

The Scriptural Method of Reform.

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BY REV. E. P. BARROWS.

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HUDSON:

1847.

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MATTH. XXIII: 26.

Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

The allusion, in these words, is to the scrupulousness of the Jews in preserving their household vessels in a state of ceremonial purity, while they were not careful to maintain moral purity in the manner of gaining and using their contents. By the washings prescribed in the Levitical law they made clean the outside of the cup and platter, while within they were full of extortion and excess; that is, things acquired by extortion and used with excess. Our Lord counsels them to begin with making clean the contents of the cup and platter. By this he means that they should begin by reforming the inward state of their hearts as manifested in their manner of gaining and using earthly possessions, and he intimates that if they will do this they need not be afraid of outward defilements. That this is the true meaning of these words appears from a comparison of the parallel passage, Luke, 11: 41; "But rather give alms of such things as ye have (perhaps more correctly thus, "Give the things within [the cup and platter] as alms") and behold all things are clean unto you."—Here we may aptly compare Titus 1: 15; "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled," where the reference is also to ceremonial defilements.

In all ages of the world two opposite systems of religion have prevailed. The one begins *within*. It seeks to purify the heart and thus to make the outward conduct pure. This is the *spiritual* system—the system contained in the gospel.

The other concerns itself mainly with the *outward forms* of action.

It does not directly oppose itself to the spiritual duties of religion—which would be too gross a method to gain currency even in this world of ignorance and perverseness—but, by prescribing a multitude of outward observances and placing in these the chief duty of man, it throws the religion of the heart into the back-ground, and makes it practically of little account. This is the system of *formalism*, of which the religion of the ancient Scribes and Pharisees may serve as the representative. All their piety lay in outward ceremonies. They made long prayers standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets; made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments, paid tithe of mint, anise and cummin; built the tombs of the prophets and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous; and performed many more such works with the greatest scrupulousness and exactness; and in these lay all their religion. The weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith, they omitted.—Their hearts were full of extortion and excess. They were whitened sepulchres, beautiful without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

In opposition to this system of formality and hypocrisy our Savior, in the text, inculcates the duty of making the purification of the heart the first and chief concern; he teaches that, where this is neglected, no outward works can be pure in God's sight; and that, where the heart is cleansed from sin, the outward part of religion will naturally and easily come right. Here then we have the **SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF REFORM**—to begin with the inner man, and proceed thence to the outer. Upon this principle the whole gospel plan of salvation is founded. This may be best illustrated by considering the manner in which it proceeds in the work of recovering man from sin to holiness.

The first work of the gospel is to discover to men the whole truth respecting their fallen and guilty state. It assumes, as its starting-point, that they are all "carnal, sold under sin;" living "in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh;" "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." It is not the outward form of their actions alone that is wrong. All is wrong within, wholly and continually wrong. Their hearts are alienated from God; they have no delight in his holy character and his most reasonable service. Pra

tically, God is not in all their thoughts. Not that the recollection of their Maker's power and wrath does not sometimes come over their souls, like a dark cloud, to disturb them in their sinful pursuits, but that they have no settled purpose to regulate their thoughts, affections and actions by his law; but, on the contrary, lay out and pursue their plans of life with reference to their own pleasure, giving their supreme affections to the objects of time and sense, and feeling no warm interest in the service of God and the joys of his salvation. In a word, they are under the unbroken dominion of worldly feelings, and this so separates them from God that they can have no comfortable communion with him, but dread his holy presence, and prefer to live "without God in the world."

These are unwelcome truths, which every system of religion having man for its author either boldly denies, or covertly explains away. But the gospel boldly asserts them of every child of Adam, declaring that, in respect to men's relation to God, "there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" and it insists also upon his making a hearty acknowledgement of them as the first step towards his recovery to holiness and happiness.

