
Reformed Episcopalians
Believe



By

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First Bishop of the Chicago Synod

The Reformed Episcopal Church

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P R E F A C E

This volume contains eight sermons delivered by the late Bishop Charles Edward Cheney in Christ Church, Chicago, and first published in 1888. They form an important contribution to the literature of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

In his original preface, Bishop Cheney wrote: "Why this is an Episcopal Church; why we conserve the historic Episcopate; why we worship in the use of liturgical forms; why we retain Confirmation as a mode of admission to full membership of the Church; why we perpetuate the ancient order of the Christian Year with its regularly recurring seasons; are all questions frequently asked of the Reformed Episcopalian. The present volume is a humble attempt to supply this felt want."

No one was more able to set forth the doctrine and spirit of the Reformed Episcopal Church than the distinguished Bishop. As a leader of the evangelical party in the Protestant Episcopal Church he had suffered for his convictions, in particular for his unwillingness to use phraseology in the administration of Baptism that would teach Baptismal Regeneration. Conscience, courage, loyalty to the Bible distinguish this stalwart servant of God. All this is reflected in the chapters that follow.

Born in 1836, of Puritan stock, Charles Edward Cheney was ordained to the ministry in the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1858. Two years later he became rector of Christ Church, Chicago, and labored among the people of that church for fifty-six years, dying in

active service at the age of eighty. During those years this inspiring Gospel preacher, devoted pastor, lover of souls led his people from a small body of worshipers in a frame building on the prairie, to become one of Chicago's large and important congregations in the heart of a great city.

Dr. Cheney was one of that small group, who for conscience' sake, met with Bishop George David Cummins on December 2, 1873, and founded the Reformed Episcopal Church. Christ Church immediately became part of the Reformed Episcopal Church and on December 14, Dr. Cheney was consecrated a Bishop. When the Synod of Chicago was formed, he was unanimously elected its first Bishop. Twice he was chosen to be his denominations Presiding Bishop. Always was he revered as a strong spiritual leader, a gracious Christian gentleman, a Reformed Episcopalian who knew whereof he spoke concerning the Church, for he spoke out of deep study and much personal experience.

This book has been revised by the Committee on Christian Education of the New York and Philadelphia Synod, under the chairmanship of the Rev. Walter Mueller. Associated with him in the work of editing have been Bishop Howard D. Higgins, Rev. Fred C. Kuehner, Rev. Alton F. Olsen, the late Rev. S. Thomas Percival, Jr. These chapters are set forth with grateful appreciation of the life and ministry of Bishop Cheney and with the prayer that God will use them, not only to inform men of the position of the Reformed Episcopal Church, but to enlist allegiance to the Bible as God's Word, Christ as Saviour, and to evangelical worship and Church government as that which will glorify God and strengthen the believer.

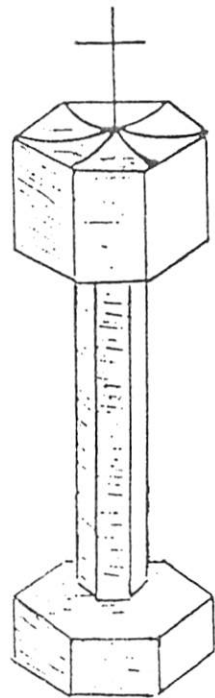
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BAPTISM AND THE BIBLE

Chapter One



BAPTISM AND THE BIBLE

Christianity deals with the greatest problems which ever set human thought to work. That all thinking disciples should follow the same paths of reasoning, or arrive at precisely the same conclusions, was never promised by the Master. All attempts to force the followers of Jesus into one and the same intellectual perception of doctrinal truth, have uniformly resulted in a deadening superstition on the one hand, or a reaction into blank unbelief upon the other.

The history of European Christianity for many centuries was the record of an outward and organic unity. But it was that produced by a crushing force. Few are they among believers in this country who find in these dark ages the highest type and best example of what the Church of Christ should be. There are certain great facts and principles, embodied in evangelical creeds and confessions, which belong to the whole body of Christ. They are the common heritage of that true Church which our communion service calls "the blessed company of all faithful people." But while the human mind is constituted as it is, men will differ as to the best and most effective ways in which the common truth can be defended and preserved.

The Reformed Episcopalian claims no monopoly of the whole truth of God, but he does recognize his responsibility as the representative of certain principles, to neglect which would impair the foundations of the entire building. In deepest loyalty to the gospel and the King, he claims the right to acquaint himself with, and to make known to others, the methods by which he would aid in upholding the stately structure of universal Christianity.

Where shall be our starting point? Biography begins at the cradle. History has its threshold where man appears first on the earth. So membership of a visible church has its initial point in the solemn rite which Christ ordained as the entrance upon His earthly kingdom.

I. THE POSITION ASSIGNED TO BAPTISM IN THE WORD OF GOD

The Reformed Episcopalian rejects any essential doctrine which does not find its basic and ultimate authority in the Bible. In this respect, he treats religious principles precisely as the patriotic American deals with the principles of politics. In all that concerns my rights and duties as a citizen of the Republic, I have a profound veneration for the views and interpretations of the Constitution which appear in the utterances of Washington, Jefferson and Adams. The words of such men are entitled to due respect. But they can never place any great constitutional question beyond the pale of controversy. The ultimate appeal must be to the Constitution itself. In like manner every Reformed Episcopal clergyman is required by his ordination vow to teach nothing as essential to salvation, except that which is taught in Holy Scripture, or may be clearly proved by it.

Even in regard to matters of smaller moment, the Reformed Episcopalian desires to know whether God's written Word has borne its testimony. No careful student of the Scriptures will come to the conclusion that baptism is a subject of trifling importance.

There are no fewer than seventy-six passages in the New Testament which deal with this question. God has not thrust it into a corner. It is impossible to read the Bible and ignore the allusions to baptism.

But the importance of the rite is not to be gauged merely by the frequency with which it is mentioned. There is a far more weighty evidence. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself insisted upon being baptized. He had no sins to be washed away. Surely, He needed not to have the element of water applied to His blessed person as symbol of such spiritual cleansing. Yet such importance did He attach to this symbolic use of water, as a teacher of man's sinfulness, and need for inward cleansing, that He compelled John the Baptist to baptize Him (Matt. 3:13-15).

Isaiah had foretold seven hundred years before, that Christ should be "numbered among the transgressors." Sinless Himself, He yet was baptized, that in all respects He might be identified with sinners.

His ministry is marked by the baptism of those who became His followers. Though He "baptized not" with His

own hands, His disciples administered that rite to more converts than even John had baptized at the waters of the Jordan (John 4:1, 2).

Go one step further. The last words of a father to his children do not deal with trifles. Yet the latest words which Jesus spoke to those whom He sent forth to bear His banner to the ends of the earth, imposed on them a command to baptize all who through their preaching of the gospel should believe on Him (Matt. 28:19).

The Reformed Episcopalian plants his feet firmly upon the Scriptures when he proclaims the momentous nature of the sacrament of baptism. For, as he pushes on his study of the New Testament, he meets the fact that the command of the Master was carried out by His apostles. It would be difficult to recall in the pages of the Book of Acts, a solitary record of conversion whether it be that of Saul of Tarsus, of the three thousand Jews on the Day of Pentecost, of the jailer at Philippi, or of Lydia, the purple-seller of Thyatira, in which the yielding of the heart to Christ is not followed by the confession of the mouth in baptism. The Reformed Episcopalian does not say with the Roman Church that there is no possibility of salvation without this symbolic cleansing. He has no proof that the penitent thief had ever been baptized. Nor can he limit God's mercy where a repentant and believing soul may be placed in circumstances which make the act of baptism impossible. He does hold with unwavering firmness to the simple fact, that the Bible clearly declares it the duty of every believer to confess his faith by a baptism with water in the name of the Holy Trinity. Such a fact lifts the baptismal washing out of the realm of that which is merely an optional ceremony. It makes it obligatory on every soul who trusts in Jesus and would do His will.

II. THE QUANTITY OF WATER USED IN SYMBOLIZING THE SPIRIT'S POWER TO PURIFY IS NOT A MATTER OF CONCERN

The Reformed Episcopalian is willing to yield regard to brethren who refuse to admit to the table of the Lord those Christians who have not been baptized by immersion, but it is a deep conviction of Scripture truth which leads him to protest against what seems to him such unbrotherly exclusion. For it is the Bible which makes baptism with water a symbol of the soul's spiritual cleansing through the work of the Holy

Spirit. It is the Bible which teaches that the other sacrament is a symbol of the soul's feeding by faith on a crucified Saviour.

The Reformed Episcopalian cannot help asking why the quantity of bread and wine should not be prescribed in the Lord's Supper, if the quantity of water must be prescribed in baptism. If a morsel of bread and a taste of wine, which in themselves satisfy neither bodily hunger, or bodily thirst, are yet sufficient to symbolize how Jesus satisfies the soul, why should not as much water as the hollow of the hand will hold, be sufficient of that cleansing element to symbolize how Jesus by His Spirit purifies the heart?

The limits of this article forbid an extended argument. Let it suffice to say that the Greek verb *baptizo*, from which we get our word "baptize," has never been proved to mean the total immersion of the body in water. Both Plutarch and Xenophon among the classic Greek authors use it with reference to the sprinkling which a gardener bestows upon his plants. Is there any evidence that when this word, far older than the New Testament, came to be enlisted in the service of the Gospel writers, its former classic meaning was altogether changed? On the contrary, there is not one passage where we are compelled to believe that it meant a complete submersion.

Luke tells us that the Pharisee who had invited our Lord to dinner was shocked because Jesus "had not first washed" (in the Greek) "baptized himself," (Luke 11:37, 38). Can we believe that the host expected every guest to totally submerge himself as a preparation for the feast?

John the Baptist predicted that Jesus should "baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). The fulfillment came upon the Day of Pentecost. But how? The author of the Book of Acts replies, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and *it sat upon* each of them" (Acts 2:3). They certainly were not immersed in fire. Again, when Peter preached to Cornelius and his household, "the Holy Ghost," we are told, "*fell on* all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44). They were immersed in the Holy Spirit. Yet when Peter comes to describe the scene to the disciples at Jerusalem, he describes it as a *baptism*. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11:16).

But the passage most frequently urged as settling the whole question, is in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It reads,

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-6).

Those who claim that there is no baptism except in immersion declare that the figurative expression, "buried with Him," must be literally carried out by the entire burial of the baptized person in water. It seems incredible that this purely figurative language should be thus pressed to literal and minute conclusions by excellent and learned men. For in the very same passage, Paul also asserts that we are "*planted* together in the likeness of his death." Why should we not carry into literal details this figure also? Or, when the Apostle adds, "Knowing this, that our old man is *crucified* with him," why not with equal reason press the figure to mean a literal stretching of the Christian on a cross?

It would be an easy task to prove that the monuments of the primitive Church, the pictorial inscriptions of the early Christians on the walls of the catacombs, as well as the recorded history of ancient Christianity, show that baptism was performed either by immersion, by sprinkling, or by a combination of both. But the Reformed Episcopalian rests his persuasion upon the written Word of God. From that he knows no appeal.

III. BAPTISM IS THE SEAL SET TO THE MOST IMPORTANT TRANSACTION WHICH CAN TAKE PLACE BETWEEN A HUMAN SOUL AND ITS MAKER AND REDEEMER

Baptism attests the *covenant* entered into between the sinner and his Saviour in the hour that, penitent and believing, the soul receives Christ as its only atoning sacrifice.

Jesus invites "Come unto me." The soul responds by a trustful and loving surrender, but the surrender is not completed in all its fulness until the seal of baptism has been set to the solemn yet joyful transaction. The Reformed Episcopalian can not forget that Christ never invited adults alone. He did not merely ask men and women to "come." He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me" (Mark 10:14). His invitation and command was that parents who believed on Him should dedicate their offspring by a complete surrender, even as themselves. Surely, He meant that the infant,

equally with the parent, should receive the seal of such surrender. His reason for requiring the children to be brought to Him makes the case still stronger. "For," He says, "*of such is the kingdom of God.*" He declares as plainly as words can speak, that the children of believing parents are members of His kingdom and Church. We have His word for it. Can anything be more unscriptural than to refuse to the very class of souls whom Jesus has thus pointed out as members of His kingdom, the seal by which that membership was witnessed?

Moreover, as we follow the Lord to the close of His earthly career, we hear Him giving His special commission to the pardoned and restored Apostle Peter. He lays it upon the conscience of His penitent disciple that he is to "feed" His "sheep." But, as if it were even more a duty, He *first* says, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15-17). Then the lambs belong to Christ, equally with the sheep. They are also in His flock and in His fold. Would the Good Shepherd put His mark, His seal, upon the sheep, and not upon the lambs?

Nor can the Reformed Episcopalian forget that when the Apostles went forth in Pentecostal power and wisdom, they baptized whole families. Lydia of Thyatira was baptized "*and her household,*" an expression which is the exact equivalent of our word "family" (Acts 16:15). Not only did Paul and Silas baptize the Philippian jailer, but "*all his*" (Acts 16:33). Paul, in writing to the Corinthian church, does not take the trouble to say whether or not he baptized Stephanas, the head of a household; but does place on record that he baptized *his family* (I Cor. 1:16). According to the Old Testament God commanded the Jews to circumcise all male infants as a sign and seal of his covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Incredible, indeed, does it seem that if the Jewish custom of receiving the little ones formally into the Church by a distinct and appointed ceremony was departed from by the early Christians, no command to that effect was given, and no controversy sprang up about so inexplicable an omission. Baptism is the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament rite of circumcision and thus is similarly administered to infants. To the Reformed Episcopalian, the subject is intensely practical. All history attests that in the early Church, believing parents realized a responsibility for their children's gospel training, which is sadly lacking among members of the Church today. The primitive Christian re-

alized that in solemn dedication, his child had been given to Christ. It was the parents duty and privilege so to surround the child from his very cradle with the atmosphere of Christian truth, and prayer, and daily instruction, that the child should grow up into a sense of his own responsibility for the fulfillment of parental promises. The strength of early Christianity lay in this family religion, ever stimulated and sustained by the consciousness in both parents and children, that alike they had been dedicated to the Lord.

Those early disciples did not leave their offspring first to hear the elements of the gospel from the lips of a Sunday school teacher, nor did they believe that their little ones must grow up in the darkness of alienation from God, till some revival should let in a sudden flash of spiritual light.

IV. FIDELITY TO THE BIBLE COMPELS PROTEST AGAINST THE THEORY THAT THE NEW BIRTH IS INSEPARABLY TIED TO BAPTISM

In 1873 some of us turned away from the Protestant Episcopal Church. The world has a right to ask what drove us out from our mother Church. One of the causes which forced that separation concerns baptism. The prayer book of the Protestant Episcopal Church required its ministers to declare immediately upon the baptism of an infant or adult that the baptized person was then and there *born again of the Spirit of God*. An infant is brought to the baptismal font, "a child of wrath" (see the Church Catechism). The water of baptism is put upon his brow, and then for the first time, the minister lifts up his voice to God in this thanksgiving, "*We thank Thee that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this child (this Thy servant) with Thy Holy Spirit.*"

To every evangelical Christian, the new birth is that "creative act of the Holy Ghost, whereby he imparts to the soul a new spiritual life." Yet the prayer book of the Protestant Episcopal Church tied this work of the omnipotent God, wonderful as the original creation of man, to a ceremony performed by a sinful creature. Experience showed that very often none of the fruits of the Spirit were brought forth by those who had been baptized. The Bible testified that Simon Magus, baptized by apostolic hands, was yet "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23). Appeal was made to high church leaders for Scripture proof that the new birth was inseparably tied to baptism with water. They

pointed to Christ's language to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Christ clearly taught that His disciples must be baptized both with water and the Holy Spirit, but there is not one word in Jesus' solemn utterances to the Jewish rabbi which said, "Baptism with water *insures* the baptism of the Spirit." I may say to the newly-landed immigrant, "except you be naturalized, and filled with the spirit of your adopted country, you cannot be an American." But I dare not say, "Take the step of legal naturalization and the spirit of patriotism will of necessity come with it."

High church leaders then pointed to Paul's words to Titus, "According to his mercy he saved us, by *the washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

To assume that "the washing of regeneration" was baptismal washing was simply to beg the question at issue. Not only so; but we perceived that Paul brought out this "washing of regeneration" as something specially *in contrast* to the "works of righteousness which we have done." By these works he asserted we were *not* saved. But in the case of the vast majority of the Christians in the days of Paul and Titus baptism was the deliberate act of an adult, voluntarily done as a *work of righteousness*. It, therefore, could not be the "washing of regeneration" referred to by the apostles.

Still, again, they stated that Peter declares, "Baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21). But we could not fail to read the rest of the verse, "*not* the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God."

Evangelical ministers in the Protestant Episcopal Church, then and now, found themselves pushed into this fearful position. They found no evidence in the Scriptures that regeneration was uniformly wrought by the act of baptism. God's Spirit was free (John 3:8). He might regenerate the soul in the hour of the baptismal rite, or before, or afterwards. Yet, every such minister must give up the use of the baptismal service, or else in solemn words of thanksgiving to God, publicly declare that which he did not believe to be God's truth.

