

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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The Church

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The reader is asked to study these passages of Scripture while reading this essay: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Corinthians 14:26-37; 1 Timothy 2:8-3:13; Titus 1:5-2:8; Acts 6:1-7; and Ephesians 4:1-24.

Contemporary popular theology and practice, including the doctrine and practice of the church, is a confused and unbiblical mess. To quote Augustine and Calvin, many sheep are without and many wolves are within the churches. The confusion can only be eliminated by studying the Scripture. It is the Bible and the Bible alone that furnishes us with the information we need for a correct understanding of the church. Tradition, history, the needs of men and women, and the ideas of men are simply irrelevant to the doctrine of the church. The Bible alone is the source of our information about the purpose and the organization of the church. A reading of what the New Testament has to say about the purpose and organization of the church quickly leads one to the conclusion that most of those societies that pass for churches today are not churches at all.

In 1989 there are all sorts of ideas being published about the church, its reformation and its reconstruction. Some want the church to be a place of worship, whatever "worship" is. Others claim that their church already is a place of worship. Some want the clergy to wear costumes and crowns, and children to drink wine and eat bread. In other churches the clergy already wear costumes and crowns, and the children already drink wine and eat

bread. Some advocate a return to iconography; others practice it. Some advocate a return to Rome; others, like Thomas Howard, run ahead of the ecclesiastical herd. Some believe women should be ordained; others ordain both women and homosexuals. Still others don't believe in ordination at all. But in this babble of voices there seems to be some agreement: Nearly everyone wants the church to be something other than what God says it should be.

The Purpose of the Church

What is the purpose of the church? Is it to induce a feeling of awe and dependence in worshippers? A warm glow of fellowship? Is it to re-enact the Gospel or the sacrifice of Calvary? Is it to appeal to the whole person? Is it to do good works? Is it to be a social action, anti-abortion, antiwar, and anti-poverty organizing center? If once we understand what the purpose of the church is, all the rest of the doctrine of the church falls neatly into place. But if we do not know what the purpose of the church is, then we cannot understand how the church is to be organized and operated.

The purpose of the church is really quite simple: education in the truth. All its activities are to be educational activities, and all its education is to be education in the truth. In his first letter to Timothy (3:15), Paul stated his purpose in writing: "I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of

the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." In his commentary on this passage, Calvin wrote: "The reason why the church is called the pillar of truth is that she defends and spreads it by her agency.... The church maintains the truth, because by preaching the church proclaims it, because she keeps it pure and entire, because she transmits it to posterity." Calvin warns pastors: "How dreadful is the vengeance that awaits them if, through their fault, that truth which is the image of the divine glory, the light of the world, and the salvation of men, shall be allowed to fall! This consideration ought undoubtedly to lead pastors to tremble continually, not to deprive them of all energy, but to excite them to greater vigilance." Calvin concludes by arguing that "if the church is the pillar of the truth, it follows that the church is not with them [clergymen] when the truth not only lies buried, but is shockingly torn and thrown down and trampled underfoot.... Paul does not wish that any society in which the truth of God does not hold a lofty and conspicuous place shall be acknowledged to be a church."

In his letter to Timothy, Paul stated his purpose as being to instruct Timothy how to conduct himself in the church. Here are a few of those instructions: "Remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies.... Instruct the brethren in these things.... These things command and teach.... Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.... Meditate on these things, take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.... Teach and exhort these things...."

In his letter to the Ephesians (4:11-14) Paul wrote: "And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive...."

In this passage Paul says that the purpose of the church is education: the edifying of the body of Christ until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. For this purpose, God has established several sorts of teachers: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. All of these men are teachers, and all are supposed to equip the saints. The apostles, prophets and evangelists did so not only by speaking, but more importantly by writing the Scriptures, and pastors and teachers teach from these documents today.

Another Scripture that is relevant to this question of the purpose of the church is *John* 21:15-17: "So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'

"He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my Sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord you know all things, you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.' "

Some trendy holistic gospel people will no doubt think that Christ was talking about literal sheep and food, but Christians know better. He was talking about his chosen ones and the truth. Feeding them is figurative language for educating them in the truth.

Let me mention one more passage, if you will. I do not wish to belabor this point about the purpose of the church, but it is both foundational to a proper understanding of the doctrine of the church and absolutely necessary in this anti-intellectual twentieth century.

Matthew 28:19-20: "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...." Christ's command to the church is to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach all the things he had taught. The purpose of the

church is education in the truth. Here he speaks literally, while to Peter he spoke figuratively.

Now in this benighted twentieth century, many people, including many who claim to be Christians, do not know what the truth is or how it is communicated. Some think that truth is personal, not propositional; when one has a religious experience, one encounters persons, not believes propositions. One trusts in Christ, not believes that Christ died according to the Scriptures, and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Believing propositions, believing doctrines is belittled as "historical faith." Even the devils have that kind of faith, we are told. One needs a living, vibrant, personal relationship with Christ. Some people think that truth is emotional, not intellectual: The truth stirs one's heart, not enlightens one's understanding. Some think that truth is practical, not theoretical: One does the truth, not believes it. After all, doesn't James say that faith without works is dead?

These modern views of truth, all of which are rejections of the Biblical view, pervert both the doctrine and the practice of the church. Many of the worst practices of those societies professing to be churches stem from their false views of truth and how it is communicated: idolatry, ritual, invitations, dance, drama, and music.

Granted that truth is propositional and therefore must be communicated by language, granted that truth is the propositions of the Bible and their logical implications, and granted that the purpose of the church is the propagation of the truth, several things follow: Virtually all non-educational functions, whether they be charitable,* political, social, ceremonial, ritual, aesthetic, or economic are not proper functions of the church. The church's principal and essential job is education in the truth, and the only source of truth is the Bible.

Several years ago I taught a class in the doctrine of God at a large and allegedly conservative Presbyterian church near Washington, D.C. There were two or three people in the class, none of whom was a member of the large Presbyterian church in which the class was being held. On the same

evening, in the same church, a man and a woman were leading an aerobics class of 25 or 30. That church enjoys a reputation of being alive. And the aerobics class was certainly lively enough. But I doubt it.

The Teachers of the Church

If teaching the Bible is the function of the church, then there ought to be a lot of teaching going on in the church. Well, in the apostolic churches that was so: There was so much teaching going on that one man could not do it all, even though that man was an apostle or a prophet. In the accounts given in the book of *Acts*, the traveling bands of apostles and evangelists were always just that: traveling groups of men. The apostles would no more have thought of sending one man out to start a church or to be a missionary than they would have thought of sending a woman alone. Yet that is precisely what many denominations, including those that pride themselves on their orthodoxy, do today. In *Acts* 13 we are given a list of five men who were prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch. Five! There was no one teaching elder, no one priest, no one pastor, no one minister. There were five. Moreover, they were all equal. There was not one pastor, and an associate pastor, and a youth minister. There was no hierarchy. There was none of the various offices that modern churches have invented in their foolish attempts to manage the church efficiently. The early Christians took the educational function of the church very seriously. And when the five teachers sent men – or rather when the Holy Spirit sent men – to Cyprus, he sent two, Saul and Barnabas, and they took John with them. By verse 14, the reference is to "Paul and his party." Apparently the party had become so large that John could return to Jerusalem.

This plurality of teachers was the common practice of the apostolic church. *Acts* 14:23 says that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. Plural, not singular. One kind of leader, not two, three, four or five. There were no bishops, no right reverends, no cardinals, no archbishops—and certainly no popes. Elders, we are told in *1 Timothy* 3 and *Titus* 1, are to be teachers. There was no such thing as a ruling elder who did not teach in the

apostolic church order. There is only one set of requirements for the office of elder, and an elder is to be able to teach. Paul did not require seminary training of some elders and not for others. Nor, and this is also very important, was there a teacher who was not ordained. This is because the only way of ruling in the church is by teaching.

When Christ sent out the seventy disciples two by two in *Luke* 10:1, he followed the same practice. Perhaps this practice of Christ and the apostles has something to do with the Biblical doctrine that the testimony of two or three witnesses is necessary to establish and confirm the truth.

In *1 Thessalonians* 5:12 Paul exhorts the Christians to "recognize those," please notice the plural, "who labor among you...and admonish you." *Hebrews* 13:7 and 17 also contain the plural. In *Acts* 20 there are several elders of the church at Ephesus. *James* 5:14 refers to the elders of the church. *Titus* 1:5 says that Paul commanded Timothy to ordain elders, plural, in every city. *1 Timothy* 5:17 refers to elders in the plural. And *1 Corinthians* 14 specifically instructs the Corinthians to limit the number of men speaking in church to six!

In failing to recognize the importance of teaching and therefore the need for several teachers in each church, virtually all modern churches part company with the apostolic church. From the Roman State-Church, headed by the pope, with each local parish headed by a priest, to the local Baptist church headed by a pastor, the institution of one-man rule has been with us since the days of Diotrephes. Diotrephes, as I'm sure you recall, was the church pastor described in *3 John* "who loves to have the pre-eminence among them" and who did not receive John or the brethren. He and his church were the prototypical one minister-one church institution. It is his example, and not the apostles', that the churches have followed from that day to this.

The Election of Teachers

But there are several other important lessons to be learned from the Scriptures if we will be willing and teachable.

First, the congregations from among their own membership elected the teachers in the church. Perhaps the most familiar example of this is *Acts* 6, in which we are told that the congregation at Jerusalem elected seven men on the specific instruction of the apostles. Apparently we are given a complete account of the election of leaders in *Acts* 6 because this is the first time it had happened in the history of the church.

Here, in part, is what the apostles said: "Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

In this one example, written for our learning, the apostles overthrow some of the most cherished practices of ecclesiastical societies today. First, their appointing of leaders, including teachers like Stephen and Philip, was not done without the consent of the congregation. Second, the apostles specified men. Please note that no women were elected or ordained, yet if this were permissible, it should have been done here, for the problem concerned the distribution of food to widows. This would seem to be (according to modern thinking) a perfect illustration of why women deacons and elders are needed. But the apostles commanded that seven men be chosen, and they were. Third, the apostles specified a plurality of men. Fourth, they specified men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Paul makes the qualifications for leaders more explicit in *1 Timothy* 3. But the choice of men is left to the congregation. The congregation elects the men from their own number, not imposed on the congregation by "higher" authority. When we read later in *Acts* that the traveling apostles ordained elders in every city, we ought to assume that they used the same method: congregational election followed by apostolic appointment or ordination. Indeed the Greek word that is used in *Acts* 14:23, as Calvin argues, means elected by show of hands. Once the procedure was described in *Acts* 6 there was no need to repeat it every time it happened. The apostles regarded ordinary Christians as competent judges of who was filled with the Holy Ghost and with wisdom. This means, of course, that those modern societies that do not elect their leaders are not following the apostolic pattern. It means that

those societies that elect women are not following the apostolic pattern. It also means that those churches that do not elect their leaders from among their own number are not following the apostolic pattern. If the congregation is expected to judge, then the congregation must be informed about the men on whom they are to vote. This cannot be done, as modern churches seem to think, by listening to ministerial candidates preach trial sermons. The men whom the apostles appointed leaders in every city were local men, not immigrants. They were familiar with the congregation, the town, and the gospel.

The Equality of Teachers

Let me go on to my next point, which is that all the leaders of the church are equal. There is no hierarchy, nor even a first among equals. God is a democrat.

"But you, do not be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your teacher – the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on Earth your father; for one is your Father, he who is in Heaven. And do not be called teachers; for one is your teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:8-12).

God is a democrat

By these words Christ outlawed all titles and marks of distinction or nobility in the church. No one is to be called Rabbi, nor Father, and, what seems most harmless of all, not even Teacher. All such titles are both inaccurate and signs of pride. Yet societies claiming to be churches call their clergy Fathers, Reverends, Right Reverends, and Rabbis. Worse, they reserve these titles for elite groups within their leadership: Not all elders are called Reverend; not all leaders are called Fathers; not all teachers are called Rabbis. Not only has the clear command of Christ been ignored, but a new group, not found in the New Testament, called the clergy, has emerged.

In *Matthew* 20 Christ expands on this prohibition: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it

over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The only authority elected leaders of the church have is both given and limited by the Bible. It is the duty to teach the truth. It is not, I shall briefly argue, the power of excommunication. Paul gives a good example of the proper exercise of excommunication in his letters to the Corinthians. In the first letter, as you recall, he wrote to them – and notice the involvement of the whole congregation, not simply the elders – "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

In his second letter, Paul wrote: "The punishment which was inflicted by the majority [note well] is sufficient for such a man, so that on the contrary you ought rather to forgive and comfort him."

The commands which Christ gave in *Matthew* 18 similarly involve discipline by the majority: Go to your brother first. If he will not hear you, take a witness. If he still does not listen, tell it to the church. If he will not listen to the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. The church does not mean the church leaders: It means the entire assembly.

Moreover, this procedure applies to all Christians, not just to laymen. There are no special courts set up for judging the clergy. All Christians are brothers, and to establish separate judicial procedures for leaders and for laity is unbiblical. The Bible regards ordinary Christians, assuming the teachers have been doing their job correctly, as entirely competent to judge, as well as to counsel, one another.

The Remuneration of Teachers

The next observation that I wish to make is that all the teachers in the church are to be paid: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. Paul did not ordinarily receive compensation from the churches he helped establish, but he was quite clear in asserting the propriety and the duty of paying teachers according to their competence and diligence. Today many churches pay only one teacher, the minister or priest or pastor, and if they are large enough his associate, his secretary, the janitor, the choir director, and maybe the organist. But that is not what Paul commands. All the oxen, all the teachers, especially those who do their job well and eagerly, are to be paid. That does not mean that they must live solely from the fruits of their labor in the church, but it does mean that their work is to be recognized as valuable by the congregation.

