

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
PRESBYTERIANISM

WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE
SYNOD OF CENTRAL NEW YORK.

Prepared and Published at the Request of the Synod.

By P. H. FOWLER, D. D.

THE PRESBYTERIAN ELEMENT
IN OUR
NATIONAL LIFE AND HISTORY.

*An Address Delivered before the Synod of Central New York
at Watertown, October 18th, 1876.*

By PROF. J. W. MEARS, D. D.

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ADDRESS.

That particular system of doctrine, allied to a particular form of government, which we call Presbyterianism, well deserves recognition at this Centennial Era among the forces which have contributed to form and to perpetuate our national life. Intermingled as it has been with a thousand other forces, it might seem impossible to define accurately its influence or to assign beyond question its due share of merit, in the hundred years of vicissitude and of progress which have just closed. But there is a certain broad character, a certain strength and solidity, a certain frank, unmistakable, uncompromising tone about Presbyterianism which renders much easier the task of discrimination, and goes far to convert it into a known instead of an unknown quantity in the problem which we are to endeavor to solve this evening. The influence of the waters of Lake Geneva upon the river Rhone is of the most positive and beneficent character. It rushes, turbulent and muddy, into the clear bosom of the lake upon the east, and leaves it on the west, a perfectly pure stream of the finest azure hue. Not unlike the contributions of Lake Geneva to the muddy river, have been the influences of Presbyterianism upon the welfare and perpetuity of the national existence, though indeed we do not pretend to press the comparison as to the extent and thoroughness of the transformation.

The subject presents itself naturally under two aspects, the historical and philosophical, or more fully and in the form of questions :

I. What facts have occurred in our national history in which the influence of Presbyterian men and Presbyterian institutions, as such, has been manifest in moulding our national institutions and directing the national policy? and

II. What are the tendencies inherent to Presbyterianism which, by the nature of the case, adapt it to exert a plastic influence upon the destinies of a free people?

It is past doubt that the very existence of our country is due to forces set in motion and brought to play in history by the Reformation under Calvin. The Puritans in New England, including Roger Williams and the early Baptists, the Dutch in New York State, the Covenanters in the Cumberland Valley, the Quakers in eastern Pennsylvania and the Huguenots of the Carolinas and New York all performed parts of the first importance in the original colonization of our country, and all drew their inspiration more or less directly from the great Reformer of Geneva.

As to the Puritans, I cannot do better than to quote from one of the most illustrious of their descendants, words uttered at one of those anniversaries which New Englanders observe with a pride which would be sectional, if New England did not belong in a peculiar sense to the whole country. "In the reign of Mary," says Mr. Choate, "a thousand learned Englishmen fled from the stake at home to the happier seats of Continental Protestantism. Of them great numbers, I know not how many, came to Geneva. There they awaited

the death of the Queen, and then sooner or later, but in the time of Elizabeth, went back to England. *I ascribe to that five years in Geneva an influence that has changed the history of the world.* I seem to myself to trace to it . . . the opening of another era of time and of liberty . . . a portion at least of the objects of the great civil war in England, the Republican constitution framed in the cabin of the Mayflower, the divinity of Jonathan Edwards, the battle of Bunker Hill and the Independence of America. In that brief season. English Puritanism was changed fundamentally and forever . . . On the banks of a lake lovelier than a dream of fairy land, in a valley which might have been hollowed out to enclose the last home of liberty, there smiled an independent, peaceful, law-abiding and prosperous commonwealth. There was a people governed by laws of their own making. I confess myself to be of the opinion of those who trace to that spot and to that time the Republicanism of the Puritans.

“There was a State without king or nobles : there was a church without a bishop. I do not suppose that learned men needed to go to Geneva to acquire the idea of a commonwealth. But there they saw the problem solved. Popular government was possible. This experience they never forgot.”

It is not necessary to multiply authorities or to look further for the genesis of Puritan principles in their bearing upon the life and character of the nation. As Presbyterians, we are willing to concede to New England all the eminence she claims in the early history of the nation, if her most gifted and loyal sons agree to trace that eminence to the influence of the Genevese

Reformer upon the characters and beliefs of the Pilgrim Fathers.

