

# THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

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## I. WHY DO WE PUNISH CRIME ?

Vacationing at Saratoga one summer, I saw bulletined for a hearing at one of the sessions of the American Social Science Association, there holding its annual meeting, this topic: "The punishment of crime. Is it for reformation or retribution?" I dropped in to hear the discussion. The paper was by a New York lawyer of repute, and it was an enthusiastic advocacy of the reformatory idea in the administration of law. The topic has had wide attention in recent years. The right understanding of it is of vital concern to good government and public weal. The principles involved concern all government, human and divine. Why do we punish anywhere? Why does a parent punish in the family, or an officer in the State? And if God punishes, why does he punish?

Let us first define some terms, common to this discussion. Justice, in the exact formula of the ancients, is *sum cuique*—to each his own. The figure representing it is the scales held in perfect balance. It is exact requital of desert.

Law, in brief and apart from a mode of procedure, is command imposed by authority. Essential to the idea of law is sanction. Without penalty, or punishment for disobedience, law sinks to the level of mere advice. It is no longer law, but counsel.

## V. SOME SALIENT FEATURES OF PRESBY- TERIAN DOCTRINE.

We shall all agree that the great end to be aimed at by those connected with any branch of the church is to seek to be well instructed in the doctrines and practices of that branch of it with which they are identified. We may rightly assume that the church member who is most fully informed in regard to his own and other churches, is least likely to be bigoted and sectarian, and that he will be the readiest to acknowledge the good there is in other churches, and to rejoice at the same time in their prosperity. In like manner it may be safely said that he who is most intelligently devoted to his own church, and who does most for her best welfare will be found doing most in the long run to advance Christ's cause in the world. It is ignorance that begets sectarianism, and we may be sure that loose church relations mean little work for the Master. This being the case, we may rightly rejoice in every opportunity given us to understand more fully the doctrines and practices of the church with which we are identified.

The Reformed churches holding the Presbyterian system have a communing membership of nearly 5,000,000 which represents a population of about 25,000,000, scattered throughout the whole world. The history of these bodies is an honorable one, and their influence for good has ever been potent. In the sphere of education, in the matter of civil and religious liberty, in the work of Foreign Missions, and in the production of religious literature, these churches have a record of which they need not be ashamed.

But our present theme limits us to the doctrinal contents of our own beloved Presbyterian system, and engages our attention with some of its outstanding features, so that many

inviting and more popular aspects of our noble system must be passed by as we keep closely to our theme.

By Presbyterian doctrine is to be understood the general system of religious truth which is set forth in the Reformed or Calvinistic Creeds, as distinguished from the Romish, the Lutheran, and the Arminian schemes of doctrine. This general system is embodied, with more or less completeness, in many Confessions and Catechisms. It is represented by the Swiss, Dutch and French Reformed or Presbyterian systems. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Churches, with some slight exceptions, are Calvinistic. The Welsh Methodists are also Calvinistic, as their title, Calvinistic Methodists, indicates. The regular Baptists, especially in the South, are strongly Calvinistic in their views of Christian doctrine, and the Congregationalists, both in England and New England, were originally of the same well defined type of doctrine. But in none of the great creeds is this system so clearly and completely exhibited as in our own Confession of Faith and Catechisms, known as the Westminster Standards. It is the outline of this system, therefore, which we are now to have before us in our discussion.

The salient features of Presbyterian doctrine have often been identified with what are called the five points of Calvinism, which some people think are exceedingly sharp points. To refresh our memories, these five points may be briefly stated. The first is entire depravity, which means that man in his natural state is apostate, guilty, and wholly unable to save himself. The second is the unconditional election which teaches that God's choice of the heirs of life and salvation is not conditioned upon anything in them, but is of his good pleasure. The third is particular redemption, which implies that though certain general benefits come to all men through Christ, yet Christ obeyed and died specially to redeem particularly and completely all those given to him by the Father. The fourth is efficacious grace, which

holds that the special renewing grace of the Holy Spirit is operative in the regeneration of the elect. The fifth and last is final perseverance, which announces that all those who are elected, redeemed and regenerated, shall surely persevere unto life eternal.

It is admitted that this is a true delineation of the main features of the Calvinistic system, as they stand over against Arminianism, but the statement of the five points scarcely expresses the whole scope of the Calvinistic system, which is, as we hope to show in this address, exceedingly comprehensive. Moreover, these five points, on the negative side, ought rather to be called the five points of Arminianism, for they were really formulated by the Arminians of Holland, as a remonstrance against the doctrinal conclusions of the Synod of Dort, which were consistently Calvinistic. In addition, our Presbyterian Standards are not framed according to the plan of the five points, but are broader.

We have often thought, therefore, that it is a real pity that the debate between Calvinism and other systems has been cast along the lines marked out by these five points, for the reason mainly that the Calvinism of our Westminster Standard, in its maturity, symmetry and completeness is a distinct advance upon that of the Synod of Dort, in 1618-1619, A. D. This being the case, it may be better in this discussion not to follow the plan of the five points, though the doctrines implied in these points will at times be under consideration. We may gain in completeness of view and thoroughness of treatment if we mark out another line of discussion. In addition, if we were to follow the beaten track of the five points, we would almost surely project the discussion along the lines of burning controversy, which we do not think is desirable in an exposition such as we now desire to make. Hence, to secure completeness of treatment, and to avoid unnecessary controversy, we shall follow another plan in dealing with the

salient points of our Presbyterian doctrine. In following out this plan, we shall first call attention to some general aspects of our doctrinal system which are well defined; and secondly, we shall follow this up by a discussion of some special features of Presbyterian doctrine which are apt in some cases to be overlooked, but which constitute its peculiar excellency.

