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ARTICLE I.

THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, CONTEMPLATED IN SOME OF ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

When we speak of second causes, it must never be forgotten that the concurrence of at least two of them is necessary to the production of an effect. Hence we speak of the *causes*, not the *cause* of the Reformation, because we are here concerned with secondary causation only. The first cause we of course acknowledge to be God. The Reformation was a great work of his holy spirit, a mighty revival of the work which he had been doing ever since the utterance of the first promise in the garden of Eden. It was a re-form-ation, a restoration of the Church to the word of God, which constitutes its form, as the Holy Ghost constitutes its life. But the work of God amongst men is performed under the conditions of time and place. And there are very many circumstances attending and concurring, in regard to some or all of which we might confidently affirm that they were causes *sine qua non*, conditions without which the great event would not have taken place, or if it had taken place, would not have been the same event, or been followed by the same results.

Our Saviour, in his parables, frequently likens the processes of the kingdom of heaven to the processes of vegetable and
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ARTICLE III.

THE FIRST AND HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE CHURCH.

The apostles were distinguished by five circumstances from all other Christian ministers, thus: *First*, they were chosen and peculiar witnesses—*eye witnesses* of the resurrection of Christ; *secondly*, they were inspired teachers and miracle-workers; *thirdly*, it was their calling to finish and close the canon of Scripture; *fourthly*, they were appointed to organise and set up the Christian Church; *fifthly*, they were commissioned to go and preach to all nations. Now manifestly there can be no proper successors to the apostles in the first three of these five callings; but just as manifestly, in the last two, all true ministers of the gospel are in a certain important sense proper successors to these original thirteen.

But Paul tells us that he not only held the extraordinary office of apostle, but was also a preacher. His language is “a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles.” And what is remarkable, he *twice uses these terms of himself*, once in the first, and once again in the second Epistle to Timothy. Now the preacher’s office is unquestionably set forth in scripture (see 1 Tim. v. 17) as one of the ordinary and perpetual offices of the Christian Church. And manifestly the apostolic office included and comprehended not only the teaching but also the ruling presbyterate, and not only the whole presbyterate but likewise the diaconate. And it may be asserted that this is true of every legitimate church office—the higher always necessarily includes the lower, so that if a man is ordained to the work of a Christian minister, he is *ipso facto* a ruling elder and deacon.

But the office of the preacher is nowhere articulately described in God’s word. There are two articulate descriptions of the presbyter, viz., 1 Tim. iii. 1-7, and Titus i. 5-9, but the preacher is more than the presbyter properly so called. Those two descriptions are specifically of the ruling elder, as any one may see for himself, for of the two or three and twenty features of

the picture drawn by the apostle, only two apply to the teaching elder, whilst both of these, but more especially all the remainder, apply manifestly to the office of the ruler. It is the ruling presbyter, then, who is the aboriginal presbyter. That was a lower gift, and as to the modern so to the primitive churches, a commoner gift than the noble function committed to the teaching elder. Paul and Barnabas ordained several Presbyteries in every little church which they organised, these could not have been all preachers, for God does not waste his grace. The earlier office filled then was the ruling elder's office, and afterwards slowly, and perhaps always sparingly, (even as it is down to our day,) the higher gift was bestowed. It is, therefore, not the teaching, but the ruling elder who is described in Timothy and Titus. The primary idea of the presbyterate is ruling, but it is preaching which constitutes its subsequent and higher development.

The Scriptures, then, no where articulately describe the preacher any more than the apostle. But Paul, in many of his epistles, especially in those to the Corinthians, gives an account of the manner in which he labored to discharge the preacher's duties; so that we behold the true nature of the office in his living example. Moreover, in his letters to Timothy and to Titus, he gives them such charges as to the manner in which they were to fulfil the office as serve to set fully before us its greatness and solemnity. See 1 Cor. i. 17, 18; ii. 1-5; 2 Cor. iv. 5-9; v. 20; vi. 4-10; 2 Tim. iv. 1-5.

Who can with uninspired pen adequately set forth the preacher of the gospel? A famous Christian poet says well:

"Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master strokes and draw from his design."

How, then, does Paul describe the preacher? Consult the passages just referred to and it will be seen that he is one preaching to the blind and lost. Christ the image of God; and behold light shines by this preaching into their hearts—light from

heaven, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and with this light there comes also life—new life, divine life, the life of Jesus himself communicated to all who believe this preaching. Thus they become one with Christ as the Head and the members are one, and partake of his immortal life.