As for the Huguenots, their settlements in America antedated all others nearly half a century, but Spanish bigotry and cruelty trampled them out in blood, anticipating by seven years the horrors of St. Bartholomew by the massacre of the nine hundred settlers of St. Augustine. Scarcely enough of them escaped to tell the story. More than a hundred years passed, during which the Huguenots of France were learning by the hard drill of Popish persecution, the incalculable value of religious and political liberty; and when, by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, they were scattered by hundreds of thousands over the Protestant world, those who came to America brought the very material which was needed in the structure of our liberties—a something which can be likened to the spring and the fibre of finely tempered steel. The first child born in New York State was of Huguenot parents: and such names as John Jay, Henry Laurens, Elias Boudinot, the first President of the American Bible Society, John Bayard and Francis Marion illustrate the prominence of this element in the early struggles in war, diplomacy and Christian beneficence of our countrymen. It was the son of a Huguenot that gave his name to Faneuil Hall and offered it for those purposes of consultation and eloquent appeal, which have secured for it the title of “Cradle of Liberty.”

The Covenanters are represented by the Scotch-Irish, who did not leave their country before striking heavy blows for the truths of the Reformation at home. The sons of the men who, on the 7th of December, 1688, shut

the gates of Derry, and starved rather than surrender to the Popish troops of James, were trained to endure the hardships of frontier life, and had nerves which did not flinch or quiver, however great the foe before them, because there was a conscience behind them. They were fit material to enter into the structure of the new Commonwealth. They came late, and yet, twenty-six years before the Declaration of Independence, a quarter of a million of Ulster county Presbyterians had landed upon our shores.

From what great struggles and preparatory experiences came the Presbyterians of the low countries, I need not detain you to tell. History has no task more honorable than that of recording the contest between the Beggars of Holland and the Grandees of Spain. The conflict for liberty only partially successful there, had to be transferred to the soil of America in order to attain a complete and enduring triumph. The first settlers in New Netherlands were thirty families, chiefly Protestant refugees from the Belgian provinces. They came in the spring of 1623. The settlement of Manhattan, says Bancroft, grew directly out of the great Continental struggles of Protestantism.

The beneficent influence of the Quakers upon the opening scenes of our Colonial history cannot easily be overrated. George Fox, the founder of the sect, may fairly be regarded as an outgrowth of English Puritanism. William Penn received part of his college training at Saumur, where there was a Calvinistic institution under the guidance of Amyrault. The religion and the philosophy of the Huguenots had their influence with the founder of the Keystone State. It could

scarcely have been Quakerism which reserved in the Colonial law the first day of the week as a day of rest. We, as a Synod, have a share in the closing on the Lord's Day of the doors of the Centennial Exhibition in the great city founded by William Penn, but I suspect it would have been a more difficult task but for that Presbyterian element which the Quaker legislator imbibed into his own nature, and infused into the laws and customs of his famous Colony.

If we except the settlers of Virginia, and that small but dominant part of the colonists of Maryland who were Catholics, and the Lutherans and Moravians who came to Georgia under Oglethorpe, we shall find America at the revolution little else than a community of Calvinists of different degrees of strenuousness in doctrine and practice, but showing the same general features of that system. All other constituent elements of the population might be omitted without vitiating a general estimate of its character; but what would the United Colonies, on the eve of the revolution, have been, if suddenly the entire element due to the Calvinistic Reformation had been withdrawn from the country? Conceive, if you please, the loss in mere numbers made good by an equally sudden multiplication of either of the other elements then to be found in small numbers in Virginia, Maryland and Georgia, and it is impossible to believe that under such auspices a great free nation could have grown up on this continent. In fact, the second supposition is itself impossible, for it was only the so-called Reformed element of the world's population that was then in sufficient numbers under the colonizing impulse; under the propelling force of

an outraged conscience, which gladly preferred exile to the sacrifice of principle; which had been made ready by the special training of Providence for the very work of establishing in a new world a new age and a new order of things. Without them, without the men and the sons of the men who had gone through the experiences of St. Bartholomew's Day, of Leyden and Harlem and Derry and Smithfield, we may be very sure the independence of America would never have been attempted or achieved.

As we approach the critical period of the national history, the beginning of the century which we are now celebrating, the lines are drawn more closely, and the relations of the Reformed element to the struggle of the revolution assume a positive unmistakable attitude. Presbyterianism, through the length and breadth of the country, allies itself, identifies itself with the cause of free government. Of the Scotch-Irish race in America it is said that it was perhaps the only race of all that settled in the western world that never produced one tory. The nearest case to it ever known was that of a man who was brought before a church session in Chambersburg, and tried upon the charge that he was not sincere in his professions of his attachment to the cause of the revolution. It is claimed that General Washington, when making a long and disheartening retreat was asked where he expected to pause. He replied, that if he were obliged to cross every river and mountain to the limits of civilization, he would make his last stand with the Scotch-Irishmen of the frontiers, there plant his banner and still fight for freedom.