If men are to be elected from the congregation as teachers, chances are they will already have another job by which they can support themselves should the congregation fire them. This would have several beneficial side-effects. If teachers are not completely dependent upon the congregation for their livelihood, they might be less apt to suppress truths that the congregation does not want to hear. Second, if the teachers can partially support themselves, the congregation will be able to support all the teachers according to their competence and diligence. Rather than paying one large salary to one man, the congregation will be able to pay smaller salaries to several men.

This division of labor would have several additional benefits: First, it would tend to reduce burnout. No one man would be expected to carry the load for the church. Second, it would ensure that the church would continue its purpose uninterrupted should one teacher resign, die, or become involved in a scandal. Third, it would reduce the personality cult and conflict that sometimes cause people to attend and to leave the church because they like or do not like the pastor or the way he preaches. There would be no central figure to like or dislike. There are many more additional benefits from having a plurality of teachers, some of which may not become obvious until it is tried. It is difficult to imagine all the ramifications of a system of church

organization that has not been tried in modern times.

The Structure of Church Meetings

Finally, I want to say a few words about church meetings themselves. *1 Corinthians* 14 contains a wealth of information about the meetings, as does *1 Timothy* 2. Some of this information is angrily rejected today by those who think they know better than God, but this is what God commands.

First, he commands the men to pray: "I desire that the men pray everywhere" (*1 Timothy* 2:8). The women are to adorn themselves with modest apparel and with good works. In contrast to the men, who are commanded to pray, the women are to keep quiet: "Let a woman learn in silence."

Second, Paul makes provision for several men to speak, as many as six in one meeting. They are to speak, and the rest are to judge. Here again is the appeal to the congregation to judge. Moreover, after the men have spoken, there is to be a period of discussion and questions. This seems to be implied by the fact that the women are prohibited from asking questions in church, but must do so at home. Such a prohibition would make sense only if there were a discussion period following each sermon. This prohibition has two good effects: First, it maintains order in the church; and second, it ensures the continuation of teaching at home in the family. It requires each husband and father to be able to teach his wife and family.

While *1 Corinthians* 14 refers to prophets and tongues speakers, the principles stated in that chapter apply to modern church meetings even though there are no prophets or tongues speakers today. The elected elders today would assume the leadership of the congregational worship. They are the elected teachers of the people. Moreover, the assembly for worship would be an assembly of all the people; there would be no division into Sunday school classes with their programs of planned retardation for the youngsters. All the women and children would learn in silence during the assembly; any questions that arose in their minds would be asked at home.

The Ideal Church

In conclusion I would like to suggest to you several characteristics of the church as it might be and ought to be. There are many details that I have yet to work out in my own thinking, but I can present a sketch of the ideal church.

The church as it might be and ought to be would consist of a well-informed congregation taught by several elected, ordained, and paid married male teachers. There would be a great deal of teaching going on at the church, all for the purpose of building the people up in the knowledge of Christ so that they might spread that knowledge throughout the community.

The plurality of teachers would mean that teaching would be plentiful, that the rest could correct one teacher's errors, even before the error is propagated. The teachers would meet regularly to discuss their teaching, to offer each other criticism and guidance, to suggest appropriate books to read, to prepare for the teaching meetings on Sunday, and to encourage each other in the faith. Mutual constructive criticism would tend to keep the teachers humble. Burnout, which has become more and more common among one-man churches, could be virtually eliminated. The church was never intended to function with one teacher, and a plurality of teachers would get a much larger job done better.

A church so arranged would also eliminate some of the squelching of local talent that the present unscriptural system encourages. I believe that many of the para-church organizations, to the extent that they are performing jobs that the church ought to be doing, are doing so because the local churches could not find, or would not find, any way to use the abilities and energies of local Christians. In a one-man church, there is room for only one man.

The institution of the Sunday school, which is only two hundred years old anyway, would be eliminated. Families would worship as families. In the order of worship a sermon or lecture might occur after some singing and prayer, followed by questions from the congregation and a general discussion to make sure that the sermon has been

understood. During this discussion, all the men of the congregation might participate. In the *Institutes* Calvin says, "It is clear that every member of the church is charged with the responsibility of public edification according to the measure of his grace, provided he perform it decently and in order."

This discussion in turn would be followed by more prayer and singing, which, I might add, is also to be educational. Many have drawn a false dichotomy between learning and worship – a dichotomy that flows from the more fundamentally false dichotomy between the mind and the spirit, or between the head and the heart – so that what is worship cannot be educational or intellectual, and what is educational cannot be worshipful. But such people are far from the Bible. *Colossians* 3:16 says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord." *Ephesians* 5:18 and 19 say, "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Notice how neatly the two activities, teaching one another and praising God, fit together. If we sing with grace in our hearts to God, we are teaching and admonishing one another also. There is no incompatibility between worship and learning; they are inseparable. Indeed, the highest worship we can pay to a God who has given us a thousand page book to read is to study that book and believe what it teaches; and the most insulting thing we can do to an author, whether human or divine, is to refuse or neglect to learn what he has written. Nothing is phonier than those people who claim to know Jesus, or to have a religious experience or a personal relationship with God, but who show little interest in a serious study of the Bible. Christ said, If you love me, obey my commands. Of course, one must know the commands before one can obey them; but knowledge, according to some people, has nothing to do with religion. Perhaps knowledge has nothing to do with their religion, but then their religion is not Christianity.

In the order of worship after the first cycle of sermon, discussion, prayer, and singing, the cycle might begin again. Or perhaps two of the elders could speak on the same topic or passage of Scripture. The important thing is to end the monologue that characterizes most churches today, the sermon following which no discussion or asking of questions is permitted. That simply is not a procedure conducive to learning. Christ himself entertained questions from his listeners. He even answered the questions of the lawyers and Pharisees who were trying to trick him. It is intolerably arrogant for ministers not to permit discussion after their sermons.

But to return to the church: A group of elected teachers, all of whom earn part of their salaries from the church and part from secular pursuits, would be more likely to preach the whole counsel of God than a single man who is totally dependent on the congregation for his support or on the denomination for his pension and health insurance. The apostolic church model would increase both the quantity and quality of the teaching going on.

When one reads the book of *Acts* and discovers just how well the apostolic model worked, an additional though inconclusive reason is added to the argument for reforming the church. Of course, one can also point to the obvious success of the Roman State-Church, which is about as far removed from the apostolic church pattern as one can get. Obviously, success *per se* is not a very good argument. But my argument is that only the apostolic model of the church is consistent with the system of truth revealed to us in the Scripture. The Diotrephesian model followed by the Roman State-Church is not compatible with the truth, and the Roman State-Church has not succeeded in propagating the truth. A false church and false doctrine go together; the apostolic church and the apostolic doctrine go together as well. Not only have we been given a system of truth in the Bible, but also as part of that system of truth we have been given information about a form of organization designed to propagate the truth. The medium and the message go together because God has given us a message about the medium. As Christians we are

sinning by failing to teach the truth in the way that God commands.

*To keep charitable activities from interfering with the purpose of the church, Paul wrote *1 Timothy* 5:4-16. In verse 11 he commands that some widows be denied charity; in verse 17 he commands that competent teachers be paid well.

A Note on Faith

John W. Robbins

The traditional analysis of faith and saving faith into three components – knowledge, *notitia*; assent, *assensus*; and trust, *fiducia* – has been shown to be false by Clark in his books *The Johannine Logos* and *Faith and Saving Faith*. Faith consists of two elements, knowledge (understanding) and belief (assent). His arguments are presented at length in his books, and I shall not repeat them here.

There is another argument against the traditional three-element view of faith that I do not believe Clark presents. It also is conclusive, and one would hope that theology and theologians a century from now – especially if Christ returns before then – recognize the error of the three-element view of faith.

The argument that I wish to offer is this: If faith consists of three elements – knowledge, assent (or belief), and trust – and if a person does not have faith unless all three elements are present, then unregenerate persons may understand and believe—assent to—the truth. In fact, those who advocate the three-element view insist that unregenerate persons may understand and believe the truth – their prime example of such persons is demons. But if unregenerate persons may believe the truth, then the natural man can indeed receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are not foolishness unto him, contrary to *1 Corinthians* 2 and dozens of other verses. Belief – and the whole of salvation – is not a

gift of God. Natural men can do their own believing, thank you very much.

The three-element view of faith leads straight to a contradiction – faithless believers – and therefore must be false.

When a Sunday school teacher was espousing the three-element view of faith and supporting the analysis from his own experience, he said that when young, he knew what the Bible said about sin and salvation; he believed that what it said was true; but he still did not have faith and was not a Christian because he did not trust Christ. That view, of course, destroys the Biblical order of salvation (*ordo salutis*) for in the Biblical order, regeneration precedes belief. When questioned about this, the Sunday school teacher began talking about regeneration by stages and referred to the miracle of the blind man receiving his sight by stages – first seeing men as trees.

This, of course, is equally unbiblical – regeneration is instantaneous, not a process, and it occurs once, not several times or in stages. Faith – belief – is an effect of regeneration; the regenerate mind must believe the saving propositions; the unregenerate mind cannot believe the saving propositions. What occurs in stages is sanctification, not regeneration, and that is what the miracle of the blind man illustrates.

In conclusion, the three-element view of saving faith cannot be true because it implies a logical contradiction, faithless believers; and because it violates the Biblical doctrine that regeneration must precede belief. The teaching of the Bible is clear: "Repent and believe the Gospel" (*Mark* 1:15); "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (*Mark* 9:23); "The devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (*Luke* 8:12); "But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*John* 1:12-13); "But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I said to you" (*John* 10:26); "Therefore they could not believe, because

Isaiah said again: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and understand with their heart, lest they should turn...." (*John* 12:39-40); "by him everyone who believes is justified from all things" (*Acts* 13:39); "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (*Acts* 16:31); "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.... For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on him will not be put to shame.'" (*Romans* 10:9,11)

Not only have the theologians failed to understand what the Gospel is, teaching that Christ died for all men and desires the salvation of all, they have failed to understand what saving faith is, turning it into something that a person must "work up" within himself, rather than a gift of God. It has been a long time since true Christianity has been preached widely in America – too long. May God raise up men whose minds and voices are true and clear.

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Secrets of Church Polity

John Witherspoon

Editor's note: One of the most notable of early American Presbyterians was John Witherspoon, sixth president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton (Jonathan Edwards had been the third president of this institution that later was known as Princeton University); the only clergyman and educator to sign the Declaration of Independence; principal author of the form of church government for the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. adopted in 1788; member of the New Jersey provincial Congress and the Continental Congress; educator of presidents, vice presidents, justices of the United States Supreme Court, state and federal legislators, and dozens of Presbyterian ministers; and author of many essays and sermons, among which is Ecclesiastical Characteristics: or, the Arcana of Church Policy, from which these excerpts are taken.

In 1766, when Witherspoon was invited by the board of trustees at the College of New Jersey to become Princeton's sixth president, he was the leader of the popular or orthodox faction in the Church of Scotland. Thirteen years before, at the age of 30, he had anonymously published Ecclesiastical Characteristics in order to ridicule the clergymen of the moderate party. In 1754—while on a fundraising trip to Scotland with Gilbert Tennent—the Reverend Samuel Davies, president of the College, read Witherspoon's satire on the Scots clergy and remarked that its humor was "not inferior to that of Dean Swift."

Enormously popular with the laity, Ecclesiastical Characteristics ran into seven editions and was the

first of Witherspoon's works to be published in America. According to Witherspoon, the Ecclesiastical Characteristics "make a complete system for the education and accomplishment of a moderate clergyman, for his guidance in public judgment, and his direction as to private practice." The book was the focus of rage and resentment among the powerful moderate clergymen of Scotland, and Witherspoon was forced to defend the satire before the Synod of Glasgow. He did so brilliantly, and we have included here part of that defense.

Our reasons for reprinting part of Witherspoon's work are several: First, not many Americans know anything about Witherspoon, even though he was certainly one of the most influential Christians of his generation. Second, those who have heard his name do not seem to be aware that he wrote brilliant satire. Third, many of those who profess to be Christians seem to think that satire is somehow un-Christian, yet it is, perhaps, the only form of humor found in Scripture. Certainly Elijah mocked the priests of Baal, Paul mocked the judaizers, and Jesus mocked the Pharisees. Satire, sarcasm, and ridicule, used in defense of the truth, are legitimate weapons; for falsehood is, among other things, ludicrous. Finally, there are just as many clergymen in 1987 as there were in 1753 who deserve to be ridiculed. Some of Witherspoon's Maxims are as appropriate today as they were two centuries ago. Here are Witherspoon's own words from Serious Apology for the Ecclesiastical Characteristics:

"The *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* is evidently a satire upon clergymen of a certain character. It is a satire too, which every body must see was intended to carry in it no small measure of keenness and severity. This was to be expected from the nature and design of the performance. A satire that does not bite is good for nothing. Hence it necessarily follows, that it is essential to this manner of writing to provoke and give offence.... The rage and fury of many ministers in Scotland when this pamphlet was first published, is known almost to all its readers. The most opprobrious names were bestowed upon the concealed author, and the most dreadful threatenings uttered, in case they should be so fortunate as to discover and convict him.