He is one who preaches the doctrine of the cross—foolishness to wise men, and an offence to self-righteous ones; but to all who believe it, the power of God and the wisdom of God—the most wondrous and the most glorious truth ever revealed to created minds; the truth of God made man, and suffering and dying, that man might partake of the divine nature; the truth of the Holy one made a sinner, that sinners who believe might be made to have God's own righteousness and be holy; the truth of the source of all life becoming subject to death, that the dead in sin might live forever!

The preacher of the gospel is a legate from the skies, he is an ambassador of God, and his mission is to beseech men, while the day of grace lasts, to be reconciled to God. He brings with him the powers of an ambassador, and has authority to settle with every man the terms of an everlasting peace between God and his guilty soul. Yes, he carries in his hand the key of the kingdom of heaven, and he can open the door and he can also shut it, because God has authorised him to speak in His name. He preaches to men the only terms of pardon, but they are terms of pardon which will bind the Almighty if accepted with all the heart. What an honorable office this! Paul says to preachers, that they must in all things approve themselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses; but he adds, that it is theirs whilst sorrowful to be always rejoicing, and that, although poor, yet they may make many rich. The preacher is, of course, a mere earthen vessel, oftentimes troubled on every side, perplexed and cast down, having, it may be, but moderate endowments of mind, and not able to preach with wisdom of words, yet to him is committed the key of the kingdom, and power on earth to loose men from the guilt of sin, and they are loosed from it in heaven. And the

preacher carries that mighty key of *doctrine* single-handed. The key of *discipline*, that other key of the kingdom, is never borne by one man alone, but always by the rulers in a body. They exercise as a body what our Presbyterian fathers, after Calvin's teaching, called the *joint* power of rule; but the preacher has committed to him singly what they called the *several* power of publicly teaching the awful word of God. Alone he stands up, be it before few or be it before many, and on his single responsibility to the Church and to Christ, discharges the awful and commanding function assigned him.

But in many other places besides those referred to already, in fact all through the book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul, there is to be found a living picture of what the preacher of the gospel is to be. One of the most beautiful of these sketches is contained in the 2d chapter of 1 Thessalonians. The apostle, with graphic force, there presents one strong feature of the true preacher's picture in these words: "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were *bold* in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention." At Philippi Paul's clothes were torn off, many stripes laid on him; he was thrust into the inner prison, his feet were made fast in the stocks; all this was the prelude to the boldness of his speaking at Thessalonica, where at first the Jews debated and discussed with him, but afterwards moved with envy at his success, set the city in an uproar and assaulted him with violence. Another feature of the picture in this chapter is in these words: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak." Along with his boldness here, is his sense of the honor put upon him in his being *allowed* to preach the gospel, and along with that sentiment this other, that the gospel was *a trust*; and so he declares that he aimed at pleasing God and not men in all his preaching, used no flattering words, was governed by no motive of covetousness, and sought no glory of human applause.

But a third and very touching feature of this picture, is his *gentleness* as a preacher. He was like a nurse dealing with children. They were dear to him; he was affectionately desirous

of them; he would impart to them not the gospel only, but his very soul. He exhorted and comforted and charged every one of them as a father doth his children. And now absent from them in the body, but not in heart, and writing to them in an epistle, he desires to see their face with great desire, because they are his hope, his glory, and his crown of rejoicing. Bold as a lion must the preacher of the gospel be, not fearing the face or the wrath of men; profoundly must he be impressed with the awful trust committed to him, and the transcendent honor of that trust; and yet he must be humble and gentle, loving and tender. He must have high courage and strong faith, but his affections must, like Paul's, be warm, and lively, and impressible.

And now we begin to understand how it happens that the description of the presbyter in 1 Tim., chapter iii., and in Titus, chapter i., should refer specifically to the ruling and not the teaching class. It was because the more important office of the preaching presbyter is set forth, not indeed articulately, yet with such graphic power, in nearly all the epistles of Paul, and because with consummate skill, as well as the most refined delicacy and the most unaffected modesty, he holds up to our view the true preacher of the gospel in himself.

Does not our Form of Government, then, well set forth the pastoral office, meaning that of the teaching elder, as the *first* in the Church both for dignity and usefulness? It is indeed immeasurably the first and the highest. What other can compare at all with this? The office of the deacon is far below it, because he only serves tables, while the pastor gives himself continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. The office of the ruling elder is far below it, because all his power is to apply to concrete cases the word which the preacher preaches; and this he can do, not alone, but always as associated with others, and by their counsel and authority. It is the preacher, the highest functionary of the Christian Church, who is commissioned to handle, and that with public and divine authority, and also alone, no other mortal taking any part with him of the responsibility—it is his, the preacher's, thus to handle the awful word, which is ever, as he handles it, a savor of life unto life, or else of death unto

death, which ever works, as it issues forth from his lips, either to save or to damn immortal souls.