The first public voice in America, says Bancroft, for dissolving all connection with Great Britain, came not

from the Puritans of New England, the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. He refers to the celebrated Declaration of the county of Mecklenberg, N. C., which preceded the Declaration of Independence more than a year, and which not only anticipated the spirit but to a most remarkable degree the very language of that memorable document. Here was a secluded people, not carried away by the infection of a general excitement, but led by the sheer force of conviction and consistency with principle alone, to declare themselves absolved from former ties of allegiance, and to organize an independent government, nearly fourteen months before they were followed and supported by the united voice of the country. It is not ludicrous, this arrayal of a single county against a great and proud empire. The document itself shows that a grand spirit, a broad humanity, dictated the movement. The Presbyterian Elder, Ephraim Brevard, who signed it, sealed his fidelity by the sacrifice of his life in the national cause. The document, printed in Charleston, was spread through the South, and was forwarded by a messenger to the Continental Congress. Its direct influence upon the phraseology of the greater Declaration which followed it, has been denied; so be it; it only follows that the Presbyterian as well as the Jeffersonian document flowed from the same deep fountain of popular love of liberty and preparedness for self-government, which the Presbyterians were the quickest to recognize and the first to put into articulate speech.

It was the great State of Virginia, Jefferson's State, which more than a year after the Mecklenburgh declar-

ation, and a few weeks before the 4th of July, 1776, passed the first Bill of Rights involving the principle of self government and independence, and although the act of the State was practically unanimous, yet it would scarcely have been the work of a people wholly descended from the cavaliers and adventurers who formed the early colonists of Virginia. "The population," says Bancroft, "had been recruited by successive infusions of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, Huguenots and the descendants of Huguenots, men who had been so attached to Cromwell or the Republic that they preferred to emigrate on the return of Charles II.," and other elements. Among the Scotch-Irish members of the Virginia Assembly, who adopted the Bill of Rights, was Patrick Henry. Another member was James Madison, afterwards President of the United States. He was of English descent, but had pursued his studies in Princeton, under Witherspoon. His name appears in the Triennial of that College, in the class of 1771. Doubtless the young man of scarcely twenty-five brought the influences of his college training into the debate upon the proposed Bill of Rights, when he objected to the word "toleration" in the Bill, because it implied an established religion, which endured dissent only as a condescension, while he contended that all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience.

The President of Princeton College at that time was the famous John Witherspoon; patriot, divine, legislator, educator in one; a true leader of men. A native of Scotland and a minister in the National Church, he had already risen to eminence there, when he was called,

in 1768, to the Presidency of Princeton College. He had scarcely arrived on his new field, when he threw himself, with characteristic ardor, into the cause of the Colonies, and became the recognized leader of the patriots of his adopted State.*

Powerful in pulpit oratory, he improved the general fast appointed by Congress for May 17, 1776, by preaching a sermon whose very title is a rhetorical triumph: "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men." In this discourse, founded on Ps. 76, 10: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain," he says:

You are all my witnesses that this is the first time of my introducing any political subject into the pulpit. At this season, however, it is not only lawful but necessary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any hesitation, that the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty and of human nature." "There are fixed bounds to every human thing. When the branches of a tree grow very large and weighty, they fall off from the trunk. And there is a certain distance from the seat of government where an attempt to rule will either provoke tyranny and helpless subjection, or provoke resistance and effect a separation."

* Ten years before he left Scotland he had shown his profound religious sympathy with the American Colonists by the following language:

"The violent persecutions which many eminent Christians met with in England, from their brethren who called themselves Protestants, drove them in great numbers to a distant part of the world, where the light of the Gospel and true religion were unknown. Some of the American settlements, particularly those in New England, were chiefly made by them, and as they carried the knowledge of Christ to the dark places of the earth, so they continue, themselves, in as great a degree of purity of faith, and strictness of practice, or rather a greater, than is to be found in any Protestant church now in the world."—*Works Edinb.*, 1804, vol. 5, pp. 194, 195.

Having spoken of the success of the Colonists thus far, he adds :

“Remember the vicissitude of human things and the usual course of Providence. How often has a just cause been reduced to the lowest ebb, and yet when firmly adhered to, has become finally triumphant. I speak this now, when the affairs of the Colonies are in so prosperous a state, lest this prosperity itself should render you less able to bear unexpected misfortunes.”

“Nothing is more certain,” he says again, “than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue. Whoever is an avowed enemy to God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country.”

This remarkable sermon was published by request, and was accompanied by an “address to the natives of Scotland residing in America,” in which the royalist tendencies of his countrymen, just at that time peculiarly excited by occurrences in the mother country, were earnestly combatted. The American Declaration of Independence, which had taken place between the delivery and the publication of the Sermon, was defended on the following grounds: 1. That it was necessary. 2. That it will be honorable and profitable. 3. That in all probability it will be no injury, but a real advantage to the island of Great Britain.