Do not imagine that such a dilemma faced the low churchmen of the English and American Episcopal Church *for the first time* when the controversy arose which resulted in the Reformed Episcopal Church. Evangelical ministers and laymen had groaned under the bondage of the baptismal service

from the days of the Reformation. They perceived the awful chasm which yawned between the plain teachings of the gospel, and the words which the prayer book put into the mouth of the officiating minister. They saw that, under the literal teaching of the baptismal service, the souls of sinners were imperiled. Believing themselves to be regenerated by God's Holy Spirit in the act of baptism, and thus saved by the baptismal washing, men came to trust their entire hope for eternity to an outward and mechanical ceremony.

They saw, too, that a Romish superstition pervaded the minds of the humble and unlettered members of the Church, leading them to believe that the unbaptized infant must certainly perish. They heard it said from high church pulpits that in baptism we have "a new principle put into us, and sanctification and purity unspotted are attributed to the Church of Christ as the effect of the washing of water." They heard it asserted, that "baptism is the new birth." And when, with the Bible in their hands, they refuted such false doctrine, their own people pointed them to the baptismal service and asked, "Do you not, every time you baptize with water, pray God to 'sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin'? Do you not, when the application of water has been made, turn to the people, and say, 'Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child (this person) is regenerate, let us give thanks'? Do you not then before the Searcher of hearts say, 'We thank Thee that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this child (this person) with Thy Holy Spirit'?"

Do you ask how such low churchmen—honest, conscientious and God-fearing, managed to stay in the old Church and repeat on every baptismal occasion a statement which they believed to be inconsistent with the Word of God? I can best answer that question from my own experience. I satisfied my conscience, through many years of ministry in the Protestant Episcopal Church, by trying to *explain away* the language of the service. Two or three widely different theories have been put forth by low church theologians, either one of which, it was believed, would bridge over the abyss between the prayer book and the Bible. One of these was that the service spoke of a sort of *ecclesiastical* regeneration, a new birth into the visible church, rather than into the spiritual life.

Another explanation was that the service taught what was called, "the judgment of charity." In other words, it charitably took for granted that the baptized infant or adult *would* repent

and believe, and God *would* give His spiritual new birth to that soul. It told the minister to imagine himself for the moment far down the future, supposing repentance and faith to have been exercised, and regeneration therefore to have been imparted. On such an hypothesis he could speak of what might be as though it were accomplished, and so declare to God his thankfulness for it. That good and great men in the evangelical party could satisfy their consciences with so artificial and unnatural an explanation, only showed how hard pressed low churchmen were to find some method to fill up the gulf between the Bible and the baptismal service.

There came a day when conscience told me that I was juggling with plain words, to torture from them that which they did not mean. The service did not speak of the future, but of *what had just now been accomplished* by the application of water. "We thank Thee that it *hath* pleased Thee to regenerate this person."

In agony of soul, I turned to the other explanation. Did not the baptismal service mean that a new birth was wrought by baptism only in the sense of introducing the baptized person into the new world of *Church privileges*? Was it not a sacramental and ecclesiastical, instead of spiritual regeneration, of which the prayer book spoke?

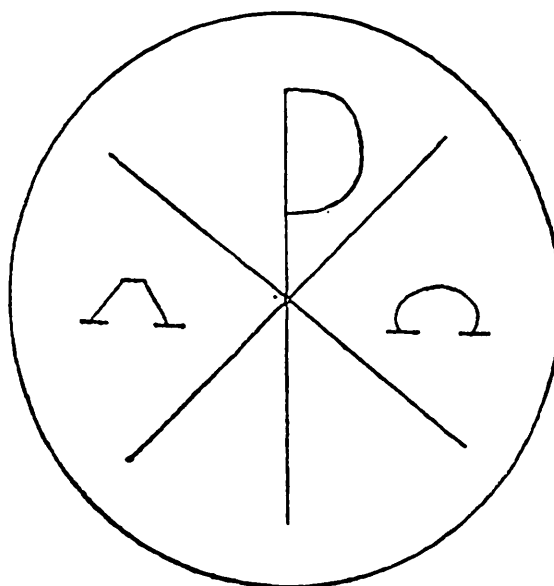
But the language of the service refused this rationalization. It met me with the plain words, "that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate *with Thy Holy Spirit*." Surely that meant not ecclesiastical, but *spiritual* regeneration.

I had reached the point where I must choose, in God's sight, between the Protestant Episcopal baptismal service and the Bible. You know the result. But God had been working upon other minds and consciences as He had upon my own.

The Reformed Episcopal Church has a baptismal service which echoes the teaching of the Word of God. It struck out the assertion which made baptism with water the unfailing channel of regeneration. It made its message, reiterated every time the sacrament is performed, a clear enunciation of the truth that baptism is a *sign and seal* of spiritual regeneration, but not that regeneration itself. Here is a Church which is true to the Word of God upon a question which meets us at the very threshold of the visible kingdom of God.

CONFIRMATION AND THE CHURCH

Chapter Two



CONFIRMATION AND THE CHURCH

The rite of confirmation, or reception of believers into the full membership of the Church by the "laying on of hands" (Hebrews 6:2), is no novelty in universal Christendom. Out of the millions of nominal Christians in the world, more than two-thirds of them admit their members by some form involving the imposition of hands. Confirmation is not merely the inheritance of the Episcopal Churches of England and America but also of that vast body of Protestants on both sides of the sea who bear the name and cherish the teachings of the great Reformer, Luther.

The statistics of Protestantism show that confirmation is the chosen method of admission to the visible fold of Christ among one-half of that portion of Christendom which denies the authority and rejects the superstitions of the Greek and Roman Churches.

But on the other hand, it is equally true that to many evangelical Christians in the United States, this ancient ordinance is something which has the aspect of a stranger and an alien. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that this country owes its evangelization, to a large degree, to three great branches of the Christian Church, none of which has retained the rite of confirmation. The Puritans of New England rejected this ceremony when they refused to be ruled by bishops. The Presbyterian Church, against the wishes of Calvin, dropped confirmation as early as the days of the Reformation. While John Wesley lived, the members of his religious societies never separated from the Church of England, and were generally confirmed in its parish churches, but in America, from the first, the Methodist Church, the pioneer of the gospel to our western states, followed another mode of publicly confessing Christ. No wonder then, that when American evangelism has been advanced so largely by churches to which confirmation is unknown, the masses of our Protestant worshipers look upon that ordinance as rather strange.

A Christian trained from infancy in some one of our sister churches enters for the first time an episcopal place of worship. It happens to be on a Sunday when a band of young

believers are publicly to give their allegiance to the Saviour. Such a scene awakens no surprise. He is used to similar occasions. But when he learns that the officiating minister who receives these souls into the visible kingdom of Christ is not the pastor of this flock, but an overseer of many congregations, he naturally demands an explanation. Still more is he surprised by the strangeness of the ceremony, when with solemn prayer for God's defending grace, the bishop lays his hands separately upon the head of each one of these new confessors of the faith. So marked is the difference from the familiar modes of public profession of Christ's name that it raises a whole brood of inquiries in his mind. While he may not question the solemnity and beauty of the ceremony he witnesses, it yet is so strange to him that he justly seeks some adequate explanation of it. To afford such inquirers the answer to which they are entitled let us ask then, What reasons has the Reformed Episcopalian to give for the rite of confirmation?

A builder feels a natural satisfaction when he finds himself able to lay the foundation stones on a basis of bedrock. It would perhaps be a similar satisfaction that the advocate of confirmation would experience, if he discovered in the New Testament that Christ had clearly and unequivocally commanded this precise observance.

Yet it would be a pleasure mingled with keenest pain. For such a command would put the rite of confirmation on the same level with baptism or the Lord's Supper. It would make confirmation imperative on all who acknowledge the authority of Christ. To refuse or to neglect to be confirmed, would be rebellion against our King. It would brand one-half of Protestantism with the stigma of disloyalty to Jesus. The broadest charity could not cover so flagrant a revolt against the Master.

But to such a position no Reformed Episcopalian is driven. The man who grasps too much at last will grasp thin air. He who attempts to claim for confirmation the authority of Christ weakens the cause for which he pleads.

Let us frankly and candidly admit that there exists in the New Testament no trace of such a divine appointment. At the same time, however, the Reformed Episcopalian does claim that the rite of confirmation has sanction and warrant in the Scriptures. If the canon of Holy Writ ended with the four Gospels we should find no Bible sanction for many of the institutions and practices which the whole Church of God holds dear.

There is no record that the Lord Jesus commanded the appointment of deacons or authorized the establishment of such an office. But the fact that the Apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, chose the seven has led the universal Church to follow their example (Acts 6:5).

Nor is there any text in the New Testament in which it is stated that Jesus directed the Lord's Supper to be administered to women, or even to any lay member of the Church. It was in an assembly of Apostles only, it was in a gathering of men exclusively, that He commanded, "This do in remembrance of me" (Matthew 26:20; I Corinthians 11:24). But the later practice of the Apostles themselves has settled all question, if any ever arose, as to the right of all genuine believers to commemorate the Saviour's love.

When Philip the Evangelist had preached the gospel with such power in the city of Samaria that multitudes, "both men and women," turned to the Lord, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now notice what follows. The Apostles at Jerusalem hear of this glorious awakening in Samaria. And forthwith Peter and John, not pastors of congregations, nor deacons like Philip, but higher officers of the new-born Church and representatives of the whole body of believers, are dispatched to the scene of Philip's labors for what? Their purpose was to pray for these new disciples and to lay their hands upon their heads" (Acts 8:14-17).

If this were an isolated case, we might perhaps suppose that it was an exception to the general rule of apostolic practice. The nineteenth chapter of the Book of Acts also reveals to us the great Apostle to the Gentiles preaching Christ to the rich and pagan city of Ephesus. Among Paul's hearers are some who had been prepared for accepting Christ by the teachings of John the Baptist or some of his disciples. They know no other baptism than that which Christ's stern herald had administered as a symbol of repentance. Paul baptizes them, but he does not stop with this obedience to the last command of Jesus. He "laid his hands upon them" (Acts 19:6).

The careful and candid reader of the New Testament will naturally ask the question, "Why was the sacrament of baptism, ordained as it was by Christ Himself, supplemented by this imposition of hands? What necessity existed that those already sealed to Christ by the baptismal sign should submit to another and additional ceremony?

The Reformed Episcopalian answers for himself and for his Church, that such an ordinance would have a twofold significance and value. It would renew in the most solemn way the consecration to Christ which baptism previously made. It would involve confirming before a higher officer of the Church, the covenant into which the soul had entered at baptism. Such a re-consecration and such a confirmation of the covenant, if sincere, is always a means of grace. It is not in any mystic or superstitious sense, but because by it the soul is stirred anew, and love and faith revived. Moreover, when such public renewal of baptismal vows was made before one who represented, as the Apostles did, no local church or congregation, but the whole body of believers and when such a messenger of the Church at large sealed the act by the imposition of his hands, it was most significant. For it substantially said to the young believer, "Your baptismal obligations bind you not merely to the little flock in Samaria, in Ephesus, in Corinth or in Thessalonica; they do not only introduce you into loving fellowship with the pastor whose preaching led you to Jesus; they also make you one of that larger and broader communion composed of all who love the Lord."

Now let us do full justice to those who hold a different view of the imposition of the Apostles' hands, from that maintained by the advocates of confirmation. They argue that both in Samaria and Ephesus the extraordinary and visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit followed the laying on of hands. There were some miraculous and supernatural gifts bestowed upon these new members of the Church, like those upon the Day of Pentecost when the disciples spoke in languages which they had never learned.

"The imposition of hands," say the opponents of confirmation, "was merely to accomplish this result. The Holy Spirit was visibly bestowed by the touch of the Apostles. That was the purpose of the ceremony. But the age of miracles passed away. And since such outward, visible and supernatural gifts of the Spirit are no longer the heritage of God's children, the ceremony through which they were imparted has no business in the Church. It is like the ceremony of a royal coronation maintained in a republic where kings are no longer known."

This argument, however, depends wholly upon one supposed fact that the *sole object* of the apostolic laying on of hands was to impart the Holy Spirit in His supernatural gifts.

But because supernatural powers followed the imposition of apostolic hands we have no right to conclude that the ceremony had no other purpose whatsoever. The Book of Acts clearly shows that the laying on of hands was not necessary to the giving of supernatural powers of the Holy Spirit. There was no imposition of the Apostles' hands upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Yet "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). And we have no account of Peter laying his hands on the household of Cornelius. But the Holy Spirit fell on them also in the gift of tongues (Acts 10:44-46).

It is a mistake therefore to assume that the sole end of this rite was to secure the miraculous influences of the Spirit. There were other ways in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit were bestowed. The conclusion is irresistible that the laying on of hands, while it was accompanied in apostolic days by the wonders of spiritual power, had some wider and more permanent end in view. For by these gifts God bore witness to the act of united prayer (Acts 4:31). He followed the preaching of the Word by imparting the gift of tongues to Cornelius and his household (Acts 11:15). Shall we therefore conclude that united prayer is no longer to be continued and that preaching should be dropped from the agencies of the Church?

The Epistle to the Hebrews alludes to three pairs of religious doctrines as being among the foundations of the truth. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:1, 2).

Now if the imposition of hands was some rite belonging only to the early age of Christianity and not meant to be a permanent ordinance, how does it come to pass that the New Testament thus puts it among "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" which enter into the very "foundation" of the truth? How does it come to be named in the midst of facts and realities as momentous as repentance and faith and as enduring as the resurrection and the judgment? Some say that it may refer to the act of ordination of ministers or to the laying on of hands to heal the sick or to the act by which miraculous

powers of the Spirit were imparted by apostolic hands.

The Reformed Episcopalian is willing to admit that it *may* mean any one of these. He cheerfully concedes that it *may* involve any laying on of hands as a religious ceremony, though it were but that of a father blessing his child (Genesis 48:14). But why should such acts as these be classed with most solemn and momentous truths? Above all, why should "the laying on of hands" be yoked with "baptisms," just as "faith" is yoked with "repentance," and "eternal judgment" with the "resurrection"? Is it uncharitable to other Christians, is it a leaning to superstition, which compels him to believe that he is following the practice of the Apostles in adhering to this special form of reception to the Church?

The history of early Christianity after the days of the Apostles is full of references to this rite as universally prevailing in the Church. Like the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, confirmation seems to have come down in undisputed practice from apostolic example. If it is argued that it became an empty form, abused to the ends of priestcraft and superstition, let it be remembered that the same abuse characterized for ages the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Moreover, the very fact that the vast majority of evangelical Christians maintain the practice of infant baptism renders absolutely necessary some method of public admission to the Church of those baptized in childhood. Dedicated by Christian parents to the Saviour's service, shall there be no way opened by which the young Christian can assume all the responsibilities of such a consecration? Is there to be given no special and public act in which he can voluntarily say that the repentance of faith which were hoped for and prayed for at his baptism are now his own? Every Church which baptizes its children has some ceremony to receive them when personally repentant and believing on their voluntary confession of Christ. The Reformed Episcopalian has no word of disparagement for any appropriate form which others may adopt. He only claims that none can be more appropriate, more solemn, more beautiful, or more in accord with apostolic practice, than confirmation.

But why ask those baptized in adult years to submit to this additional ceremony? The answer is twofold. We follow the example of the Apostles who laid their hands upon the heads of those who had in mature life been openly baptized.

But beside this pattern set before us, we recognize a practical value in the confirmation of those baptized in adult years.

A bishop presides over many parishes. His visits to each necessarily cannot be frequent. But when he does come for the administration of this rite, it affords an opportunity for those who have been led to Christ, and who have confessed that faith, to renew their baptismal obligation.

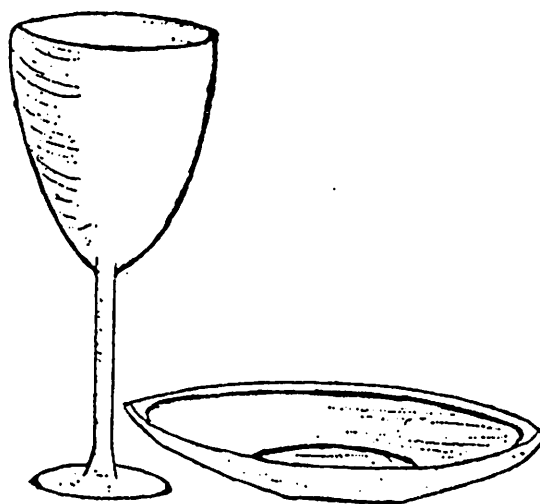
It may be added that there are few greater evils in the Church of Christ than the selfish and narrow isolation of a single church. There is a tendency on the part of an individual parish to follow its own narrow course regardless of all that may be on either side. But confirmation is an act in which an official of a larger organization participates. The provision which gives the act of administering this rite into the hands of the bishop emphasizes the principle that the person confirmed thereby becomes, not only a member of this congregation or that parish, but also a member of the whole Reformed Episcopal Church. He thereby pledges himself to its welfare and its progress.

The sweetest and most nutritious bread may be made the vehicle of poison. God has given us nothing which may not be abused and perverted from its true purpose. The rite of confirmation affords no exception to the rule. Upon it a fungus growth of evils has developed in the Church that is not the result of the ordinance itself: Churches bring forward for confirmation persons with no preparation of heart; Churches assume that the touch of a bishop confers apostolic grace; Churches insist that confirmation supplements the regeneration that a child received at baptism.

The Reformed Episcopalian strikes at the taproot of the weeds which choke this rite with errors when he protests against these false and pernicious evils. He comes for confirmation not in order to be made a Christian. He comes because through repentance and faith he has been pardoned, washed in the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The true soldier of his country is always such before he puts on the uniform. His uniform only makes all the world know what his heart is. Confirmation makes no man a soldier of the Cross, who was not such at heart before.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Chapter Three



THE LORD'S SUPPER

No visible institution of Christianity so impresses the mind and the imagination as the supper of the Lord. It antedates the Christian Church itself.