I. SOME GENERAL SALIENT ASPECTS OF PRESBYTERIAN DOCTRINE.

I. The very first of these is the remarkable scripturalness of our doctrine.

This is a striking feature of our creed when compared with almost any other, for in so many cases these other creeds err either by excess or defect. But our Standards, above all others, honor the Word of God. This appears in the fact that both the Confession and the Catechisms give the Holy Scriptures a first place in their plan. The first chapter in the Confession and the opening questions of both Catechisms speak of the inspired Word of God. Then our whole system of doctrine is drawn from this divine treasury of religious truth and teachings. The great doctrines are often expressed in our Standards in the very language of the Holy Scriptures, and all through they breathe the true spirit of the Word of God.

It is well to keep this fact in mind, for it is sometimes asserted that Presbyterian doctrine is speculative rather than scriptural in its nature. Such a judgment is, to say the least, hasty, and betrays a painful lack of knowledge concerning the way in which our system of doctrine was formulated, as well as of the actual contents of the system itself. A moment's reflection will show this, and at the same time will reveal the wonderful scripturalness of our whole system. When we go back to the Reformation we find that there was in it a breaking away from scholasticism, with its speculative theology, and a return to the direct

study of the Scriptures. Luther's great and abiding work was his translation of the Bible into the German tongue. Calvin in his great commentaries did little more than expound Holy Scripture, and his Institutes is as fine a specimen of biblical theology as we find anywhere. Knox in all his labors was constantly preaching and expounding the Holy Scriptures.

The history of the proceedings of the Westminster Assembly, which framed our Standard, with so much care, and the directions given to that body show plainly that the Assembly was to lay all human philosophy aside, and that they were either to directly deduce their doctrines from the Word of God, or to plainly prove them by that infallible rule. Nothing was allowed a place in our Standards which was not fully sustained by the Holy Scriptures. Hence we find that none of the philosophies of their own day, nor of the ancient times is to be discovered in our creed. It is orderly and systematic, one might say scientific, in its form, but the domination of no philosophy in any way appears in it. The authors of our Standards were bound by no human speculations, but they bowed reverently before the Word of God.

Further, all inspection of the Standards themselves shows very plainly that oftentimes the very form and phrase of Scripture is woven into the fabric of our system. Open the Confession at any chapter or the Catechisms at any question, and you will find this fact to be self-evident. Even at those places where we would naturally expect the flavor of speculation, we find that the Scriptures themselves often provide the form, and always the materials of the doctrinal statements which are made. Only a few examples can be cited to illustrate and confirm this fact. In the second chapter of the Confession which treats of God and the Trinity, the whole statements of the nature and attributes of God are just phrases from the Word of God. The proof texts make it very plain. So in the eighth chapter, which

has for its subject, Christ the Mediator, we find clause after clause taken almost directly from the Scriptures, and woven together with much skill. In the statement of Effectual Calling in the tenth chapter, the four factors of conviction, enlightenment, renewal and persuasion are all taken from the Word of God. The same is true in regard to justification, sanctification, faith and repentance. The language of our creed is cast again and again in the very form of Holy Scripture. This fact is one of the marked features of our system of doctrine. The result is that no branch of the Church has done more to honor and use the Word of God than the Presbyterian. Let no one, therefore, imagine the Presbyterian doctrine is not "founded on and agreeable to the Word of God." There is no creed more scriptural.

2. A second main salient feature of the Presbyterian system of doctrine is its comprehensiveness.

Our doctrines are sometimes said to be very rigid and narrow, and those who adhere to them are often called strict and stern. The strait-laced Presbyterian is almost a by-word, while it is really a compliment. So far as doctrinal statement is concerned, our system is definite, and gives forth no uncertain sound. And it is strict in the type of morality which it prescribes for the conduct of the Christian man. There is an ethical virility about our system which produces a healthy Puritanism in all the relations of life. But to assert that the type of Presbyterian doctrine found in our creed lacks in breadth of vision, or is narrow in the horizon of its outlook is as far from the reality as anything could well be.

The system of doctrine which we hold centers in, and radiates from, the eternal purpose of an omnipotent, omniscient and holy God. All things are from him, through him, and for him. He is the source and end of all there is, and such a doctrine cannot be narrow in its outlook. In a word, it is as comprehensive as the wide sweep of that

eternal purpose according to which all things come to pass.

Hence it is that our system is a sound philosophy, based on the Scriptures, of the origin and continued existence of the universe. God is its author and ruler. All the processes of nature are but the operation, through what we call second causes, of the wise agency of Almighty God. The laws of nature are but an expression of the presence and purpose of God. The discovery of these laws becomes the process of tracing out the thoughts and activity of God, for, according to our doctrine, God is in constant contact with all the complex movements of nature. Hence whenever modern science correctly unfolds and interprets the mysteries of the universe, it but reveals, to some extent, God's modes of working out, in this sphere, his all-embracing plan. And the more fully the unity and continuity of nature is exhibited by scientific inquiry the more plainly will it appear that Calvinism is the true philosophy of nature, and that it has nothing to fear from reverent scientific research. Calvinism is scientific and comprehensive in its views of nature.

The same is true of what our doctrine teaches concerning God's providential oversight of men, as it appears in human history. All through this history it discovers a moral purpose. It teaches that no event is entirely isolated, but has relation to some extent with all other events. It asserts that nothing happens by chance, and that everything is but the unfolding of an eternal plan which moves steadily towards the goal of its consummation. Efficiently or permissively God's purpose is held to have relation to every event which occurs in the history of mankind. Here again the broad reach of our doctrine is evident.

But further, our doctrine is not only the philosophy of the universe, and of human history, it is also the complete philosophy of redemption, resting on the basis of God's Word.. Over against sin which was foreseen and yet permitted by God, and at the same time is bounded and con-



trolled by him, the plan of redemption was provided. In the eternal purpose of God this purpose or plan was made ; it is wrought out in the progress of time, and it shall in due season be fully consummated. Sin was not an incident which took the Almighty by surprise ; nor is the gospel remedy for sin a mere after-thought of God, to which he was driven by the unexpected machinations of Satan. According to our doctrine, the purpose of God in its far-reaching sweep includes all that has been done, all that is now in progress, and all that shall yet be brought to pass in the unfolding of the wonders of redeeming wisdom and saving grace. Who, then, shall say that our system of doctrine has a narrow outlook, or lacks in breadth of vision ? It puts the observer on a lofty mountain top, and enables him to command a wide view of the whole horizon of God's eternal purpose.