A few days after the fast, Witherspoon took his seat as a member of the Provincial Assembly of New Jersey. The royalist Governor of the State, being cited before the body to answer for his conduct, entered the hall escorted by the military, and denounced the assembly as illegal and the members as low-bred, ignorant men, wholly incompetent for legislation, and deserving

to be hung as rebels. What the other members thought, Witherspoon did not wait to hear, but at the moment the Governor ceased, he sprang to his feet and poured out a torrent of invective and irony, for which the illegitimate birth, the scanty education and well known coarseness of the royal Governor gave fair opportunity. "On the whole," concluded Witherspoon, "I think Gov. Franklin has made us a speech every way worthy of his exalted birth and refined education." The Convention voted to depose the Governor, and the next day sent Witherspoon, with five others, to represent New Jersey at the Continental Congress. Witherspoon was the only clergyman who sat in that body. They arrived in the midst of the deliberations preceding the last great step towards Independence. Witherspoon at once took a bold position. The gravity and solemnity of the occasion, in his view, were such as to demand promptitude, and not at all to justify delay. "Mr. President," he said, "that noble instrument on your table, which insures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this very morning by every pen in the House. He who will not respond to its accents, and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions, is unworthy the name of freeman. Although these gray hairs must descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather they should descend thither by the hand of the executioner, than desert, at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country."

He held his place in Congress for six years, served on various important committees, drew up, as is believed, the report on the cruel treatment of prisoners by the British in New York, and was deputed to visit

the headquarters of the army to improve the lamentable condition of the troops. He wrote important State papers; opposed extravagant issues of paper money; pled with Congress for the maintenance of the public credit; resisted the proposed appointment of the notorious but popular Thomas Paine to an important secretaryship; labored to build up a strong central government; maintained unwavering faith in the national cause, in the most trying times, and contributed the full strength of a grand and unblemished character to sustain the reputation of the Continental Congress, when torn with disorders and turbulence on account of the refusal of the States to confer upon it the necessary authority. Thus he not only aided in meeting the military difficulties of the Revolution, but also those in many respects more trying, which arose from the political and financial embarrassments of the struggle. His counsels on these latter questions, although not followed at the time, have been fully justified by their subsequent adoption. He was a hard money man, and believed in the necessity of a strong central government.

It is honorable to the Presbyterian Church of America that it remembers so gratefully the incalculable services of this, by all odds, the most heroic figure in her early history, and is marking this centennial year by a suitable monument to his memory.

I might mention, and put in contrast with Presbyterianism, the attitude of another prominent body of professing Christians, which, at the close of the Revolution, found itself nearly annihilated as the result of its tory sympathies. I might contrast the behavior of two distinguished clergymen of the city of Philadelphia,

one of whom, indeed, at the beginning of the war, seemed overflowing with patriotic zeal, but who, when the inevitable dark days came, wrote to Gen. Washington, urging him to abandon the cause of America as hopeless, and suggesting to him to dictate a peace at the head of his army—after which traitorous advice he fled the country. The other was a Presbyterian minister, the pastor of the Third Church in Philadelphia, who bore the illustrious name of Duffield. This descendant of the Huguenots was called from his charge in Carlisle to the position in Philadelphia, early in the sessions of the Continental Congress, and while the representatives of England still exercised authority in the affairs of the city and the State. But Mr. Duffield did not hesitate. He threw the whole weight of his position and influence on the side of Congress. Seized and brought before the magistrate for seditious conduct in persisting in preaching a patriotic sermon, he declined to give bail, and the case was postponed. Meanwhile the whole city and State was aroused, and a band of patriots, known as "the Paxton boys," living near Harrisburg, met and resolved that if the King's government dared to imprison Mr. Duffield, they would march to Philadelphia and liberate him at the point of the bayonet.

The members of the Continental Congress were frequently in attendance on his ministrations. Four months before the Declaration of Independence he preached before an assembly of Pennsylvania militia and members of Congress, a famous discourse, in which, with irresistible eloquence, he urged the necessity of that measure. He declared that heaven designed this