The Passover, out of which the Communion sprang, prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus, as the supper of the Lord recalls it to memory. The Passover came from the age when the Pyramids were built. The communicant is looked down upon by the witness of three thousand years. And when the Pyramids shall crumble, the Lord's Supper shall remain. For, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death *till he come*."

Little wonder if superstition has seized upon so ancient an ordinance, and used it as a potent weapon to subvert the freedom of God's children. It is the duty of every Christian to know the exact nature of so conspicuous and solemn an institution of Christ. Let us attempt that duty, with prayer for the Spirit's guidance.

I. WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF THE HOLY COMMUNION?

It would seem as if the New Testament had left us without excuse if we blunder as to the true answer to this inquiry, for doubt and controversy generally arise in regard to things concerning whose origin history has left us in the dark.

The record of the institution of the Lord's Supper has been given in the Bible so fully, so clearly, and with such repetition, that error would seem impossible and debate unnecessary. We have four distinct and separate accounts, differing from each other in regard to no material fact. Three out of four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke) have told the story nearly in the same words. It would seem as though these three accounts were sufficient. But when the Apostle Paul finds the church at Corinth perverting this sacrament from its holy purpose, he gives to that Christian community a fourth narrative of the first origin of the Lord's Supper, that he declares he had received by direct inspiration from the Lord Himself (I Cor. 11:23).

The first thing which attracts the attention of the Reformed Episcopalian who studies this fourfold record, is *the simplicity* of the Lord's Supper.

In the light of the New Testament accounts of the Lord's Supper, the Evangelical regards with distress the pomp and ceremony with which the Communion is sometimes celebrated. If the Lord Jesus had tried to choose a method of establishing an institution in His Church which should be singularly plain, simple, and unencumbered by ritual, He hardly could have selected a different way. That simplicity appears in the *place* selected for the last supper. No splendid temple, no gorgeous sanctuary, no decorated shrine, witnessed the first eucharist. It was the bare upper chamber of a Jewish house borrowed for the occasion.

The same simplicity is revealed in the total *lack of any ritual details*. Christ wrote out no rubrics of direction how the Church was to perpetuate this feast. The shelves of our ecclesiastical libraries are crowded with "manuals of devotion" for the use of communicants. They descend to detailed directions as to postures, and even how the bread should be taken in the hand, and the cup lifted to the lips. Christ did not depart from the simplicity of the solemn rite, by even an allusion to these minor matters. Christians have quarreled whether their posture around the Lord's Table should be standing, as in the Greek Church; sitting, as is the practice of Presbyterians; or kneeling, as with Episcopalians. Yet no one of these postures is that of the Apostles, for they reclined on couches, as the old Oriental fashion was at feasts. "The simplicity which is in Christ," forbade attention to such details. The whole question of posture is plainly a matter of indifference, in which every Church may exercise its choice.

Observe, too, how this simple and natural idea of the Communion is preserved *in the symbols* employed. Jesus might have chosen some striking, unique unprecedented emblems of His dying love. Instead of that, He takes bread and wine, both of which the Jews used in keeping the Passover, and which were therefore right before Him. He seemed to say, "I make the simplest and most natural act of your daily life a blessed and sacred thing. I hallow with the remembrance of My love to you, even your partaking of food and drink." It was anticipating Paul's language: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). When Paul rebukes the Corinthian

church for its failure to discern the real purpose of this sacrament, he says, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (I Cor. 11:33). How clear it makes it that the Lord's Supper was a simple meal in memory of Christ. There is not a word even to indicate that the presence of a minister was necessary to the proper celebration of the rite!

The fourfold history of the institution of this sacrament, leads the Reformed Episcopalian, in perfect accord with other believers, to regard the Lord's Supper as a special *memorial* of Christ's atoning death.

In one of our public parks a statue stands to keep in memory for all generations a great statesman whom it represents in marble. That commemoration is the one central idea with which it was erected. It doubtless serves other purposes as well. The park is ornamented by its presence. It bears witness to the liberality of the rich and the self-denying patriotism of the poor. It forms a bond of union between the multitude of contributors to its erection. But these do not constitute the one great end which its erection had in view. If these subsidiary purposes be crowded to the front, and so kept before the public mind that the remembrance of the dead hero shall be lost sight of, better that the sculptor never touched chisel to the stone! A doctrine of the Lord's Supper which belittles this memorial feature, has lost the original purpose for which it was instituted.

Our Lord used *language* in His gift of this ordinance to His disciples which can be explained only on the basis of its being primarily a memorial rite. He broke the bread and gave it to them with the words, "Take, eat; this is my body." Now, setting aside for the present the Roman Catholic theory of a miraculous change of the substance of the bread into the literal body of Christ, what could He have meant by words like these? Exactly what a father would mean who, when about to cross the sea, gives his picture to his children, and says, "This is myself." He does not mean that the portrait is actually his own personal being, but that it represents him. The only value of such a representation is that it helps the memory to recall him. So, too, Christ speaks of the wine, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." When you reject the Roman Catholic theory of a transubstantiation of the wine, you must of necessity understand Christ to mean that the wine was a

representation of that blood which He was to shed for sinners. It was ever afterward to appeal to the *memory* of the believer.

Nor need we depend on a mere interpretation of His words in giving the emblems. Luke distinctly states that Jesus told the disciples what was the purpose of these symbols, and of the Christian's partaking of them. When Paul received from Christ Himself the account which he gives in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he also declares that the very words of Christ were those which Luke had recorded. And as if to make it clear that it was a ceremony to be perpetuated in the Church mainly as a memorial rite, Paul tells us that Jesus followed the giving of the cup with this still more explicit expression of His will, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

Observe, too, the appropriateness of the emblems to bring out in conspicuous relief the memory of Christ's sacrifice. The bread of which they partook had been before that hour employed by Christ as a type of His body (John 6:35-38), but now it is *broken*. Each account mentions with particularity this fact of the bread being thus treated in His hands, as if Christ would have the fact of His blessed body being bruised and pierced, the one prominent idea in the recollection of His people.

In the city of Boston thousands daily pass a statue of Abraham Lincoln which represents him taking the fetters from the legs of a slave. It clearly seems to say that those who put that striking figure there were not merely anxious to have posterity remember the great president, but to remember him in that particular act of his eventful life. So do the broken bread and the flowing wine touch the memory of the Christian with the recollection of a Saviour in the act of giving His life for sinners.

Thus, the Reformed Episcopalian finds no incomprehensible "mystery" in the Communion as a means of grace. He does not approach the Lord's Table with the feeling that it is some magic charm in which he is to find spiritual help as the Roman Catholic expects to find it in touching a relic of the saints, or the wood of "the true cross." Its philosophy is as clear as the noonday, for what can rekindle in the heart the glow of love, like the stirring of the memory?

The Reformed Episcopalian, however, does not forget that together with this memorial idea of the communion, another great truth is coupled. The Lord's Supper is a visible

gospel. We cannot see these emblems of the death of Jesus without their preaching to us eloquently and powerfully the doctrine of His atonement. Why, then, do we not satisfy all that this sacrament demands, when we have looked upon the consecrated symbols of His dying love? Why eat the bread? Why drink the wine? Will not our love be awakened by the sight of this pictorial representation of His suffering for us? We have no hesitation in answering. Our bodily life is itself an emblem of our spiritual life. Exactly as we sustain our bodily existence by partaking of food and drink, so by faith do we feed upon Christ. The Old Testament had foreshadowed it, when the prophet, turning from the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law, cried from his watchtower of vision, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). Christ Himself echoed the same great truth when long before the night in which He was betrayed, He solemnly declared, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53).

That He did not refer to the Communion in these strongly figurative words is plain. He uttered them at least a year before He instituted the Lord's Supper. He spoke to an assemblage of Jews, who could by no possibility know anything of this ordinance to be established in the future. Moreover, when He discovered that they only saw in them a gross and earthly meaning, and wondered how they were to eat His flesh and drink His blood, He corrected their blunder. He told them that in His body He was to ascend to heaven, and that under the figure of His body and blood, He had spoken of His Spirit. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:62, 63).

If any words could express more clearly than these, that simple trust in Christ and His Word, sustains the spiritual life, as eating and drinking sustain the bodily life, it is difficult to imagine what these words could be. What follows? Clearly enough, that when the Saviour established the Lord's Supper, He ordained this eating of the bread, this drinking of the wine, to be a symbol of the faith by which we must receive Him into our souls, and live spiritually upon Him.

It may be added that the Reformed Episcopalian sees one other great truth brought clearly before him in this symbolic rite. In thus entering into fellowship with his suffering

Lord, he also becomes a member of the vast brotherhood, whatever be the name they bear, who partake of Christ by faith, "The blessed company of all faithful people." By trust in Christ, they "all eat the same spiritual meat; and drink the same spiritual drink." They symbolize that loving fellowship by this visible gathering around the same table, and exhibit their common love and common interest in each other, by calling their memorial feast, "the communion."

Basing his view of the Lord's Supper upon the teaching of the Word of God alone, the Reformed Episcopalian opens wide his arms to welcome to this feast, all who love his "Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity."

II. WHAT HAS THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN DONE TO RESCUE THE LORD'S SUPPER FROM UNSCRIPTURAL PERVERSION?

William of Orange, the leader of Protestant faith and civil liberty, against the Church of Rome and the tyranny of Spain, once placed his young son as a hostage in the hands of Philip II, the Spanish king. When at last restored to his father, the youth had been transformed. He had become a Spaniard in national spirit, a tyrant in political principle, and a bigoted Romanist in religion. Where lay the secret of so vast and complete a change? Simply here. The Spanish teachers *began early*. The Reformed Episcopalian who reads the history of the visible Church of Christ, discovers a similarly amazing transformation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He sees the simple, natural, logical truth that was embodied in a sacred meal, taken on common by believers, to commemorate the death of Christ, changed into an awesome mystery and gorgeous ceremonial. He sees the bread no longer broken, but in the form of a wafer. He sees the wine, in bold violation of the Saviour's last command, taken from the laity and reserved for the clergy alone. He sees the table which bore witness to the primitive principle of the communion as a solemn, commemorative feast, replaced by an altar, on which a priest offers the consecrated elements as a sacrifice to God. He sees the wafer lifted up like an idol, and the people bowing in prostrate adoration as before God Himself. He sees the universal Church accepting for a thousand years the doctrine that the priest by his consecrating act has transmuted the bread and wine into the literal and actual body and blood of the

Redeemer. How did this revolution come about? The answer is that the enemy began early. There is no trace of such a ceremony or such a doctrine in the New Testament. We read of "the breaking of bread, and prayer" in apostolic history, and in the epistles to the apostolic churches. We see the Christians gather at a simple meal which calls to their memory their suffering Lord. But that is all.

Yet, no sooner do we leave inspired teaching, and open the pages of the writers known as the "early fathers," than the perversion of the Lord's Supper begins to appear. The good seed sown by the Son of Man was not yet grown when the tares sprang up also.

No heresy of the Roman Church so directly led to the Reformation as that of transubstantiation; (the doctrine that what had been, up to their consecration, bread and wine, became by a miraculous change the actual flesh and blood of the Redeemer). Yet so deeply rooted was this monstrous theory, that even Luther could not fully rid his mind of its remnants. Rejecting transubstantiation, he tried to reconcile his loyalty to God's Word with what he called "consubstantiation" (the notion that while the bread and wine did not lose their nature, and were still bread and wine after consecration, yet in union with them was the body and blood of Christ).

But the reformers of the Church of England on this point gave no uncertain sound. They may have entertained false theories in regard to baptism, but they did not find on that field the battle which they were to fight. The whole struggle of the English reformation raged about the supper of the Lord. And here they drew broadly and unmistakably the Scripture line between Christ's truth and Rome's perversion. Let it ever be remembered that of the many hundreds who died amidst the flames of martyrdom, which Bloody Mary lighted, there was not one who did not give his life rather than accept a false doctrine *concerning the communion*. From Archbishop Cranmer down to the humblest peasant the English witnesses for Christ, were witnesses even unto death, against every form of perverting the simplicity of the Lord's Supper.

It would be natural to conclude, that whatever error might find place in the Church of England and her daughter in America, it would be impossible that they should wander from the truth concerning the communion. Here, surely, the principles for which Cranmer and Latimer, Ridley and Hooper

died will be guarded as men guard their homes and the lives of their children.

But the weed of a false doctrine of the eucharist is one which has tough roots, and sprouts readily again. From Reformation days there were those in the English Church who shrank from the strong, clear views of Cranmer, and his companions in martyrdom. They gained the ear of Elizabeth, eager to reconcile her Popish subjects to a Protestant liturgy. They led her to revise the communion service, so as to abolish a rubric denying the so-called "real presence." The same class of religious teachers still further corrupted the service when the prayer book was revised in the days of that worthless king, Charles II. The germs of a doctrine for which the reformers died at the stake rather than accept, were sown in the soil of the service. They sprang up here and there in the Church, but only reached their baleful harvest time when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Oxford Tracts appeared. From that hour no thistles ever spread more rapidly.

Today the doctrine of the "real presence" pervades the Protestant Episcopal Church and is taught directly or indirectly by the vast majority of her clergy. What is that doctrine? Briefly, it is that while there is no change in the bread and wine, Christ is spiritually present IN THEM after the consecration. Mark the language. Every Potestant believes with Archbishop Cranmer, that Christ is really present in the Lord's Supper in the hearts of "all them that worthily receive the same." But the advocates of the notion of the "real presence," mean such presence *in the bread and in the wine*. The officiating priest by consecration has imparted to the elements themselves the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ. Do not think that I exaggerate. Listen to this langauge from an advocate of the doctrine: "The body and blood of Christ are sacramentally united to the bread and wine, so that Christ is truly given to the faithful." "His flesh, together with the bread; and His blood, together with the wine." (*Tracts for the Times*, N. Y. Edition, 1839, Vol. 1, p. 199). "The nature of this mystery is such that when we receive the bread and wine, we also *together with them*, receive the body and blood of Christ" (Ibid., p. 214). Dr. Pusey declares in his letter to the Bishop of Oxford, "There is a true, real and spiritual presence of Christ at the holy supper . . . independently of our faith."

Dr. Pusey writes of the Lord's Supper, "It is truly flesh

and blood, and these received into us cause that we are in Christ, and Christ in us."

Dr. Dix's Trinity Church Catechism says, "The bread and wine becomes Christ's body and blood, yet remaining true bread and wine."

Dr. James DeKoven writes, "Believing in the presence of the body and blood of the Lord *in the consecrated elements*, I believe that presence to be in no sense material or corporal, but spiritual, though none the less real and true."

In Pusey's *Eirenicon*, a work written to prove how slight are the differences between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, he refers to *Palmer on the Church*, as a book "framed word for word on our formularies, which received the sanction of two archbishops, and which used to be recommended to candidates for holy orders." From the work referred to he quotes these remarkable words: "She (the Church of England) believes that the eucharist is not the sign of an absent body, and that those who partake of it receive not merely the figure, or shadow, or sign of an absent body, but the *reality itself*. And as Christ's divine and human natures are inseparably united, so she believes that we receive in the eucharist, not only the flesh and blood of Christ, but Christ Himself, both God and man" (*Eirenicon*, p. 31).

Now, observe the exact idea which these quotations give. It is that the real presence of Christ in the Holy Communion, is not a presence in the heart of believers. It is "independent of their faith." But it is *in* the bread and *in* the wine. In one word, the Spirit of God is placed, through a man's consecration of the elements, in a piece of bread, and in a cup of wine. Is the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation any more degrading to the Spirit of God than this? Or is it strange that other perversions of the truth should have followed in its train?

If the consecrated bread and wine upon the Lord's table are really the body and blood of Christ, then it logically follows that the table ceases to be a table. It has to become an "altar" on which is offered anew the body and blood of Jesus as an oblation to the Father. "It is not," says Dr. Dix, "a sacrifice by way of a new death, but by way of a standing memorial to His death. It pleads to the Eternal Father, sets forth before the world, and applies to our souls the one sacrifice of Christ."

Then, too, this makes the minister a sacrificing "priest" who offers, like the sons of Aaron, the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood. Hence it is that in the Protestant Episcopal Church, the word "minister" has come to be superseded by that of "priest." We no longer hear of a faithful parish minister, but a "parish priest." Yet we have only to turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews to learn that every trace of a sacrificing priesthood like that of Aaron passed away when Jesus offered His "one sacrifice for sins for ever" and "sat down on the right hand of God." Christ is the only priest of the Christian, except that every true believer, minister or layman, is one of "a royal priesthood."

But, above all, the whole system known as "ritualism," by which the public worship of the Church has been completely disguised is based on this false theory of the Lord's Supper. The vestments which have superseded the simple robes worn formerly by ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Church are imitations of those which are supposed to have been worn by priests who offered sacrifices. A leader of the Church of England ritualists in answer to the question, "What meaning do you attach to the vestments?" replied, "I take them to be a distinctive dress of a *priest* at the time of celebrating the Holy communion." In the earlier days of the Church out of which our own sprang, it was sometimes customary to bow the head at the name of Jesus in the Creed, to signify belief in His deity. Today a far more profound obeisance is made at multiplied points of the service, but, mark it well, *always toward the table*. Why? Because that table is now "the altar," with super-altar upon it, and crucifix crowning it. And if this theory of the "real presence," and a sacrifice in the Lord's Supper is true they are right to bow. For if the awesome presence of the Son of God is on the that table, then, surely, I cannot prostrate myself in an adoration too profound. But if it be an unscriptural and idolatrous doctrine, then this bowing toward the so-called altar, is as offensive to God as prostration before a Chinese image or an African fetish.

