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ARTICLE I.

MINISTERS' WIDOWS AND ORPHANS.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly, a memorial looking to some positive and permanent provision for the families of deceased ministers, was presented by the Rev. Dr. J. Leighton Wilson. If his scheme, or any kindred scheme, should be got into successful operation, as the fruit of this initial effort, he may undoubtedly regard it as the crowning work of his useful life. Because the imperative need of such a provision presses upon the Church with accumulating weight year by year; because the manifest interest excited throughout her bounds since the earliest discussion of this topic demonstrates the fact that the Church is beginning to recognise this ponderous obligation; and because no enterprise that has engaged the attention of her worthiest sons is so environed with difficulties as this.

In the discussion at Mobile, two or three things were formally expressed or constantly implied. First, that the preaching of the gospel, from Presbyterian pulpits at least, seems to involve the necessity of poverty in the preacher. That is to say, the

ARTICLE V.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON THE PRECEDING ARTICLE.

We differ with our correspondent, the author of the foregoing article, but we also agree with him; and the points in respect to which we differ, though perhaps not fewer, may yet be of less consequence than those concerning which we agree.

In the first place, we differ with him as to his statement (p. 212,) that the first report of the Book of Church Order was returned to the Assembly loaded down with numerous objections, and condemned for its violent and unnecessary changes, and that this was the result of extensive consideration and rigid criticism. We are of opinion, on the contrary, that it was but little considered, and never loaded down with objections. The Church was preoccupied with the public calamities and distress, and never intended to pronounce the changes proposed to be violent and unnecessary, but was led to reject the Book mainly from being not in a condition to give them any adequate consideration. And should our Presbyteries be led again this spring to express dissatisfaction in general with the Book, it will be due, we apprehend, to the difficulty of having adequately considered them more than to any other cause. The truth is that the Form of Government and the Book of Discipline are weighty documents, and the revision proposed is very thorough and covers many points. And although what is proposed is simply a more logical and scientific development of our system, yet many of our brethren have not turned their attention to a consideration of them in time to come to a conclusion favorable to their adoption. To get fifty different bodies of men to agree to two long reports touching many different matters is not a task of easy accomplishment. We may add as helping to explain correctly the almost unanimous rejection of the first report by the Presbyteries, after the Memphis Assembly had with equal unanimity adopted it, that in the meanwhile it had become apparent that

our Kentucky brethren would shortly be united with us, and the general desire was not to make any alterations previous to their entry amongst us. In fact, we positively know that there were many who decidedly approved of the Book as sent down from Memphis, who yet for various reasons were disposed to have its adoption postponed for a while.

In the second place we might be inclined to differ from the statement (p. 214,) that it is the presbyter and not the presbytery which gives to our system its peculiar historical and organic form. We admit that our system is *called* the Presbyterian, because it is a government by presbyters or elders, and not by preachers; but we hold that no idea is more fundamental than that these presbyters or elders rule *in bodies*. The parity which all true Presbyterians insist on is the parity not of ministers *as such*, but of all presbyters or elders; and if that can be protected, the other is of little importance. It might be freely denied without fatal consequences to church government; for that does not belong to preachers as such. The official parity which belongs to all presbyters is in relation to the ruling office. It is in the courts of the Church that they are all on a par, class with class, and individual with individual. Now, this parity of all presbyters is one of the foundation-stones of our ecclesiastical edifice, and if it be taken away, the whole building is endangered. But another and perhaps a still more fundamental principle is that the presbyters or elders never govern singly, but always in assemblies. Both these ideas are plainly held forth in our present Form—the parity of all presbyters or elders in Chapter V., where it is said ruling elders are properly (that is *simply*) representatives chosen to exercise government in conjunction with ministers (who are representatives *and something more*, viz., teachers); and the necessity of the ruling by bodies, in Chapter VIII., where it is said that Scripture requires the Church to be governed by assemblies, parochial, presbyterial, and synodical.

In the third place, we can not agree with our correspondent in his opinion expressed (p. 214,) that the tenor of our present Form supports a wide distinction between the two classes of elders, and a preëminence of one over the other *considered as*

rulers. We will not call in question what he says of the *practice*, because that does vary in different sections of the Church; but we insist that our present Form holds up the parity, as in Chapter V. above quoted; and also in those places where it gives us courts composed of rulers; and also where it calls on *the presbytery* so composed to lay hands on ministers, and calls on *all the members* of the presbytery to give the newly ordained the right hand of fellowship. Of course it is altogether inconsistent with all this for our present Book to omit imposition of hands in the ordination of ruling elders. But it can not be admitted that the revised Form, as at first sent down, contained any different doctrine of the ruling elder from the Form in use amongst us. It was only more completely distinct and self-consistent. Neither can it be admitted that the revised Form as it comes now before the Presbyteries has expunged certain changes regarding this matter which the former report of it had made—much less that the Presbyteries had condemned and repudiated this feature of it. All these statements are made by our esteemed correspondent (p. 214); but we are forced to say that we think he makes them erroneously.