What an office, then, is the preacher's! How grand, considered as an institute of the Son of God himself for the complete accomplishment by human agency of his own divine mission! What glory attaches to it, considered as the only succession of the apostolate! What a weight of solemnity goes with it, as it takes up the work of guiding, instructing, comforting, and saving men! What a terrific work it is, as it binds upon a poor feeble creature's shoulders the care of souls, and bids him get ready to render account for them at the last day to the Judge of all! And yet, along with all these awful features of this office, how attractive and joyful this highest of all callings, considered in relation to its ineffable rewards!

Now the preacher of the gospel is required to make full proof of his ministry; to be instant in season, out of season; to give himself wholly to his great work; and not to be entangled with the affairs of this life. Christ cannot be honored, nor the Church edified, by a secularised ministry. The Lord hath ordained that they who preach the gospel should *live of the gospel*—that is, be supported whilst preaching, and get their living by that business. Accordingly, every call to the pastorate of a Presbyterian church contains a specific engagement on the people's part to him of such provision for his wants as shall set him free from worldly cares and avocations. It is absolutely incongruous for one to mix up preaching with buying and selling. Any kind of secular pursuit, indeed, is incongruous with the care of souls. He who has that awful work bound upon his heart can have no time or strength for any temporal calling whatsoever. How could Timothy observe Paul's requirements, not to neglect the gift that was in him, but to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; to meditate upon these things, and give himself wholly to them that his profiting might appear unto all; to take heed to himself and unto the doctrine, (that is, the preaching,) and to continue in them (that is, persistently to follow his high and solemn calling,) so that he might both save himself and his hearers in the great day—how could Timothy observe such requirements, and

yet habitually devote himself to any worldly work? The churches do sometimes encourage their ministers to farm or to teach school by incompetent support, but it is bad policy as well as contrary to the Lord's ordinance on the subject. There is no surer way to make a church spiritually poor, but their minister pecuniarily rich, than to have him settled as pastor on an insufficient salary, with the understanding that he may make it up with the profits of his worldly labor. The man who is at liberty to farm all the week can afford to preach on Sunday for very small pay, but he will not be able very long to edify his church with nourishing and instructive doctrine; and they cannot afford to pay even a small price for profitless preaching, for mere unstudied rambling talk, without study and without prayer. The profiting of their souls demands the intense devotion of all his powers of intellect, and heart, and speech. A church will, ordinarily, wither away, whose minister does not bear them and their children continually on his soul. This is the very idea of the pastorate—it is *caring for* souls, feeding and watering the flock, looking after their spiritual interests, consulting for their growth and progress in the divine life; and this is a great work, what might fill an angel's heart, and what did fill a Saviour's hands; and it is a work not compatible with any secular calling whatsoever. But whilst no church can afford to starve itself to death on the husks which a preacher's mere Sunday morning studies shall produce for their spiritual sustenance, the preacher ordinarily will amass wealth who farms all the week and then gets a small salary, punctually paid him, for talking an hour or two on Sundays. It is no extravagance to say, that churches and preachers who enter into such engagements with each other are just encouraging one another to aim at getting rich in this world's goods. They are stimulating one another to run this kind of race; and the small salary paid the secular preacher for his Sunday's talk is just so much start which the church agrees to give him in their race together for wealth. Ordinarily, the preacher has as good judgment as his people as to the ways of prosperous farming; ordinarily, he knows as well as they do when to buy and when to sell, and how much to ask, and how

much to give; ordinarily, he is as good a judge of the points of a horse or a cow; and if he may but devote the powers of his mind to these matters all the week long, he can acquire property just as well as his people, and then whatever they pay to him as their minister he may put out at compound interest, and he will in the course of years as necessarily come to be rich pecuniarily, as they to be spiritually poor.