The Reformed Episcopalian has gone back to the Word of God. Our Church has planted its feet upon the rock, in restoring the Lord's Supper to its primitive simplicity. Open your *Book of Common Prayer*, and in its forefront you find a "Declaration of Principles." In the name of the Reformed Episcopal Church, it condemns as "erroneous and strange

doctrines contrary to God's Word," the theory "that Christian Ministers are 'priests' in any other sense than that in which all believers are 'a royal priesthood:' that the LORD'S Table is an altar on which the oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ is offered anew to the Father: that the Presence of Christ in the LORD'S Supper is a presence in the elements of Bread and Wine."

We framed our whole liturgy on the principles laid down in this declaration. From cover to cover you nowhere will find a minister of the gospel called a "priest." We required that the minister in delivering the bread to the communicant, should call it "bread," and when delivering the cup should call it "wine." Thus our Church bears perpetual witness to the fact that no change takes place in these emblems through the prayer of consecration.

We found that the Protestant Episcopal Church had omitted, under the influence of the high church Bishop Seabury, the rubric of the Church of England positively declaring that the consecration prayer does not change the nature of the elements, and that no worship of these elements is intended by kneeling at the communion. We put it back where Cranmer once had written it.

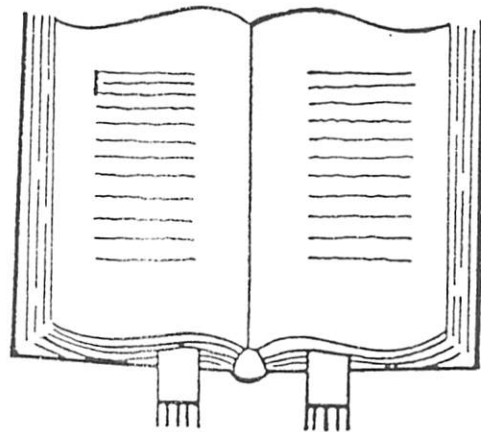
Then, to crown the work, we graved it upon the very constitution of this Church, that no altar should ever be permitted in any edifice in which Reformed Episcopalians should worship.

In an evil hour Archbishop Cranmer yielded to the Bloody Mary's threats, and signed a paper recanting his own protest against the doctrine of the "real presence" in the bread and wine of the communion. Bitterly did he repent his cowardly act, and when the flames leaped up around him in the hour of his martyrdom, he thrust his right hand, which had written his recantation, into the hottest fire. "Unworthy hand! unworthy hand!" cried the penitent martyr.

Reformed Episcopalian, remember that for you to yield one hair's breadth to the ritualism which has crept like a mildew over the Protestant Episcopal Church, is to do before God and angels and men, the very act of which Cranmer's "unworthy hand" was guilty.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Chapter Four



THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20 : 27, 28) .

A child is born into this world as some shell or bit of seaweed is tossed by the waves upon the shore. It lives by no choice of its own. But Jesus Christ always spoke of His birth as His "coming." It was His own voluntary act which laid the Babe of Bethlehem in the Manger-cradle.

Like a leaf that flutters down upon the hurrying stream, the future of a child is shaped and controlled by currents and eddies, the drift of which baffles all human prophecy. No such contingencies affect the Child over whose birth the angels sang their carols. He came into this world with a definite mission, which no power of man or devil could thwart. He was born only that this pre-arranged destiny might be carried out. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," said Christ, to the wondering Pilate.

When the twelve, fired by a low ambition for power, and jealous of each other, quarreled for high rank in Christ's earthly kingdom, He rebuked them with the language of the text. He Himself had but one purpose from His birth at Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary. It was to be a *minister*, a servant of other men, for such is the exact meaning of the Greek word in which He described His office.

In this text the double work of Jesus is contained, like twin seeds in a shell. He was to be a minister to men, and ransom for men. That last feature of work He wrought out "once for all." No man can add to the completeness of that concerning which with His dying breath He cried, "It is finished".

But His ministry for men goes on. Through those whom He still sends, He ministers to the sinful and the lost.

I. THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN BELIEVES IN AND HONORS A MINISTRY AUTHORIZED AND APPOINTED BY CHRIST HIMSELF

Religious controversy has sometimes served to wrap the truth in clouds of doubt. But the battle waged around the question of the ministry has certainly had the opposite effect. Its fierce thunderstorms have cleared the theological atmosphere, and left some points so sharply defined that further discussion seems unnecessary.

Romanist and Protestant agree so far as this, that both confess that the Word of God authorizes the appointment of a class of men whose lives shall be wholly consecrated to the sacred ministry. There is substantial unanimity in acknowledging that our Lord Himself appointed men to such an office, in His choice of the twelve Apostles, and in sending forth the seventy disciples (Matt. 10:5-8; Luke 10:11). Vast multitudes had become His nominal followers. But out of their ranks He selected these, as soldiers might be selected from the army to become officers and leaders in the campaign. The loftiest tree that ever towered toward heaven and shadowed the earth with its spreading branches had its birth in some tiny seed. So the germ of the ministry of the gospel is in this simple historic fact that Christ made selection from those who followed Him in His brief earthly work of some to be leaders in proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven.

The point to be kept in view is not whether all of Christ's people should not be in some sense preachers of the gospel. It is not whether every layman is not bound to spread the glad tidings. The root-principle which lies at the basis of this whole subject of the ministry is in the record of the four Gospels, that the Saviour sent out a selected class of His disciples with a *special* commission in proclaiming the Word. To this extent, it is clear that the ministry rests solidly upon Christ's own authority.

In the great plain of the Sacramento Valley, I have seen a rivulet take its rise among the foothills, grow to the proportions of a river, flow on with strong current for a time, and then strangely disappear, beyond the power of man to discover it. Such a failure is a strange anomaly in nature. It would be yet more strange in the spiritual world, if Christ, whose love to man, unsealed in apostolic days the flowing stream of the gospel ministry, had in later times suffered it to perish from

the earth. He promised that His presence with those whom He sent on this special work, should continue "unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). The work of the ministry was to be perpetuated till "all nations" had heard the gospel (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; Rom. 1:5). The Reformed Episcopalian firmly believes that Christ has kept that pledge of His own word. He reads history and sees "a darkness that may be felt" fall upon the world. Ignorance, superstition, false religion and wide spread corruption perverted for a thousand years the "simplicity that is in Christ." But through it all, he sees that the true succession of the ministry of Jesus never failed. In monastery cells, in lonely Alpine valleys, in the courts of kings, and in the humble homes of the poor, Christ's Spirit prepared His ministers, whose light in darkest ages shone out like the stars. Thus, in full accord with the reformers of the Church of England, the Reformed Episcopalian holds that the Spirit of God alone can make a minister of Christ. The Holy Ghost separates some men for this sacred office by an inward impulse through the teaching of the Bible, compelling them to cry out with the Apostles, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." No other power, no other preparation, can create "able ministers of the new testament" (2 Cor. 3:6). The Reformed Episcopalian stands by the strong statement, "Education will supply the mind with knowledge; art will adorn it with its graces and beauty; oratory will make the tongue eloquent; personal accomplishments will make the man admired; the hands of a bishop may give him outward authority to minister the Word and sacraments. But none of these, nor all combined, will make him a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the work of the Holy Ghost."

No wonder, surely, that with such authority lying behind the ministry, and giving it all its power, the Reformed Episcopalian holds in honor every true minister of the Lord Jesus. For us to despise or to neglect our ministers, to fail to hold up their hands in prayer, encouragement and material support, would be a far greater sin than it would be in a Church which holds that a mere outward ordinance can make a man a minister of Christ.

But it will be asked, "Does not the Reformed Episcopalian demand that his minister shall be set apart to his sacred office by a solemn ordination?" I answer that no Church on earth is more tenacious of such an orderly recognition of the Spirit's call to Christ's work.

The foreign-born American may have been full of the spirit of his adopted country before he was recognized by that country as a citizen. But the nation demands that he shall be naturalized in token of such recognition. The President of the United States was such in reality before he took the oath of inauguration. But good government requires that he be formally inducted into his high responsibility.

The Reformed Episcopalian holds earnestly that it is the duty of the Church, when satisfied by trial and examination that God the Holy Ghost has moved a man to seek the ministry, to acknowledge that work of the Spirit by formal ordination.

But who shall ordain? If the New Testament had clearly settled that question, no choice could be allowed. If by that supreme authority, it be settled that bishops alone have such a duty entrusted to them, then we have no right to depart from such a Scripture model. If, on the other hand, there be clear Scripture proof that only presbyters can exercise the prerogative of ordaining others, we sin when we commit such a duty to some higher officer of the Church. But if, with all the concentrated study of the centuries, no man, however learned, has been able to put his finger upon one passage of the New Testament, which fixes beyond all doubt just where the power to ordain resides in the Church, then it is perfectly evident that each Christian Church must decide that question for itself. In the light of the early history of the Church of Christ, the Reformed Episcopalian, with all other Episcopalians, is led to require a bishop to take part in every ordination. But Church history is one thing; the Word of the living God is another. And, therefore, our Church recognizes the full validity of the ordination conferred by its sister Churches. We fully believe that Christian history justifies us in perpetuating episcopal ordination. We believe that in this way ours is what our Twenty-Fourth Article of Religion calls it, a "historic ministry." We honor it as a precious heritage from our fathers of the English Reformation. But until we can find in God's written Word, a clear statement that ordination by bishops alone is honored by the Holy Ghost, we dare not brand with condemnation, as does the Church from which we have separated, the orders of other Churches whose ministry God has blessed.

II. THE REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH STANDS AS A WITNESS TO BEAR TESTIMONY AGAINST TWO DANGEROUS ERRORS CONCERNING THE MINISTRY

Words have different meanings to different persons and in different situations. A single word to some may be filled with hidden significance and meaning while to others it has no other meaning than is ordinarily attached to that single word.

The word, "priest," seems on its surface as innocent of all hidden meaning as any in our English tongue. For it is simply a contraction of the term "presbyter," the Greek form of "elder." It originally meant, therefore, only an older man, such as might naturally be entitled by experience to be a teacher of his juniors.

So far as my knowledge of the various forms of Church government goes, I am not aware that any Church exists, in which there is not an office of "the elder," or "presbyter." And if we shorten the word into "priest," what danger is in the act? Simply this: that our translators of the New Testament selected the word "priest," as the name by which to render into English speech, a totally different Greek word which invariably means a sacrificer, or one who offers an expiation for sin. It is never used in Scripture in any other sense. The sons of Aaron, like their father, were priests because it was their distinctive work to offer on God's altar bloody sacrifices, which prefigured and typified the bloody sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. They offered sacrifice in atonement for a guilty people, who otherwise might not dare to approach God. They also presented the offerings of the people, which could only be accepted as they were given to God through these officiating priests. In one word, the Aaronic priesthood "stood between the living and the dead," mediating for guilty men before a holy God.

But when Christ cried from the altar of Calvary's cross, "It is finished," the Old Testament priesthood died as stars die in the heavens when the sun arises in his strength. The typical priest was no more, because the real Priest had offered His "one, full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The whole Epistle to the Hebrews is an argument expressly written to prove that the priesthood under the old dispensation had been done away

by the sole expiation of the Lamb of God. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." And if no sacrifice, then no altar and no priest. There is "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

The New Testament indeed calls all true believers "a royal priesthood," and "an holy priesthood." But why? Because they are members of Christ Himself, "bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh." As being "in Christ" we can "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Not one solitary passage of the New Testament ever styles a minister a "priest" on account of his ministerial office. For a minister to arrogate that title to himself, is to revolt against the plainest teaching in the Word of God.

It may be added that the earliest of the uninspired writers known as "the Fathers," betray in their writings no trace of this perilous doctrine. Not until the third century did early Christianity become corrupted by the notion that a minister is a priest.

But the Dark Ages came. The Roman Church riveted its fetters on a superstitious people. What other bond could hold the conscience in such slavery as this, than to make the lay member of the Church look on his minister as a "priest," who alone could offer a sacrifice for sin, or present an oblation to God upon His altar? The Council of Trent put that dogma into its decrees, and chained the Church to the conquering car of a priestly caste. Against that doctrine the Reformation was the protest of living Christianity. But in the Church of England, "the eldest daughter of the Reformation," this priestly idea has been revived. This change is also evident in the Protestant Episcopal Church. There was a time when the word "priest" was rarely used in reference to a minister of Jesus. Today every rector of a parish is spoken of as "the priest in charge." But what does this change mean? Let the answer come from the lips and pens of those who thus use the word. The late Rev. Mr. Mackonochie, of St. Alban's, in London, says, "The priest gives to every communicant the heavenly food of the Divine Sacrifice." Dr. Pusey, Archdeacon Denison, and twenty-one clergymen of the Church of England, addressing the Archbishop of Canterbury, said "The same body once sacrificed for us, and that same blood once for all shed for us, sacramentally present, are pleaded by the *priest*."

One clergyman, on his examination, was asked:

"Do you consider yourself a sacrificing priest?"

"Yes."

"In fact, a *sacerdos*, a sacrificing priest?"

"Distinctly so."

"Then you think you offer a propitiatory sacrifice?"

"Yes; I think I do offer a *propitiatory sacrifice*."

We cross the sea. We enter Old Trinity Church, in New York City. Its rector wields the vast influence of the wealthiest religious corporation in our country. His whole Church endorsed him by his election to preside over one of its General Conventions. Let us hear him teach the children from the *Trinity Church Catechism*:

"When we celebrate the holy eucharist on earth, with what do we join ourselves?"

"With the offering of Christ in heaven."

"How so?"

"Christ in heaven, is doing in glory, what the priest on earth is doing in a holy mystery."

Such is the teaching which in the Protestant Episcopal Church lies hidden in this seemingly harmless word, "priest." Against it, our beloved Reformed Episcopal Church is a perpetual witness. She has no sacrificing priest but Jesus. She dares not allow her prayer book to apply to a preacher of the Word, and pastor of the flock, a name which would rob Jesus of His glory in offering His sole sacrifice.

Closely connected with this error is that which teaches that our Lord not only appointed a ministry, but also its *precise form and order*. We are told that as an architect furnishes a builder with a detailed pattern containing minute specifications of the building to be constructed, so did our Lord give to the Apostles the specifications after which the Church was to be moulded for all coming time. *Wheatley on the Book of Common Prayer*, a standard work in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and once a textbook in its theological seminaries, distinctly asserts, "What Aaron, and his sons, and the Levites, were in the temple, such are the bishops, presbyters, and deacons in the Christian Church." "These were appointed by God, as those were, and therefore it can be no less sacrilege to usurp their office." Again, "None but those who are ordained by such as we now call bishops, can have any authority to minister in the Christian Church."

Dr. Dix's *Trinity Church Catechism* puts this theory in even stronger terms. It states that during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension, Christ gave to the Apostles, as the first bishops of the Church, "a definite constitution, government and officers." It declares that Christ has never permitted but "one kind of government for His Church," and that, "episcopal government." To belong to a religious body not having this episcopal government, "is disobeying Christ." No man can be "a lawful minister" who has not been "ordained by a bishop." The "Protestant sects" are not Churches at all, but have "cut themselves off from the Catholic Church, by abandoning the Catholic ministry." Such is today the generally accepted view held concerning the ministry in the Protestant Episcopal Church. In the past, the low church party resisted it bravely. But they have passed away. The feeble relic of the once powerful evangelical element may here and there faintly remonstrate, but it is like the pressure of a child's finger against the onward march of a glacier.

Nothing but a separate organization, having all the episcopal characteristics that the old Church could claim, yet standing on the strong foundation of the Bible, could successfully bear witness against such an error.

When the Reformed Episcopal Church was founded, its Twenty-Fourth Article, which you will find in your prayer book, and which I ask you carefully to read, declared such a view of the ministry "unscriptural, and productive of great mischief." It graved deep on its constitution, the ecclesiastical equality of presbyters, "whether episcopally or otherwise ordained."

Its canons not only allow interchange of pulpits with other evangelical ministers, but provide for their reception into its ministry without re-ordination.

Are we justified in such a protest as this Church makes against the two errors—that Christian ministers are sacrificing "priests," and that the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, is clearly necessary to the being of the Church?

The *consequences* of those errors justified us, for they excluded from the Church of Christ, millions of the noblest witnesses for Jesus that ever lived in holiness, and died in triumphant faith. They made their ordination to be an unmeaning farce, their sacraments to be utterly invalid, and their whole work, by which, to a very large degree, our own land has been

evangelized, to be a rebellion against God. Out of the priestly and exclusive theory of the ministry sprang also the notion of auricular confession and absolution by a priest. For when a bishop laid his hands upon a candidate for the sacred office, the prayer book authorized him to say, "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." The abomination of auricular confession in a Protestant Church is thus boldly commanded. The question is asked, "By whom is God pleased to forgive sins in the Church?" And the answer runs, "By the priests of the Church." Such is the logical result of such a view of the ministry.

Out protest is justified by the *English reformers*. No fact of English history is more undeniable than that the martyred founders of the English Church recognized the ministry of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Germany, Holland and Switzerland.