In addition, our doctrine presents a noble ideal of the individual Christian man. He is looked upon as an object of divine regard from all eternity, as the subject of saving grace in this life, and as an heir of glory in the world to come. It first makes him a free man in Christ in this life, and then it enables him more and more to attain unto the ideal of that character which requires the reproduction of the image of God. And not only for the individual, but also for the family, and for the State as well, our Calvinistic doctrine has its broad and elevating teaching. In a word, this doctrine is the true philosophy of man, redeemed man, in all the relations in which he is to stand. Its great principles, so clearly wrought out in American Presbyterianism, and nowhere more consistently held than in our branch of that great family, its great principles of a free Church in a free State, and of the rights of the individual conscience are of the utmost importance. To these principles, held by Presbyterians everywhere, the world owes a debt of lasting gratitude, for they are at once the watchword and the guarantee of civil and religious liberty among us.

Such then, in brief, is the comprehensiveness of our system. It is the profound philosophy of nature, of human history and of the individual man, in all his domestic, civil and religious relations.

3. A third general salient feature of our system is its Catholicity of spirit.

Our system is often charged with a narrow spirit, and with an unkindly temper. But a little consideration will reveal the true temper of our system to be generous and kindly to all men, specially towards all who are of the household of faith in the widest sense. This catholicity relates to that spirit of generous fellowship among all Christians which our system constantly inculcates. This catholic, or universal spirit of recognized brotherhood among all who love the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the noblest features of our system. This feature appears in the very terms of our creed, as, for example, in the definition of the visible Church, and in the description given of the communion of saints in the Confession of Faith. "The visible Church consists of all these, throughout the whole world who profess the true religion, together with their children."<sup>1</sup> "All saints, being united to Christ, are united to one another in love and have communion in each others' gifts and graces and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good."<sup>2</sup> And "this communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus."<sup>3</sup>

These great statements of the Confession guide Presbyterians in all their relations with their brethren in other churches, and out of them grows that intelligent catholicity of spirit which appears among Presbyterians every-

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<sup>1</sup>Confession of Faith: Chapter xxv: 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, Chapter xxvi: 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, Chapter xxvi: 2.

where. We, consequently, hold no close communion views, and we exclude no one from Christian fellowship who is in good standing in any evangelical church. Further, we receive members from other churches on presentation of their credentials, and thereby recognize their ecclesiastical standing as complete. We also receive ministers from other evangelical churches without re-ordination, if they have the educational qualifications, and accept our system of doctrine, and in this way we recognize the validity of their orders. We can, with perfect consistency, unite in any proper inter-denominational movement, such as the work of the Bible Society, or the Young Men's Christian Association, and transgress no principle of our system. We even go so far as to invite to the Lord's Table all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, who have made profession of faith in him, and who are in regular standing in their own churches. Surely these, and other facts which might be mentioned, amply reveal the broad and consistent catholicity of our doctrine and practice. We rightly maintain a healthy and vigorous denominationalism, yet we refuse to be dominated by any narrow sectarianism. Presbyterians have often been persecuted for Christ's sake, but they have seldom persecuted others.

In no spirit of boasting or self-praise it may be added that for all interdenominational and public educational and philanthropic schemes Presbyterians in this land, and in every land, give of time, and energy, and money more than their share. Moody is reported to have said that if he wanted \$100,000 for any good cause, he would expect to get about \$80,000 of it from the Presbyterians. This is just what we would expect from the practical effects of our doctrine of the visible church, and of the terms of communion which we hold. Hence, both doctrinally and practically, our Presbyterianism breathes no narrow spirit, but is as generous and catholic in its temper as is the love and mercy of God.

4. A fourth general salient feature of our system is its symmetry, or well balanced harmony of parts.

This is an exceedingly attractive feature of our doctrine, especially to thoughtful and logical minds. Some care is needed here to have a right understanding of our system, for it is sometimes charged that it is one-side and extreme, and needs some toning down. It is also hinted in certain quarters that our system gives undue emphasis to certain points, and these points are at best obscure or mysterious. Against all such allegations we are prepared to maintain that our system is wonderfully symmetrical, and possesses a harmonious balance in all its parts such as is to be found in no other system. There is nothing one-sided about it, and it puts the emphasis just where God has put it in His Word. It is this striking feature of our doctrine which has always made it attractive to the most thoughtful minds. The experience and testimony of Dr. Thornwell and Dr. Girardeau, neither of whom was reared a Presbyterian, but both of whom became devoted adherents of our system, as the result of their own investigations in their mature years, fully confirms the claim we are now making.

In this connection it should be carefully noted that the contrast between Calvinism and Arminianism is not always clearly conceived. It is sometimes said that Calvinism views the facts and doctrines of the scheme of grace from the divine side chiefly, and that Arminianism regards them mainly from the human point of view. Then it is hinted that both of these are defective, and that the truth lies somewhere between them. To this way of putting the contrast between typical Arminianism and generic Calvinism we cannot agree. Such a way of putting the contrast would be true only of Arminianism, and supralapsarian Calvinism. But this is not the Calvinism of our creed, nor was this type really held by Calvin, nor is it found in any of the Reformed or Calvinistic creeds. Only a few writers from time to time have been supralapsarians. Generic Cal-

vinism as represented by our Westminster Standards is a well balanced middle view, which avoids the extremes just stated, and relates the human and divine factors in the scheme of grace just as God has related them in His Word. In this way our doctrine balances the sovereignty of God and human freedom, and gives to each its proper sphere, only subordinating the human to the divine as the Scriptures teach, and as the relation between creator and creature demands.