western world as the asylum of liberty, and that to raise its banner here their forefathers had surrendered the dearest ties of home, friends, and native land, and braved the tempests of the ocean and the terrors of the wilderness. "Can it be supposed," he asks, "that the Lord has so far forgotten to be gracious and shut up his tender mercies in his wrath, and so favored the arms of oppression, as to deliver up their asylum to slavery and bondage? As soon shall he subvert creation, and forbid his sun to shine. He preserved to the Jews their cities of refuge, and whilst sun and moon endure, America shall remain a city of refuge for the whole earth, until she herself shall play the tyrant, forget her destiny, disgrace her freedom, and provoke her God." Among the proofs of the effectiveness of this discourse was an offer of fifty pounds by the British for the capture of the preacher. Four days after the Declaration of Independence, he received a commission as chaplain in the Pennsylvania militia. In this position he magnified his office, faithfully sharing the perils of the campaign, preaching to his regiment on Staten Island, while the enemy's missiles from the Jersey shore rattled over their heads, and risking his life in the disastrous retreat across New Jersey. With the return of peace he resumed his place as pastor of the Third Church, and I can testify that the stamp of his patriotic zeal remains, in a marked degree, upon the Third Church, better known in Philadelphia as Old Pine St. Church, to this day. By the side of the tablet in the vestry, which bears the name of Duffield, may be seen another of still tenderer interest, bearing the names of eighteen youthful members of the same congregation, "martyrs," as

they are called in the inscription, "from Old Pine St. Church," young men who laid down their lives in the struggle of 1861-65. And that the pulpit of Old Pine St. in those later days, held by one who bore the famous name of Brainerd, was equally faithful, I can testify with equal emphasis. "God forbid," said Dr. Brainerd, to his people, on the Fast Day of April, 1863, "God forbid that I should entrust our young men to the perils of the field, and not bless them daily, in the name of the Lord. We have a great cause, but a greater God. We bring the interests of a continent, with the welfare of its future hundreds of millions; we bring the safety of our civil government; we bring the great cause of humanity at large; all the freedom that earth has gained in six thousand years; we bring the interests of Christianity itself, which alone in this free land has found impartial liberty of conscience and worship; we bring all these to the altar, and say, O God, have mercy upon us, and vindicate our cause from those who have risen up against us. We live in an hour on which the destiny of ages is turning. We are touching springs which will vibrate on the weal or woe of far distant generations. Let us meet it on the field, if need be, with courage; in our closets with prayer to the God of nations and armies."

Thomas Brainerd would have uttered substantially the same sentiments anywhere, but standing in the pulpit of the Third Church, they seem to gather force from the century—old echoes that might be imagined to haunt the aisles and pillars of that memorable building.*

* Albert Barnes, in his tract on Presbyterian Affinities, says: "Some other denominations are, and ever must be, reluctant ever to refer to the history of their clergymen and many of their people,

It is almost superfluous to attempt to explain to this audience what it is in Presbyterianism and in the Reformed Churches generally, which necessarily led them to assume the position of avowed and active adherence to the revolutionary cause. Nowhere else in the world is a more ardent love of liberty joined to a more decided attachment for system and order. Liberty in law is the watchword of Presbyterianism. The Reformation itself was a direct appeal to God, a personal union of the human heart to its Creator in opposition to a crushing weight and an impenetrable barrier of priestly mediators. It gave to every man personal worth. Every individual could and must for himself realize the priceless benefits and dignities of redemption. It arose at once both against the ecclesiastical tyranny of the times and the political machinery by which that tyranny was sustained. In proportion as the religious reaction of the reformation was more radical, was its relation to civil life more manifest. Wherever the hierarchical element was swept clean away, there, naturally enough, appeared the idea of a popular government. The church without a bishop carried with it the state without a king. John Calvin was "the reformer who pierced to the roots." His faith was dreaded with one consent and with instinctive judgment by all the monarchs of the world as the creed of republicanism.

the time of the American Revolution ; our denomination is willing that all that occurred—all that was done by us as a Denomination—should be . . . read by all mankind. The past is fixed, and fixed as we would desire it to be. . . There is not a line on that subject which we would desire to expunge or change."

King James I., born and reared a Scot, spoke what he knew when he said: "A Scots Presbytery agrees with monarchy as well as God and the devil." Lord Bacon says: "Discipline by bishops is fittest for monarchy of all others." James II. said: "If there is no despotic power in the Church there can be no despotic power in the State; or, if there be liberty in the Church, there will be liberty in the State." Charles the 2nd pronounced Calvinism a religion not fit for a gentleman.