Archbishop Cranmer was aided by Knox, Melancthon, Bullinger, Calvin, Bucer, and Martyr, all ministers of non-Episcopal Churches, in the preparation of the prayer book. Not only so, but for a hundred years, under the bishops of the Reformation period, Englishmen who had received only Presbyterian ordination, held parishes, and ministered without question in the English Church. The writings of the men who died at the stake under the Marian persecution, are full of the clearest acknowledgment that episcopal ordination is not necessary to a valid ministry.

But, above all, our protest is justified by *Scripture*. Even the ordination services of the Protestant Episcopal Church make no claim that the Bible alone proves any fixed and definite constitution of the ministry. They only assert that Scripture and the "ancient authors" show that the three orders existed from the days of the Apostles. No microscopic search reveals authority for the statement quoted from the *Trinity Church Catechism*, that Christ, in the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension, gave to His Church a "fixed constitution" for all time, in the threefold orders of "bishop, priest and deacon."

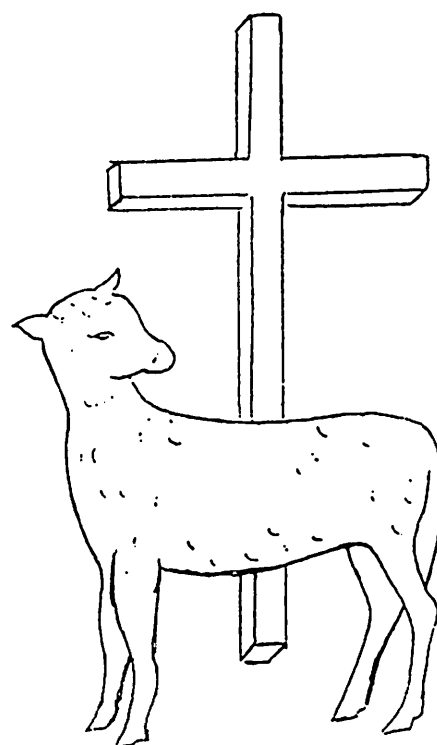
And from one end of the New Testament to the other, the word "priest" is never applied to a Christian minister. Paul calls himself an Apostle, a preacher, a witness to Christ,

But never a priest. John styles himself an "elder" (II John 1), but nowhere a priest. Peter writes, "The elders (or presbyters) which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder." But Peter would as soon have denied his Lord again, as to have written, 'Who am also a priest.'

Christ came to be our eternal Priest and Sacrifice in one. But He "humbled himself" to minister unto men. May God save His Church from a human ministry which would rob the Lord Jesus of His supreme and solitary Priesthood.

THE OFFICE OF BISHOP

Chapter Five



THE OFFICE OF BISHOP

What is episcopacy? There are some names whose real meaning you only discover when you deal with them as the devotee of science deals with the stones known as "geodoes." They must, as it were, be broken open to find what lies hidden inside. Such a word is the Greek *episcopos*, which in the English Bible is translated "bishop." It has in it just this significance—it means an "overseer."

Clearly then, an Episcopal Church is one which believes that certain ministers hold a position of oversight in church affairs. There may be very different notions as to the authority which these overseers possess. There may be widely variant views as to the sources from which their authority is derived. But the essential principle of Episcopal government, which lies underneath all its forms, consists in this gift to certain ministers of an oversight of the Church of Christ.

I. DOES THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN BELIEVE THAT THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP IS OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT, AND PERPETUATED BY AN UNBROKEN APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION?

The Reformed Episcopal Church was born of the Protestant Episcopal Church. If we inherited from it extravagant views of the office of a bishop, it would only be an illustration of the laws of heredity.

For not more clearly do high church writers assert that Christ established the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, than they insist that He appointed the threefold order of bishops, priests, and deacons. The Reformed Episcopalian protests against such a position as contrary alike to the Scripture, to history, and to all the analogies of human life.

A village springs up on the virgin prairie of the West. A mere hamlet, its government is of the simplest character. Two or three men are vested with all authority that so primitive a state of things demands. But the population grows. The hamlet becomes a town. The necessities of the case call forth a demand for a new class of officers. By and by, a city, number-

ing tens and hundreds of thousands, has swallowed up in its vast population the little germ out of which it sprang. New emergencies arise, and the government which was adequate for a country town is succeeded by the complete municipal machinery of a great and populous city. Those who founded the place did not provide the offices of city magistrate, aldermen, mayor, and judges of various courts, while the hamlet consisted of a half a dozen houses and a half a hundred people. Those offices were created when the need for them arose. It is the natural and historical way.

Exactly parallel to this is the account of the natural development of the apostolic Church. The early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles reveal to us no ministers, no administrators, no governors of the new born Church, except the Twelve Apostles.

As the gospel spreads and multitudes are added the emergency calls for a new set of officers, and the *deacons* for the first time appear. The lowest office in the ministry is the earliest to be created. But it arose only when needed and grew out of an unforeseen emergency.

All this time the entire Christian Church had been confined to a single city. Jerusalem alone had contained the whole of Christ's "little flock." Now persecution drives them out. Scattered throughout Palestine, they carry the great tidings with them. New churches spring up far distant from the apostolic center. The Twelve cannot be pastors in a hundred different towns. And so another new emergency calls forth the appointment of "elders" or "presbyters." It is not till the eleventh chapter of the Book of Acts, and probably ten years after the appointment of the seven deacons, that elders or presbyters are mentioned. They came like the deacons to supply a felt want. They were appointed only when such a need arose. But from the beginning to the end of the Acts of the Apostles you look in vain for any record of the creation of the episcopate.

The name "bishop" is not in the Book of Acts, except as Paul calls the presbyters of Ephesus "overseers," where the Greek word is equivalent to "bishops." Wherever the name is used throughout the epistles it refers to presbyters. Every advocate even of the highest claims for divine authority for the office of the bishop, frankly confesses that "bishops" and "presbyters" are used everywhere in the New Testament to signify the same office. Nothing can be clearer than this fact,

that a bishop and a presbyter in the view of the New Testament are one. If when no Apostles remained alive to exercise oversight in the Church, some presbyters were chosen to hold a supervisory position, and to them the name of "bishop" was given to distinguish them from their fellows, it was to meet a felt need in the Church precisely as with the deacons and presbyters. Nothing can be more certain than the fact that no divine command exists for the appointment of such an order in the ministry.

Even if we admit the claim that Timothy was made a bishop at Ephesus, and Titus at Crete, by the authority of the Apostle Paul, it would not follow that it bound the Church everywhere, and in all ages to maintain such an office as a permanent feature of the ministry. For the Apostles sanctioned the community of goods among Christians; yet no believer in modern times regards that principle as obligatory on the Church or its members. Apostles sanctioned anointing the sick with oil but no man regards it as a divine command for all lands and ages.

Paul recognizes an order of "deaconesses," and commends a Christian woman to the Church at Rome, expressly calling her by that name, yet the order of deaconesses has almost died out of the Church and no Christian imagines that a divine obligation requires the Church to restore it. Episcopacy may be a form of Church polity equally suited to all times and regions. Reformed Episcopalians would be the last to deny it. But that because after the Apostles died, episcopacy is found prevailing throughout universal Christendom, it is therefore a polity which God requires as essential to the existence of His Church, we abhorrently deny.

It will be asked, does not the Church of England, and through her, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, claim an "Apostolical Succession" of bishops, so that in an unbroken chain from the Apostles down to the latest prelate consecrated, each one can trace his ecclesiastical pedigree? Unquestionably such a claim is made, and on the basis of it, we are told that outside of this genealogical line there can be no valid transmission of ecclesiastical authority. How monstrous such a doctrine is can be more fully realized when we remember that it makes invalid and a mockery all the work which since the Reformation God has wrought by the non-episcopal Churches. On this theory they are no churches. At the same time that this theory remands all non-episcopal

Churches to the category of unauthorized "sects," it makes the corrupt and idolatrous Roman Church to be a true Church of Christ, because the chain of "Apostolic Succession" has been preserved in the consecration of its bishops.

No line or words of Scripture can be adduced to prove that either Christ or His Apostles commanded any such chain to be constructed through which the unseen current of church life should flow. There is no record in the Book of Acts or the Epistles of a solitary consecration of a bishop. The chain drops powerless because its very first link is lacking. However far down the centuries the so-called succession may have been extended, there is no proof that it ever had a beginning.

We are told that the early Fathers of the Church and writers of history give us every link of this chain. One lists Clement the first bishop of Rome. Another as positively confers that dignity upon Linus. Still a third leaves Clement out and remands Linus to the second place in the succession. "The succession of Rome is as muddy as the Tiber." And yet we are gravely told that the "existence" of God's Church on earth "depends" upon this contradictory testimony.

As we follow the frail thread down the ages, it becomes still more confused and tangled. There were long dark ages in which all history becomes a hopeless labyrinth. Yet the believer in Apostolic Succession must hold that all Church existence depends on a certainty that through that period of ignorance and corruption, when bishops were feudal chiefs and when their lives were the shame of mankind, each one was duly consecrated, and the long chain never broken.

Added to this, we have the positive testimony of Jerome in the fourth century, and a host of later writers, that the great metropolitan Church of Alexandria (whose line of bishops figures largely in these lists) during two hundred years immediately succeeding the Apostles, always chose its own bishops from among the presbyters, who laid their hands upon him in consecration.

The reformers of the Church of England, who sealed with their blood their testimony of the truth, unanimously reject such a theory of Apostolic Succession. Canmer argued that a presbyter and a bishop were of the same order, and that no consecration to the episcopate was necessary. Bishop Jewel distinctly states that the Scripture makes a bishop and presbyter the same, and "only church custom" elevates the former above the latter. Even Archbishop Whitgift, opposing Puritan at-

tacks upon episcopal order, owns that "the Church of Christ may exist *with or without this or that form of government.*"

What the reformers and martyrs of the English Church thus forcibly and boldly taught, was also the earnest conviction of the first bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. The venerable William White, Bishop of Pennsylvania, has been well styled "the father of episcopacy in America." When the English bishops, after the American Revolution, hesitated to consecrate a bishop for the revolted colonies, Dr. White recommended that bishops should be appointed and *consecrated by presbyters*. So stands the case. Against this theory of Apostolic Succession, the protest rings out from good men of every age, from all Christian history, and from the Word of God.

II. WHY DOES THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN THEN, RETAIN THE OFFICE OF BISHOP?

The answer is that the Reformed Episcopalian sincerely believed in the *practical value* of having in the Church such a presiding officer. To hold one individual responsible is the fruit of ripe experience.

The Church of Christ has ever taught that the entrance to its ministry cannot be too carefully and jealously guarded. The Reformed Episcopalian holds that in no way can the worthless and the ignorant, the unsound in doctrine and the unholy in living, be so effectively barred from entering the sacred ministry, as by holding one officer of the Church responsible for ordination to the work of gospel preaching. Responsibility is like the precious metals. One grain of gold may be beaten so thin as to cover a surface of fifty square inches, but its thinness destroys its tenacity and strength. It is an awful responsibility to which a Church holds one of its officers when it demands that he shall answer for the entrance gate of ordination. It cannot fail to impress him with a sense of his need of God's grace and wisdom sought in prayer. The Reformed Episcopalian does not believe that such responsibility will waken so profound a sense of watchfulness and prayer when it is beaten out to cover fifty or a dozen men with the duty of ordaining.

Let us pass from the entrance of the ministry into the *government* of the Church itself. No bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church can ever be "a lord over God's heritage." But as an adviser and a friend, he stands among his fellow

ministers as a presiding officer. If heart-burnings and jealousies creep into the hearts of fallen men, who, though ministers of Christ, are liable to temptation, it is his to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

He occupies too, the responsible position of a mediator and arbitrator, when differences spring up between ministers and their congregations. Troubles which might grow to vast dimensions and a shameful publicity, and add to the scandals that block the progress of Christianity, if either left to themselves or entrusted to the settlement of councils or ecclesiastical courts, may be quieted and harmonized by the wisdom and godly counsel of a presiding officer of the whole Church.

Moreover, who can so stir up the stronger parishes "to support the weak," who can to the same degree interest one church in another, and push on the missionary effort of the whole body, as an officer whose sympathies, interests and responsibilities are enlisted not in a single congregation, but in the Church as a whole?

Does it not also prove that a presiding officer among his fellow presbyters is a necessity to the Church when we find in the non-episcopal Churches a bishop, not in name, but in actual work and responsibility? It clearly shows that such an office is a natural and necessary one. It grows out of the inevitable demand of all human society that for every body there should be a head. Are we Reformed Episcopalians wrong when we claim that having the office, we should give the officer his ancient name?

We have been charged with inconsistency in one prominent fact of our history. The Reformed Episcopal Church rejects, as we have seen, the theory of an unbroken succession of episcopal consecrations from the Apostles down. "Why then," it has been asked, "did it come into existence only when a bishop of the old line led the movement? Why does it continue, to consecrate bishops by bishops and thus perpetuate a succession to which it attaches no importance?"

The answer is that Reformed Episcopalians do attach importance to their historic episcopate. We do not hold that it is necessary to the existence of a valid ministry and a true Church, but we believe that it links us with the glorious reformers of the English Church. Their polity is ours. It puts us clearly in that ecclesiastical family which preserves the idea of a president among presbyters which history testifies was the practice of the early Church.

That is not all. Our argument of practical utility again has its influence. The work of this Church must be largely in the line of opening a refuge for Episcopalians. It must be a home for men who love a liturgy and episcopal government, though loving the gospel better. When Bishop Cummins entered on the work of this Church he wrote to the Presiding Bishop of the communion from which he withdrew that he took the step in order to "transfer his work and office to another sphere." He entered this Church bringing his episcopal office with him. As such he consecrated other bishops.

It has been urged that canon law requires three bishops to consecrate, but history is full of instances in which but one acted as the consecrator. Dr. Pusey himself writes, "Consecration by one bishop is valid." Cannon Liddon, as high authority as the highest churchman could desire, has distinctly admitted over his own signature, when his opinion of the historic position of the episcopate was sought, "A consecration by one bishop is valid. All orders conferred by a bishop so consecrated are undoubtedly valid." Dean Stanley, certainly one of the profoundest students of Ecclesiastical History that the English Church has produced, has also pronounced his verdict as follows: "Whoever lays hands on presbyter or deacon (whether bishops or presbyters) takes part in the consecration or ordination: though a *single bishop is sufficient* in each case."

We can therefore give to our brethren who desire a pure gospel in a historic Church; an invitation which could not have been extended if ours were not a Church in the line of the historic episcopate.

Our Church has a reason over and above its practical argument for episcopal polity. Antiquity considered by itself proves nothing to the Christian. There are ancient institutions which degrade man and dishonor God. Polygamy and slavery are gray with age. But when we cherish something which itself is good, and possesses a manifest practical value, it adds to that value to know that it has stood the test of ages. There are certain principles of right and justice which constitute the bulwarks of society in this century, but it certainly adds to the estimate in which we hold them when we find them in the Magna Charta and know that they have stood between freedom and despotism since the barons at Runnymede wrested them from the reluctant hand of King John.

We have seen that episcopacy has a practical value in our

own day. Surely, it ought to add to the honor in which we hold it if history shows that it has come down to us from the apostolic age. If too, we find that the New Testament hints at, if it does not clearly prove, the fact that overseers were appointed while the Apostles lived, to do precisely the work which bishops do in an episcopal Church of our own time; and if later history shows that through all the earlier centuries of Christianity that polity prevailed, we have a valid reason for retaining the episcopal office.

That such evidence is to be found in the New Testament appears indisputable. All Protestants admit that the Twelve Apostles ordained other ministers, and that upon them there fell "the care of all the churches." Now, the simple question is, did these episcopal duties cease to be exercised by presiding presbyters when the apostolic band gradually passed away from earth? Even before the death of the last Apostle, did there exist no such presidency among the presbyters of the early Church when the work became too extensive for the personal supervision of the Twelve? Let the reply come from Paul's own writings. He says to Timothy: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). When we ask how, and in what form, the authority to preach was to be conferred by Timothy, we receive the answer from the same authority. He tells Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man." He was to use the same watchful care and thorough examination of a candidate, expected of a bishop now; but when such investigation was complete, he was to admit the man who had thus been scrutinized by *laying on of hands* (I Timothy 5:22).

Still stronger does the point of our argument appear in the directions given to Titus, "For this cause," says Paul, "left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5).

These two presbyters of the early Church manifestly exercised a power which did not belong to other presbyters. Paul exhorts Timothy to forbid the preaching of certain doctrines (I Timothy 1:3) which can only be explained on the theory that he had supervision of his fellow ministers. Explicit directions are given him as to the qualifications on which he should insist in those exercising their ministry under him (I Timothy 3). He is to count a presbyter who ruled well, "worthy of

double honor." He is not to receive an accusation against a presbyter, except in the presence of two witnesses (I Timothy 5:17, 19). When satisfied of sin on the part of a presbyter, he is to rebuke him publicly (I Timothy 5:20). Titus is given instructions to "rebuke with all authority." If necessary, he was to stop the mouths of those who held and taught heresies in doctrine (Titus 1:11, 2:15, 3:10). It seems almost impossible to avoid the conclusion that these two early ministers of Christ were entrusted by apostolic hands with precisely the duties and responsibilities which now pertain to the office of a bishop.