But if our Lord ordained that his word should be preached by a class of men set free from all worldly cares and avocations, he did not ordain that the government of his Church should be committed *solely* to such hands. It were incongruous to have all the delicate and difficult and complicated questions, all the practical affairs which the discipline of the Church must affect, regulated *solely* by a set of hermits, of men not of this world, and necessarily unacquainted, because devoted to their spiritual calling, with the things of this world. Accordingly the same Lord who ordained that preaching presbyters should live of the gospel and be free of worldly cares and avocations, has appointed another class of presbyters to be associated with the preaching ones in the rule and government of His Church. And these are to be men of worldly business, of worldly experience, and of worldly wisdom. The whole account of them in 1 Tim. iii., and in Titus i., shows that they are men found in the market-place and the haunts of trade, for they are described as occupying a position which exposes them to becoming covetous, given to wine, soon made angry, and even brawlers and strikers—all which are hardly supposable of the preacher free from worldly cares and avocations and encountering other men only in the religious sphere. It is to presbyters who pursue worldly callings, but are blameless in them; presbyters who have constant dealings with worldly men about worldly matters, but have a good report of them which are without; presbyters who are sober, just, holy, temperate, patient, vigilant, given to hospitality, husband of one wife, ruling well their own houses, and so knowing how to take care of the Church of God, holding fast the faithful word as they have heard it from the teaching presbyter in the pulpit and been taught by him, and being apt themselves to teach it

from house to house, and so able both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers—it is to such ruling presbyters, along with the teaching presbyters, that the work of discipline and government is committed. And surely, if we can see and admire the wisdom and the goodness of our Lord in ordaining that there should be a class of presbyters who to be preachers of his word, who shall not be in any sense *men of the world*, we can also see with equal clearness the same wisdom and goodness in his appointing a second class of presbyters to be joined with this first class in the delicate task of government and discipline. And if these things be so, then it is very easy to understand how the Church is not to be governed by *clergymen*, to employ that word which Calvin and Gillespie and all thorough and sound Presbyterians repudiate as a popish word, signifying the popish error that the heritage of God is a priesthood, and not his dear people—it is easy to understand how the Church is not governed by *clergy*, but by bodies of rulers freely chosen by the people, and that our ecclesiastical judicatories are all of them *representative* assemblies. And thus the Church is plainly seen to be a free Christian commonwealth—free by her Lord's appointment of the State; free of the one-man-power of diocesan bishops; free of all clerical rule as such whatsoever; enjoying the right of self-government as becomes the free people of God, and yet having a freedom regulated by his laws; enjoying a liberty which is far from being license, and constituting not a mere crowd, nor a mere mob, but *Christ own house* organised and governed according to his perfect will.

Let us recur again to the doctrine of our Form of Government, that the office of the preaching presbyter is the first in the Church both for dignity and usefulness. This is plainly the doctrine of the Scriptures. We have seen that in respect to two out of the five features which made up the apostolic office, the preacher is the true and only successor of the apostles; while in the other three features there is no successor of the apostles possible. As to the office of prophet and evangelist, the preacher is *both*, in the only sense in which these offices do now exist. The preacher, then, being in some sense apostle and prophet and

evangelist, there plainly can be no other office in the Church comparable with the preacher's. For as it includes those three highest functions, so far as they now exist in the Church, so also it includes necessarily every other which the Lord has instituted, down to the very lowest. The preacher includes the deacon, and with the deacon he has power over things; he includes the ruler, and with the ruler he has power over persons. Neither of these functions indeed forms any part of his preaching function; but he has them both because he is a preacher. The Scotch Church disfranchises every *preacher without charge*, by not allowing him to sit and vote in Presbytery—but this is to destroy parity. Every preacher in good standing must have the powers both of the ruler and the deacon. Indeed, who ever preaches may, in a sense, be said necessarily to rule; for the whole power of ruling is by the word which the preacher preaches. Standing there in that sacred desk and preaching, he is proclaiming the all-governing word; and having power to proclaim that word, he must needs have power in the proper place and in the proper manner, that is, *along with his brother presbyters*, to apply that word in the discipline and government. And thus it is indisputable that the preacher's office is the first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness.

In view of all these principles, plainly derived from the Scriptures, it is evident—

1. That the diocesan episcopacy is not the form of government set forth therein. For that system glories in an officer higher than the highest in the Christian Church, and puts under him all the preaching presbyters.

Still further: Diocesan episcopacy is not only a one-man-power in the Church, where lawfully none may rule singly except Christ himself, but it is also a man-made-power in the Church, where lawfully man can make or appoint no power whatsoever.