The means which the Holy Spirit employs to bring home to men's consciences the conviction of their inward corruption are extremely simple. They consist in the revelation of a perfect standard of right, the pure and spiritual law of God, and the application of this standard to their character and conduct. Nothing more than this is needed to produce the deepest conviction of sin. Let a man be clearly instructed in the true character of God's law, as an all-comprehending spiritual rule of conduct, extending to the inward springs of action, and requiring not only that this should be in its outward form right, but also that it should flow from right motives—let a man understand this, and then let him retire into the recesses of his own soul, and institute there an honest comparison between the state of his heart and that required by God's law; and a flood of conviction will flow in upon him. His sins will rise before him in dark and dreadful array, appearing, as they really are, infinite: rather, his whole life will be seen to have been one continuous act of sinning—a tissue of ingratitude, rebellion and abuse of mercies the most rich and varied. In vain will he search for something that is good, good as compared with the standard of God's perfect law. All will be found to be "only evil continually."

And while the gospel thus reveals to men the extent of their inward corruption, it sets before them, with equal plainness, the true desert of sin. Here their pride and self-righteousness bring them into direct collision with the sentence of Jehovah. They judge of the value of God's law and the evil of violating it from their own perverse feelings. To them God's authority is of less account than the pleasures of sin. In the pursuit of these they perpetually trample under foot its precepts. No wonder, then, that, when they thus lightly esteem the law itself, they should complain of its penalty as unjust. This is what all transgressors do; for the very fact that one is a transgressor of law proves that he has no abiding conviction of its excellence.

But God sees all things as they are. His judgment of the evil of sin is truth unmixed with error. He understands the end from the beginning, and beholds, in his law, the bond of perfectness which binds together all parts of his everlasting kingdom in harmony and happiness. In all sin he sees a blow aimed directly at the foundation of his government, and, by the penalty which he has annexed to it, he declares its proper demerit. His sentence is, "The wages of sin is death;" and his word teaches, in no doubtful language, what this death is—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power"—declaring that for every violation of God's law men deserve eternal punishment in hell, and that, without repentance, what they deserve will certainly overtake them. Heirs of eternal wrath, this is the posture in which the Bible places all men without distinction, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

And, if the sinner inquires in what way he can make amends for his past transgressions, the gospel answers that there is no way. It cuts off at once all self-righteous attempts to justify himself before God. It does not allow him to cherish the vain hope that he can, by any good works whatever, or by any inward penitence, do any thing towards meriting the forfeited favor of God. It has shown him that he is deserving of eternal death, it further shows him that, so far as his own works and deservings are concerned, he must forever remain such.

And then the gospel comes with the offer of free forgiveness through the blood of Christ—forgiveness not on the ground of any good works which the sinner has done or can do, but of the all-sufficient sacrifice on Calvary. It offers him a salvation which is not part of works

and part of grace, but all of grace. It compels him to feel that no part of the glory of it belongs to himself, but all to God. Thus it levels in the dust his pride and self-righteousness.

To the unhumiliated heart this feature of the gospel is especially offensive, for the last thing that men are willing to renounce is the idea of their own merit. Every minister of the gospel has occasion to witness the violent struggle that often takes place in the heart of an awakened sinner between his pride on the one hand, and the convictions of his conscience on the other; a struggle which he cannot but watch with intense interest, knowing that upon its issue are suspended life and death. His self-righteous spirit impels him to look around for some other way of salvation less humbling than that which the gospel proposes, and such ways—the inventions of man—are ever at hand, and often, too, disguised under the name of christianity. He who is resolved not to yield to the humbling terms of the gospel will, sooner or later, strike off into one or another of these by-paths of human merit, and perish miserably in it.

Even when the inquirer after salvation is so far enlightened as to discern his need of Christ, to renounce, formally, all dependence on his own good works, and to rest his hope of forgiveness only on the ground of Christ's atoning sacrifice—even then he is not beyond the reach of self-dependence, which follows men to the very door of the kingdom of heaven, and cleaves to them as a part of their very nature. Even then, instead of casting himself at once, in deep sincerity, upon the mercy of Christ, we often see him setting himself to the work of elaborating in his soul some fitness to receive that mercy; of working out there some right feelings which shall constitute the ground of his acceptance with Christ. Instead of an *exoteric*, or outward system of good works, like that of the ancient Scribes and Pharisees, he has substituted in its place an *esoteric*, or inward system of good exercises and frames of mind, on which he as really relies, as a preparation for being accepted by Christ, as they did on their outward works for justification before God. Thus, without knowing it, he brings into the gospel plan of justification by faith the bad leaven of human merit, by which he corrupts it and makes it void. He does not understand that a sinner can have no fitness to receive Christ's mercy except simple willingness to receive it, (in which is always included willingness to be controlled and directed by Christ in all things) and that this is a fitness which, in its very nature,



excludes all claim to mercy on the ground of merit. And as to those good exercises which he is endeavoring to work out in his soul, his mistake lies in placing them before the justification of faith, as a preparation for it, instead of making them to flow from it, as their source.