If the Arminian so exalts human freedom as to limit God's sovereignty, and if the supralapsarian so emphasises divine sovereignty as to impair human freedom, our system gives both their proper place, and holds that human freedom is a fact, and yet God governs through that freedom. By the operation of efficacious grace the sinner is made able and willing to believe and obey the Gospel, and in this way all the conditions of human freedom are preserved. At the same time the operation of this grace is in accordance with God's eternal and sovereign purpose wrought out by the Holy Spirit, and thus all the requirements of divine sovereignty are secured. Moreover, we do not feel ourselves under any obligation to reconcile divine sovereignty and human freedom at all their points of contact. But we do feel bound to hold both together, because each is fully attested by its own unimpeachable evidence in experience and in Scripture. Most earnestly, therefore, do we claim for our system a symmetry and balanced consistency at this central point of view.

This same symmetry and cautious moderation appears at various crucial points in the details of our system. It does not commit us to positions of doubtful controversy, round which theologians have waged fierce warfare. The doctrines of the Trinity and of the Deity of Christ are stated in such a reserved and careful manner as to show but little trace of the burning controversies which have raged round these cardinal doctrines. In regard to the nature of man,

theologians have earnestly debated whether his constitution is dual or triple ; that is, whether man is made up of two essences, body and soul, or of three, body, soul and spirit. But our standards do not absolutely commit us to one or the other of these positions. The same is true in regard to the view taken of the connection between Adam and the human race, and especially in regard to the way in which the whole race has become sinful by reason of Adam's apostacy. Touching this point there has been endless, and often bitter, controversy, and perhaps the debate can never be finally settled. But our system takes a careful and consistent middle view here, and avoids extremes. The Pelagian, on the one hand, denies that there is any moral connection between Adam and the race in the matter of sin, and hence he can give no good account of universal sin among men. The realist, on the other hand, so merges the race in Adam in the matter of sin, that the basis of individual responsibility for each man is virtually destroyed. But our system, holding both the natural and federal headship of Adam, presents an admirable middle view, which fully accounts for the facts of sin, and does ample justice to the teachings of God's Word upon the matter of sin. In like manner our system teaches a symmetrical middle view in regard to that central doctrine known as the atonement. Upon this vital doctrine our system plainly teaches the vicarious and sacrificial nature of the obedience and death of Christ, by which an adequate moral equivalent for our sin was rendered to the law and justice of God. Thus the superficial extreme of the example and moral influence views of the atonement are avoided, and it equally guards against the other excessively literal view known as the commercial theory. At every point, therefore, our doctrine has moderation and symmetry. It is irenic on all points where extremes appear.

But nowhere does this moderation and symmetry appear more clearly than in the doctrine of the Church, and of her

government under Christ the head thereof. Here one of the great excellencies of our system appears. In our system we find the headship of Christ, the functions of the rulers in the Church, and the rights and privileges of the members of the Church all related to each other in the most harmonious and symmetrical way. The result is that the honor of Christ, the delegated authority of the rulers in the Church, and the rights and liberties of the people under their spiritual rule, are all finely balanced over against each other. In this way the centralization of all forms of Episcopacy, on the one hand, and the individualism of all types of Independency on the other, are happily escaped, by the fine balance which our system maintains between the corporate unity of the whole, and the individual liberty of the parts. Here order and freedom, rule and liberty, are finely blended.

But, further, this fine balance and symmetry of parts appear in the practical working of our system of polity, with its gradation of representative courts in the church. If, for example, any member feels that he did not get justice in a trial before the session of his local church, he can appeal to the Presbytery, and from the Presbytery to the Synod, and again from the Synod to the General Assembly. In this way he has every possible opportunity to secure an impartial hearing, and to obtain full justice at the hands of the courts of the Church, as, under Christ the Head, these courts represent the body of his people, and administer the power lodged primarily in that body. Surely Presbyterianism is symmetrical, and an eirenicon between Episcopacy and Independency. In it both Scripture and common sense are to be found.

Thus the four salient general features of our doctrinal system have been outlined. It has been seen that our system is Scriptural, comprehensive, catholic and symmetrical to a remarkable degree. Now for the rest of our time we shall give attention to some special salient features of our system.

## II. SOME SPECIAL SALIENT FEATURES OF OUR SYSTEM.

Many of these special features might be selected, but time permits the consideration of only a few on this occasion. In making choice of certain features of our system, we shall be guided by two considerations. The one is the importance and value of the points themselves considered, and the other is the necessity of giving proper emphasis to certain features of our system which are sometimes partially obscured. By the guidance of these two considerations, we shall try to give a brief exhibit of some particular aspects of our doctrines, which may place them before our minds in their proper proportions.

1. First of all the Sovereignty of God is a special feature of our system which merits attention first of all. This sovereignty consists in the unerring oversight and almighty control of all things by the all-powerful and ever wise agency of the one living and true God. He is high over all blessed for evermore. He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. One doctrine puts us on our guard against narrow ways of thinking at this point. If we are not mistaken this tendency to narrowness of vision sometimes appears even among the adherents of Calvinism. We shall not be misunderstood when we say that we are inclined to think that the precious fact of election, or the choice of the heirs of salvation is sometimes so pushed into the foreground that at least a wrong angle of vision for the whole vista of God's sovereignty is obtained. Election is a vital and very precious component part of our system, but it is not the fundamental fact in the Reformed doctrine, as exhibited in our Standards.

The sovereignty of God is the basal fact and the structural principle of the entire system. That sovereignty exhibits itself in various ways in the carrying out of God's all-embracing purpose or plan, known as his decrees, according to which He foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. This sovereignty is operative in his rule over the various



activities of nature, where each form of existence is governed according to the nature, and in harmony with the laws which God has prescribed. It also emerges in his moral government over men and angels, even over fallen men and angels. It appears very definitely in the arena of redemption, where God's purpose to save by the appointed remedy the heirs of salvation, is properly termed election. The elect are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and were given to Christ by the Father to be His seed. In due time they are redeemed by him, and one by one they are effectually called by the Holy Spirit, and are thus brought into vital union with Christ. In this way they come into possession of the benefits of Christ's redemption, and in due time they are finally made meet for heaven. Thus the sovereignty of God is seen to be the central principle of our system, and that election is the application of this principle in the sphere of redemption.