It found its home and historic center and political expression in the republic of Geneva. But limited to that narrow city, it must have perished for lack of development. It must get rid of old world restrictions or die. It must realize on a broader field, its God-given impulse and tendency to become in some true sense, a kingdom of God on earth. Buffeted, trampled upon, disfranchised, outlawed at home, its future seemed dark indeed when the new world which Popish enthusiasm had discovered and claimed, arose upon the horizon. Rome, claimed it. Commercial and scientific interest sighted its frontier and outlined its shape. But it waited for a century and a quarter, substantially unoccupied, until the hour for the Calvinist migration had come. Calvinism was destined to live. Its ecclesiastical and political characteristics were too fundamentally important to be allowed to disappear. Therefore the New World was opened and reserved for them. America was theirs. America was for the Calvinists, as truly as in divine Providence the Calvinists were for America. The adherents of this system could not come to America without bringing along their intense convictions,

ingrained into their souls by a century of persecution. If Great Britain would not yield them a practical independence, of necessity they would grasp it. If armed resistance was requisite to realize their ideal here in these remote parts of the earth, they unhesitatingly would offer it.

There was dignity in their coming. Not as a mere mob or frightened herd of fugitives did they come. In place of the cast-off yokes of medievalism, they brought grand conceptions of a moral order and a divine government, drawn from an intelligent study of Scripture models, and from the previous experience of an inward self-restraint. Those in whom a genuine Christian manhood had taken the place of slavish dependence upon confessionals and priestly absolution, were prepared to frame just laws, to found a righteous government, and in their conduct to illustrate as well as by their blood, if necessary, to maintain and defend them. The Constitution of Plymouth Colony was written upon the cover of a Bible in the cabin of the *May Flower* and signed and sealed upon the ocean by the company of Pilgrims. The revolt of these men from arbitrary human government was for no selfish end whatever, but in the name and for the glory of God. Therefore, in his name, they were quick to re-establish and zealous to maintain it.

In fact, the Presbyterianism of these colonists was the very form and mold of a free government, the safest and best in its main outlines that could be found. As the Presbyterians of North Carolina anticipated the fact and form of the Declaration of Independence, so the Presbyterians of Geneva and Scotland in working

out the plan of a free, but orderly church, had anticipated in all its main features, the political fabric by which that independence was consolidated into a grand national and historic reality. In this church all power proceeds from the people, but Presbytery is not democracy, it is not a weak confederation. It is a compact representative government, with a written constitution. The largest autonomy is allowed to the elementary parts, which is consistent with the unity and organic life of the whole. Every member has rights which the whole body is bound to protect. The clergy is not a whit better off in this respect than the laity, and no clergyman better off than his brother clergyman. This principle of parity is essentially republican. At the same time Presbytery is a government. It is not merely advisory ; it is authoritative. " It is designed to settle and determine things. It implies as its correlative, obedience. The submission which it demands is not the mere submission which the mind renders to good advice. * * * It is the submission *due* to those who are appointed to rule and who are entrusted with authority."—*Albert Barnes' Presb.—its Affinities—*p. 9-10.

The analogy between our republican form of government and that of the Presbyterian Church is so striking that the subject has become too trite to need extensive statement here. When we consider the great preponderance of the Presbyterian element in the early history of the country, when we reflect that the men who framed our Constitution were largely trained under one or the other forms of church government allied to Presbyterianism, we cannot permit ourselves to doubt

that the blended strength and elasticity, the variety and the symmetry, the liberty and the order, in fact the sound republicanism of our government were contributions of Presbyterianism to our national life.

I do not deem it necessary to argue for the perfection of our national system, nor even for that of the Presbyterian polity. Both have their enemies. Grave complications and even catastrophes have occurred under both. If any other form of government could have prevented the war of secession on the one hand, or the excinding acts on the other, without permanently sacrificing still greater interests, I have yet to see that form of government described and its superiority demonstrated. Such as it is, our national government undoubtedly is the outgrowth of modes of thought largely controlled by the influence of Presbyterianism.

But polity is only an outward form, only valuable as the result of inward forces. And it is these inward forces of Presbyterianism which we must now consider, and in which are the real hidings of its power. These inward forces are comprehensively described under the single term Calvinism. Calvinism has been regarded as in fact a doctrine of government, a method and form in which the divine power is put forth in the government of the universe. "It is based on the idea that God rules, that he has a plan; that the plan is fixed and certain; that it does not depend on the fluctuations of the human will, on the caprice of the human heart, or on contingencies and uncertain and undetermined events in human affairs. It supposes that God is supreme; that he has authority, that he has a right to exercise dominion; that, for the good of the universe,

that right should be exercised, and that infinite power put forth only in accordance with a plan."—*Mr. Barnes.*

The habit of thought and the style of character growing out of this view of the universe have gone deeply into the life of America. They have been as pillars of adamant, as an anchorage among rocks during the formation and growth of its political order. This is by no means an exhaustive statement of the vital elements of Calvinism. Joined with them is the sense of direct personal responsibility to God, and of the moral equality of all men before him; of the emptiness of all earthly distinctions compared with those conferred by his grace and spirit, and of the moral unity of the race in Adam. The prevalence of these ideas broke down all the foundations of tyranny, while those saved the liberty from becoming the license of liberated slaves, and gave it the checks and balances of right reason and of subordination to the higher law of God.