"...[W]hat first induced me to write, was a deep concern for the declining interest of religion in the church of Scotland, mixed with some indignation at what appeared to me a strange abuse of church-authority.... I am altogether at a loss to know what is the argument in reason, or the precept in Scripture, which makes it criminal to censure ministers when they deserve it.... I hold it as a first principle, that as it is in them doubly criminal and doubly pernicious, so it ought to be exposed with double severity.... [I]f, in any case, erroneous doctrine, or degeneracy of life, is plain and visible, to render them completely odious, must certainly be a duty. When it is not done, it provokes men to conclude that the clergy [are] all combined together, like 'Demetrius and the craftsmen,' and more concerned for their own power and credit, than for the interest and benefit of those committed to their charge....

"There have been, within these few years, writings published in Scotland directly levelled against religion itself, taking away the very foundation of morality, treating our Redeemer's name with contempt and

derision, and bringing in doubt the very being of God. Writings of this kind have been publicly avowed, and the names of the authors pre fixed. Now, where has been the zeal of the enemies of the *Characteristics* against such writings? Have they moved for the exercise of discipline against the writers? ... Does this not tempt men to say, as was said an age ago by Moliere in France, or by some there, on occasion of a play of his called *Tartuffe*, That a man may write what he pleaseth against God Almighty in perfect security; but if he write against the characters of the clergy in power, he is ruined forever....

"[I]t seems very reasonable to believe, that as human beings are never at a stand, a church and a nation, in a quiet and peaceable state, is always growing insensibly worse, till it be either so corrupt as to deserve and procure exterminating judgments, or in the infinite mercy of God, by some great shock or revolution, is brought back to simplicity and purity, and reduced, as it were, to its first principles.... [I]t is every man's duty to do all in his power to retard the progress of corruption, by strictness and tenderness in his own personal walk, fidelity and vigilance in the duties of a public station, and a bold and open testimony against every thing contrary to the interest of true and undefiled religion."

In his Speech in the Synod of Glasgow, Witherspoon pulled no punches with his critics:

"[M]ust the least attempt to show that there are corruptions among the clergy be an unpardonable crime? I have seen it insisted on in print, that as soon as the liberty of the press is taken away, there is an end of every shadow of liberty. And as of late years it hath been very frequent to borrow from what is customary in the civil government, and apply it to the church, I shall beg leave to borrow this maxim, and

to affirm, that so soon as it is not permitted in general to lash the characters of churchmen, there is established a sacerdotal tyranny, which always was, and always will be, of the most cruel, relentless, and illegal kind....

"To conclude, Sir, though I will never approve of, or give my consent for establishing a practice which I think unjust and tyrannical; yet as to my own case, I will even submit to be interrogated by this very party upon this just, this self-evidently just condition, that the ministers of that Presbytery do submit themselves to be interrogated by me in turn, on their doctrine...."

Let us now turn to Ecclesiastical Characteristics.

MAXIM I

All ecclesiastical persons, of whatever rank, whether principals of colleges, professors of divinity, ministers, or even probationers, that are suspected of heresy, are to be esteemed men of great genius, vast learning, and uncommon worth; and are, by all means, to be supported and protected.

All moderate men have a kind of fellow-feeling with heresy, and as soon as they hear of any one suspected, or in danger of being prosecuted for it, zealously and unanimously rise up in his defense. This fact is unquestionable. I never knew a moderate man in my life, that did not love and honor a heretic, or that had not an implacable hatred at the persons and characters of heresy-hunters; a name with which we have thought proper to stigmatize these sons of Belial, who begin and carry on prosecutions against men for heresy in church-courts.

It is related of the apostle John, and an ugly story it is, that upon going into a public bath, and observing the heretic Cerethinus there before him, he retired with the utmost precipitation, lest the edifice should fall, and crush him, when in company with such an enemy of the truth. If the story be true, the apostle's conduct was ridiculous and wild ... ; however,

whether it be true or not, the conduct of all moderate men is directly opposite.

As to the justice of this maxim, many solid reasons may be given for it.—Compassion itself, which is one of the finest and most benevolent feelings of the human heart, moves them to the relief of their distressed brother.—An other very plain reason may be given for it: moderate men are, by their very name and constitution, the reverse, in all respects, of bigotted zealots. Now, it is well known, that many of this last sort, both clergy and common people, when they hear of a man suspected of heresy, conceive an aversion at him, even before they know any thing of the case; nor after he is acquitted (as they are all of them commonly in our church-courts) can they ever come to entertain a favorable opinion of him. The reverse of this is to be as early and vigorous in his defense, as they are in his prosecution, and as implicit in our belief of his orthodoxy, as they are in their belief of his error

....

This brings to mind another reason for the maxim, viz. That heretics being so nearly related to the moderate men, have a right to claim their protection out of friendship and personal regard....

MAXIM II

When any man is charged with loose practices, or tendencies to immorality, he is to be screened and protected as much as possible; especially if the faults laid to his charge be, as they are incomparably well termed in a sermon, preached by a hopeful youth that made some noise lately, "good humored vices."

The reason upon which this maxim is founded, may be taken from the reasons for the former, "mutatis mutandis"; there being scarcely any of them that does not hold equally in both cases. A libertine is a kind of practical heretic; and is to be treated as such....

I must not, however, omit taking notice, to prevent mistakes, of one exception that must be made from this maxim; that is that when the person to whose charge any faults are laid, is reputed orthodox in his principles, in the common acceptation of that word,

... in that case they are all to be taken for granted as true, and the evil of them set forth in the liveliest colours. In consequence of this, he is to be prosecuted and torn to pieces on account of these crimes. But if it so happen, that he cannot be convicted upon a trial, then it is best to make use of things as they really are; that is, to express suspicions, to give ingenious and dubious hints, and if possible, ruin him without any trial at all....

MAXIM III

It is a necessary part of the character of a moderate man, never to speak of the Confession of Faith but with a sneer; to give sly hints, that he does not thoroughly believe it; and to make the word orthodoxy a term of contempt and reproach.

The *Confession of Faith*, which we are now all laid under a disagreeable necessity to subscribe, was framed in times of hot religious zeal; and therefore it can hardly be supposed to contain any thing agreeable to our sentiments in these cool and refreshing days of moderation. So true is this, that I do not remember to have heard any moderate man speak well of it, or recommend it, in a sermon, or private discourse, in my time, And, indeed, nothing can be more ridiculous, than to make a fixed standard for opinions, which change just as the fashions of clothes and dress. No complete system can be settled for all ages, except the maxims I am now compiling and illustrating, and their great perfection lies in their being ambulatory, so that they may be applied differently, with the change of times.

Upon his head some may be ready to object. That if the *Confession of Faith* be built upon the sacred Scriptures, then, change what will, it cannot, as the foundation upon which it rests, remains always firm and the same. In answer to this, I beg leave to make a very new, and therefore striking comparison: When a lady looks in a mirror, she sees herself in a certain attitude and dress, but in her native beauty and colour; should her eye, on a sudden, be tinctured with the jaundice, she sees herself all yellow and spotted; yet the mirror remains the same faithful mirror still, and the alteration arises not from it, but from the object that looks at it. I beg

leave to make another comparison: When an old philosopher looked at the evening-star, he beheld nothing but a little twinkling orb, round and regular like the rest; but when a modern views it with a telescope, he talks of phases, and horns, and mountains, and what not; now this arises not from any alteration in the star, but from his superior assistance in looking at it. The application of both these similitudes I leave to the reader.

But besides these general reasons, there is one very strong particular reason why moderate men cannot love the *Confession of Faith*; moderation evidently implies a large share of charity, and consequently a good and favorable opinion of those that differ from our church; but a rigid adherence to the *Confession of Faith*, and high esteem of it, nearly borders upon, or gives great suspicion of harsh opinions of those that differ from us: and does not experience rise up and ratify this observation? Who are the narrow-minded, bigotted, uncharitable persons among us? Who are the severe censurers of those that differ in judgment? Who are the damnors of the adorable Heathens, Socrates, Plato, Marcus Antonius, &c.? In fine, who are the persecutors of the inimitable heretics among ourselves? Who but the admirers of this antiquated composition, who pin their faith to other men's sleeves, and will not endure one jot less or different belief from what their fathers had before them! It is therefore plain, that the moderate man, who desires to inclose all intelligent beings in one benevolent embrace, must have an utter abhorrence at that vile hedge of distinction, the *Confession of Faith*.

I shall briefly mention a trifling objection to this part of our character.—That by our subscription we sacrifice sincerity, the queen of virtues, to private gain and advantage. To which I answer, in the first place, That the objection proves too much, and therefore must be false, and can prove nothing: for allowing the justice of the objection, it would follow, that a vast number, perhaps a majority, of the clergy of the Church of England are villains; their printed sermons being, many of them, diametrically opposite to the articles which they subscribe. Now, as this supposition can never be admitted by a charitable man, the objection from

whence it flows, as a necessary consequence, must fall to the ground.

But further, what is there more insincere in our subscriptions, than in those expressions of compliment and civility, which all acknowledge lawful, although they rarely express the meaning of the heart! The design is sufficiently understood in both cases; and our subscriptions have this advantage above forms of compliment, in point of honesty, that we are at a great deal of pains usually to persuade the world that we do not believe what we sign; whereas the complaisant gentleman is very seldom at any pains about the matter.

What is said might suffice in so clear a case; but I am here able to give a proof of the improvement of the age, by communication to the reader a new way of subscribing the *Confession of Faith*, in a perfect consistency with sincerity, if that be thought of any consequence: it is taken from the method of attesting some of our gentlemen elders to the general assembly. Many insist, that they ought to be at tested, and do attest them, as qualified in all respects, if the attestors are wholly ignorant about the matter; because, in that case, there is not evidence to the contrary, and the presumption ought to lie on the favorable side. Now, as every new discovery should be applied to all the purposes for which it may be useful, let this method be adopted by the intrants into the ministry, and applied to their subscription of the *Confession to Faith*. Nothing is more easy than for them to keep themselves wholly ignorant of what it contains; and then they may, with a good conscience, subscribe it as true, because it ought to be so.

MAXIM IV

A good preacher must not only have all the above and subsequent principles of moderation in him, as the source of every thing that is good; but must, over and over, have the following special marks and signs of a talent for preaching. 1. His subjects must be confined to social duties. 2. He must recommend them only from rational considerations, viz. the beauty and comely proportions of virtue, and its advantages in the present life, without any regard to a future state of more extended self-interest. 3. His

authorities must be drawn from heathen writers, none, or as few as possible, from Scripture. 4. He must be very unacceptable to the common people

MAXIM V

A minister must endeavor to acquire as great a degree of politeness, in his carriage and behavior, and to catch as much of the air and manner of a fine gentleman, as possibly he can.

This maxim is necessary, because without it the former could not be attained to. Much study is a great enemy to politeness in men, just as a great care of household affairs spoils the free careless air of a fine lady: and whether politeness is to be sacrificed to learning, let the impartial world judge. Besides the scheme which I have permitted the moderate man to study, doth actually supercede the use of all other learning, because it contains a knowledge of the whole, and the good of the whole; more than which, I hope, will be allowed to be not only needless, but impossible.

This scheme excels in brevity; for it may be understood in a very short time; which, I suppose, prompted a certain clergyman to say, that any student might get as much divinity as he would ever have occasion for in six weeks.... Agreeably to all this, have we not seen in fact, many students of divinity brought up in hot-beds, who have become speakers in general assemblies, and strenuous supporters of a falling church, before their beards were grown, to the perfect astonishment of an observing world? ... Then there will be no need at all for the critical study of the Scriptures, for reading large bodies of divinity, for an acquaintance with church history, or the writings of those poor creatures the Christian fathers....

We find that moderate men have mostly, by constitution, too much spirit to submit to the drudgery of the kinds of learning above-mentioned, and despise all those who do so. There is no controversy now about Arian, Arminian, Pelagian, or Socinian tenets ... This shows, by the by, the injustice and malignity of those poor beings the Seceders, who cry out of erroneous doctrines in the church, and assert, that Arminianism is publicly

taught by many. It is known, that they mean the moderate men, when they speak so; and yet I will venture to affirm, that there are not a few young men of that character, who, if they were asked, could not tell what the five Arminian articles are, so little do they regard Arminianism.... It will perhaps be objected against this maxim, That the moderate party commonly set up on a pretence of being more learned than their adversaries; and are, in fact, thought to be very learned in their sermons by the vulgar, who, for that reason hate them. Now, as to their pretending to be more learned than their adversaries, it is most just; for they have, as has been shown, got hold of the sum-total of learning, although they did not calculate it themselves. And as to their being thought learned in their sermons by the vulgar, it is sufficient for that purpose that they be unintelligible. Scattering a few phrases in their sermons ... will easily persuade the people that they are learned: and this persuasion is, to all intents and purposes, the same thing as if it were true.

MAXIM XI

The character which moderate men give their adversaries of the orthodox party must always be that of "knaves" or "fools"; and, as occasion serves, the same person (if it will pass) may be represented as a "knave" at one time, and as a "fool" at another.