Let it never be forgotten that the scope of this central principle of our system is very extensive. It embraces all nature, and extends along the entire current of human history. It includes the entire of the operation of God's redeeming grace among men, and it extends its wide sweep over all the institutions and activities of mankind. Almighty God, whose sovereignty is over all, is King of kings and Lord of lords, as well as King and Lawgiver in Zion. The powers that be in civil government are ordained of God, and the affairs of all the nations are under his providential control. In the Headship of Christ also over his Church, and over all other things in relation to and for the benefit of the Church, we have an important mediatorial aspect of this sovereignty. Such then is the basal fact in our system, the very core of our scheme of doctrine. Before a holy and mighty God, who is sovereign supreme and gracious, our system bids bow with profound reverence, godly fear and filial trust.

2. A second special salient feature of our system is the

large place it gives to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

This is one of the salient features of our system which is often obscured in its interpretation. When the proposal was made, by our sister church a few years ago, to revise the Confession of Faith, it was seriously proposed by some to add something more definite in regard to the Holy Spirit and his activity. Such a proposal betrayed ignorance of the fact that our Standards do lay great stress upon this very matter, for a little careful study will show that the agency of the Holy Spirit is assumed all through the Confession and Catechisms. Follow me for a little, in an attempt to lift this salient feature of our system into its proper place of honor in it.

First of all, the Holy Spirit is the divine originator of Holy Scripture by revelation and inspiration.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Word of God is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> And in addition the inward illumination of the same spirit is necessary for the saving understanding of what is revealed in the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup> And, to crown all, the Supreme judge in matters of religion is the Holy Spirit speaking in the Word.<sup>4</sup>

Then in creation and providence the Holy Spirit has part with the Father and the Son.<sup>5</sup> He is the Executive of the Godhead in these spheres. Under the Old Testament dispensation the operation of the Holy Spirit instructed and built up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah through whom they had salvation.<sup>6</sup> Then in constituting the person of Christ as the God-man through the incarnation, the

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<sup>1</sup>Confession of Faith, Chapter 1:2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, Chapter 1:5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, Chapter 1:6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, Chapter 1:10.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, Chapter IV:1.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, Chapter VII:6.

Holy Spirit performed an exceedingly important part.<sup>1</sup> And then, all through our Lord's public ministry he was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure.<sup>2</sup>

In like manner our system gives great prominence to the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the way by which the benefits of Christ's redemption are applied to its subjects, at the very first stage, effectual calling, by which the elect are united to Christ, is by the Word and Spirit of Christ.<sup>3</sup> And all subsequent quickening and spiritual removal are due to the working of the same spirit.<sup>4</sup> Then Sanctification throughout is by means of the Word and Spirit of God dwelling in believers.<sup>5</sup> And it is by the agency of the same Spirit that they are enabled to die into sin and to live unto righteousness.<sup>6</sup> And not only so, but the exercise of saving faith is the result of the work of the Spirit in the hearts of those who believe.<sup>7</sup> And repentance also is a saving grace wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Word and Spirit of God.<sup>8</sup> And still more, good works are simply the fruits of the Spirit, who dwelling in believers, works in them both to will and to do of God's good pleasure, as they, in turn, strive to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.<sup>9</sup> Perseverance also is the result of the abiding of the Spirit and seed of God in the heirs of salvation.<sup>10</sup> And assurance of salvation is the product of the Spirit of adoption, Who is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.<sup>11</sup> And, to crown all, the sacraments are made effectual, as a means of grace, and as channels of spiritual good, only by the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, Chapter VIII:2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, Chapter VIII:3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, Chapter X:I.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, Chapter X:2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, Chapter XIII:I.

<sup>6</sup>Larger Catechism, Question 75.

<sup>7</sup>Confession of Faith, Chapter xiv: 1.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, Chapter xv: 2.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, Chapter xvi: 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, Chapter xvii: 2.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, Chapter xviii: 2.

working of the Holy Spirit in the heart.<sup>1</sup> And the preaching of the word has efficacy unto salvation and edification, only as it is blessed to spiritual and saving results by the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

We may rightly conclude, therefore, that we do but simple justice to our standards when we recognize the place of honorable prominence which they give to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We need no new doctrine upon this vital point. We only need in our thought and teaching to rise up to the lofty doctrine of our system in regard to the person and activity of the Holy Spirit.

3. A third special salient feature of our system is the profound view it gives of the unity of the human race, especially in its moral aspects and relations.

The moral unity of the human race as taught in our system gives the key to solve not a few problems in anthropology, and it affords the best philosophy of the race sin of mankind ever set forth. The pressing question of the ages and of every philosophy is the origin of sin. And a particular query under this great question is as to how the whole race seems to have fallen under its awful effects. The patent fact is that sin rests universally upon the race. All men seem to be born into the world with a moral history behind them, so that they, from the first lie under dire evils for which they are not directly responsible, and from which they are unable to set themselves free.

The question then is, how are these evils and man's sad state under them to be explained in harmony with the justice and goodness of God? This is the problem of every theodicy. Shall we with the Pelagian deny the reality of the apostasy of the race through the sin of Adam, and hold that each generation comes into the world practically in the same moral condition as Adam was when created? Or must we,

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<sup>1</sup>Confession of Faith, Chapter xxvii: 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, Larger Catechism, Question 155.

with Origen and some others, suppose that men had a moral probation in a pre-existent state of some sort in which they failed to stand the conditions of that probation; and as a penal consequence for this failure they were condemned to be born into this world in that sinful and disabled condition in which they unhappily find themselves. Or shall we assert, with the Realist and others, that the individuals of the race are all so bound up together in one, and were so actually one in Adam as a single substance or as a unitary nature that they were really present and actually sinned in and with Adam, in such a way that when they come into the world they have a sinful moral history behind them, and the penalty of sin upon them.