But in whatever form, whether open or covert, self-righteousness endeavors to thrust itself into the work of man's salvation, the gospel steadfastly rejects it. Here it will yield nothing. "Not by works of righteousness which you have done, but by the mercy of God through Christ are you saved"—this is the language which from age to age it holds to all men. Thus it secures, in all who sincerely embrace it, a truly broken and contrite spirit.

And while the sinner thankfully accepts of pardon upon these humbling terms, the gospel instructs him, with equal plainness, that it comes, as a holy salvation, to save him *from* his sins, not *in* them. It teaches him that all who will have an interest in Christ's mercy must deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. It forewarns him that the allowed indulgence of a single lust will shut him out of heaven. If he inquires, "what sacrifices does Christ demand of me?" it answers, "all sacrifices—every thing that you have and are." "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Thus while, as we have seen, it cuts up by the roots the spirit of pride, it also eradicates with it the spirit of worldliness, making men at the same time humble and heavenly-minded.

But there is a further difficulty lying in the sinner's way. He is utterly unable, of his own unassisted strength, to deliver himself from the power of indwelling sin, and to raise himself up to a state of holiness and communion with God. This inability lies not in the absence or defect of any of those faculties which are necessary to qualify him to render to God's law perfect obedience, but wholly in the strength of his sinful passions, which, contrary to the dictates of his understanding and conscience, are continually hurrying him into acts of sin, and snapping asunder his resolutions of amendment, like threads of flax in the fire. In yielding himself a servant of sin unto death he is free, consciously free, and it is this that makes his case so dreadful; for, were his sin necessitated, (if such a thing as necessitated sin could be supposed) he would be guiltless. But now his understanding and conscience direct him one way, and his earthly

affections allure him in the opposite direction, and he, of his own free choice, follows them to his destruction. The law is spiritual, but he is carnal, sold under sin. The Ethiopian will as soon change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as he do good, without the help of divine grace, who has all his life been accustomed to do evil. There is as much hope that he will plant himself in the middle of the Niagara, gather its foaming billows in his hands, and roll them back into the blue expanse of Erie, as that he will, self-sustained, resist the torrent of his corrupt affections, and recover himself to holiness. Alas! the mighty current will sweep him over the precipice to perdition. He that attempts, in a spirit of self-dependence to emancipate himself from the fetters of sin, will soon make distressing discoveries of its power over him. He will struggle on only losing ground, instead of gaining it, till at last, in the bitterness of despair, he cries out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

Here the gospel, in the fulness of its grace, comes to his relief. It offers him the all-sufficient help of the Holy Spirit to illuminate his dark mind, to cleanse his polluted soul from the defilements of sin, and to give him the victory over the world. The Spirit of God teaches him his own weakness, not to drive him to despair, but to impel him to lay hold of the proffered aid of heaven. He teaches him to despair only of himself, and this that he may lead him to repose full confidence in the Redeemer of his soul.

By the clear apprehension and hearty reception of all these truths which have been now considered is the soul of the penitent sinner prepared for that blessed union with Christ to which the gospel introduces him. He has been shown the depth of his inward pollution, that he might go for cleansing to the laver of God's grace: he has been made to see his guilt and desert of eternal death, that he might betake himself for pardon to the atonement on Calvary: he has been taught his weakness, that he might lay hold of Christ's strength; his blindness, that he might earnestly seek illumination from God. With each discovery of his emptiness there has been a corresponding discovery of the fulness of the Savior's grace. He has been emptied of himself that he might be filled with all the fulness of God.