Let us create no misunderstanding. The New Testament does not say that Timothy and Titus were Apostles. It does not assert that they, or either of them, ever succeeded the Apostles in their peculiar office. But it does make it reasonably evident that even in the Apostles' days, some presbyters were appointed to oversight of the Church. They were entrusted with special authority in the two departments of admitting men to the ministry, and exercising a leadership and presiding influence. How perfectly natural it would be that as martyrdom, or a more peaceful death took the Apostles from their earthly work, the model suggested by their appointment of Timothy and Titus, and perhaps others, as presiding presbyters, should lead the Church to make such an office a permanent feature of its polity. And what was so natural actually took place. As early as the period A. D. 107-116, Ignatius testifies that the episcopal polity was universal in the Church.

It is unnecessary to cite the long category of Christian writers whose testimony makes it clear that from the time of Ignatius, onward for 1500 years, bishops presided over all the ever spreading activities of the Christian Church. We may justly reject many of the opinions of these writers. We may treat their doctrinal views precisely as we do those of any other uninspired men. The Bible is the supreme test to which they must be subjected even as the preaching and writing of teachers in our day. But their religious opinions are one thing. Their historic testimony is another. They are competent witnesses as to what took place in their own age, and their evidence is absolutely like that of one man. Beyond all question, they prove that the universal polity of the Church from within a hundred years of the death of Christ onward, was an episcopal polity.

What makes this the more remarkable, is the fact that

while endless controversies arose regarding Christian doctrine and government, there is no record of any question concerning the settled polity of the Church being a government by bishops. Orthodox and heretics were perfectly agreed on that point.

The Reformed Episcopalian cannot believe that within thirty years of the death of the last Apostle, the universal government and polity of the Church could have become episcopal if such a system had been repugnant to the Apostles' own teaching and practice. The Reformed Episcopal Church retains this form of Church government because we believe it to be "*ancient and desirable*." May this Church with bishops, who are "first among equals" with their brethren, demonstrate the value of this form of Church organization. While maintaining that the episcopate is not essential to the "being" of the Christian Church, may we show that it can be for the "well being" of the Church.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Chapter Six



THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Among the external characteristics of the Reformed Episcopal Church none attracts more attention than the fact that we worship with a liturgy or precomposed form of devotion. Just as some feature of face is more quickly noticed than a more important and vital trait of character so does our prayer book worship more readily arrest attention than our doctrinal principles.

For four hundred years a controversy has agitated the Protestant Churches regarding set forms of prayer. But ancient as the discussion is, it has not died of old age. It is a living question today. Like many other debated points, it has not always been discussed with a large-minded fairness or Christian temper. May moderation and sincerity feature our consideration of it.

I. WHY DOES THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN EMPLOY A PRAYER BOOK IN PUBLIC WORSHIP?

The rock on which the Protestant builds is the Word of God alone. To that supreme test we must submit. Hence if a liturgy employed in public worship is clearly inconsistent with the Bible, the sooner we reject it the better.

It must be a hasty glance which we give at the past history of God's people but it certainly will shed some light upon the vexed question of liturgical worship. When God had delivered Israel at the Red Sea, the rescued people engaged in a solemn act of worship. Moses and the men of Israel sang a chant of thanksgiving (Exodus 15). But Miriam and the women take up the burden of the same words and sing them responsively. It is difficult to see how such worship could have been conducted without some prearranged form.

Again, in the sixth chapter of the Book of Numbers God speaks to Moses and gives him this direction, "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them . . ." Then follows a long and elaborate benediction of which every word is precomposed and prescribed.

In the tenth chapter of the same book Moses is described as using a set form of words whenever the Ark of God led forth the people and whenever it rested on their march.

Four hundred years later we find David using a form of worship when the Ark, after a long captivity, is brought to Jerusalem (Psalm 68 : 132) .

When Solomon offered his solemn prayer at the dedication of the Temple he used the very language prepared and written by his father David in the preceding generation (compare 2 Chronicles 6:41 with Psalm 132:8, 9) .

But why go back to a period so remote? Twice over did Jesus give to His disciples what we call the Lord's Prayer. It was in response to their appeal, "Teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

No one believes that the Jews who followed Christ were strangers to the act of prayer. They clearly meant to say that John the Baptist had taught his disciples some form of supplication adapted to their needs under his preparatory stage of the Kingdom of God. And now Christ's followers ask for a form of prayer that shall be an advance upon John's—a distinctively Christian prayer. And with that request the Saviour complied. He not only said, "After this manner therefore pray ye" (Matthew 6:9) , but also, "When ye pray, say" (Luke 11:2)—thus giving them a liturgical form. Surely we need no stronger evidence that a form is not out of harmony with either the Old or the New Testament.

But another reason impels the Reformed Episcopalian. A responsive form of worship is a continual protest against a ministerial and priestly monopolizing of the public service of God. It is an easy way to rid one's self of all business cares to sign a "power of attorney" by which a man divests himself of his own personal rights and transfers his individuality to another.

That act in the sphere of religion constitutes the Roman Catholic idea. The rights, responsibilities, and duties of the laymen are transferred to the priest. All religious worship centers in the celebration of the Mass. It is not needful that any beside the priest should be present. The people have in it no necessary share.

When the Reformation came its leaders were quick to see that one of the most effective means to secure to the laity a recognized place in the Church was a responsive liturgy.

Luther prepared form of worship for Germany. The Moravians possess and use today a service book dating back to 1632. Calvin was among the earliest to perceive the importance of a book of common prayer and himself gave a liturgy to the churches of Switzerland. Even the Presbyterians of Scotland in Reformation days did not wholly depart from the principles of a prearranged mode of public worship.

In England a Scriptural prayer book was felt to be the first essential step toward giving the layman his Christian rights. Cranmer and his fellow workers called to their aid the great lights of the Reformation in other lands and with their help laid in the English Church the deep foundations of liturgical worship. But in every case the underlying principle and the impelling motive were the same. It was the conviction that nothing can guard the rights of the Christian layman against priestly encroachment like a form of worship in which the people have their necessary share.

Moreover, a liturgy possesses a unique teaching power. One can always discover a man's doctrinal views from his prayers. Precomposed or extemporaneous, a prayer is like the coin bearing the image and superscription of the mint in which it was stamped. Consequently prayer is a powerful doctrinal teacher. The public worship in a congregation is continually teaching either falsehood or truth. But extempore prayers of necessity change with every alteration in the belief of him who leads the worship.

The manifest advantage of a precomposed form is that it steadily and persistently teaches the same truth. And in the Reformed Episcopal Church *The Book of Common Prayer* is a consistent teacher of evangelical truth—the truth of the Word of God.

II. WHAT IS THE PRAYER BOOK OF THE REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

The impression has been created that ours is a new liturgy, sprung upon the world like a fresh discovery in nuclear physics. If such were the case it would justly prejudice the Christians against it. For a prayer book must be the product of the ages. There is a reverence in the prayerful disciple of Christ which leads him to feel that if he is to worship in the use of forms of prayer they must be those in which the penitence and praise, the hope and faith of ages past have

found expression. Precisely such is the prayer book of the Reformed Episcopalian, a volume based on the second prayer book of Edward VI, the work of the martyrs of the English Reformation. Ours is therefore an ancient form of prayer, parts of which have been handed down from the earliest ages of Christianity.

There is nothing in uninspired language that stirs the soul like the ancient hymn the *Te Deum* which opens with the words, "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord." It takes us back to the days when Christians, driven from the surface of the earth, met for worship in rock-hewn catacombs. It was this Christian hymn which was the first to be heard on the soil of this continent, when Columbus fell upon his knees and in the words of the *Te Deum* praised God for a new world.

The *Gloria in Excelsis*, the opening words of which were sung by the angelic choirs when Christ was born, has voiced the praise of believers for at least twelve hundred years. The Apostles' Creed has been the outline of Christian doctrine accepted and repeated in worship from the third century. Nor is the Nicene Creed of much later date. Originating in the year 325 and put in its present form half a century later, its clear and trumpet-like tones have proclaimed the deity of the Saviour.

The great majority of all the brief prayers which are called Collects have breathed the pleadings of believers into the ear of God for more than twelve centuries. Surely, such a heritage, consecrated and hallowed by the devotion of Christian ages and fragrant with the memories of saints in glory, is a possession which no true believer will despise.

When Henry VIII for wholly worldly reasons broke away from the Papacy, no attempt had been made to have throughout the English Church a uniform public service. There were different forms or "uses," as they were called, in different dioceses of England. But with Henry's death, his son, Edward VI, mounted the throne. It was like the young Josiah succeeding to the crown of his idolatrous father. Then came what may be called the first English prayer book (1549). It was the work of men educated in the Roman Catholic Church and just opening their blind eyes for the first time to the light. They saw "men as trees walking." No wonder that the liturgy they produced was full of the false teachings in which its compilers had been trained. No wonder that this *first* prayer book

of Edward VI taught that the Lord's Supper was a sacrifice, the holy table an altar. No wonder that it permitted auricular confession and prayers for the dead.

Cranmer and his associates were all this time studying the Bible. Slowly but surely they came into the full light of the gospel. Three years after the first prayer book of Edward VI was published they could not conscientiously use it, and in 1552 the *second* prayer book of Edward VI appeared. Strange as it may seem, that liturgy given to the Church of England when the Christian world was just emerging from its long night of Papal darkness, was the most truly Protestant service book that the English Church has ever possessed. It rejected superstitious ceremonies. It cast out the doctrine of the "real presence" in the bread and wine. It expunged the word "altar" as applied to the Lord's table. It did away with auricular confession. And to the communion service it added the note which appears substantially in the prayer book of the Reformed Episcopal Church explaining that when we kneel at the communion, we mean no act of adoration of the elements of bread and wine.

No more than a mention can be made of the later alterations of the prayer book in the English Church. In 1559 Queen Elizabeth seeking to reconcile Roman Catholics in her realm had the afore-mentioned note stricken out. Under Charles II no fewer than six hundred changes were made in the prayer book, every one of which made it less and less the Protestant liturgy which Edward VI had bequeathed.

When the American colonies became a free nation, Episcopalians were scattered throughout the land, without bishops and without a prayer book adapted to the altered circumstances in which they were placed. In the year 1785 a convention of clergy and laity met in Philadelphia to organize the Episcopal Church in the United States. Its president was the venerable William White, afterwards bishop of that Church in Pennsylvania. Among its lay delegates were such men as John Jay, James Duane, Francis Hopkinson, and Charles Pinckney—men whose genius and patriotism made the Revolutionary period of our national history an era of surpassing splendor. That convention appointed a committee to revise the English prayer book. The result of their work was the prayer book of 1785. That prayer book is in all essential features the one adopted by the Reformed Episcopal Church and with which we worship today.

In all its distinguishing features it went back to the old Reformation work of 1552—the second and Protestant prayer book of Edward VI. It left out all assertion of necessary regeneration in baptism, all suggestion of “real presence” in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper; it expunged the word “priest” and substituted “minister.” In a word, it was a Protestant and evangelical liturgy from cover to cover.

But before 1785 Dr. Samuel Seabury of Connecticut—an extreme ritualist and high churchman—had failed to secure for himself consecration as bishop from the English Church. Its bishops had grave doubts whether he had ever been duly chosen to the office. Then Dr. Seabury appealed to the Scottish Episcopal Church to aid him. By that extreme semi-Romish communion, his secret election in which no layman had any part was accepted, and he was consecrated at Aberdeen as bishop.

But Dr. Seabury’s consecration was given by the Scottish Episcopal Church with a purpose in view. It was followed by his solemn pledge that he would introduce into the American prayer book the idea of a priestly sacrifice in the Lord’s Supper. That pledge he fulfilled to the letter. For in 1789, when the prayer book of 1785 had hardly come into general use, Bishop Seabury used his influence to overthrow the work of the first convention of the American Episcopal Church. A new liturgy permeated with the sacramental and ritualistic teachings of Bishop Seabury was adopted. This last, with revisions, is the prayer book of the Protestant Episcopal Church today.

The prayer book of the Reformed Episcopalian, however, is the old and original liturgy, published by the first convention of the American Episcopal Church, and on the ground of which its first bishops were consecrated.

III. HOW SHOULD THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN USE HIS PRAYER BOOK?

It is needless to say that he ought to use it *intelligently*. The best of tools may be worthless, and even dangerous, in the hands of the ignorant. The prayer book needs to be understood in order to be a genuine help to worship.

The Reformed Episcopalian needs to be an intelligent student of his liturgy because sincere Christians are frequently prejudiced against it. The believer who worships with a

liturgy should be able to defend it. He will find that many earnest but ignorant Christians believe the prayer book to be Popish. He will be told, "You worship with a book; so does the Romanist."

The answer is, that you cannot argue against what is good in religion simply on the grounds that a corrupt church employs it. On the same ground we might reject the doctrines of the atonement and the Trinity.

Nor is it true that the Roman Catholic Church has anything corresponding to our "common prayer." Her priests and her people have different service books. But any one book which requires concurrent worship on the part of the clergy and the laity is something unknown to the Roman Church.

We shall also find the objection that a liturgy inevitably produces *formalism*. We are told that a prayer book makes the worshiper a mere parrot-like employer of phrases to which he attaches no meaning. But the argument is childish. You may pour melted lead into a mold or let it flow freely out upon the ground. But it will grow hard in the one case as in the other. If a man loses his hold on Christ and ceases to seek sincerely for the power of the Holy Spirit, there will be coldness and spiritual hardening, deadness and formality, whether he prays extemporaneously or with a liturgy. Pastors of non-liturgical churches pray the same way, Sunday after Sunday, even though their prayers are not to be found written in a book.

Can any good reason be given against precomposed prayers which does not equally apply to precomposed hymns of prayer and praise? Well did old John Newton write:

Crito freely will rehearse
Forms of prayer and praise in verse;
Why should Crito then suppose
Forms are sinful when in prose?
Must my form be deemed a crime,
Merely from the want of rhyme?

Still again, prejudice charges that we indulge in what Christ forbade as "vain repetitions." But the intelligent worshiper with a prayer book cannot forget that the Psalms of David, composed and used for public worship, are marked by precisely such repetitions. Nor did our Lord rebuke repetition in prayer, but "vain" or empty repetition. On that awful night of His agony in the garden He prayed three times that the

cup might pass from Him, "saying," we read in Matthew's Gospel, "the same words." We need not fear formalism when following in His blessed steps. An intelligent use of the prayer book will prevent formalism in public worship because no Reformed Episcopalian can study his liturgy without perceiving that it is not a tyrant to enslave him, but a teacher to instruct him.

The Reformed Episcopalian should use his prayer book not only intelligently, but also *spiritually*.

In worship, whether extemporaneous or precomposed, we must give ourselves sincerely to it. We bow our heads in silent prayer when we enter the sanctuary. We ask that such absorption in worship shall be our experience. But how do we carry it out? Some are in the habit of leaving the worship to their neighbors. Others respond to the Psalter but take no part in the *Amen* at the close of every prayer.

From the beginning to the end of the service the prayer book should never leave your hands, except in the Scripture reading. When you close it in anthem or in prayer, you lead yourself into temptation to wandering thoughts and set a bad example to those around you.

Not only so, but our very postures have their relation to our spiritual enjoyment and blessing in worship. To lounge indolently while God's praise is sung has but one meaning, when age or infirmity do not excuse it. It means that there is no praise in the heart.

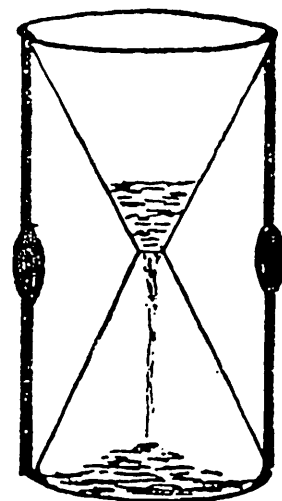
Remember also that children can be trained to public worship in a liturgical service, as they cannot be where all except the singing of hymns is extemporaneous. They have a right to the teaching power of the service. Its "line upon line, and precept upon precept" can be interwoven with the earliest dawnings of childish intelligence. As parents lead their children to the house of worship and guide them in the use of the liturgy by their aid and their example they will learn to sing with Christians of all ages,

"Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father!"

THE CHURCH YEAR

Chapter Seven



THE CHURCH YEAR

"For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20 : 16) .

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (Galatians 4 : 10, 11) .

These two texts present two seemingly contradictory portraits of the Apostle Paul. Look for a moment at these two contrasted pictures. The first represents the Apostle on his way from the continent of Europe to Jerusalem. Ephesus, with its Christian Church, lay just on the path his ship would follow. To the elders and the people of that community of saints, he was attached by ties only to be compared with those binding the parent to the child. Yet he "determined to sail by Ephesus." In the Greek it reads "*past* Ephesus." Why? Did they not need his fatherly counsel? Would there be no comfort to his own soul in beholding their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ?

These were not the causes which lay behind his resolve. The reason is plainly given. He was determined to be at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Nor was this merely the fixing of a date at which he had set his heart on reaching the Holy City. For, on a previous occasion, he hurried away from the entreaties of his friends with the explanation, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem" (Acts 18 : 21) .

It was a strange reason for Paul to give. The feasts and ordinances of the Mosaic law had been set aside in Christ. Had He not blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances" which was against us, "nailing it to his cross"? Yet apparently Paul was so eager to observe this dead ordinance of the Jewish law and ritual, that he sailed past the faithful flock at Ephesus in his haste to keep Pentecost at Jerusalem.

Now look at the contrasted picture. Portraits often differ because taken at different periods of life. But unless all our chronology is at fault, the date of the Epistle to the Galatians

varies but a year or two from that of this voyage past Ephesus and its Christian Church.