MAXIM XII

As to the world in general, a moderate man is to have great charity for Atheists and Deists in principle, and for persons that are loose and vicious in their practice; but none at all for those that have a high profession of religion, and a great pretence to strictness in their walk and conversation

... [T]he very meaning of charity is to believe without evidence; it is not charity at all to believe good of a man when we see it, but when we do not see it. It is with charity in sentiment, as with charity in supplying the wants of the necessitous; we do not give alms to the rich but to the poor. In like manner, when there are all outward appearances of goodness, it requires no charity to believe well of the persons: but when there are none at all, or perhaps very many to the contrary, then I will

maintain it is charity, and charity in its perfection, to believe well of them. Some object to this, Well, since it is your will, have charity for them; but have charity also for such as are apparently good. Oh! the stupid world! and slow of heart to conceive! is it not evident to a demonstration, that if the appearance of wickedness be the foundation of charity, the appearance of goodness, which is its opposite, must be the foundation of a quite contrary judgment, viz. suspecting, or rather believing ill of them? If any still insist, That if not charity, yet justice should incline us to believe well of them? as I have seemingly confessed; I answer, That we have no occasion for justice, if we have charity; for charity is more than justice, even as the whole is more than a part: but though I have supposed, ... that justice requires this, yet it is not my sentiment; for the persons meant being usually great enemies to us, are thereby cut off from any claim in justice to our good opinion; and being also, as have been proved, improper objects of charity, it remains that we should hate them with perfect hatred, as in fact we do.

MAXIM XIII

All moderate men are joined together in the strictest bond of union, and do never fail to support and defend one another to the utmost, be the cause they are engaged in what it will.

Time would fail me, if I should go through all the excellencies of this crowning maxim; and therefore I shall only further observe, that it excels all the known principles of action for clearness and perspicuity. In order to determine which side to chose in a disputed question, it requires no long discussions of reason, no critical inquiry into the truth of controverted facts, but only some knowledge of the characters of men; a study much more agreeable, as well as more common, than that of books. To speak more properly, it requires no study at all of any kind; for, as to the gross, or general tendency of a character, common fame communicates the impression, and seldom or never deceives us.

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The Fallibility of Ministers

J. C. Ryle

But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before certain Jews came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:11-16).

Have we ever considered what the Apostle Peter once did at Antioch? It is a question that deserves serious consideration.

What the Apostle Peter did at Rome we are often told, although we have hardly a jot of authentic information about it. Roman Catholic writers furnish us with many stories about this. Legends, traditions, and fables abound on the subject. But unhappily for these writers, Scripture is utterly silent upon the point. There is nothing in Scripture

to show that the Apostle Peter ever was at Rome at all!

But what did the Apostle Peter do at Antioch? This is the point to which I want to direct attention. This is the subject from the passage from the Epistle to the Galatians, which heads this paper. On this point, at any rate, the Scripture speaks clearly and unmistakably.

The six verses of the passages before us are striking on many accounts. They are striking, if we consider the event which they describe: Here is one Apostle rebuking another! They are striking, when we consider who the two men are: Paul the younger rebukes Peter the elder! They are striking, when we remark the occasion: This was no glaring fault, no flagrant sin, at first sight, that Peter had committed! Yet the Apostle Paul says, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." He does more than this: He reproves Peter publicly for his error before all the Church at Antioch. He goes even further: He writes an account of the matter, which is now read in two hundred languages all over the world. It is my firm conviction that the Holy Ghost means us to take particular notice of this passage of Scripture. If Christianity had been an invention of man, these things would never have been recorded. An imposter, like Mahomet, would have hushed up the difference between two Apostles. The Spirit of truth has caused these verses to be written for our learning, and we shall do well to take heed to their contents.

There are three great lessons from Antioch which I think we ought to learn from this passage:

1. The first lesson is that great ministers may make great mistakes.
2. The second is that to keep the truth of Christ in his Church is even more important than to keep peace.
3. The third is that there is no doctrine about which we ought to be so jealous as justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

1. The first great lesson we learn from Antioch is that great ministers may make great mistakes.

What clearer proof can we have than that which is set before us in this place? Peter, without doubt, was one of the greatest in the company of the Apostles. He was an old disciple. He was a disciple who had had peculiar advantages and privileges. He had been a constant companion of the Lord Jesus. He had heard the Lord preach, seen the Lord work miracles, enjoyed the benefit of the Lord's private teaching, been numbered among the Lord's intimate friends, and gone out and come in with him all the time he ministered upon Earth.

He was the Apostle to whom the keys of the kingdom were given, and by whose hand those keys were first used. He was the first who opened the door of faith to the Jews by preaching to them on the day of Pentecost. He was the first who opened the door of faith to the Gentiles by going to the house of Cornelius and receiving him into the Church. He was the first to rise up in the Council of the fifteenth of Acts and say, "Why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" And yet here this very Peter, this same Apostle, plainly falls into a great mistake. The Apostle Paul tells us, "I withstood him to the face." He tells us that "he was to be blamed." He says, "he feared them of the circumcision." He says of him and his companions that "they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel." He speaks of their "dissimulation." He tells us that by this

dissimulation even Barnabas, his old companion in missionary labors, "was carried away."

What a striking fact this is. This is Simon Peter! This is the third great error of his which the Holy Ghost has thought fit to record! Once we find him trying to keep back our Lord, as far as he could, from the great work of the cross, and severely rebuked. Then we find him denying the Lord three times, and with an oath. Here again we find him endangering the leading truth of Christ's Gospel. Surely we may say, "Lord, what is man?" The Church of Rome boasts that the Apostle Peter is her founder and first Bishop. Be it so: Grant it for a moment. Let us only remember that of all the Apostles there is not one, excepting, of course Judas Iscariot, of whom we have so many proofs that he was a fallible man. Upon her own showing the Church of Rome was founded by the most fallible of the Apostles.

But it is all meant to teach us that even the Apostles themselves, when not writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, were at times liable to err. It is meant to teach us that the best men are weak and fallible so long as they are in the body. Unless the grace of God holds them up, any one of them may go astray at any time. It is very humbling, but it is very true. True Christians are converted, justified, and sanctified. They are living members of Christ, beloved children of God, and heirs of eternal life. They are elect, chosen, called, and kept unto salvation. They have the Spirit. But they are not infallible.

Will not rank and dignity confer infallibility? No, they will not! It matters nothing what a man is called. He may be a Czar, an Emperor, a King, a Prince. He may be a Pope or a Cardinal, an Archbishop or a Bishop, a Dean or an Archdeacon, a Priest or Deacon. He is still a fallible man. Neither the crown, nor the diadem, nor the anointing oil, nor the mitre, nor the imposition of hands can prevent a man making mistakes.

Will not numbers confer infallibility? No, they will not! You may gather together princes by the score, and bishops by the hundred; but, when gathered together, they are still liable to err. You may call

them a council or a synod or an assembly or a conference, or what you please. It matters nothing. Their conclusions are still the conclusions of fallible men. Their collective wisdom is still capable of making enormous mistakes. Well says the twenty-first Article of the Church of England, "General councils may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God."

The example of the Apostle Peter at Antioch is one that does not stand alone. It is only a parallel of many a case that we find written for our learning in Holy Scripture. Do we not remember Abraham, the father of the faithful, following the advice of Sarah, and taking Hagar for a wife? Do we not remember Aaron, the first high priest, listening to the children of Israel, and making a golden calf? Do we not remember Nathan the prophet telling David to build a temple? Do we not remember Solomon, the wisest of men, allowing his wives to build their high places? Do we not remember Asa, the good king of Judah, seeking not the Lord, but the physicians? Do we not remember Jehosaphat, the good king, going down to help wicked Ahab? Do we not remember Hezekiah, the good king, receiving the ambassadors of Babylon? Do we not remember Josiah, the last of Judah's good kings, going forth to fight with Pharaoh? Do we not remember James and John, wanting fire to come down from heaven? These things deserve to be remembered. They were not written without cause. They cry aloud, No infallibility!

And who does not see, when he reads the history of the Church of Christ, repeated proofs that the best of men can err? The early fathers were zealous according to their knowledge and ready to die for Christ. But many of them countenanced monkery, and nearly all sowed the seeds of many superstitions. The Reformers were honored instruments in the hand of God for reviving the cause of truth on Earth. Yet hardly one of them can be named who did not make some great mistake. Martin Luther held pertinaciously the doctrine of consubstantiation. Melancthon was often timid and undecided. Calvin permitted Servetus to be burned. Cranmer recanted and fell away for a time from his first faith. Jewell subscribed to popish doctrines for fear of death. Hooper disturbed the Church of

England by over scrupulosity about vestments. The Puritans, in after times, denounced toleration as Abaddon and Apollyon. Wesley and Toplady, last century, abused each other in most shameful language. Irving, in our own day, gave way to the delusion of speaking in unknown tongues. All these things speak with a loud voice. They all lift up a beacon to the Church of Christ. They all say, "Cease from man;"—"Call no man master;"—"Call no man father upon Earth;"—"Let no man glory in man;"—"He that glories, let him glory in the Lord." They all cry, No infallibility!

The lesson is one that we all need. We are all naturally inclined to lean upon man whom we can see, rather than upon God whom we cannot see. We naturally love to lean upon the ministers of the visible Church, rather than upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop and High Priest, who is invisible. We need to be continually warned and set upon our guard.

I see this tendency to lean on man everywhere. I know no branch of the Protestant Church of Christ which does not require to be cautioned upon the point. It is a snare, for example, to the English Episcopalian to make idols of Bishop Pearson and "the Judicious Hooker." It is a snare to the Scotch Presbyterian to pin his faith on John Knox, the Covenanters, and Dr. Chalmers. It is a snare to the Methodists in our day to worship the memory of John Wesley. It is a snare to the Independent to see no fault in any opinion of Owen and Dodderidge. It is a snare to the Baptist to exaggerate the wisdom of Gill and Fuller and Robert Hall. All these are snares, and into these snares how many fall!

We all naturally love to have a pope of our own. We are far too ready to think that because some great minister or some learned man says a thing—or because our own minister, whom we love, says a thing—it must be right, without examining whether it is in Scripture or not. Most men dislike the trouble of thinking for themselves. They like following a leader. They are like sheep—when one goes over the gap all the rest follow. Here at Antioch even Barnabas was carried away. We can well fancy that good man saying, "An old Apostle,

like Peter, surely cannot be wrong. Following him, I cannot err."

And now let us see what practical lessons we may learn from this part of our subject:

(a) For one thing, let us learn not to put implicit confidence in any man's opinion, merely because he lived many hundred years ago. Peter was a man who lived in the time of Christ himself, and yet he could err. There are many who talk much in the present day about "the voice of the primitive Church." They would have us believe that those who lived nearest the time of the Apostles must of course know more about truth than we can. There is no foundation for any such opinion. It is a fact that the most ancient writers in the Church of Christ are often at variance with one another. What are the best of ministers but men—dust, ashes, and clay—men of like passions with ourselves, men exposed to temptations, men liable to weaknesses and infirmities?

It is a fact that they often changed their own minds and retracted their own former opinions. It is a fact that they often wrote foolish and weak things and often showed great ignorance in their explanations of Scripture. It is vain to expect to find them free from mistakes. Infallibility is not to be found in the early fathers, but in the Bible.

(b) For another thing, let us learn not to put implicit confidence in any man's opinion, merely because of his office as a minister. Peter was one of the very chiefest Apostles, and yet he could err. This is a point on which men have continually gone astray. It is the rock on which the early Church struck. Men soon took up the saying, "Do nothing contrary to the mind of the Bishop." But what are bishops, priests, and deacons? What are the best of ministers but men—dust, ashes, and clay—men of like passions with ourselves, men exposed to temptations, men liable to weaknesses and infirmities? What saith the Scripture, "Who is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (*I Corinthians* 3:5). Bishops have often driven the truth into the wilderness, and decreed that to be true which was false. The greatest errors have been

begun by ministers. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of the High priest, made religion to be abhorred by the children of Israel. Annas and Caiaphas, though in the direct line of descent from Aaron, crucified the Lord. Arius, that great heresiarch, was a minister. It is absurd to suppose that ordained men cannot go wrong. We should follow them so far as they teach according to the Bible, but no further. We should believe them so long as they can say, "Thus it is written," "thus saith the Lord;" but further than this we are not to go. Infallibility is not to be found in ordained men, but in the Bible.

(c) For another thing, let us learn not to place implicit confidence in any man's opinion, merely because of his learning. Peter was a man who had miraculous gifts and could speak with tongues, and yet he could err.

This is a point again on which many go wrong. This is the rock on which men struck in the Middle Ages. Men looked on Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus and Peter Lombard and many of their companions as almost inspired. They gave epithets to some of them in token of their admiration. They talked of "the irrefragable" doctor, "the seraphic" doctor, "the incomparable" doctor—and seemed to think that whatever these doctors said must be true!

But what is the most learned of men, if he be not taught by the Holy Ghost? What is the most learned of all divines but a mere fallible child of Adam at his very best? Vast knowledge of books and great ignorance of God's truth may go side by side. They have done so, they may do so and they will do so in all times. I will engage to say that the two volumes of Robert M'Cheyne's *Memoirs* and *Sermons* have done more positive good to the souls of men than any one folio that Origen or Cyprian ever wrote. I doubt not that the one volume of *Pilgrim's Progress*, written by a man who knew hardly any book but his Bible and was ignorant of Greek and Latin, will prove in the last day to have done more for the benefit of the world than all the works of the schoolmen put together.

Learning is a gift that ought not to be despised. It is an evil day when books are not valued in the Church. But it is amazing to observe how vast a

man's intellectual attainments may be, and yet how little he may know of the grace of God. I have no doubt the Authorities of Oxford in the last century knew more of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, than Wesley, Whitefield, Berridge, or Venn. But they knew little of the Gospel of Christ. Infallibility is not to be found among learned men, but in the Bible.