And further still: Diocesan episcopacy is a complete reversal and transposition of the order and relation in which the Scriptures have placed the preaching and ruling presbyterates. The Scriptures give the especial and highest honor to the presbyter who labors in the word and doctrine. Diocesan episcopacy puts

a ruler—a single ruler over many preachers. The diocesan bishop is not ordinarily a preacher, though he may preach occasionally. But preaching is not his work and business. His business is to *regulate* the multiplied affairs of a diocese. His work is ruling, and that not one church, but many, and not only many churches, but many ministers—he rules on the largest scale. We can call him nothing else but a very exaggerated ruling elder. The power which the Scriptures set forth as joint power he singly exercises; but the several power of preaching he neglects, and disparages by neglecting. The order of Scripture, the order which Christ the King and Head ordained, he reverses; puts the first office below the second; and claims especial honor for himself, precisely for not laboring in the word, but simply ruling well; and yet all his ruling is unlawful, because the Scriptures require the Church to be ruled only by representative assemblies.

2. It is equally evident that Independency can not be the form of government set forth in the Scriptures. Two things lie plainly on the surface of the New Testament and cannot be denied. The first is, that the Church is one, and not broken up into fragments, separate and independent. The second is, that she is a representative republic, governed by her chosen rulers, and not governed directly by the crowd or the mob. One thing more may easily be found in Scripture, namely, that the representative assemblies of the Church stand in regular gradation, and that the whole must govern every part, because the body is one. There is but one body, as there is but one head. Christ has ordained rule and rulers for his Church. He set up his New Testament Church, by first calling the office-bearers, and afterwards the members. The New Testament Church began from its very beginning as one organised body governed by rulers.

3. It is equally evident that the form of government set up in the Scriptures is that one which makes much of the deacon, and much of the ruling elder, and especially much of the teaching elder; and that one which makes much of all these because Christ instituted them. It holds to a divine right for all these offices and their several functions, and therefore makes much of

them. But of course it does not confound them together. It does not, like episcopacy, reverse the order in which these functions stand, and put ruling over preaching; nor does it identify the presbyter with the preacher. All preachers must be presbyters, but all presbyters are not preachers. Nor is the presbyterate the same function as preaching; nor is the assembly of presbyters an assembly of preachers. There is an order of presbyters; but it is divided in the Scriptures into two classes. There is one class of presbyters that exercise only the ruling function; there is another and a higher class of presbyters, who, besides the ruling function, exercise one that is far higher, viz., the teaching function. This teaching function each of this class exercises severally, but the ruling function is to be exercised only by a body of presbyters. And every one of these presbyters is, as such, the peer of every other. The parity of all presbyters, as such, is fundamental in the scriptural system. We do not assert the parity of all preachers, as such; because no parity exists between preachers such as we care a button to assert. The preacher indeed cannot be said to be, as such, the peer of every other; for one has ten gifts of speech, and another five, and another only one. But the parity of all the presbyters and of both the classes of presbyters, as such, is a very different affair—a matter of the highest practical importance in church government, having bearings of vast consequence to the free Christian commonwealth. Right here prelacy and popery take their departure from the true scripture doctrine of presbytery. All the presbyters must have, as such, equal rights and powers, and ruling elders be considered, as such, the full equals on the floor of church courts, that is, the full equals, as presbyters, of the teaching elders, or we begin at once to travel Romewards.

Now all these distinctive principles of this system of Church polity are to be found in the Scriptures. The scriptural form of church government makes much of these distinctions. They are all divine. These are lines which the King himself has drawn. If Presbyterians would but carry out this system into full practice, and so honor him who gave it, his blessing might

be expected to descend. Church polity is, of course, of less consequence in some of its relations than the doctrines of grace. Yet, how great and precious, nevertheless, must be the laws and principles which the King reveals for the government of his kingdom. That kingdom he purchased with his own blood. His Church is as dear to him—it was dearer to him than his life. The least of his commandments respecting it if we break and teach men so, we shall be least; but if we do and teach them, we shall be great in that kingdom.

ARTICLE IV.

EDUCATION.

One of the excellences of our Shorter Catechism is seen in the first question and answer. The wisdom and piety, as well as the orthodoxy, of the framers of that best and most comprehensive summary of Bible truth which uninspired man has ever composed, is seen in the fact that the mind of the learner is directed to the great business for which every person is placed in this world; and, also, in the fact that the whole catechism hangs suspended from this first question and answer. Every one who learns the catechism is taught, in words at least, that his chief end, his main business, in this world, is to glorify God and be fitted to enjoy him forever. How beautiful! how grand! how sublime the idea that is attempted to be put into the mind and heart of the young as to the *great* end, and the *only true* end, of life! God could propose to himself no higher end in the creation, preservation, and government of all things than his own glory. And he requires man to do the same. The framers of our catechism, therefore, were not only right and wise in putting this question and answer in the catechism, but also in putting it in its proper place. It need not be proved to the readers of this article that this idea, this principle, is abundantly