Presbyterianism is a system of clear and strong convictions rather than a matter of feeling and of form. It takes hold of the man through his intellect and his conscience. Its grasp upon the will, therefore, is clear, strong and regulative. It will do nothing without a sound reason. Its moving forces are applied to the deepest principles. It is not like the tempest which stirs great waves for a time and upon the surface, but like the tides and the silent and deep currents which day and night, and year after year, keep on their steady course around the globe.

Strength of character, stability and endurance, are the social and natural outcome of such a system. It may

be said that these points belong constitutionally to the Anglo-Saxon race. But take away from them their monarchical old-world associations and aristocratic repressions, and give them independence—let them stand alone—the race will then need an inward self-regulative principle. Never was it called to stand alone as in America. It would not have attempted thus to stand alone, if it had not been conscious of possessing a backbone such as Calvinism has given it.

Calvinism gives toughness and fibre, and an anvil-like power of resistance, which wears out hammers rather than yields; Calvinism reads the word discipline in the word disaster. Calvinism gets victory by the rough road of defeat; Calvinism teaches and practices a perseverance which springs from faith in a supreme and righteous God. It may not be exactly just to the æsthetic side of our natures. It is not great in art. The reformers were not particularly known as admirers of nature. These deep-souled men were unmoved by the sentimental raptures of a Rousseau, and indeed, could scarcely enter into the deep feeling for nature of the O. T. writers. Luther thought the Leviathan and Behemoth of the Book of Job, were allegorical representations of the devil. But in that enterprise which crosses vast untraveled seas, which penetrates the unexplored depths of new continents and founds commonwealths while keeping savage foes at bay on the one hand, and wresting liberty from civilized foes on the other, it is without a rival in the history of mankind.

The doctrine which is common to Calvinism and to Protestantism generally that each individual mind may

be in direct communication with its Creator, that he has revealed his will by the written word to all, must tend to the universal diffusion of learning; on the other hand, the doctrine that God is a God of order and plan must tend to encourage that higher learning which seeks to discover the order and system of the universe. Hence Calvinism has been the source not only of the common school system as it exists in our own country, but of almost every one of our earlier colleges and universities. Notably Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Union, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Rutgers, Dickinson, Washington and Jefferson, Middlebury, Hampden Sidney, Amherst, Lafayette and Hamilton, not to mention more recent enterprises. For generations nearly the entire cultivated mind of the country was under its training and stamped with its peculiar impress.

Thus it is no mere sullen, stubborn, blind power of endurance and of resistance which Calvinism has contributed to the country. Calvinism is not a cold stoicism; nor, on the other hand, is it a daring fanaticism which can give no account of itself or of its actions. It is not a sort of baptized Islamism as some have believed it to be. It is not fatalism, the doctrine of bigots and of oriental dreamers. This indeed has conquered a name and created a despotism, but it has never marked its course with free schools and colleges. It is the intelligent, philosophical and Scriptural dogma of predestination, not fatalism, that is to be associated with Calvinism. It is the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, infinitely-wise Ruler of the universe, who acts with infinite forethought, and whose purposes are the best, the holiest, the most beneficent that can possibly be. It

is such a doctrine that in every age has found its place in the minds of resolute, well-poised, thinking men, and that has ever tended to form, train and develop an order of things, and a class of minds of exalted character in sympathy with itself. This was the chief historic factor in our country's life, when it started on its career a hundred years ago.

Many other elements have been introduced in the intervening century; not a few of them readily harmonizing and blending naturally with the preëxisting status; some of them little else than old world outgrowths and developments of the Calvinistic movement; some of them developments in directions overlooked by Calvinism, and necessary to give greater elasticity to American manhood; some contributing the much-needed æsthetic element; some conspicuously hostile to Calvinism and perilous to the republic itself. Calvinism itself has had its vicissitudes, its severe experiences; it has undergone modifications, it has learned something from the new world of which it was in some true sense the author. The great increase of the partially educated or the ignorant classes in our country has gone beyond her power of supply through her solid and somewhat cumbrous machinery. Nor have these masses taken kindly to her systematic, thoughtful and humbling doctrines. A needless rigidity and pertinacity among American Calvinists in insisting on absolute uniformity of doctrine has led to dissensions, divisions and temporary weakness, and increased the prejudices of the outside world, and made them ready to hear and swell the cry against us as a narrow-minded, quarrelsome and hair-splitting sect. More than thirty years of

separation—one-third of the previous century—has been spent in the school of a severe, self-imposed discipline, and have taught us a lesson of forbearance, generosity and comprehensiveness which it will take us at least a century to forget.