(d) For another thing, let us take care that we do not place implicit confidence on our own minister's opinion, however, godly he may be. Peter was a man of mighty grace, and yet he could err. Your minister may be a man of God indeed, and worthy of all honor for his preaching and practice; but do not make a pope of him. Do not place his word side by side with the Word of God. Do not spoil him by flattery. Do not let him suppose he can make no mistakes. Do not lean your whole weight on his opinion, or you may find to your cost that he can err.

It is written of Joash, King of Judah, that he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (*2 Chronicles* 24:2). Jehoiada died, and then died the religion of Joash. Just so your minister may die, and then your religion may die too—may change, and your religion may change—may go away, and your religion may go. Oh, be not satisfied with a religion built upon man! Be not content with saying, "I have hope, because my own minister has told me such and such things." Seek to be able to say, "I have hope, because I find it thus and thus written in the Word of God." If your peace is to be solid, you must go yourself to the fountain of all truth. If your comforts are to be lasting, you must visit the well of life yourself, and draw fresh water for your own soul. Ministers may depart from the faith. The visible Church may be broken up. But he who has the Word of God written in his heart has a foundation beneath his feet which will never fail him. Honor your minister as a faithful ambassador of Christ. Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. But never forget that infallibility is not to be found in godly ministers, but in the Bible.

The things I have mentioned are worth remembering. Let us bear them in mind, and we shall have learned one lesson from Antioch.

2. I now pass on to the second lesson that we learn from Antioch. That lesson is that to keep Gospel truth in the Church is of even greater importance than to keep peace.

I suppose no man knew better the value of peace and unity than the Apostle Paul. He was the Apostle who wrote to the Corinthians about charity. He was the Apostle who said, "Be of the same mind one toward another;" "Be at peace among yourselves;" "Mind the same things;" "The servant of God must not strive." "There is one body and there is one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." He was the Apostle who said, "I become all things to all men, that by all means I may save some" (*Romans* 12:16; *1 Thessalonians* 5:13; *Philippians* 3:16; *Ephesians* 4:5; *1 Corinthians* 9:22). Yet see how he acts here! He withstands Peter to the face. He publicly rebukes him. He runs the risk of all the consequences that might follow. He takes the chance of everything that might be said by the enemies of the Church at Antioch. Above all, he writes it down for a perpetual memorial, that it never might be forgotten; that wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the world, this public rebuke of an erring Apostle might be known and read of all men.

Now why did he do this? Because he dreaded false doctrine, because he knew that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, because he would teach us that we ought to contend for the truth jealously, and to fear the loss of truth more than the loss of peace.

St. Paul's example is one we shall do well to remember in the present day. Many people will put up with anything in religion, if they may only have a quiet life. They have a morbid dread of what they call "controversy." They are filled with a morbid fear of what they style, in a vague way, "party spirit," though they never define clearly what party spirit is. They are possessed with a morbid desire to keep the peace and make all things smooth and pleasant, even though it be at the expense of truth.

So long as they have outward calm, smoothness, stillness, and order, they seem content to give up everything else.

We have no right to expect anything but the pure Gospel of Christ, unmixed and unadulterated—the same Gospel that was taught by the Apostles—to do good to the souls of men.

I believe they would have thought with Ahab that Elijah was a troubler of Israel and would have helped the princes of Judah when they put Jeremiah in prison to stop his mouth. I have no doubt that many of these men of whom I speak would have thought that Paul at Antioch was a very imprudent man and that he went too far!

I believe this is all wrong. We have no right to expect anything but the pure Gospel of Christ, unmixed and unadulterated—the same Gospel that was taught by the Apostles—to do good to the souls of men. I believe that to maintain this pure truth in the Church men should be ready to make any sacrifice, to hazard peace, to risk dissension, to run the chance of division. *They should no more tolerate false doctrine than they should tolerate sin.* They should withstand any adding to or taking away from the simple message of the Gospel of Christ.

For the truth's sake our Lord Jesus Christ denounced the Pharisees, though they sat in Moses' seat and were the appointed and authorized teachers of men. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," he says, eight times over, in the twenty-third chapter of *Matthew*. And who shall dare to breathe a suspicion that our Lord was wrong?

For the truth's sake Paul withstood and blamed Peter, though a brother. Where was the use of unity when pure doctrine was gone? And who shall dare to say he was wrong? For the truth's sake Athanasius stood out against the world to maintain the pure doctrine about the divinity of Christ and waged a controversy with the great majority of the professing Church. And who shall dare to say he was wrong? For the truth's sake Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, the English Reformers, counseled Henry VIII and Edward VI to separate from Rome, and to risk the consequences of division. And who shall dare to say that they were wrong?

For the truth's sake Whitefield and Wesley a hundred years ago denounced the mere barren moral preaching of the clergy of their day and went out into the highways and byways to save souls, knowing well that they would be cast out from the Church's communion. And who shall dare to say that they were wrong?

Yes! Peace without truth is a false peace; it is the very peace of the devil. Unity without the Gospel is a worthless unity; it is the very unity of Hell. Let us never be ensnared by those who speak kindly of it. Let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Think not that I came to send peace upon Earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword" (*Matthew* 10:34). Let us remember the praise he gives to one of the Churches in the Revelation: "You cannot bear them who are evil. You have tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and have found them liars" (*Revelation* 2:2). Let us remember the blame he casts upon another: "You allow that woman Jezebel to teach" (*Revelation* 2:20). Never let us be guilty of sacrificing any portion of truth upon the altar of peace. Let us rather be like the Jews, who, if they found any manuscript copy of the Old Testament Scriptures incorrect in a single letter, burned the whole copy, rather than run the risk of losing one jot or tittle of the Word of God. Let us be content with nothing short of the whole Gospel of Christ.

In what way are we to make practical use of the general principles which I have just laid down? I will give my readers one simple piece of advice. I believe it is advice which deserves serious consideration.

I warn then every one who loves his soul *to be very jealous as to the preaching he regularly hears and the place of worship he regularly attends.* He who deliberately settles down under any ministry which is positively unsound is a very unwise man. I will never hesitate to speak my mind on this point. I know well that many think it a shocking thing for a man to forsake his parish church. I cannot see with the eyes of such people. I draw a wide distinction between teaching which is *defective* and teaching which is thoroughly *false*—between teaching which

errs on the negative side and teaching which is positively unscriptural.

But I do believe, if false doctrine is unmistakably preached in a parish church, a parishioner who loves his soul is quite right in not going to that parish church. To hear unscriptural teaching fifty-two Sundays in every year is a serious thing. It is a continual dropping of slow poison into the mind. I think it almost impossible for a man willfully to submit himself to it and not take harm. I see in the New Testament we are plainly told to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (*I Thessalonians* 5:21). I see in the Book of *Proverbs* that we are commanded to "cease to hear instruction which causes to err from the paths of knowledge" (*Proverbs* 19:27). If these words do not justify a man in ceasing to worship at a church, if positively false doctrine is preached in it, I know not what words can.

Does any man mean to tell us that to attend the parish church is absolutely needful to an Englishman's salvation? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name. Does anyone mean to tell us that going to the parish church will save any man's soul, if he dies unconverted and ignorant of Christ? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name. Does anyone mean to tell us that going to the parish church will teach a man anything about Christ, or conversion, or faith, or repentance, if these subjects are hardly ever named in the parish church and never properly explained? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name. Does anyone mean to say that a man who repents, believes in Christ, is converted and holy will lose his soul, because he has forsaken his parish church and learned his religion elsewhere? If there is such an one, let him speak out and give us his name. For my part I abhor such monstrous and extravagant ideas. I see not a jot of foundation for them in the Word of God. I trust that the number of those who deliberately hold them is exceedingly small.

There are not a few parishes in England where the religious teaching is little better than Popery. Ought the laity of such parishes to sit still, be content, and

take it quietly? They ought not. And why? Because, like St. Paul, they ought to prefer truth to peace.

There are not a few parishes in England where the religious teaching is little better than morality. The distinctive doctrines of Christianity are never clearly proclaimed. Plato, or Seneca, or Confucius, or Socinus could have taught almost as much. Ought the laity in such parishes to sit still, be content, and take it quietly? They ought not. And why? Because, like St. Paul, they ought to prefer truth to peace. False doctrine and heresy are even worse than schism.

I am using strong language in dealing with this part of my subject; I know it. I am trenching on delicate ground; I know it. I am handling matters which are generally let alone, and passed over in silence; I know it. I say what I say from a sense of duty to the Church of which I am a minister. I believe the state of the times, and the position of the laity in some parts of England, require plain speaking. Souls are perishing in many parishes in ignorance. Honest members of the Church of England in many districts are disgusted and perplexed. This is no time for smooth words. I am not ignorant of those magic expressions, "the parochial system, order, division, schism, unity, controversy," and the like. I know the cramping, silencing influence which they seem to exercise on some minds. I too have considered those expressions calmly and deliberately, and on each of them I am prepared to speak my mind:

(a) The *parochial system* of England is an admirable thing in theory. Let it only be well administered and worked by truly spiritual ministers, and it is calculated to confer the greatest blessings on the nation. But it is useless to expect attachment to the parish church when the minister of the parish is ignorant of the Gospel or a lover of the world.

It is a plain Scriptural duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (*Jude* 3). In such a case we must never be surprised if men forsake their parish church and seek truth wherever truth is to be found. If the parochial minister does not preach the Gospel and live the Gospel, the conditions on which he claims the attention of his parishioners are *virtually violated*, and his claim to

be heard is at an end. It is absurd to expect the head of a family to endanger the souls of his children as well as his own for the sake of "parochial order." There is no mention of parishes in the Bible, and we have no right to require men to live and die in ignorance in order that they may be able to say at last, "I always attended my parish church."

(b) *Divisions and separations* are most objectionable in religion. They weaken the cause of true Christianity. They give occasion to the enemies of all godliness to blaspheme. But before we blame people for them, we must be careful that we lay the blame *where it is deserved*. False doctrine and heresy are even worse than schism. If people separate themselves from teaching which is positively false and unscriptural, they ought to be praised rather than reprov'd. In such cases separation is a virtue and not a sin. It is easy to make sneering remarks about "itching ears," and "love of excitement," but it is not so easy to convince a plain reader of the Bible that it is his duty to hear false doctrine every Sunday, when by a little exertion he can hear truth. The old saying must never be forgotten, "He is the schismatic who causes the schism."

(c) *Unity, quiet, and order* among professing Christians are mighty blessings. They give strength, beauty, and efficiency to the cause of Christ. But even gold may be bought too dear. Unity which is obtained by the sacrifice of truth is worth nothing. It is not the unity which pleases God. The Church of Rome boasts loudly of a unity which does not deserve the name. It is unity which is obtained by taking away the Bible from the people, by gagging private judgment, by encouraging ignorance, by forbidding men to think for themselves. Like the exterminating warriors of old, the Church of Rome "makes a solitude and calls it peace." There is quiet and stillness enough in the grave, but it is not the quiet of health, but of death. It was the false prophets who cried "Peace," when there was no peace.

(d) *Controversy* in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world, and the flesh without private differences in our own camp. But there is one thing which is even worse than

controversy, and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted without protest or molestation. It was controversy that won the battle of Protestant Reformation. If the views that some men hold were correct, it is plain we never ought to have had any Reformation at all! For the sake of peace, we ought to have gone on worshipping the Virgin and bowing down to images and relics to this very day! Away with such trifling! There are times when controversy is not only a duty but a benefit. Give me the mighty thunderstorm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons us in silence, and we are never safe. The other frightens and alarms for a little season. But it is soon over, and it clears the air. It is a plain Scriptural duty to "contend (*Jude* 3).

I am quite aware that the things I have said are exceedingly distasteful to many minds. I believe many are content with teaching which is not the whole truth and fancy it will be "all the same" in the end. I am sorry for them. I am convinced that nothing but *the whole truth* is likely, as a general rule, to do good to souls. I am satisfied that those who willfully put up with anything short of the whole truth will find at last that their souls have received much damage. Three things there are which men never ought to trifle with—a little poison, a little false doctrine, and a little sin.

I am quite aware that when a man expresses such opinions as those I have just brought forward there are many ready to say, "He is no Churchman." I hear such accusations unmoved. The day of judgment will show who were the true friends of the Church of England and who were not. I have learned in the last thirty-two years that if a clergyman leads a quiet life, lets alone the unconverted part of the world, and preaches so as to offend none and edify none, he will be called by many "a good Churchman." And I have also learned that if a man studies the Articles and Homilies, labors continually for the conversion of souls, adheres closely to the great principles of the Reformation, bears a faithful testimony against popery, and preaches as Jewell and Latimer used to preach, he will probably be thought a firebrand and "troubler of Israel," and called no Churchman at all! But I can see plainly that they are not the best

Churchmen who talk most loudly about Churchmanship.

I remember that none cried "Treason" so loudly as Athaliah (2 Kings 11:14). Yet she was a traitor herself. I have observed that many who once talked most about Churchmanship have ended by forsaking the Church of England and going over to Rome. Let men say what they will. *They are the truest friends of the Church of England who labor most for the preservation of truth.*

I lay these things before the readers of this paper and invite their serious attention to them. I charge them never to forget that truth is of more importance to a Church than peace. I ask them to be ready to carry out the principles I have laid down, and to contend zealously, if needs be, for the truth. If we do this we shall have learned something from Antioch.