With the full and undivided confidence of his soul he casts himself upon his Savior, and thus, through faith, enters into that inward

union of spirit with him, upon which the scriptures so much insist as the well-spring of the believer's life. A new world is now opened to him: new objects of pursuit enlist his energies: new hopes and desires take possession of his bosom: the realities of eternity, coming into his soul through the power of faith, crowd out the vanities of time: the whole current of his thoughts, affections and purposes is turned into a new and nobler channel. He is not so much *reformed* as *changed*—not so much made a *better* man as a *new* man. He has put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and been renewed in the spirit of his mind: he has put on the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. To sum up all, he is made a new creature in Christ, as it is written, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold all things are become new."

Such is the manner in which the gospel proceeds in the work of reclaiming lost sinners. Its first and greatest work is an *internal* work. It is within the soul that it begins to exert its illuminating and sanctifying power. It cleanses the fountain, and thus makes the streams which flow from it pure.

The gospel accomplishes, indeed, such an outward work of reformation as no other means have ever been able to achieve. This, however, it does, not by aiming mainly and directly at it, but by changing the internal state of the soul. Its outward work is properly speaking *directive*. It consists in the application of the holy principles which it has generated in the believer's soul to the various relations and circumstances in which he is placed. Much of the labor of every faithful pastor lies here. He must address himself to the different classes of christians in his flock, and point out specifically the duties which belong to each. The Epistles of the New Testament furnish many specimens of this application of the general principles of the gospel to particular cases. In imitation of these divine models, the faithful pastor will diligently divide to every one in season a portion of truth suited to his individual case. He will not content himself with exhibiting abstractly the nature of faith and love, and humility, and meekness, and all the other christian graces, but he will show the application of these to the particular circumstances in which his hearers are placed. Have any of them been oppressors of their fellow men, he will instruct them to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke, not on the ground of a calculation of worldly profit and

639, but of christian love. Have any of them been intemperate in the indulgence of their bodily appetites, he will tell them to be temperate in all things, not solely or principally because this will be better than intemperance for their worldly estates, but because their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and they are bought with a price. Have any of them a quarrel with their brethren, he will exhort them to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven them. And so of every other specific duty. He will make it the fruit of an inward principle of life, which imparts life to it also, and totally separates it, in its nature, from the same duty performed in a cold-hearted, pharisaical spirit.

If true religion has its seat in the inner man, and if the scriptural method is to begin with first cleansing this from the power of sin, and thus to make the outward conduct pure, it follows that all plans of reform which adopt the contrary method, striking only at specific overt sins without attempting to eradicate from the soul the principle of all sin, a selfish spirit that seeks its own pleasure, irrespective of God's glory and the welfare of his creatures—that all such plans are utterly vain and will disappoint the hopes of those who put their trust in them. No particular work of reform can be permanently advanced any further than men's hearts are brought under the control of the principle of inward faith and love, which, as we have seen above, it is the province of the gospel alone to implant in the soul.— This truth is so obvious that one would think the bare announcement of it sufficient to gain the assent of all christians. And probably no true christians can be found who do not receive it into their creed.— But, in practice, multitudes deny it. Without attempting to bring men's hearts under the enlightening, sanctifying and subduing power of the gospel, they embark in zealous efforts to reform their conduct in respect to this or that particular sin, and they think to carry all before them by the force of their arguments and the vehemence of their denunciations. As this is one of the prominent delusions of the present day, it deserves a serious consideration.

First, then, we remark concerning this method of reform that it is false in theory. It is directly opposed to the scriptural method, which has the common sense of the world on its side. It proceeds upon the assumption that men can be reclaimed from particular forms

of sin while their hearts remain under the uncontrolled dominion of the principle of all sin, a selfish and worldly spirit. Most manifestly this bad inward principle is the bitter fountain whence all the external streams of iniquity take their origin. These streams can neither be dried up nor made sweet while the fountain itself continues to flow. They may be indeed temporarily diverted from one channel into another, but they will be bitter streams still, desolating all before them. The fountain itself must be healed by the salt of the gospel; then all its issues will be wholesome and fertilizing.