At the close of the Revolution, President Stiles preached an election sermon before the Legislature of Connecticut. His inspiring theme was "the Future Glory of the United States." Among other prophetic outgivings he declared that "when we look forward and see this country increased to forty or fifty millions, while we shall see all the religious sects increased into respectable bodies, we shall doubtless find the united body of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches making an equal figure with any two of them."

The period contemplated by the seer of New Haven has arrived. The population has passed its limit of forty millions. At the opening of the Revolution, Congregationalism stood at the head of the American Church in wealth and numbers. Presbyterianism stood fourth. That branch of the Congregationalists which grew out of the schism of Roger Williams, held the second place, and the Church of England the third. The standing of these denominations to-day is stated about as follows: Baptists second, Presbyterians third, Congregationalists seventh, and Episcopalians eighth; the Presbyterians strictly so-called, being the only one of the four which has made any relative advance. The Baptists have held their own, the Roman Catholics have pressed forward to the place vacated by the Presbyterians, while a denomination scarcely known even by name to Dr. Stiles, and barely ushered into exist-

ence at the revolutionary era, by giant strides has placed itself numerically in the front rank of all—the Methodists.

The anticipations of the preacher have, therefore, not been realized. By statistics, it by no means appears that the combined forces of Presbyterians and Congregationalists hold to-day the dominant position with which they ushered in the century. Yet it is noticeable that Presbyterians as such have no reason to be discouraged by the showing of these statistics. It would seem as if to them would be committed the chief guardianship of the interests originally shared between themselves and the Congregationalists. In spite of our internal difficulties, we have made a decided advance relatively to all the other religious bodies, with one or two exceptions. Let us not be misunderstood. Far be it from us at this Centennial celebration to utter the word Presbyterian or to press a claim for Presbyterianism as such to the disparagement of the profoundly valuable services of other Evangelical denominations in strengthening the supports of civic virtue, and in furnishing those Christian elements which alone can give stability to a republican form of government.

It is a great work to which all of God's people in this nation without distinction of sect are called. To maintain and to diffuse throughout the body of the American people that strength and purity of Christian sentiment which will qualify them for the responsibilities of self-government, on so grand a scale as it has now reached, and is likely to reach in the second century of its existence; to successfully combat and counterwork the undermining influences of unbelief both in its do-

mestic and its imported manifestations; to maintain the predominance of those educational institutions in which religion and science go hand in hand as comrades and co-workers to the glory of God; and which are now confronted with largely endowed and vigorous institutions to whose system of instruction Evangelical religion and the inspired Word of God are outside matters, concerns of no moment, put upon a par with the oracles of Zoroaster or the dreams of Mohammed; to purify the turbid atmosphere of political strife, and to put a meaning and a power into the cry for reform; to uplift once more the old commercial virtues of probity, of contentment with legitimate gain, in place of the wild frenzies of the Stock Exchange and the speculative mania that taints our regular business transactions with the very air of the gambling saloon; to see that our conquests for freedom to men of every race and color, gained by unparalleled cost of blood and treasure, shall not be rendered void by intimidation and by partisan trickery; and that every man in this broad Union, be he black or white, from Maine to Texas, and from Florida to Alaska, shall be protected in the exercise of the rights of citizenship; to beware of the designs of Rome upon our free schools, with their unsectarian Bible, and upon the whole civil and religious fabric of our Republic, through the Jesuitical manipulation of our political machinery; in short, to bear the interests of this great nation deep in our Christian sympathies and prayers and to contend manfully against its enemies upon the right hand and the left is no exclusive prerogative of any denomination in the church of America; it demands the united energies of us all.

But if to any one of us the privilege of the post of danger, of standard bearer is to be given, our own denomination, may, without presumption, expect to hold that position. With its unrivalled patriotic and historic memories, with its inherent and demonstrated affinities for a Republican form of government, with its reunited ranks and wings stretching broadly over the land, emerging with an enlarged and catholic spirit, from its recent divisions, and yet cleaving unalterably to the great pillars of doctrinal truth which are based upon the Rock of Ages, and which reach with the divine faithfulness to the clouds, we, my brethren, with the wealth and culture and enterprise and energy and solidity of character which still belong to our body, with our various well-organized schemes of beneficence and Christian work, and our thousand missionaries in our great cities and along our border, may, by the blessing of God, nay, ought to and must, unless shamefully derelict, achieve a work for our country as distinguished as memorable, and as essential to the beneficent effects of American civilization in the century to come, as was the work of our honored fathers in the century past.