3. But I pass on to the third lesson from Antioch. That lesson is that there is no doctrine about which we ought to be so jealous as justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

The proof of this lesson stands out most prominently in the passage of Scripture which heads this paper. What one article of faith had the Apostle Peter denied at Antioch? None. What doctrine had he publicly preached that was false? None. What, then had he done? He had done this: After once keeping company with the believing Gentiles as "fellow-heirs and partakers of the promise of Christ in the Gospel" (*Ephesians* 3:6), he suddenly became shy of them and withdrew himself. He seemed to think they were less holy and acceptable to God than the circumcised Jews. He seemed to imply that the believing Gentiles were in a lower state than they who had kept the ceremonies of the law of Moses. He seemed, in a word, to add something to simple faith as needful to give man an interest in Jesus Christ. He seemed to reply to the questions, "What shall I do to be saved?" not merely, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," but "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be circumcised, and keep the ceremonies of the law."

Such conduct as this the Apostle Paul would not endure for a moment. Nothing so moved him as the

idea of adding anything to the Gospel of Christ. "I withstood him," he says, "to the face." He not only rebuked him, but he recorded the whole transaction fully, when by inspiration of the Spirit he wrote the *Epistle to the Galatians*.

I invite special attention to this point. I ask men to observe the remarkable jealousy which the Apostle Paul shows about this doctrine, and to consider the point about which such a stir was made. Let us mark in this passage of Scripture the immense importance of justification by faith without the deeds of the law. Let us learn here what mighty reasons the Reformers of the Church of England had for calling it, in our eleventh Article, "a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort."

(a) This is the doctrine which is essentially necessary to our own personal comfort. No man on Earth is a real child of God and a saved soul till he sees and receives salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. No man on Earth is a real child of God and a saved soul till he sees and receives salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. No man will ever have solid peace and true assurance until he embraces with all his heart the doctrine that "we are accounted righteous before God for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings." One reason, I believe, why so many professors in this day are tossed to and fro, enjoy little comfort, and feel little peace is their ignorance on this point. They do not see clearly justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

(b) This is the doctrine which the great enemy of souls hates, and labors to overthrow. He knows that it turned the world upside down at the first beginning of the Gospel in the days of the Apostles. He knows that it turned the world upside down again at the time of the Reformation. He is therefore always tempting men to reject it. He is always trying to seduce churches and ministers to deny or obscure its truth. No wonder that the Council of Trent directed its chief attack against this doctrine and pronounced it accursed and heretical. No wonder that many who think themselves learned in these days denounce the doctrine as theological jargon and say that all "earnest-minded people" are justified by Christ, whether they have faith or not!

The plain truth is that the doctrine is all gall and wormwood to unconverted hearts. It just meets the wants of the awakened soul. But the proud, unhumbled man who knows not his own sin and sees not his own weakness cannot receive its truth.

(c) This is the doctrine, the absence of which accounts for half the errors of the Roman Catholic Church. The beginning of half the unscriptural doctrines of popery may be traced up to rejection of justification by faith. No Romish teacher, if he is faithful to his church, can say to an anxious sinner, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." He cannot do it without additions and explanations which completely destroy the good news. He dare not give the Gospel medicine without adding something which destroys its efficacy and neutralizes its power. Purgatory, penance, priestly absolution, the intercession of saints, the worship of the Virgin, and many other man-made services of popery all spring from this source. They are all rotten props to support weary consciences. But they are rendered necessary by the denial of justification by faith.

(d) This is the doctrine which is absolutely essential to a minister's success among his people. Obscurity on this point spoils all. Absence of clear statements about justification will prevent the utmost zeal doing good. There may be much that is pleasing and nice in a minister's sermons, much about Christ and sacramental union with him, much about self-denial, much about humility, much about charity. But all this will profit little if his trumpet gives an uncertain sound about justification by faith without the deeds of the law.

(e) This is the doctrine which is absolutely essential to the prosperity of a church. No church is really in a healthy state in which this doctrine is not prominently brought forward. A church may have good forms and regularly ordained ministers, and the sacraments properly administered, but a church will not see conversion of souls going on under its pulpits when this doctrine is not plainly preached. Its schools may be found in every parish. Its ecclesiastical buildings may strike the eye all over the land. But there will be no blessing from God on that church unless justification by faith is

proclaimed from its pulpits. Sooner or later its candlestick will be taken away.

Why have the churches of Africa and the East fallen to their present state? Had they not bishops? They had. Had they not forms and liturgies? They had. Had they not synods and councils? They had. But they cast away the doctrine of justification by faith. They lost sight of that mighty truth, and so fell.

Why did our own church do so little in the last century, and why did the Independents and Methodists and Baptists do so much more? Was it that their system was better than ours? No. Was it that our church was not so well adapted to meet the wants of lost souls? No. But their ministers preached justification by faith, and our ministers, in too many cases, did not preach the doctrine at all.

Why do so many English people go to dissenting chapels in the present day? Why do we so often see a splendid Gothic parish church as empty of worshippers as a barn in July, and a little plain brick building, called a Meeting House, filled to suffocation? Is it that people in general have any abstract dislike to episcopacy, the prayerbook, the surplice, and the establishment? Not at all! The simple reason is, in the vast majority of cases, that people do not like preaching in which justification by faith is not fully proclaimed. When they cannot hear it in the parish church they will seek it elsewhere. No doubt there are exceptions. No doubt there are places where a long course of neglect has thoroughly disgusted people with the Church of England, so that they will not even hear truth from its ministers. But I believe, as a general rule, when the parish church is empty and the meeting-house full, it will be found on inquiry that there is a cause.

If these things be so, the Apostle Paul might well be jealous for the truth and withstand Peter to the face. He might well maintain that anything ought to be sacrificed rather than endanger the doctrine of justification in the Church of Christ. He saw with a prophetic eye coming things. He left us all an example that we should do well to follow. Whatever we tolerate, let us never allow any injury to be done to that blessed doctrine—that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Let us always beware of any teaching which either directly or indirectly obscures justification by faith. All religious systems which put anything between the heavy-laden sinner and Jesus Christ the Savior, except simple faith, are dangerous and unscriptural. All systems which make out faith to be anything complicated, anything but a simple, childlike dependence—the hand which receives the soul's medicine from the physician—are unsafe and poisonous systems. All systems which cast discredit on the simple Protestant doctrine which broke the power of Rome carry about with them a plague-spot and are dangerous to souls.

Baptism is a sacrament ordained by Christ himself, and to be used with reverence and respect by all professing Christians. When it is used rightly, worthily, and with faith, it is capable of being the instrument of mighty blessings to the soul. But when people are taught that all who are baptized are as a matter of course born again, and that all baptized persons should be addressed as "children of God," I believe their souls are in great danger. Such teaching about baptism appears to me to overthrow the doctrine of justification by faith. They only are children of God who have faith in Christ Jesus. And all men have not faith.

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament ordained by Christ himself, and intended for the edification and refreshment of true believers. But when the people are taught that all persons ought to come to the Lord's table, whether they have faith or not; and that all alike receive Christ's body and blood who receive the bread and wine, I believe their souls are in great danger. Such teaching appears to me to darken the doctrine of justification by faith. No man eats Christ's body and drinks Christ's blood except the justified man. And none is justified until he believes.

Membership of the Church of England is a great privilege. No visible church on Earth, in my opinion, offers so many advantages to its members, when rightly administered. But when people are taught that because they are members of the church they are as a matter of course members of Christ, I believe their souls are in great danger. Such teaching appears to me to overthrow the doctrine of

justification by faith. They only are joined to Christ who believe. And all men do not believe.

Whenever we hear teaching which obscures or contradicts justification by faith, we may be sure there is a screw loose somewhere. We should watch against such teaching, and be upon our guard.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me first of all ask everyone who reads this paper to arm himself with a thorough knowledge of the written Word of God. Unless we do this we are at the mercy of any false teacher. We shall not see through the mistakes of an erring Peter. Once let a man get wrong about justification, and he will bid a long farewell to comfort, to peace, to lively hope, to anything like assurance in his Christianity. An error here is a worm at the root.

We shall not be able to imitate the faithfulness of a courageous Paul. An ignorant laity will always be the bane of a church. A Bible-reading laity may save a church from ruin. Let us read the Bible regularly, daily, and with fervent prayer, and become familiar with its contents. Let us receive nothing, believe nothing, follow nothing, which is not in the Bible, nor can be proved by the Bible. Let our rule of faith—our touchstone of all teaching—be the written Word of God.

In the next place, let me recommend every member of the Church of England to make himself acquainted with the Thirty-nine Articles of his own Church. They are to be found at the end of most prayerbooks. They will abundantly repay an attentive reading. They are the true standard by which Churchmanship is to be tried, next to the Bible. They are the test by which Churchmen should prove the teaching of their ministers, if they want to know whether it is "Church teaching" or not. I deeply lament the ignorance of systematic Christianity which prevails among many who attend the services of the Church of England. It would be well if such books as Archbishop Usher's *Body of Divinity* were more known and studied than they are. If Dean Nowell's *Catechism* had ever been formally accredited as a formulary of the Church of England, many of the heresies of the last twenty

years could never have lived for a day. But unhappily many persons really know no more about the true doctrines of their own communion than the heathen or Mahometans. It is useless to expect the laity of the Church of England to be zealous for the maintenance of true doctrine, unless they know what their own church has defined true doctrine to be.

In the next place, let me entreat all who read this paper to be always ready to contend for the faith of Christ, if needful. I recommend no one to foster a controversial spirit. I want no man to be like Goliath, going up and down, saying, "Give me a man to fight with." Always feeding upon controversy is poor work indeed. It is like feeding upon bones. But I do say that no love of false peace should prevent us striving jealously against false doctrine and seeking to promote true doctrine wherever we possibly can. True Gospel in the pulpit, true Gospel in every Religious Society we support, true Gospel in the books we read, true Gospel in the friends we keep company with—let this be our aim, and never let us be ashamed to let men see that it is so.

In the next place, let me entreat all who read this paper to keep a jealous watch over their own hearts in these controversial times. There is much need of this caution. In the heat of the battle we are apt to forget our own inner man. Victory in argument is not always victory over the world or victory over the devil. Let the meekness of St. Peter in taking a reproof be as much our example as the boldness of St. Paul in reproofing. Happy is the Christian who can call the person who rebukes him faithfully a "beloved brother" (*2 Peter* 3:15). Let us strive to be holy in all manner of conversation, and not least in our tempers. Let us labor to maintain an uninterrupted communion with the Father and with the Son, and to keep up constant habits of private prayer and Bible-reading. Thus we shall be armed for the battle of life and have the sword of the Spirit well fitted to our hand when the day of temptation comes.

In the last place, let me entreat all members of the Church of England who know what real praying is to pray daily for the church to which they belong.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may be poured out upon it, and that its candlestick may not be taken away. Let us pray for those parishes in which the Gospel is now not preached, that the darkness may pass away and the true light shine in them. Let us pray for those ministers who now neither know nor preach the truth, that God may take away the veil from their hearts and show them a more excellent way. Nothing is impossible. The Apostle Paul was once a persecuting Pharisee; Luther was once an unenlightened monk; Bishop Latimer was once a bigoted Papist; Thomas Scott was once thoroughly opposed to evangelical truth. Nothing, I repeat, is impossible. The Spirit can make clergymen preach that Gospel which they now labor to destroy. Let us therefore be instant in prayer.

I commend the matters contained in this paper to serious attention. Let us ponder them well in our hearts. Let us carry them out in our daily practice. Let us do this, and we shall have learned something from the story of St. Peter at Antioch.

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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The Ordination of Women

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The 154th Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES) (May 1976) received and included in its minutes the *Report* of a Study Committee on the Role of Women in the Church. The *Report* recommended the ordination of women as deacons. The matter at hand is not a matter of deaconesses. For years the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (now the U.P.C.U.S.A., United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church of America cooperated in supporting a Deaconess School in Philadelphia, and its graduates served in those denominations. The matter now at hand, however, is not to acknowledge Presbyterian practice, but the quite different and novel proposal to ordain women as deacons.

Although the Study Committee does not advocate the ordination of women as elders, it advocates the ordination of women. Because of our contemporary situation, most recently the actions of the Episcopal Church, it is unrealistic to think that a church which begins with ordaining women as deacons can long deny them ordination as elders. This paper will indeed consider the office of deacon, but the underlying question is the ordination of women, as the title of this paper indicates.

Since this is a modern proposal, the burden of proof falls on the innovators. A short note on history will clarify this point. *Hebrews* 5:1-4 shows that the Jewish High Priests were ordained: they were all men. A companion paper on *The Presbyterian*

Doctrine of Ordination will also mention the ordination, usually by anointing with oil, of lesser Old Testament officials. The Jewish restriction of such ordination to men has only recently been questioned by liberal Judaism. The Roman Catholic Church ordains men only. One of the arguments of the high churchmen in the Episcopal Church, relative to its alteration of its government this year, was that the ordination of women would hinder ecumenical reunion with Rome. The Protestant Reformation, for all its opposition to Romanism, never questioned the practice of ordaining men only. Now, if this practice has continued from the time of Abraham down to 1960 or thereabouts, those who are innovators surely must bear the burden of proof. The *Westminster Confession* indeed says, "All Synods ... may err, and many have erred." Therefore it is theoretically possible that the Reformed Presbyterian Church is in error. But when the agreement is worldwide over 4,000 years, it is, I repeat, extremely improbable. Therefore a mountainous burden of proof rests on those who advocate the ordination of women. Suppositions of possible meanings of *gunaikas*, for example, even if "likely," are not enough. What the denomination needs, before it can have the authority to discard the historical concept of ordination, is compelling proof.