In the fourth place, our correspondent seems to us to be in error, when he states (p. 214,) that the present doctrine of the eldership makes it distinct from, and inferior to, the *pastoral* or *episcopal* office. Such is the theory of some individuals in our Church, and it may possibly be the prevalent theory in some particular districts. But we deny earnestly that our Church holds any such view, as we also deny that such is the doctrine of our present Form any more than of the revised Form. Our present Form of Government certainly answers to the Scriptures in regarding *elder* or *presbyter* equivalent to *bishop*, and the *ruling* power of elders to be the *pastoral* or the shepherd's power. At the same time our correspondent, we think, equally errs in denying that the minister's office is "the first in the Church both for dignity and usefulness." It is, we must believe, *immeasurably* the first in both respects; and this statement does not touch the question of *parity*, for that only regards the ruling function. Just bear in mind that the whole government of the

Church is in the hands of bodies of presbyters, and that preachers *as such* have nothing to do with it; and then you may exalt their preaching function as much as its preëminent importance demands, without any damage to the freedom of the Church.

Our correspondent denies (p. 218,) that there is any Scripture for the superiority of teaching to ruling. It is enough to quote the apostle's saying, they must "give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word;" and Paul, that Christ "sent him to preach the gospel;" and that "God had set in the Church first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, etc.;" and that the elders who labor in word and doctrine are especially worthy of double honor. Our correspondent certainly gets upon prelatic ground if he means to say that ecclesiastical jurisdiction pertains to a higher function than ecclesiastical instruction.

Another point respecting which we must differ with our correspondent, is, his representing "the power of the keys" (see p. 215,) as if it referred only to the ruling, and not also to the teaching office. Certainly the keys are two; and while the one is the key of discipline given a joint power to the whole body of apostles and to every presbytery as rulers; the other is the key of doctrine given a several power to each one of them and to every minister considered as an individual teacher.

So far we have been dwelling upon points of difference. But we have now to say, that in almost every thing advanced by our correspondent in his last six pages, we very cordially agree with him, and would urge the especial attention of our readers to his remarks.

It is very clear to our minds that the theory which makes the presbyter necessarily and always a minister of the word, does leave the ruling elder out of our system; and that to leave the ruling elder out, or even to shear him of his rightful importance and influence in the government of the Church, is to turn it into a clerical domination and pave the way for prelacy, after which and out of which comes popery. We must ever insist that the true and proper and original presbyterate was ruling and not teaching, which was a separate and a higher function.

It is quite certain that besides the diaconate there is but one other office (that of elder or presbyter or bishop) which Paul describes articulately; and that besides him no other New Testament writer has undertaken to set before us distinctly the office-bearers of the Church. But Paul himself, after describing the presbyter in full, does, in the same Epistle to Timothy, divide this order into two classes—the ruling and the teaching elders. But we have no zeal at all for insisting on the number *two* being sacred, albeit prelatists do make so much ado, as our correspondent points out, about their “*three orders.*” In the Scriptures the matter is presented as we have stated it above; nevertheless the language of the Mobile Assembly will satisfy us, if it will satisfy those who have differed with us.

Our correspondent we think proves very fully that “apt to teach” (the only *oratorical* feature in Paul’s description to Timothy of the presbyter) can not have an exclusive reference to the teaching elder, but that on the contrary it is unquestionably the ruling elder specifically whose portrait is there drawn in full. And he sets forth in suitable terms the ruling elder as holding no doubtful place in our system, as that system is revealed in Scripture. That officer is indeed no “lay element in the government of the Church,” but fills a high “spiritual office instituted for the edification of the body of Christ.” Indeed, it is very clear to our minds that in a certain sense the ruling and the teaching elders are, to use our correspondent’s expression, (p. 220,) “substantially the same.” We mean to say that there is a profound philosophy in our Saviour’s constitution of his church government, which makes one out of two, as well as two out of one. The teaching office is immeasurably higher than the ruling, and yet there is a sense in which they who rule must *ipso facto* teach; just as on the other hand it can not be doubted that he who teaches must *ipso facto* rule. What is any decision which a church court makes but a declaration of what is the word of the Lord as applied to that case? Every court of rulers, then, does as such in a certain sense teach by ruling. On the other hand, what is the teaching elder doing in the pulpit whenever he preaches but ruling the church on a grand scale, and with that