That epistle is full of sad reproofs of the believers in Galatia. They were apparently making the gospel of Jesus secondary to the observance of Jewish forms and ordinances. Not least dangerous in its perversion of the truth was the fact that they insisted upon the Mosaic feasts and fasts as a necessary part of Christian obedience. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." So strongly does Paul feel the peril of this error, that he adds, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

How strangely inconsistent does this reproof appear, when put side by side with the Apostle's intense eagerness not to miss the celebration of Pentecost at Jerusalem!

Yet one simple thought, which runs all through the New Testament, is like the stroke of a Master, bringing these two discordant views of the Apostle into perfect harmony. That thought is this: *The Christian may often accept as a privilege, that which he allows no man to impose on him as a bondage.*

Here lay the point of divergence between Paul and the Galatian Church. The Apostle could find spiritual blessing in keeping certain seasons which his Jewish fathers had observed. But the Galatians sought to make them the basis of Christian character. Just as they imposed circumcision on Gentile converts as necessary to salvation through Christ, so they doubtless imposed a regard for Jewish days and months and years, as an essential of Christian character. It was against such perversion of the believer's liberty, that Paul entered his ringing protest.

The Reformed Episcopalian draws exactly this line of distinction between the use and abuse of what he calls "the Christian Year." No Puritan shall revolt more indignantly than he against imposing any seasons or times upon the Christian Church or the Christian member of the Church. Yet he may find in those seasons, helps to growth in grace, which he counts among his sweetest gospel privileges.

I. WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN YEAR WHICH THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN OBSERVES?

In war time, a new recruit is enlisted in the army. In the first glow of his enthusiastic patriotism, the one idea which lays hold upon his mind, is that he is to fight the battles of

his country. But it takes but little time to learn that a soldier's life is to be governed by a plan which assigns to every day and every hour its own peculiar duty.

Not unlike this, is the discovery which gradually comes to him who enters on the work of a Christian soldier in a liturgical and episcopal Church.

Educated perhaps in some other Christian Church, he only recognizes at first, the fact that Episcopalians, in their public worship, employ certain precomposed forms of prayer and praise, contained in *The Book of Common Prayer*. But, by and by, it dawns upon him that underneath this fact there is a system, an order and a plan, which gradually reveal themselves. He cannot follow the worship of the prayer book, without perceiving that it takes a year, and dividing it into certain seasons, engraves upon each of these, the commemoration of some one great Christian doctrine or some event in the life of the Saviour. All history is witness to the value of such a system as a mode of education.

The Reformed Episcopalian who follows the leadings of *The Book of Common Prayer*, will find directly succeeding the communion service, a series of *the collects, epistles, and gospels, for use throughout the year*. The collect is simply a brief prayer; the epistle is an extract from one of the letters which by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were written to the early Christians, and the gospel is a selection from one of the four histories of our Saviour's life on earth. But the three—the collect, gospel and epistle, are like the harmonious chords of a perfect instrument of music. They blend in teaching the same truth. Some one special fact or doctrine breathes through all three alike.

But when you turn to these services for the Christian Year, you discover, perhaps to your surprise (if educated in some other church), that its first day bears no relation to what we commonly call the New Year season. We begin not with January, but with a Sunday falling in December, or possibly even in November. For ours is not the secular year, not the year of the astronomer, nor the year of the man of business. It is the *Christian Year*.

The First Sunday in Advent is our New Year's Day. The services are evidently meant to take us back, as it were, to the days when men were looking for the coming of the Son of God. We stand where such Israelites as Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and Simeon, and Anna stood, and watch

and wait for the angels' song to announce that Christ is born. Three Sundays more make up the Advent Season. But through them all "one unchanging purpose runs." It makes every faithful member of our Church, like one who looks out to sea, expecting the ship which bears homeward his long absent friend. It leads us to realize God's infinite love in sending His own Son to live with men and to die for men. Above all, it will not let us forget that He has given His word that He will come again.

Our Master foretold that even His own people should "slumber and sleep," and become forgetful of this cardinal fact of His Second Advent. But the Episcopalian who allows this truth to slip from his grasp does so in defiance of his Church, which annually sets the services of the first four Sundays of the Christian Year, like watchmen to cry in drowsy ears, "The Lord is at hand."

Then comes the birthday of our Lord. Our appointed worship for Christmas Day is full of gladness. But it is a gladness like that which Isaiah foretold, "when a holy solemnity is kept." Wherever there are hearts to glow with joy, and tongues to sing in praise, the fixing of this one day concentrates every thought upon the love that led the Son of God to humble Himself to be born of a woman.

A little further on, and we reach the season bearing the Greek name, "the Epiphany." It means literally "the shining forth." It suggests to our minds a light shut in and obstructed by opaque walls, suddenly bursting through all that dims its glory, and flinging its rays far out upon the night. The stranger to our services is told that by the Epiphany season we recall the visit of the Magi, "the wise men from the East," to the newborn King of the Jews. Perhaps the appointment not only of a chosen day, but of several Sundays which follow, to commemorate an event briefly recorded in the New Testament, demands explanation. But in the Epiphany lies the title deed of the Christian who is not of Israel's race, to his share in Christ's salvation. The Old Testament never let the subject drop, of the coming Epiphany when Gentiles should know the salvation which began with the Jewish race. Every prophet foretold that glorious day. Over and over did Jesus Himself in both parable and direct statement teach His disciples, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." And the starled Magi from the distant East were the first of that mighty multitude of Gentile birth to claim what God had promised.

The Sundays of the Epiphany season are not out of proportion to the magnitude and importance of the event they fasten in the memory. Nor only so; but Epiphany is ever like a hand that points us to work undone, like a voice that reminds us of duty. If we forget that there are millions yet of Gentiles on the earth, heathen who have never heard of Christ, this season of the Christian Year ever urges us to missionary work and liberality of prayer.

Passing from Epiphany, we are reminded by our services of the approach of Lent, and of the Easter glory which appears beyond it. Three Sundays intervene between the season of Epiphany and that of Lent. They bear the old Latin names of Septuagesima, the seventieth; Sexagesima, the sixtieth; and Quinquagesima, the fiftieth. Not accurately, but only in round numbers, they suggest to the mind that we have reached in our journey to the resurrection of our Lord, the seventieth, the sixtieth, the fiftieth day before Easter.

If you study the collect, epistle and gospel for each of those days, you will find that with an increasing solemnity they are leading you toward the one great thought of Lent, true and godly sorrow and sincere repentance for sin.

As you push on in the examination of the appointed services of the prayer book, you find that Ash Wednesday opens the door to a season of forty days of special humiliation, self-examination and prayer. The name which this day bears is one which grew out of an old custom now long abandoned, of employing ashes as a token of mourning. To us the mere name is nothing, except as it serves to mark the day on which we begin the solemn season to which it introduces us. But the stranger in our Church naturally asks, what the six weeks of the Lenten season signify? Why do we set apart this fixed period for special religious exercises? What is the nature of the appointed worship during these forty days?

The answer must needs be brief. But its philosophy is rooted deep in the necessities of our spiritual life. The growing Christian is one who obeys the apostolic direction to "pray without ceasing." He may not every moment be touching the keys of the instrument, but he does keep it in tune ready to respond with the music dear to the ear of God. Yet nothing is more certain that that, with all this constant prayerfulness of spirit, he must have *appointed time to pray*.

But what is true of the member of the Church is equally

true of the whole body. What is needed in each day's journey is needed in the whole year.

We have pressing upon us an imperious demand of our spiritual nature, that some period in every year should be made a time of special and peculiar self-examination and re-consecration to the service of the Master.

During this solemn season our services constantly emphasize the fact of our own sinfulness. Like John the Baptist, they are preachers of repentance. But with a fullness which the rough-clad herald of Christ never exhibited in his proclamation of the Lamb of God, they reveal an atoning Saviour.

Step by step, they lead us on through the weeks, until in Passion Week (the close of Lent) they dwell upon a suffering Saviour in all the details of His atoning work. With Good Friday we look upon the cross and behold our Substitute before the law, which we have broken; as He bears "our sins in his own body on the tree."

Easter Sunday comes to set God's seal to Christ's completed sacrifice. It leads us to the empty sepulcher, and while it testifies to the Father's acceptance of the finished work of the Son, it also assures the believer that the same power which burst the seal and rolled away the stone, shall raise his body from the grave, to be gloriously immortal.

Time forbids more than an allusion to the remainder of the Christian Year. We set apart a day to commemorate the Ascension of our Lord, and thus to keep in mind the grand work of Jesus in the present, as "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Then on Whitsunday we recall that Pentecost when "a nation was born in a day." Thus each year we preclude the possibility that the Reformed Episcopalian should ever forget the person, the work, or the office of the Holy Ghost.

On Trinity Sunday we bear our testimony with the Christian Church of all ages, to the central truth of the threefold personality in one eternal Godhead.

The objection has been sometimes urged that by thus affixing to a certain period of the year, the special consideration of some one duty, or doctrine, or fact in our Lord's career on earth, we abridge the liberty of the Christian minister. It has been argued that thus to narrow the range of topics toward which our minds and hearts are turned, is to leave no room for a thousand themes perfectly in accord with

gospel preaching, and to crowd out a host of Scripture subjects which do not *directly* belong to any of the Sundays from Advent to Easter. A glance at the prayer book affords the sufficient answer. Following Trinity Sunday, come at least twenty-two Sundays after Trinity. While each of them has its collect, epistle, and gospel, in perfect harmony with each other, the services do not prescribe any one great theme, like those of Christmas, Easter, or Whitsunday. Thus through one-half of the Sundays of the year, our Church has plainly permitted the widest range of expository preaching.

It may be well at this point to notice that the Church Year of the Reformed Episcopalian differs in one important feature from that of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In our revision of the prayer book we dropped the special services for what were called "saints' days." We were willing to honor Apostles and martyrs, even as they followed in the footsteps of Christ. But when we found that the Church of Rome had multiplied these days commemorative of so-called "saints," till the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year were not half enough to give one day to each, when we found that ritualists and Romanizers were constantly adding to the number of names to be remembered by some holy day, we felt that the line must somewhere be sharply and clearly drawn. We therefore made the Christian Year to be a memorial of no sinful mortal, however pure his life, or glorious his death. From one end to the other, it reveals "Jesus only." Like the old painter, who, finding that in his picture of the Lord's Supper, the chalice which held the wine drew the admiration of beholders, and so in his jealousy for Christ's glory, dashed his brush through the rare painting of the cup, we blotted out from our Church Year, all which could distract attention from Jesus our Lord.

II. WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY EVERY REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN SHOULD OBSERVE THE CHRISTIAN YEAR?

Our rapid glance at what constitutes the Christian Year, has already suggested some of the reasons why every Reformed Episcopalian should avail himself of the helps to growth which it affords. Let us briefly sum them up.

We do not for one moment claim that the Scripture requires any such observance. We dare not, therefore, if we

would, impose the Christian Year upon any Christian's conscience. Paul would stir in his grave to rebuke us, as he rebuked the Galatian Church, if we demanded that believers should keep these appointed days as *essential* to the Christian life.

Christmas, Lent, Easter, Whitsunday can all be traced back to a very early period of the Church's history. But there is no footprint which they have left upon the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Let us not, however, forget that we have no Bible evidence that Christians in apostolic days built churches and devoted them to worship. No text of the Bible clearly proves family prayer to be a Christian duty. No line of the Word of God prescribes the gathering of children in a Sunday school. Not a proof-text can be adduced for the use of instruments of music in Christian worship. Yet the overwhelming majority of intelligent believers would feel that Christianity was losing ground in the world, if church edifices were no longer erected, if the family altar were thrown down, if Sunday schools were to shut their doors, and if no organ were to accompany sacred song. Why do we value these things? Not because God's Word prescribes them. But because while in themselves in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament, Christian experience has found them *useful*. We have applied to them the test of utility, and are satisfied with the result.

On exactly the same basis does the Reformed Episcopalian place the Christian Year. It has passed through the fiery crucible of the centuries. It has come forth like silver refined in the fires. What then, is the value of the prescribed arrangement of the Christian Year?

It constantly *preaches Christ*. The ancient Romans used to say that every road in the vast empire led to Rome. So does every one of these appointed services lead to the atoning Son of God. History and experience are witnesses that no canon law and no ecclesiastical discipline can ever build walls strong enough and lofty enough to shut out false ministers and teachers of error from the Church. But if every pulpit in the Reformed Episcopal Church were to be filled by a Judas, betraying the Saviour, if every minister were to preach what Paul calls "another gospel," the services of the Christian Year would brand him as false, and contradict his utterances.

Do not let us forget that the order and system of these appointed services, are calculated to build up *a symmetrical*

and well balanced religion. Men are likely to be like the lonely trees on our wind-swept prairies. The branches of the cottonwood are often only on the side of the trunk opposite to the source of the prevailing winds. Christians are prone to become one-sided in their growth. Ministers frequently allow some true doctrine to become a hobby, absorbing all their pulpit-teaching. But he who is guided by the Christian Year, finds himself led to give to each great truth its due proportion. He may preach on the Resurrection at Christmas, or the Crucifixion at Whitsuntide, or tell the story of Christ's birth at Good Friday, but all the while, the appointed services utter their rebuke. And if, through all the year, he dwell on some one favorite theme, however important it may be, the prayer book rings out like a trumpet, voicing the demand of the people for instruction in the whole, instead of a part of gospel truth.

Hence, too, the Church Year is an additional *security of the lay membership of the Church.* When you commit your spiritual guidance to a pastor, you do not mean to become a passenger in a balloon, driven here and there by every wind of heaven. You mean to trust yourself to his guidance as to that of the pilot on an ocean steamer, who follows day by day the instructions of his chart. The map which the Christian Year marks out is ever open to the examination of the lay member of the Reformed Episcopal Church. He has a right to expect that the minister shall be guided by it.

Last of all, the Church Year is a help to *Christian unity.*

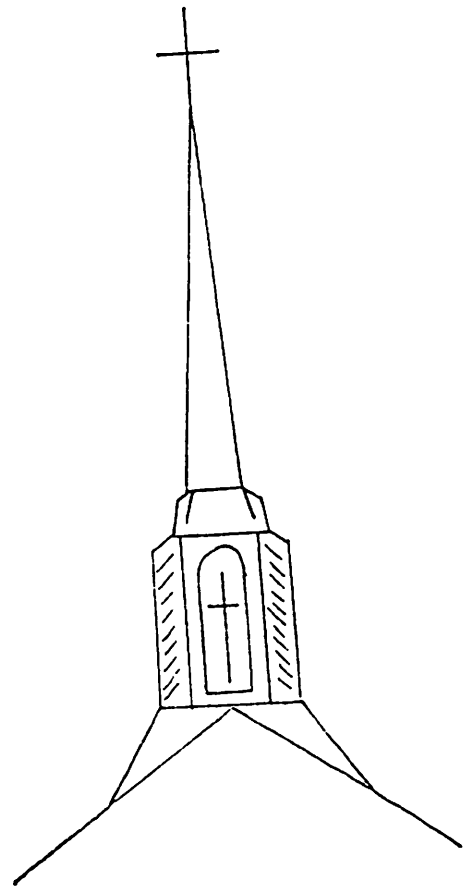
At one time, outside of the Episcopal Church, the celebration of the great festivals of the Christian Year was looked upon by the majority of American Protestants as a relic of Roman superstition. But today, Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday, Good Friday and even Ascension Day are kept with appropriate services by thousands of evangelical churches, and by vast numbers of evangelical Christians. Some of our leading religious papers, with no episcopal or liturgical affiliations, have strongly urged that the "week of prayer" should be made to conform in date with the first week of the Lenten season.

It has been argued that to restore more fully the links of the Christian Year, which are already socially and legally recognized among us, and to let them be illustrated by the epistles and gospels which have marked their circuit for centuries past, would be a long step in the direction of uniting the Christian Churches of the United States.

Such is our Christian Year. Eloquent of Christ alone, purged from all superstitious honors to saints who were but fallen men, building up Christian character in symmetrical proportion, and ever bringing into closer fellowship with each other, all who are in fellowship with Jesus, it claims the love and intelligent appreciation of every Reformed Episcopalian. May we so use it here, that we may be better fitted for that Church whose years are the cycles of eternal joy!

THE DUTIES OF A CHURCH MEMBER

Chapter Eight



THE DUTIES OF A CHURCH MEMBER

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."
(Psalm 48 : 12, 13) .

It is natural to find in Mount Zion a type of Christ's visible Church. It was the center of the Hebrew worship. There every religious rite was performed by God's appointed priesthood. There sacrifice and incense, the appeal of prayer and the gladness of praise consecrated and hallowed the chosen seat of Israel's God.

We surely may transfer to the Christian Church, where "a royal priesthood" of all true believers offers up spiritual sacrifices, something of the honor with which the Jew regarded Zion. That honor, says the Psalmist, demanded a survey of the holy mountain. It only required that God's people should know how glorious their seat of worship was, to lead them to feel a profound love and reverence for it.

Above all, such study of the towers and palaces of Zion, would enable them to teach their children how beautiful and holy was God's house. They were to "go round about Zion, that they might tell it to the generation following."

I. THE DUTY OF THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN INVOLVES AN INTELLIGENT ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF HIS OWN CHURCH

Membership in a church is like a garment which touches one at every possible point of contact. It has to do with every department of our life. It is meant to influence us in public and private. It ought to control our daily business as our daily devotion. It should have a place in our work and our recreation. It belongs to our relations in the family, the sanctuary and the scene of our every day labor.