The present paper, in contrast with the *Report*, maintains that the historical Presbyterian procedure is required by Scripture. In conformity with the third ordination vow of the Reformed Presbyterian

Church, Evangelical Synod, our ministers "accept the Presbyterian form of Church Government as derived from the Holy Scriptures" (*Form of Government* V, 1). Therefore, the conclusion here will be that Scripture definitely forbids the ordination of women. To this end it would be possible to examine the *Report* paragraph by paragraph. But there may be a more orderly way. Of course, the readers of this paper should have the *Report* before them; and references to it will be frequent enough. But the outline, after these introductory lines, will be:

- I. The Question at Issue
- II. The Basis of the Debate
- III. Peripheral Material
- IV. The Main Passages.

I. The Question at Issue

As the introductory remarks have already said, and as the *Report* makes clear, the issue is not that of un-ordained deaconesses. The issue is the ordination of women as deacons. Now, whether such is permissible depends on the doctrine of ordination. Is the Reformed Presbyterian doctrine of ordination Scriptural, or is it not and should it therefore be changed?

It is strange that the *Report*, lengthy as it is, pays so little attention to the doctrine of ordination. Since the ordination of women depends on some view of ordination—a view in conflict with Reformed principles—the *Report* should have included a massive defense of its underlying premise. This it did not do.

Section F (132) is about the most the *Report* has to say. It begins with a statement relative to the official position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. However, it does not state that position correctly; and insofar as the *Report's* conclusions depend on this inaccuracy, they are to be rejected. The *Report's* statement is: "This denomination ... has seen one of the distinctive elements of the elder's role *as distinguished from that of deacon* to be the possession of

ecclesiastically binding authority." This statement contradicts the *Form of Government*. Since the immediate aim of the *Report* is to defend the *ordination of women as deacons*, three subject-matters need attention. Ordination is the inclusive one. It is the question at issue. The subordinate points are *deacons* and *women*. What does the *Form of Government*, in its authoritative definition of Reformed Presbyterian policy, say on these two points?

To quote, the *Form of Government*, V, 5 says, "The formal steps by which a young man becomes an ordained minister...." It does not say "a young person," and it does not say "a young man or woman." Since even a few years ago, no one advocated the ordination of women, this reference to a man rather than a woman was neither emphasized nor repeated. At V, 8, the *Form of Government* simply says, "The qualifications of both teaching elders and ruling elders...." "Laymen, ordained to the eldership" is another phrase. It is also said that these elders have "a certain ruling or governing authority." The section on deacons is not so explicit. Had women been envisioned as possible candidates it would have had to be explicit. The *Report* takes the position that Scripture allows the ordination of women as deacons but prohibits their ordination as elders. If this were the Reformed Presbyterian position, the *Form of Government* would have had to state the difference explicitly, clearly, and emphatically. It does not do so. What is explicitly said is, "The minister shall then propound to the elder- or *deacon*-elect the following questions: See Section 3 of this chapter."

Thus, pastors, elders, and deacons all take the same vows, with the one exception that pastors assent to question 8; while other ministers—not pastors, elders, and deacons—assent to question 9. None of these nine vows explicitly mentions authority to teach. But if this authority is assumed for an elder, it is also assumed for a deacon, because ruling elders, deacons, and non-pastoral ministers are treated as a single class. Then further, in V, 9, d, upon the ordination of a deacon, the minister says, "We give you the right hand of fellowship to *take part of this office with us*." Note that this is not an ordination of deacons-elect by previously ordained deacons, with

the idea that then elders are ordained by elders. Such might indeed greatly distinguish elders from deacons. It is the *minister* who says to the deacon-elect, "*We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this office with us.*"

But the clinching formula is that which the *Form of Government* imposes on the congregation: "Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this *brother* as a ruling elder (or *deacon*) and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and *obedience* in the Lord to which ... the Constitution of this Church *entitles* him?"

At this point it seems proper to conclude that the *Report* bases its thesis on a mistaken view of Reformed Presbyterian government. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod does not distinguish between an elder and a deacon by the latter's lack of ecclesiastical authority. On the contrary, it explicitly asserts this authority. The application to women—in the light of Scripture yet to be discussed—is automatic. Ignoring our constitution the *Report* continues, "If this distinction is maintained, there need be no question of setting women in authority over men by ordaining them as deacons." But if this unconstitutional distinction were maintained, there would be no need or reason to *ordain* either men or women deacons. Ordination is induction into an authoritative *order*. This now returns the discussion from the ordination of *women* as *deacons* to the fundamental question of *ordination*.

There are several views as to the nature of ordination. The one acknowledged by the largest group of people is that of Romanism. At the Reformation, Luther clearly, Calvin more clearly, and a great section of the European populace perceived that the elaborate Roman hierarchy with its awesome claims contrasted sharply with the simplicity of the church as the apostles had organized it. The Romish claims depended largely, perhaps almost entirely, on the premise that ordination confers a special rank of *priesthood* for the purpose of repeating Christ's sacrifice in the mass. In their opposition to the mass, all the Reformers abominated the papal hierarchy and rigorously defended the equal priesthood of all

believers. Yet they did not for that reason abolish the ordained ministry.

There were some who did. The radical Anabaptists denounced all church government and civil government, too. Later, and continuing to the present, the Quakers and Plymouth Brethren rejected an official ministry. Even more recently, in opposition to organized religion, some groups would shut down the seminaries, close the church doors, sell the real estate, and—unlike the anarchism of the Anabaptists—spend the proceeds to establish socialism.

Since the *Report* does not discuss these movements, since indeed it makes no effort to explain its new view of ordination, it is not possible to be sure of what direction this movement in our denomination may later take. It is clear, however, that the modern temper among religious people is rather inimical to "organized religion" and favors some form of pietism rather than the Presbyterian position.

Neither Luther nor Calvin accepted this left-wing position. Calvin (*Institutes*, IV, iii, 2) says, "By the ministers to whom [Christ] has committed this office, and given grace to discharge it, he disperses and distributes his grace to the Church, ... Whosoever therefore studies to abolish this *order* and kind of government, ... or disparages it as a minor importance, plots the devastation, or rather the ruin and destruction of the churches." These words show how highly Calvin esteemed ministerial order. That this includes the deacons also a later paragraph (IV, iii) makes clear: "The qualifications of ... bishops are stated at large by Paul in two passages... The same rule is laid down for the deacons and governors."

There are other historical documents. The *French Confession* of 1559 says, "We detest all fantastic people who greatly desire ... to abolish the ministry" (Art. xxv). The *Second Book of Discipline of the Scottish Kirk* says, "There are four ordinary functions or offices in the Kirk of God, the office of pastor, minister, or bishop; the doctor; the presbyter or elder; and the deacon." In Reformation days the main object was to reject the papal theory of hierarchy, and to insist on the priesthood of all

believers. Our Scottish forebears also refused to acknowledge the Anglican ordination of deacons because this was part of the hierarchical scheme. But they ordained deacons, and they had strict views of the significance of ordination. They rejected the "indelible character" imposed by ordination as the Romanists understood it; but they did not object to an "indelible character," a life-long authority, as they themselves defined it.

It is strange, and perhaps one may be so bold as to say significant, that the *Report* in advocating the ordination of women has so little to say about ordination. Since the *Report*, in order to allow women to be ordained as deacons, excludes from ordination the conferring of authority, no one can be sure what theory of ordination the *Report* wishes to introduce into our denomination. One can be sure, however, that its view of ordination is destructive of Presbyterian polity.

During the Reformation, the controversy centered chiefly on the ministry, less on the elders, and least on deacons. Yet the Reformers did not pass over the latter in complete silence. Luther in his *Address to the Nobility*, June 1520, said, "He [the minister] should have as assistants several priests [the term *priest* continued to be used for a time] and *deacons* who should help him to *govern* the people and congregations with sermons and the administration of the sacraments." The *French Confession* of 1559 (previously alluded to) also says, "It [the true Church] ought to be *governed* according to the policy which our Savior Jesus Christ has established, that is, that there be pastors, supervisors, and deacons." Note that deacons form a part of the governing body. The Genevan *Ordinances* of 1541 state something similar: "... let the minister distribute the bread in good order and with reverence; and let no others give the cup except the ones appointed or the *deacons* with the ministers." The *Ordinances* of 1576 make the same statement about the deacons. Again, what Calvin says about women who perform baptism is surely applicable to women who might act as deacons. In his *Tracts* he says, "Even in the minutest matters, as meat and drink, whatever we attempt and dare with a doubtful conscience, Paul plainly denounces as sin. Now, in baptism by women, what certainty can

there be, while a rule delivered by Christ is violated? For that office of the Gospel which he assigned to ministers, women seize for themselves." Further, Calvin's reply to the Synod of Lyons in 1563 (compare Quick, *Synodicon* I, 53) says, "*Deacons* and elders, being the arms and hands of the Pastor ... may also distribute [the bread and cup] to those who are remote from [the pastor]."

In these passages the mention of deacons is noteworthy because there was a widespread disinclination to allow deacons and even elders to assist in the communion service. Calvin obviously regards deacons as having authority by virtue of their ordination. They are no doubt subordinate to the minister. Ordination confers on the minister the authority to preach the Word, and since the sacraments require the Word, ordination confers the authority to administer the sacraments, and also, in conjunction with other ordained men, the authority of the keys. But though the deacons are subordinate to the minister, they participate in that authority. The ordination questions are the same; the minister receives the deacon as taking "part of this office with us"; and the congregation promises obedience to the deacon.

II. *The Basis of the Debate*

The issue has now been clearly stated. It is the Reformed doctrine of ordination. This doctrine is not the prelatial and hierarchical theory of Rome, nor is it the anarchical chaos of the Anabaptists. But which of the three views is correct? Obviously the Reformed Presbyterian Church forbids the ordination of women. Since, however, "All Synods and councils since the apostles' time ... may err, and many have erred," it is theoretically possible that Reformed Presbyterian government is in error. But it is highly unlikely that Presbyterianism is in error on this particular point. The believing Jews before the coming of Christ, as well as the unbelieving Jews afterward, had no women as priests. Neither does Romanism. Neither does Lutheranism. Among these groups there are differences regarding the nature of ordination, its validity, its authority, and more; but all agree that it is wrong to ordain women. Now, where Rabbis Eliezer and Agiba; Popes Leo and Gregory; and Luther, Calvin, and

Knox agree on a particular point, it requires overwhelming argument to prove them wrong. On what basis could anyone construct such an argument? There is only one such basis, the Bible.

The *Report*, be it not only cheerfully but also gratefully acknowledged, appeals to Scripture alone. Were it otherwise they and we would have no common basis of argument. However much the present paper regards the *Report's* exegesis poor and its argument invalid, the *Report* is to be highly commended for its repeated rejection of the idea that parts of Scripture are not binding today because they were culturally conditioned. Since this rejection is not the contemporary stance of the religious community, a short paragraph or two stressing the contrast is pertinent.

Dr. Paul King Jewett is a particularly good example, for he has recently argued for the ordination of women. He has no trouble with the Scriptural material; he even agrees substantially that the view defended in this paper is Scriptural; but he simply rejects the Apostle Paul's mistakes as culturally conditioned. The seminary, too, in which Dr. Jewett teaches, is also a good example. Several of its members have publicly engaged in controversy against Scriptural inerrancy. The more conservative faculty members resigned and left the seminary, some years ago, yet the seminary claims to be evangelical. They should call themselves modernists, for their position is very much the same as that of the modernists early in this century. Their tactics are also similar, for in debasing the language so as to empty the term *evangelical* of its historic meaning, they repeat the earlier modernists' debasing of the term "the *divinity* of Christ" to accommodate Homer and Shakespeare, if not the divine Sarah. This pervasive influence of liberalism is most clearly seen in the large apostate denominations. In them a minister can be ejected or a candidate can be refused ordination because he disapproves of women's ordination. But liberalism's influence can also be seen, though it may be in modified form, in more conservative churches. Even in our church we must regard it as shortsighted to discuss an issue such as ordination without taking into consideration the conditions that press upon us from every side. Since liberal ideas

pervade the entire religious community, Reformed Presbyterians will do well to combat them even in their incipient forms. Too many seminaries and denominations slip into apostasy almost imperceptibly. Let not the heirs of Covenanters meet this fate.

One recent, small, but encouraging sign on the horizon was the 135 to 74 vote against women's ordination in the 1976 General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. They even voted down a motion to distribute the advocates' *Report* to the session "for prayerful consideration."

The successful introduction of the ordination of women into liberal churches is one with the general outlook of women's liberation. Apart from the excesses of left-wing philosophy, the permissiveness of parents and society, and the stress on women's alleged rights even to permitting a teenage girl to get an abortion in defiance of her parents—apart from this sort of thing, it is doubtful that anyone would have agitated for the ordination of women. The mention of Women's Lib and the exceeding great immorality of our times is not intended to cast aspersions on the authors of the *Report*. No one accuses them of sitting enthralled at the feet of Bella Abzug. On the contrary, the procedure of the *Report* explicitly and throughout appeals to Scripture. In this it differs completely from the usual procedures. Is there any instance, in any denomination, of this sort of agitation on strictly Scriptural grounds? The present *Report* seems unique. For its reliance on Scripture, we are grateful. Nevertheless the present sociological propensities tend to produce a more favorable reception of this proposal than the Scriptures warrant. With the *Report's* explicit basis, this paper fully agrees and urges all readers to consult the Scripture alone.