But, says the objector, the manner of the Apostles was to preach against men's sins, and preaching against these is preaching the gospel. To this it is obvious to reply that preaching against men's sins (that is, the external forms of sin, as here understood by the objector) was included in the work of the Apostles, but by no means constituted their whole work, nor even the principal part of it. Their first and greatest work was, as we have seen, to dethrone sin in the heart by bringing into it the high and holy principle of faith in Christ, and herein must we, if we would be successful reformers, tread in their footsteps. Preaching the gospel involves preaching against men's sins, but preaching against men's sins does not necessarily involve preaching the gospel. The faithful minister of Christ, for example, will apply the principles of the gospel to the particular sin of intemperance. He will be a thorough-going and efficient temperance preacher. But an avowed infidel may advocate temperance upon worldly principles. So it is with the cause of human freedom, and with every other question of a moral nature. It may be advocated on evangelical ground, or on the basis of worldly policy, and the result will ever correspond with the means employed. If any good cause is divorced from christianity and placed on a mere worldly foundation, worldly men may be greatly pleased with the separation, and (if the question be of an exciting character) may perhaps enlist in it with great energy, and seem about to press it forward to a triumphant issue. But the final result will be a sad disappointment to all the friends of true religion and sound morality. The vitality which the cause brought with itself from its previous connection with christianity may sustain it for a time, but, when this is spent, it will either die of exhaustion, or (which is a result still more deplorable) unsanctified human passion will come in to supply the place of christian

principle: thus that which was the cause of righteousness will be so perverted as to be made an engine of iniquity, and a fearful demonstration will be given to the world the of truth of our Lord's maxim that Satan does not cast out Satan.

If the principle of reform which we are considering is false in theory, it is also, in the second place, most disastrous in its results as evinced by the experience of the churches. This shows that no permanent advance in any work of reform is to be expected any further than it is sustained by the power of the gospel operating in men's hearts. Had it not been for the deep spirit of piety which pervaded the community when the temperance reformation began, it could never have achieved such triumphs as we are now permitted to record.—Has any one the infatuation to suppose that such a movement could have been commenced and carried forward successfully in a heathen community, or even in our own country in a time of general religious declension? The temperance reformation has been sometimes called, in reference to the revivals that followed it, a "John the Baptist," sent to prepare the way before them. But it should not be forgotten that it was preceded also by a series of pure and powerful revivals, by which the religious sensibility of the public had been greatly quickened and strengthened, and a reservoir of religious feeling created, which needed only to be directed into the right channel and guided by enlightened piety. The early temperance reformers were men deeply imbued with the spirit of the gospel. Their efforts were emphatically the fruit of christian love and sympathy. They had their origin in the agony of closet prayer and meditation over the woes of the drunkard, and his poor, abused, broken-hearted, starving family. Although many persons engaged in it who were not themselves the professed followers of Jesus, yet even these took their tone and spirit from such leaders as Beecher, and Chapin, and Beman, and Hewit, and Edwards, and Humphrey, and a host more who constituted the noble band of pioneers in this great work.

These men felt in their inmost soul that, in advocating the cause of temperance, they were advocating that of Christ's church, and they drew all their weapons from the armory of the gospel. It is only in modern times that the attempt has been made by some to separate temperance from christianity. The results of this are already most disastrous, and could those who wish for the separation succeed in their undertaking, the cause would be ruined.

And need it be said that the cause of human rights has been permanently advanced only so far as it has been advocated upon christian principles and in a christian spirit? Slavery had its origin in selfishness, and by selfishness is it sustained. It feeds and cherishes the natural disposition of man to domineer over his fellow beings, and to use their souls and bodies for his own personal advantage. Its fundamental principle, in direct opposition to that of the gospel, is self-seeking and self-pleasing at the expense of the dearest rights of others. It is, therefore, a system congenial to the natural heart. It finds there a soil every way adapted to its growth, a soil in which it shoots forth strong and vigorous roots, and strengthens itself against all opposition from without. It is, moreover, a sin which intertwines itself with the whole fabric of society, becoming a part of the body politic, and bringing every institution and relation of society under its debasing power. Thus, while it multiplies its evils on every side, it multiplies, at the same time, the obstacles to its removal.