almighty sceptre, the word of God, to which we must all bow as he wields it over our heads? This is no fancy sketch. The Scripture describes but one presbyter, and yet makes this one to be two; and so on the other hand the Scripture takes the two and makes them one by giving to both the one name *presbyter*, as when Peter, the apostle and teacher says, "who am also an elder." Again the apostle, in Ephesians, speaks of the extraordinary and ordinary office-bearers thus: "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Why does he not repeat the pronoun after pastors and before teachers? Why does he not say "and some teachers," and so complete the sentence as he commenced it? The omission is certainly remarkable, and it must have some significance. We are quite aware that eminent authorities have understood it to point out that ministers of the Word are both rulers and teachers; also that others as eminent have understood these terms to refer to the ordinary minister, and the doctor or professor in the church-school. But comparing scripture with scripture, it does not seem consistent that the presbyter or ruling elder can be left out here, for they are every where else set forth as *pastors*. And that is certainly a reasonable interpretation of this language of the apostle which holds that he means by this remarkable omission to signify that pastors and teachers are two classes of one order, and one order of two classes.

Touching the question of the adoption by our Church of the Book of Church Order, one thing is very plain: that Book is an honest and earnest effort to bring up our formularies of Order to the level of our doctrine of church government as actually existing amongst us at this time. The half century which has elapsed since the last revision was made, has been one of very thorough and lively discussion and debate respecting points of church order. Shall there be no recognition whatever of the progress made? Shall our Church, called in God's providence to assume an independent position some ten years ago, and again recently called still more solemnly to the mission of perpetuating the lately so much dishonored testimony of 1837 for Old School theology—shall this Church in the outset of her career, when ar-

ranging in other respects the platform of her external life and movement, take no note of the great advance in sound Presbyterian ideas during fifty years past? Knowing, as we all do, how far short our present Form and Discipline fall of carrying out the prevailing belief of our hearts respecting what God has revealed, how can we suffer these imperfect statements of his truth to continue the law of his Church amongst us? Our doctrine of the courts of the Church needs a fuller and more perfect exhibition. The nature and duties of church officers require more ample description—especially the evangelist or missionary demands to be treated much more fully and distinctly, for the ideas of Presbyterians have made large progress on this important subject since the year 1820. Then again the unscriptural method in which the Book provides for ordaining ruling elders and deacons without imposition of hands should be revised and amended. Such are some of the defects of our present Form of Government; and our Book of Discipline, it is agreed on all hands, is equally defective.

Now we do not understand our correspondent as objecting to a revision, but we do understand that for him the Mobile Assembly's Book of Church Order fails of going far enough in some directions. For ourselves, we have no idea that that Book is perfect or complete. No doubt it might be made better in various respects by more time and more labor, notwithstanding the vast amount of both which so many men have already spent upon it. And we do not doubt that ten years more might be well devoted to perfecting it in every phrase and every word. Moreover we do not doubt that a dozen different committees could produce a dozen different models for the Form and the Discipline, respecting which the Assembly might debate for years and years without fully determining which one of the dozen should on the whole be preferred.

It is indeed no light job the Church has undertaken. But the great and peculiar difficulty is that about fifty different bodies of men are called upon, and very properly, to state exactly what they do and what they do not approve in reference to a mass of particulars altogether many hundreds in number.

It seems to us that if the general character of the revision is acceptable to the Presbyteries, they will probably content themselves with signifying that, and *vice versa*; for there remains but one meeting for most of them in which to do the whole work of critically examining and stating their opinions. We hope there will be a thorough dealing with the business, even if it should require a fortnight from every Presbytery. We believe such a study of church government as this would help all our ministers and elders to understand their system better, and induce them to carry it out more fully into execution. And so we close these editorial comments with the earnest prayer that our Master and Lord may guide his servants into all truth and duty respecting this important undertaking, so that his glory and our Church's prosperity may thereby be promoted.

ARTICLE VI.

CHRIST AND THE STATE.

The powers that be are ordained of God. The state is a political person, moral, responsible; for to it pertain rights, duties, and obligations, which connect it directly with the government of God. It is indeed the organ through which that government is administered in its relation to man's highest earthly interests. Mankind every where, naturally and constantly, recognise in their various dialects, the personality and responsibility of nations, showing that this doctrine commends itself to the universal conscience. They speak of national virtue and national vice, national rewards and national punishments. So, too, the word of God addresses nations in their collective capacity, condemns national sins, and denounces national judgments. To say that responsibility, in its last analysis, is individual, is no just objection, but only a quibble; for though it be true, it is true of the individual, not as a disconnected unit, but *as so and so related*. Man is not an individual being complete