Now a little reflection will serve to show that all these attempts to explain the problem are ineffectual, and are cumbered with various difficulties. The Pelagian not only ignores scripture but goes squarely in the face of the facts of human experience, when he asserts that men come into this world with no such moral disabilities as lead them invariably into sin. The pre-existence theory is a pure speculation, which has no Scripture to support it, and is ever hampered by the fact that no man has any memory of any such an important moral experience as this pre-existent probation implies. And the realistic theory in all its forms is at best quite vague, and is in danger of providing no proper basis for the personality and responsibility of individual men.

But what about our own system on this knotty point? Can it supply a better solution of this great question? We assert with a good deal of confidence that our system can give a better solution than any of these mentioned. Its answer does justice to the teachings of Scripture and to the facts of experience. It regards Adam as the natural root and federal head of the whole race. As the root of the race he is the source or fountain whence all the individuals of the race of mankind have come by natural descent. As the federal head of the race he acted as the representative

of the race which was regarded as a moral constitutive unity in him, in such a manner that the personality and responsibility of the individuals of the race are in no way impaired. Moreover, the natural rootship of Adam accounts for heredity depravity, and his federal headship lays the basis for imputed guilt. By this means all the facts of guilt and depravity, as they rest on the race, can be reasonably explained. Guilt is imputed as liability to penalty, so that the evils under which the race lies have a proper ethical basis given them. Depravity is inherited, and in this way all the facts of human experience which modern science is bringing out in regard to heredity in the moral sphere are accounted for. In addition, the very latest conclusions of sociological research which discovers a corporate unity and organic solidarity in the human race are in perfect harmony with our doctrine at this point. Hence in our doctrine here, which is an expression of Scripture teaching, we find that it is in full accord with the latest conclusions of reliable science.

Hence our doctrine of race unity in relation to Adam and of race sin by reason of his apostasy is only Scriptural and rational, but it harmonizes with the very latest results of modern science in regard to the inbeing of the race in Adam, and in regard to the racial basis for some of the profound features of original sin. Moreover, the stress which our system lays upon the heinousness of sin and of man's helplessness under it, but magnifies the glory of the wisdom and grace which delivers from its dreadful bondage, and cleanses from its debasing pollution.

4. A fourth striking special feature of our system is the large place it gives to the activity of Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace and the Redeemer of His people.

This mediatorial and redeeming activity of Christ in the world is the central fact of the gospel, and very diverse views are held as to its nature and scope. These views will largely determine the type of theology and of religious life

which appears in any branch of the church. Our system is exceedingly rich and complete in its teaching on this vital point, and we may be sure that so long as we remain true to this teaching we cannot but continue to be thoroughly evangelical.

According to our doctrine the redeeming activity of Jesus Christ, or of God through Christ, is exercised in three distinct yet closely related ways. Our system finds these three in the Scriptures, and it gives full scope to each of them, and yet blends them all harmoniously in Christ's mediatorial work as our divine Redeemer.

He is the prophet of the covenant of grace. In this capacity He is the teacher sent from God, and as such he makes known to men God's will for their salvation. In this aspect of his redeeming activity he is the revealer and the revelation of God in all the ages. During the Old Testament period and prior to his personal advent among men, He, through the prophets and institutions of the Old Testament, revealed the purposes and will of God. During his earthly career, especially in the period of his public ministry, he was the medium of the revelation of and from God. Then since his ascension to the right hand of the Father, all saving truth in all the ages has been, and is still mediated by Him. Thus our system lays great stress upon the revealing and teaching functions of Jesus Christ, and we go heartily with those who make a great deal of this aspect of his saving work.

Again, his redeeming activity appears in the fact that He is also the priest of the covenant. As such He offered up himself once for all a true sacrifice for our sins, and he continues, as our advocate with the Father, to make continual intercession for all those who look unto Him for salvation and hope. Here one of the cardinal aspects of Christ's redeeming activity appears. He saves men not merely as a divine prophet, or as a teacher sent from God, by means of the truth, or by his splendid example alone. As a true

priest and offering for sin, He saves us by atoning for the guilt of our sins, and by rendering such an advocacy on our behalf before God as we require. To this end he kept the law perfectly, and thus obtained righteousness for us; and He suffered under the law and thereby removed the penalty from us, and so laid the ground for the pardon and acceptance as righteous of all who come to God by Him. This priestly activity is sacrificial and vicarious in its nature, so that thereby God is rendered propitious, and our guilt is expiated. Then on the basis of this satisfaction, that aspect of his redeeming activity known as his intercession is conducted. According to our system this saving priestly activity of Jesus Christ is continually operative through all the ages. He is our great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, and He ever liveth to make intercession for us. This is a vital aspect of our doctrinal system, and is to be held fast.

Once more, Christ's redeeming activity is further exercised in the kingly rule which He maintains and administers over his church, and over all other things in relation to the church, and for its welfare. All power or authority is given unto Him in heaven and on earth; and in a manner which men are too slow fully to realize. He sits on the throne of mediatorial rule, and sways that sceptre of universal dominion, which shall eventually cause every knee to bow to him, and shall make even his enemies his footstool. His is a universal umpire, and it is destined to be world-wide in due season.

This then is the wide three-fold scope of the redeeming activity of Jesus Christ as set forth in our system. On the basis of the covenant, and for the sphere of redemption our system is Christo-centric, though its wider aspects are theocentric. Its salient feature here is that it exalts Christ. It may be safely said that no other system does such justice to the teaching of Scripture in reference to the redeeming activity of Jesus Christ among men. He is at once the prophet, the priest and the king of the covenant of grace,



and as its mediator He performs necessary redeeming services for all those who come to God by Him. As prophet He issues the Gospel message and makes known the terms of salvation, as priest He makes good the conditions of salvation, ratifying the covenant by His blood, and making intercession, and as king He dispenses and applies the benefits of the covenant by his Word and Spirit. And with wonderful adaptation to the needs of sinful men all of this activity is perfectly suited to meet that need. As prophet He instructs their ignorance, and gives them the knowledge of the way of life, as priest He atones for their sins and brings them acceptably to God, and as king He subdues them to himself, rules over them with a gentle sway and defends them with his almighty arm. Whatever may eventually be thought of Christ's threefold activity as redeemer, it is evident that no system that leaves any one of them out or fails to blend them together in its teaching can ever be scripturally complete, or suitably adapted to the needs of men, who need a Saviour from sin. We lay a great deal of stress upon this salient feature of our system.