Upon what means, now, are we to rely for the overthrow of this gigantic system of oppression, so thoroughly entrenched in the citadel of human depravity?—this all-comprehending sin, which multiplies on every side the fetters of the masters as well as of the slaves! There is but one remedy, **THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**. It was the spirit of christianity that first aroused the anti-slavery spirit in England and in the northern portion of the United States; and now, after years of toil, this is our only hope. Wherever the gospel is cordially received into the heart, it prepares the non-slave-holder to advocate the cause of freedom in the spirit of meekness and love, and, in the bosom of the slave-holder, it sets in operation principles which are directly opposed to the dark and cruel system of slavery, and which must eventually work its overthrow.

We say not that the gospel is simply to be left to its silent influence, without any direct application of its principles to slavery. On the contrary such an application will be found necessary and appropriate. The truth now contended for is that christian principle, both among Northern anti-slavery men and Southern slave-holders must come first in order, and then the application of this principle to the evil in question, and that it is only so far as there is christian principle to *direct* the reformer and *move* the man to be reformed, that permanent success is to be expected. This is the true Bible method,

to which alone God will add his blessing, though not at present the most popular method.

What a strange delusion is this that by heaping resolutions upon resolutions on the subject of slavery, excommunicating all who hold the relation of masters to slaves, without regard to their circumstances, and denouncing as enemies to the cause of freedom those who cannot be made to come into these measures, we are going to break the fetters of southern slavery! What has been gained by this method of reform, unless divided counsels among brethren; "strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings;" and a fierce pharisaical spirit that occupies itself more with other men's sins than its own, are gain?

Alas! we have not in our bosoms enough of the spirit of Christ to carry on any work of reform wisely and successfully. Like the Laodiceans we say that we are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, and know not that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. What we need infinitely more than all things else is the renovation of our faith and love. This is the good fountain whence all the outward streams of good works flow. Pure revivals of religion, carried forward under the influence of the great doctrines of the gospel, independently of all the vexed questions of the present day, would, by filling the hearts of christians with love towards God and man, and bringing them into a meek, humble, steadfast spirit, accomplish a thousand fold more for every good enterprise of reform, than conventions for debate and doubtful disputation. These are important in their place, but they are not the principal means of advancing the cause of freedom. They are of use only so far as there is in the community christian principle to be operated upon. Beyond the work of giving to this a right direction they can effect nothing valuable. Now the point where the cause of human rights, in common with every other good cause, labors, is in the feeble influence which the gospel exerts on the community. Let men's hearts be brought largely under its quickening, purifying and elevating power, and every work of outward reform will go forward with success. But, let the churches invert this order of procedure, and put the anti-slavery reform, or any other reform, before the work of establishing their own hearts in the faith of the gospel, and bringing the hearts of their fellow men under its power, and the issue will be only contention, confusion, and every evil work. They have



reversed the divine order, and cannot succeed. The sooner they discover their error and retrace their steps, the better for themselves and those whose good they seek.

Upon all his brethren in the ministry, the author would affectionately urge the necessity of their earnest co-operation in setting forth before the churches the scriptural principle of reform contended for in the preceding discourse with all possible plainness and fidelity.— You know, brethren, that it is the true principle, and the only one which promises any real good to the cause of human rights. You know, moreover, that it is not, at the present day, the most popular principle: that an effort is made by worldly men, who pursue the opposite method of reform, to overbear the churches, and, by denunciation and misrepresentation, to drive them into the adoption of their unscriptural policy. In such a crisis you are set for the defense of the truth on this great question which is agitating the nation, and which must agitate it for many years to come. You cannot steadfastly maintain the christian principle of reform, without encountering the enmity and reproach of those who advocate the opposite principle. This is, at the present day, an important part of “*the offense of the cross,*” which your Master calls upon you to bear. Be willing to bear it. You will have his presence and help, and may reasonably hope that, by his blessing upon your labors, the churches will be saved from the unspeakable calamity of sacrificing their christian independence to the demands of “men of perverse minds and destitute of the truth,” and adopting a policy which they must, sooner or later, with many tears, retrace.

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