The world has surely a right to expect that we shall grasp with a thorough comprehension that which touches our life at such a multitude of points.

The church to which one belongs is his home. A Chris-

tian who is ignorant of his own church, ought to be as rare as the man who knows nothing of the house in which he dwells.

The reasons which demand intelligent acquaintance with one's own branch of the universal Church, lie upon the surface.

One of these is that thorough knowledge of His own household of faith will always tend to make the Christian *a better member of the whole family of Christ.*

A man may have a blind, fanatical zeal for his own Church, which leads him to look on all other Christians as outside of the pale of salvation. He may magnify his own branch of the universal Church till every other shall appear as an enemy of the cause. But such a Christian is the product, not of thorough knowledge of his own Church, but of ignorance regarding it. The proof of that position is readily adduced from our own acquaintance with religious bigotry. Consider the Romanist who narrows the scope of Christ's salvation to those of his own communion. You will almost invariably find that just in proportion to his intense bigotry, is his ignorance of his own Church in its history, doctrines, and methods. Intelligent study of the Reformed Episcopal Church will only make the Reformed Episcopalian more zealous for the cause in which all true believers are united, and more broad and comprehensive in his charity toward all who bear his Master's name.

Then too, let it not be forgotten that a thorough acquaintance with one's own Church, is like an anchor which *keeps the Christian from aimless drifting.*

The old proverb, "A rolling stone gathers no moss," is nowhere more applicable than in the sphere of religion. I should be the last to assail the Christian who from strong conviction that he could better serve Christ, or grow in grace, by changing his church relations, withdraws from one communion to enter another. In every leading denomination are laymen and ministers who shine as lights, and hold the front rank in earnest Christian work, whose education and early life attached them to some Church which convictions of duty led them to leave for another. I am not speaking of such. Our country owes a debt of gratitude, which it can never pay, to men who forsook their early home across the sea, to cast their lot with the people of this great Republic. The West has been developed and enriched by immigration from the older States. On the same principle every branch of the Church is under inesti-

mable obligation to those who have entered its fold from other portions of Christ's vast household. But immigration is one thing. Restless, unreasoning roving is another. In religion, as in national life, there are immigrants, and there are tramps. I know one individual who, in the twenty-five years of my acquaintance with him, has changed his church relations from one denomination to another no less than eight times. The average duration of his membership of any one communion, is but a fraction over three years. Such a Christian becomes a positive injury to the cause of Christ. He weakens the Church he enters more than the one he leaves. Above all, he leads the world outside to sneer at the want of any deep conviction underlying his church relations. Can you conceive of such a man as thoroughly grasping the truth as held by any branch of the Church? If in any evangelical communion he had struck down the roots of a real study into its principles and spirit, it would have saved the Church at large from contempt and himself from a life like that of a wandering Bedouin.

How many professing Christians too, are to be found, who while not formally severing their ecclesiastical relations, yet roam here and there from one place of worship to another, as fancy or inclination dictate. Attracted to one church by the music, to another by sensational preaching, or to a third by some theatrical ritualism, they add nothing to the spiritual strength of the fold to which they belong, while they undermine their own religious life. Such souls cannot build up their spiritual strength. But such Christians are never to be found in the class who honestly endeavor to be informed as to the principles of their own Church. The man who forms an intelligent acquaintance with whatever is peculiar to his own communion, and who sincerely tries to lay hold of its doctrines and methods, roots himself in that Church so that he feels his personal responsibility for it, and kindles in his heart a love for its worship, which no mere accident of music, or the style of the preacher, or the accessories of the place of meeting can effect.

But while all this is true to a certain extent of any evangelical Christian, it is tenfold true of the Reformed Episcopalian. His Church is one of the younger of evangelical Church. While in one sense it is as old as the English Reformation, and while it justly claims to be the Protestant Episcopal Church as founded by Bishop White and his co-laborers,

its separate existence is measured by only a few short decades. It came into being in a period of Christian history when the drift of religious movements was toward union rather than separation. The mere fact that it is the result of a secession from an ancient and powerful communion, tends to create prejudice against it. The Reformed Episcopalian stands in the attitude of one who is bound to give satisfactory reasons for his position among the Churches.

Now and then Reformed Episcopalians are asked to explain precisely the nature of their Church; how it differs from that out of which it sprang; and what are its doctrinal positions. And only too often, they are compelled by their own ignorance to admit their inability to give any satisfactory reply. Yet if there is any Church in existence whose members need an intelligent understanding of its principles it is the Reformed Episcopal Church. But how shall our own people obtain such thorough comprehension of their own doctrines and methods?

First of all, by a searching study of our *Book of Common Prayer*. Ours is a distinctively liturgical Church. Its ministers are bound by their ordination promises to "conform to the worship" which is prescribed in the Prayer Book. And within the covers of that formulary of public devotion, brief as it is, can be found the whole system of this Church. The vast majority of all classes of Episcopalians use a Prayer Book as they do their Sunday clothes. It is a book simply for their guidance in worship once a week. Consequently it is never opened from Sunday to Sunday. It is this simple fact which explains why there are those in the Protestant Episcopal Church, intensely evangelical, avowedly low church in their sympathies, and viewing with abhorrence any departure from Scripture teaching, who are perfectly satisfied to regard their Prayer Book as next to the Bible in their esteem and love. In that book are services, like those for ordination and the consecration of bishops, for the institution of a rector and the visitation of the sick, which are so rarely witnessed in actual use, that multitudes have never heard them. But who carefully studies them at home? They may contain the seeds and germs of Romanism, but these are unnoticed because they are not forced every week upon the attention of the worshiper in church.

It is with deep conviction that I venture the statement, that the greatest need of the earnest and spiritually-minded

laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church is to take up their own *Book of Common Prayer*, outside of the place of worship, and compare its teachings with those of the Bible. *Our Prayer Book* courts such study and comparison.

Some of you have crossed the Alps. Have you never seen, a little distance from your road, but diverging from it, the ancient highway now deserted, but on which perhaps the old Romans were wont to journey? In every case your eye, at a single glance, took in the cause which led to the change. It made the route shorter, or it straightened a crooked pathway, or it avoided some perilous pass. So every change from our old Prayer Book which has been made in that with which we worship today, has its obvious reason.

I plead then, with every Reformed Episcopalian that he will make his liturgy something more than a mere directory of public worship. A serious private study of the Prayer Book cannot fail to furnish him such knowledge of his own Church as will put it in his power to answer every question which honest inquirers may make as to the principles of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Next in importance as a source of information stands the *history* of this Church.

Patriotic Americans who lived in those stirring times when the Civil War shook the foundations of our country complained that there was a dearth of books which clearly expalined the causes out of which that tremendous struggle sprang. They realized that the succeeding generations would, as a result, be uninstructed in the great principles which lay at the foundation of one of the most momentous events in our national life.

A kindred difficulty besets the Reformed Episcopal Church. Its real history dates back to the English Reformation. Its Prayer Book is, in its main features, as old as the reign of Edward the Sixth. But the causes, which working in the hearts of evangelical Episcopalians produced at last a separate organization in the year 1873, are unknown to thousands of our own people.

In the form of tracts and pamphlets published by our Reformed Episcopal Publication Society, the member of our Church who really desires to be informed as to what this Church is, and why it exists, can find the history of conscientious struggles which resulted in the formation of this communion.

Such is the first duty to his own Church resting on every Reformed Episcopalian. If other Christians can afford to be ignorant of the principles and methods of the branch of Christ's Church to which they may belong, he cannot. The world around him, the religious sentiment of our times, and the interests of his own communion imperatively demand that he shall be able to "give an answer to every man that asketh . . . a reason of the hope that is in" him.

II. THE DUTY OF THE REFORMED EPISCOPALIAN INVOLVES EARNEST WORK IN THE UPBUILDING AND STRENGTHENING OF HIS OWN CHURCH

Faith and works are bound together by a ligament which it is always perilous to sever. When Saul of Tarsus was stricken to earth as he hurried along the Damascus road, he recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the One who spoke from the skies. It was but the germ of faith. Weak, ignorant, imperfect, he nevertheless believed that the once persecuted Galilean was the "Lord." But how quickly did works follow in the track of his faith! He cannot conceive of believing on Christ, without obeying Christ. Forthwith he cries, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" From that day onward Saul's question has been repeated by every soul which has truly believed on Christ. A living faith always kindles a fire which blazes forth in fervent desire to work in the cause of the Saviour.

But all Christian experience goes to show that the best workers for the Master have been those who gave their labor *along the lines marked out by that branch of the Church to which they belonged.*

Such an assertion may involve the charge of narrowness and sectarian bigotry. But a moment's serious and impartial consideration will refute the cruel accusation. There is a noble work which is being done by instrumentalities belonging to no one branch of the Christian Church. Cooperative movements, such as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, which are composed of evangelical believers of every denomination, are the glory of our times. But who are the leaders in every one of the vast agencies for the spread of the gospel? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you will find them to be men who also take the lead in all the activities of the particular Church to which they belong. Where you find a Christian so needlessly broad in his catholicity, that he

has no warm love for his own communion, you will also find one who does no real or valuable service in any cooperative organization for the evangelizing of the world. But that is only the negative side of the argument. There is a positive side. History and experience are concurring witnesses that the best results in Christian work have been accomplished by men who were bound together by a deep attachment to some one branch of the great Church of Christ.

Precisely that spirit and that kind of work is the need of the Reformed Episcopal Church. Our danger lies, not in the direction of any sectarian narrowness, but rather in that of allowing a broad catholicity to lead us to undervalue our own Church.

To the Gulf Stream the most advanced and civilized countries of the world owe the fact that they are not icy deserts, uninhabitable to man. But if the heated waters of the Gulf Stream were diffused through the whole breadth of the Atlantic, their power would be nothing. One with the ocean, yet retaining its own integrity and form as a mighty river, the Gulf Stream moves on to bless the earth.

Let us enter heartily into every truly evangelical cooperative movement for the spread of the truth of Christ. But let it be our aim to be a compact and organized body, strong in individuality, warming a cold world because warmed ourselves by devotion to the special trust God has committed to us.

Let me suggest one or two reasons why you should love and work for your own Church.

To some of you it presents a claim like that which one's birthplace has upon his affection. It was in the Reformed Episcopal Church, in its clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus, that you found your first hope in Christ. But for its work you would be still in the darkness where you once wandered.

A leading scientist, lost in the vast Yellowstone region and chilled by the nightly cold of the mountains, once saved his life by a magnifying lens which chanced to be in his pocket. It was the sun's rays which gave the needed fire. But it was the lens which concentrated them. Christ alone saved you. But the warmth of His truth came to your chilled soul through the concentrating medium of the Church to which you belong. Christ deserves your first love. But next to Him your love is due to the instrumentality He used.

But the Reformed Episcopal Church is entitled to your loving and earnest work because of *what it is in itself*. Your own Church is above all things else a Church faithful to the Word of God. It knows no doctrine, no form of service, no religious practice, which cannot bear the test of the plummet and line of the Bible.

Moreover, while this Church is conservative of all that antiquity has transmitted of genuine worth it is progressive in meeting the real needs of the Christian in our times. It does this by being liturgical, yet allowing free prayer; Episcopal, yet honoring the ministry otherwise ordained; retaining a communion service hallowed by long ages of Christian use, yet inviting to the Lord's table "all who love our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity."

It has a claim, too, upon your zeal and effort, because its *special work* is one which no other Church can do.

The Anglican Church in Great Britain, Canada and the United States is a vast, wealthy and powerful organization. Its adherents in England and America are numbered by millions. But the steady drift of that Church for most of the years it has been in existence has been toward a false and unscriptural view of the sacraments and the ministry, more and more nearly approximating that of the Church of Rome. A gaudy ritualism has supplanted the simple yet majestic service which was once delighted in. To complete the sad picture, we need only add that there has been a growing desire to delete the word "Protestant" from the name of that Church. As a result there is a deep unrest among some members of that Church. Where can they go? Some, it is true, drift into other evangelical communions. But they rarely find themselves at home. They want an Episcopal Church. They crave liturgical worship. They miss the ancient order of the Christian year. Their taste cultivated in the forms of the *Book of Common Prayer*, revolts against a thousand things which are attractive to those differently trained. Unhappy in their own Church because it has ceased to be what it once was, and because they cannot in conscience approve Romish doctrine in the pulpit, and Romish worship in the chancel, such souls are unable to find their wants met in any non-liturgical Church. They are largely ignorant that such a relief exists as our Church would afford them. I have actually known a lay member of the Protestant Episcopal Church to be agreeably surprised to find that we held the doctrine of the Trinity, and others who sup-

posed that we worshiped without the aid of a liturgy. Surely here is the *special field* of the Reformed Episcopal Church. We are the only organized body of Christians who can offer to them the old-fashioned Episcopal Church, which our fathers of the revolutionary epoch founded. We can give them the historic episcopate, the liturgy in its purity, and the Church year with its orderly teaching.

How can you most effectively enlist yourselves in work for this beloved Church?

Begin at home. Realize your own responsibility for the Church to which in God's sight, you solemnly gave yourself when your name was enrolled among its members. Say to yourself, "This is the Church, not of my bishop, my pastor, my church officers, but of myself. It is my Church. God holds me responsible for the work to be done by this communion. I am not responsible for what the other churches are doing, but for the success and usefulness of the Reformed Episcopal Church."

Such a sense of responsibility will lead you first of all, to hold up the hands of your pastor by a regular attendance at your own appointed place of worship. The prevalent habit of roving from one church to another has its root in a conscience blunted to a profound sense of Christian duty. I may be welcome to sit down at my neighbor's table. I may find there highly-spiced food. But as a member of a household, I am deserting the place which belongs to me, and creating a gap in the family circle which no one else can fill.

Then, too, such a sense of my responsibility will make me a Reformed Episcopalian whether at home or abroad. When passing a Sunday in some distant city, my first inquiry will be not where I may enjoy the best music, or hear the most eloquent preaching, but whether there is there a band of Reformed Episcopalians, however small in numbers or wealth, whom I may encourage by my presence. I will seek out the minister, and give him the Godspeed of my fellow communicants. In one word, I will interest myself in the *whole church* to which I belong. Wherever are Reformed Episcopalians, there are my brothers and my sisters. Such interest will lead me to take the one religious paper which is the organ of our Church. I will endeavor to be informed as to what our Church is doing outside the narrow limits of my own parish. I can only gain such information in the columns of the EPISCOPAL RECORDER.

What deep interest, too, ought every Reformed Episcopalian to feel in our Theological Seminary.

The Reformed Episcopal Seminary is not just another among the many "schools of the prophets." In a profound sense it is unique for there, not only are the students instructed in the eternal Word of God, but are also exposed to Episcopal and liturgical influences which fit them for service in our portion of Christ's vineyard. Its uniqueness is also found in the fact that though it is indeed a *Reformed Episcopal* seminary, its student body has always included young men from most of the Protestant denominations. Many choose to attend our seminary rather than one of those of their own denomination because they recognize the contribution the Reformed Episcopal Seminary has made in the past and can make in their own future ministries for Christ. Its influence, therefore, is widespread and such a seminary is indeed worthy of our support both prayerful and financial.

Our Seminary appeals to us for such personal interest in its work as shall make it for all time a fountain of blessing to our entire communion and to the Church at large.

This sense of responsibility will lead parents to train their children in the principles and the ways of their own Church. All honor to the Sunday school work. No man shall question my loyalty to it. But I do not hesitate to say that if we allow the children to substitute attendance at the Sunday school for worship in the church, then we are perverting the Sunday school from its real design. If your children are old enough to be enrolled in the Sunday school, they are old enough to attend one church service on Sunday. If you must choose between the two, I unhesitatingly say that the child trained from his earliest years to the use of the Prayer Book, and encouraged to participate in the worship it provides, will more surely become an intelligent and spiritually-minded Christian, than the child who attends a Sunday school, and neglects the services of the sanctuary.

Last, but not least, such a sense of responsibility will lead us to liberality in giving, and constancy in praying for our Church.

When a wealthy Christian, during the long years of commercial distress following one of the financial depressions suffered by our country, was asked why he doubled his subscriptions to religious work, he answered, "Because the times are

so hard." So I say to every Reformed Episcopalian, because the times in which we are now living are so difficult, the responsibility and the honor of building the superstructure of our Church upon the foundation so strongly laid by our founding fathers, has a double claim upon our self-denying liberality. It needs our gifts as no other stronger, older and richer organization needs the silver and gold of its members.

For the very same reason this Church appeals to you for your earnest prayers in its behalf. We are living in perilous times. These are days of distress and tribulation throughout the world. Our only hope is that the Church of Jesus Christ, of which our Reformed Episcopal Church is a vital part, will meet the challenge of the times. To be so strengthened we must prevail upon God in prayer.

Let no difficulties lead you to despond. Discouragement can only come to those Reformed Episcopalians who shut their eyes to what God has wrought.

Our Reformed Episcopal Church is a Church which had a comparatively recent and small beginning. Bishop George David Cummins, founded this portion of Christ's Church in 1873 with the assistance of only seven ministers and a handful of laymen. Today the Reformed Episcopal Church is found, not only in the United States, but in Canada, Great Britain and India. Missionaries in Africa, Germany and India are proclaiming Christ's Message because of the Reformed Episcopal Church. In South Carolina a work among the Negroes has been maintained and is growing.

The greatness of a Church can only be measured, however, by the greatness of its people. If our Church is to become ever greater in its influence, outreach, and witness, it will be because Reformed Episcopalians have given, taught, and prayed to that end.