5. A fifth notable salient feature of our doctrine is the unique place which it gives to the Spiritual Fatherhood of God, and the Spiritual Sonship of believers.

The doctrine of adoption contained in our system deserves special notice, for it is one of the salient features of our system which is in danger of being obscured at the present day. Indeed, there seems to be a good deal of confusion and some exaggeration among modern theologians in regard to the whole subject of the Fatherhood of God, the sonship of believers in Christ, and brotherhood of believers thereby. A clear understanding of the doctrine of our system on this point would remove the confusion, relieve the exaggeration, and give simple scriptural ideas upon the whole subject in its threefold aspects of Fatherhood, Sonship and Brotherhood.

In the Scriptures, according to our system, God is repre-

sented as Father in three distinct senses. First in a trinitarian sense He is the Father of his only begotten Son; secondly, in a natural sense as the Father of all his creatures by creation; and, thirdly, in a spiritual sense as the Father of all those who truly believe upon his Son, Jesus Christ. Our doctrine clearly recognizes these three senses, and in doing so, gives a well defined place to spiritual Fatherhood and Sonship. To as many as believe upon his Son, Jesus Christ, God gives the right or authority to become the sons or children of God by that faith. They thereby receive the spirit of adoption whereby they are able to cry Abba, Father. Hence to confound this spiritual Fatherhood with mere natural fatherhood is to do serious injustice to the full teaching of Scripture, and to rob spiritual Fatherhood and Sonship of half its preciousness. On the other hand to confound spiritual sonship entirely with either justification or regeneration, both of which it certainly implies, is to introduce an element of confusion from another source. Our system, with its doctrine of adoption and spiritual sonship, strikes the happy medium here in an admirable way. It gives a separate place for the fact of spiritual sonship of all true believers. This it does on the firm basis of those Scriptures which speak of believers as Sons of God, as His children, and as being the heirs of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and unfading.

We lay special stress on this fact. It may be that some theologians have given reason for the emphasis which is given to the Fatherhood of God in recent theological thought, for they have not done justice to the doctrine of adoption. All that is needed is a fair and sympathetic interpretation of our own system at this point. Such an interpretation will bring out all the excellency of our doctrine, and will show that it needs really no new additions to do justice to the Fatherhood of God.

6. A sixth well marked feature of our system is the solid

basis which it provides for the entire security of all God's children, as members of the household of faith.

Few things in our noble system of doctrine are more valuable in themselves, or more cheering and comforting to believers than its teaching in regard to the assured and stable security of all those who have laid hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel. It teaches that all who are truly united with Christ, and really regenerated, shall certainly retain the seed of spiritual life in their souls, and that they may rest secure in the assurance that the work of grace will be carried on till complete. Or, to put it in another way, all those who by faith in Christ are justified, regenerated and adopted, are thereby placed in a relation of abiding favor and acceptance with God, through the merit and abiding mediation of Jesus Christ. Hence an abiding relation of favorable acceptance having been established in justification, and an assured state of grace having been originated in regeneration to be continued in sanctification, then neither shall that relation be ever broken or that state of grace ever be destroyed. Thus their security is complete, for the believer is surrounded by the munitions of the divine purpose, has his hope fixed on the merit of Christ, and enjoys at once the protections of God's providence, and the working of grace in his heart. The resources of almighty power and infinite grace are enlisted on his behalf. Christ's work for us, and the Spirit's work in us give ample guarantee of the believer's security. In our rich doctrine of justification, resting on the atoning work of Christ, and in our deep doctrine of regeneration, growing out of the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, we find the firm foundation which is solid rock upon which assured hope may rest.

No other system provides such a basis for the believers security. The mere moralist, professing to stand in his own moral strength on merely legal ground, may at any time fall, and consequently cannot have security, for he has no remedy

for his evil deeds. The Romanist even, trusting for life and salvation to the church cannot have an unfailing sense of security, for misgivings will ever arise as to whether the church really can and actually has so attended to matters that there will be no failures. An infallible God and his infallible Word are more reliable than a professedly infallible church of recent date. And the Arminian, who makes justification consist in pardon of sins only, and not also in acceptance as righteous also on the basis of Christ's righteousness imparted to us cannot provide abiding security for believers. He is liable at all times to the contingency of falling away from the state of grace. In fact, every time the believer sins he must have his justification renewed, and is always in a condition of unstable equilibrium. Hence, if the Arminian is to obtain security he must discover it on the believer's side alone, and this naturally leads to some form of perfectionism wherein believers shall not sin, and hence retain their sense of security and consequent assurance only because they do not fall into sin. It is thus evident that defective views of justification like the Arminian which makes it consist in pardon only, logically lead to falling from grace; and falling from grace renders security and accompanying assurance impossible save on the unscriptural hypothesis of entire sanctification or sinless perfection.

But our doctrine founds the believer's security, not on his character or deeds, but on the complete work of sanctification which Christ rendered and which is made good to him in justification, and on the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Thereby his relation to God's law is fixed and secure in the divine favor, and the work of grace is pledged to go on, with all its fluctuations, till the believer is presented faultless and complete in Christ on that great final day. This is our doctrine of the believers security, which grounds his assurance of life and salvation, and pledges his perseverance to the end. We do well to hold fast and rejoice in our strong and comforting doctrine at this point.

7. A seventh salient feature of our system of a special nature is the special stress which it places in ethics, or the practical conduct of life.

We have seen that our system has a clear and comprehensive outline of the Christian doctrines, and we now turn to consider its ethical teaching. If its doctrines are clear cut, its ethical code is likewise quite rigid. This is a feature of our system not always rightly understood. The idea sometimes prevails that our system is hard, stiff doctrine without much reference to the practical conduct of life. That this is far from correct, everyone knows who has studied the exposition of the commandments given in our Catechisms. It is true that our doctrine gives no place to good works as the ground of our salvation, but it very strongly insists on the keeping of the moral law as the rule of conduct for the Christian man. The result of this position is the production of a strong, sturdy set of virtues on a true Gospel basis. The faith is shown by its works.

That this is true is fully confirmed by noting the type of men and women this system of teaching has produced. It makes men humble and tender, because it causes them to feel that their salvation is of God and purely of grace. It makes them strong and heroic, for it teaches them that God requires a perfect obedience in the life they are now living, and it assures them that He will grant grace even more fully to obey. It also makes them patient and persevering, for it tells them that God is working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure as they are working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. It has, as a matter of fact, made heroic martyrs and liberty-loving patriots. It has given men such a vivid sense of God's presence that they were inspired to noble deeds of self-sacrifice. It has engendered a spirit of patient submission and trust in the midst of trial, for it gives assurance that all things work together for good to them who love God and who are the called according to His purpose. Hence the ethical strict-

ness, and almost puritan rigor of our system is one of its features which is worthy of careful regard. We shall be wise not to depart from it.

8. The last salient feature of our system now to be noted is its admirable teaching regarding the Sacrament, especially the Lord's Supper.

In many respects this is one of the best features of our whole system of doctrine. We should always give due importance to the sacraments of our Church, and to all that they imply. In general we ought carefully to note the fact that our system gives a sacrament for each of the great sets of facts implied in the Gospel. What Christ has done for us is represented in a general way in the Lord's Supper, and what the Holy Spirit does in us is exhibited in the ordinance of baptism. This is the order and symmetry of our system compared with some others at this point.

Space compels us to pass by the ordinance of baptism with brief notice, though it would well repay us to consider the teaching of our system, both as regard to the mode and subjects of baptism. We can note only one thing, and that is the clear teaching of our system in regard to the covenant relative of the children of professed Christians. They are members of the Church by virtue of their birth, and on the basis of infant Church membership infant baptism securely rests. Both the doctrinal importance and the practical value of this aspect of our system can scarcely be overestimated. In no system is there such good teaching, for it avoids the errors of those who teach baptismal regeneration, and the mistakes of those who deny infant Church membership and baptism. Let us hold fast our good doctrine here.

We can do little more than mention a few things about the Lord's Supper. The doctrine of this ordinance stated in our standards is well worthy careful study, for it is truly scriptural and deeply spiritual in its nature. It sets forth a doctrine, which if correctly and intelligently held,

will forever guard us against all ritualism, formalism and sacramentarianism, and equally protect us from taking trivial or superficial views of this holy ordinance. It holds wise middle ground.

The doctrine of our system on this subject regards the Supper of our Lord, as a divinely appointed seal or pledge of the covenant of grace, and it therefore guarantees the bestowment of the benefits which that covenant provides and offers. It utterly rejects the notion of the real presence of the body, soul, blood and divinity of our Lord in the bread and wine of the ordinance, as transubstantiation teaches. Nor can it accept the magical presence of the humanity of Christ in, with and under the elements as consubstantiation maintains. Neither can it be entirely content with a merely symbolic or pictorial presence of our Lord in the Supper where the elements merely represent certain truths, as some assume. Our system rather maintains, with fine balance and profound insight, the truly spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to which Christ is present, with all his saving benefits, to the faith of the true believer, just as the bread and wine are present to the senses of the worthy partaker of the Holy Supper. According to our doctrine, further, the Holy Spirit renders the Lord's Supper a real means of spiritual good to the true believer, who rightly partakes of the emblems of Christ and his saving benefits. Thus in no ritualistic manner, but in a deeply spiritual way, the Lord's Supper becomes a means of grace and channel of spiritual good, by the blessing of Christ on it, the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the observer, and the faith of the recipient of it. This in the briefest way is a statement of what may be regarded as one of the salient features of our system which gives it superiority over all others.

Four general, and eight special features of our Presbyterian doctrine have been hurriedly passed under review.

From what we have learned we shall surely be thankful for the splendid heritage which we have in our doctrinal system, and we shall also be ready to maintain it, in all its scriptural completeness in our own restless age. Whatever changes may be made in the historic doctrines of the Church, in the future, and however further the Church may, by the Holy Spirit in coming days, be led into the knowledge of God's will, as set forth in Holy Scripture, we are strongly inclined to believe that it must take its point of departure from our system, and build upon its strong foundations. Our system gathered up into itself all the streams which flowed along the channel of the Reformation, and is the most mature, and scriptural creed ever formed.

If there is to be any real doctrinal advance it must be, not by setting aside our system, but by setting out from it. In the meantime, we shall be wise always to seek to adapt our splendid system of doctrine to the pressing needs of our own changing times. Nor shall we forget our duty to set forth the strong, saving truths of our system to all men, as far as lies in our power.

Geneva! Holland! Scotland! The nurseries of this grand type of doctrine. John Calvin! William the Silent! John Knox, the noble exponents of it in these lands. Think what these have done! Geneva, the blazing light from which many a bright Reformation torch was kindled. Holland, whose sturdy patriots held in check for years the proud hosts of Spain, as her own dykes held back the rolling sea. Scotland, whose little sea-girt isle has made a deeper impression, for its size and its number of people, upon the civilization of the world than any other.

What might the world have been today but for these, and for God's power exercised through them. They, under God, made possible the Great Britain and America of today. And these have wrested the sceptre of the world's dominion from the Latin races and the Romish hierarchy, and



placed it in the hands of the Anglo Saxon and the Protestant. And by this agency civil and religious liberty has been established on a secure foundation, and the heralds of the cross have been sent into all lands.

May God make us more worthy of our noble heritage, and may it be ours, in some degree, to be faithful in our day and generation to all the responsibility which rests on us, as the heirs of so much that is at once humbling and inspiring.

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