III. Peripheral Material

Some Scriptural material, however, bears on the main topic only to a small degree. Other passages relate more directly, and a few may be decisive. The first class cannot be completely omitted, for the

Report contains a considerable amount of it, but perhaps in this reply brevity will be acceptable.

One such peripheral point is the matter of women praying in the public church service. The *Report* discusses this at some length. The reason is clear. If Paul has actually forbidden women to pray in public, he certainly would not have permitted them to be ordained. Hence the *Report* must combat this interpretation. On the other hand, if Paul permitted women to pray in public, it by no means follows that he would have ordained them. This point of logic is sufficient to show the futility of several pages of the *Report*. However, a word in favor of the more obvious interpretation will count against ordination. The verses read, "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak.... It is a shame for women to speak in church" (*1 Corinthians* 14:34-35). The *Report* (116) notes an "apparent conflict" between the prayer of women in chapter 11 and their silencing in chapter 14.

Can ordination solve this apparent conflict? Is it not possible, and much easier, to use another method? Since the later Corinthian reference commands silence, and hence rules out ordination, the only problem is that of contradiction. On this point two things may be said. First, as the *Report* itself acknowledges, the prayers of women that Paul permits may have taken place in informal prayer meetings. Or, what the *Report* does not consider, the prayers may have been made in women's own homes. Of course, as the *Report* says at the bottom of page 115, "These texts clearly presume that women did pray and prophesy." But the point at issue is where and when? The text does not say "in the church." Therefore these words should not be inserted. Then when another text says explicitly, Let women keep silence in the church, it follows that *1 Corinthian* 11 cannot mean "in the church." It must refer to some informal gatherings, such as one of our women's missionary societies. The *Report* acknowledges that this solves the problem of alleged contradiction. But it rejects the solution because "it is doubtful that the case can be sustained exegetically," (116).

Doubtful? Not very. The clarity of chapter 14 and the absence from chapter 11 of the words "in the church" seem to be exegetically sufficient. Furthermore, so far as the main question of ordination goes, it is not necessary to sustain this interpretation exegetically. The immediate point is the solution of an apparent contradiction, and even the *Report* agrees that the interpretation given here is satisfactory. On the other hand, the *Report's* interpretation cannot be sustained exegetically. How can one extract from the verse the words that are not there? Yet the *Report* should provide exegetical certainty because it bears the burden of proof. But that there were—actually and historically, occasions of prayer and prophecy other than the regular church service, and that therefore the present interpretation does not depend on unsupported assumptions, is clear, if not from *Acts* 11:28, at least from *Acts* 21:9-11. What Agabus did hardly fits into a worship service; and exegesis cannot deny that Philip's daughters prophesied, like Agabus, when no church service was in progress.

The result of this analysis is (1) that pages 115-117 of the *Report* hardly bear on the question at all; (2) that the solution rejected on page 116 remains satisfactory; and (3) that the *Report's* "Conclusion: *1 Corinthians* 11:5 probably refers to public worship services" is not more than probable, and probably less compelling than what the *Report* rejects as a "weak possibility." It must be insisted that the advocates of women's ordination, not those who defend the official Reformed Presbyterian principles, must produce the "compelling external evidence." The burden of proof rests on the innovators, not on those who maintain the actual standards.

Another peripheral matter concerns Paul's stylistic abilities. In order to substitute its interpretation for the more obvious one, the *Report* argues in several places that there cannot be a "violent break" in subject matter between the two verses in question. There must be a smooth transition. Now, admittedly, most verses connect logically with their preceding and succeeding verses. Otherwise there could be no continuous discussion. Nonetheless, paragraph breaks occur; and sometimes there are two or more sudden shifts within a very few lines.

A major example is the well-known passage, *Romans* 5:12-19. There, the passage has a single theme, but Paul mixes together many strands of a complex subject. There are parentheses within parentheses, and the sentence becomes so complicated that Paul breaks it off and begins over again in verse 18. Active minds, like Paul's, are apt to write intricate sentences, including parenthetical remarks. And they jump back and forwards as their thoughts come in profusion. Note therefore another example: *1 Timothy* 5:17ff., an epistle if not a chapter that occupies many pages in the *Report*. After discussing the plight of widows in the first half of the chapter, Paul turns to the Old Testament admonition that congregations should support their pastors; then come directions concerning judicial cases; then a warning against ordaining young men, or newly converted Christians; then some medicinal advice to Timothy. Finally, two verses—which do not connect with the medicinal advice—are vague enough to make any connection uncertain. In view of such examples as these, and there are others, this paper will not relinquish its interpretation when the argument for its alternate depends so heavily on the assumption that Paul must write as smoothly as the *Report* expects. In fact the *Report* itself (83) has to adjust itself to an "abrupt transition."

The Question of Phoebe

Under the rubric of "Peripheral Matters" there are distinctions in degree. A not so peripheral matter is the use of the term *deacon* in the New Testament. If the New Testament contained even a single instance of the election and apostolic ordination of a woman as a deacon, the fact would be conclusive. Without an example, however, the argument can never be conclusive. The best that can be done is to refer to *Romans* 16:1, where Phoebe is called *diakonon*, and from this infer that the church members had elected her and that the apostles thereupon ordained her.

Such an inference is invalid. Note that in *Acts* 6:1 there was a daily *diakonia* before "deacons" were elected and ordained. The word originally was not the name of an ordained officer, but designated anyone who served the needs of others. In *John* 2:5, 9 it refers to those who were serving the marriage banquet. Compare *Matthew* 22:13. In *John* 12:26 it

refers to any faithful servant of Christ. Thence the term can be applied to Phoebe, or to any other Christian, without implying ordination. In fact, so far as the term itself goes, it even refers to servants of Satan (*2 Corinthians* 11:15).

In *1 Timothy* 4:6, Timothy is called a servant, a *diakonos*; though he was an elder or bishop and not a "deacon." So too the apostles themselves are called servants: *Acts* 6:2 says that the apostles had been serving (*diakonein*) tables, but henceforth they must drop this task and give themselves to the ministry of the Word (*diakoinia toulogou*). When it is noted that the seven chosen were not called "deacons" in this passage, and that the verb *diakonein* applies to the apostles, must we conclude that Phoebe was an apostle? Quite the contrary; the term *diakonos* was a name given to any servant. Its application to Phoebe in *Romans* 16:1 carries no implication of ordination.

The *Report* tries to dispose of this contention on page 134. "Because the word *diakonos* can be translated either 'deacon' or 'servant' it is important to note that Paul *did not choose to use the feminine form of the word but rather broke gender to identify Phoebe with the masculine form of the noun* [italics in *Report*]. This very strongly suggests that he was not simply calling her a servant ... but was rather using a formal term identifying her as a deacon." But where in Greek literature does such a feminine form of the word occur? Neither *Liddell and Scott* nor *Arndt and Gingrich* lists any feminine form. On the contrary, they both cite passages in which the masculine form applies to women.

With respect to the masculine and feminine forms of Greek nouns, another point deserves mention. The *Report* is unique in that it recommends women for deacons but forbids their ordination as elders. Proposals and their adoption in other denominations include and indeed stress ordination as ministers. This is because these other denominations have little regard for Scripture, while the *Report* desires to follow the Bible. The *Report* has no inclination to argue that the Bible allows women to be ordained as pastors. Nevertheless one can wonder whether or not the ordination of women as pastors can be prevented once the momentum has begun in their

ordination as deacons. Indeed it is possible to guess a part of the future argument. It will be pointed out that if we now ordain women as deacons, although there is no such form as *diakone* in the New Testament (or elsewhere?), we ought all the more to ordain women as pastors because *1 Timothy* 5:1, 2 explicitly mentioned *presbuterai* (women elders) as well as *presbuteroi* (men elders).

The words *diakonos* and *presbuteros* are not the only examples of words used colloquially, which we almost without exception use technically. The word *church* (*ecclesia*) is another example. In *Acts* 2:47 the Lord added converts to the "church" daily; and the context shows what church was meant. But the tumultuous assembly of heathen in Ephesus is thrice called the *ecclesia* (*Acts* 19:32, 39, 40). Hence the term *diakonos*, applied to Phoebe, is no evidence that she was ordained. But it is said that Phoebe was not merely a servant of the Lord, she was also a *prostatis* of many. The argument is that *prostatis* (masculine) and therefore *prostatis* (feminine) meant ruler, authority, defender, guardian, presiding officer, patron, etc. Thus Phoebe was a regularly ordained officer with authority over many people.

Unfortunately the masculine form does not occur in the New Testament and the feminine form only this once. The verb, however, occurs about seven times and certainly indicates authority and command. To those who advocate the ordination of women, this one word seems to be strong evidence, and perhaps conclusive. But surely one ought to have more than a *hapax legomenon* to overturn thousands of years of ecclesiastical procedure. Nor is this all that can be said. For the verse itself says that Phoebe was a *prostatis* to Paul himself. Thus Paul must have been an inferior member of the order over which Phoebe was president and ruler. Contrary to these unacceptable inferences, this paper concludes that Phoebe was a faithful servant who had been of great help to many people and to Paul himself, as Peter's mother-in-law served (*diakonei*) Christ in *Matthew* 8:15.

This section on peripheral material has now canvassed the topic of women praying in church, Paul's stylistic peculiarities, and the usage of the

term *deacon*. But as the discussion now continues, the material bears more and more directly on the main issue.

IV. *The Main Passages*

1 Timothy 2 is surely one of major importance. Upon first reading it seems definitely to rule out the ordination of women. Indeed a second and a third reading confirm this impression. In fact the chapter goes further than forbidding such ordinations: It even forbids women to pray in the public services.

Against this clear statement the *Report* struggles at some length (79-90). It first notes that the subject of the chapter is "prayer in the church." This of course is true, but it can lead to a misunderstanding. Chapter two is a subdivision of the epistle as a whole, the subject of which is broader than prayer. *1 Timothy* covers the general subject of worship, and hence Paul can pass from prayer to other phases of worship. By narrowing the subject to prayer, the *Report* wishes to avoid an alleged violent break supposedly required by the usual interpretation. The *Report* is extremely detailed and should be consulted. It would be unreasonably burdensome here to examine every line. But in general the *Report* argues that on the usual interpretation, there would be an impossible break "because it does not actually present Paul's intended contrasts but treats v. 8 (men praying with holy hands) as if it stood next to vv. 11ff...." (80). The *Report's* argument seems to depend on the assumption that Paul could not have considered, in the same verse, two related subjects—here, in fact, one main subject and a subordinate part.

The argument of the *Report* is defective at several points. Paragraph (1) on page 80 says, "If the intended comparison is the sex roles, the comment on holy hands ... seriously obscures Paul's central but *unspoken* point that women should not pray." To this, one can reply that there is not just one "central" point in the passage, unless it be the general topic of orderly worship. Many verses in Scripture contain several distinguishable points. Here, in addition to *holy hands* and *modest apparel*, the "sex roles" can hardly escape notice. Far from being "unspoken," as the *Report* strangely repeats

three times over, verse 12 says, "she must be silent." This silence is consonant with the progression of thought in verses 8 and 9. Men are to pray (in the church), women are to dress modestly, and learn in silence and subjection. Verse 10, not verse 9, may be a parenthetical aside, for such are not absent from Paul's style, but there is no violent break or "parenthetical aside which seriously obscures Paul's central ... point."

The *Report* makes much of the word *hosautos* in verse nine. The *Report* admits that it would be wrong to translate the verse as, "Similarly also I want the women to pray"(80). This is a welcome admission, but the *Report* apparently fails to see how it undercuts its own contentions. First, it must be insisted upon that the prohibition of public prayer of women is not "unspoken." The *Report* at least three times asserts that it is unspoken, and upon this erroneous assertion builds part of its argument. Second, *hosautos kai* admittedly draws some kind of parallel. But the *Report* has already admitted that the parallel is not, I want men to pray ... I also want women to pray. For this reason the parallel can as little be, I want men to pray with holy hands and I want women to pray in modest dress. And for this reason the argument of pages 80-82 ought to be adjudged a failure.

Someone now is sure to ask, But then what is the parallel? This is a legitimate question, but it is permissible to decide that the *Report's* view is impossible without being able to answer this question. The *Report's* view is impossible because of the *spoken* (written) command of silence. However, a plausible answer to the question is at hand, and the *Report* itself vaguely hints at it (page 82, last paragraph of the section). Briefly it is this: Paul's ideas came to him in profusion; the general subject here is public worship and not prayer alone; therefore one may accept the words, if not the intention, of the *Report* (page 82 end), "a continuation of Paul's discussion of prayer ... understood as discussing ... worship." If so, Paul has said, "Men are to worship by lifting holy hands in prayer, *likewise also* women are to worship by dressing modestly and remaining silent."

Such is the conclusion proposed here. But a further point is that the wording of the *Report* is most misleading when it says, "we must question whether it is at all a tenable inference that women were silent at all times in the Pauline assemblies" (page 82). Of course it is not a tenable inference. The inference is exactly the opposite: Women were not always silent in the Pauline assemblies; that is why Paul wrote to correct the disorder. A similar peculiarity occurs on the next page also: "Why did the problems of prayer, prophecy, and teaching arise, if he never permitted women to speak in the churches?" (page 83, last line). One might as well ask about *1 Corinthians* 7, Why did the problem of incest arise, if Paul had never permitted incest in his churches?

Since the remainder of Part I (pages 84-90) is interesting, instructive, and substantially acceptable—in fact, since this material agrees more with the Reformed Presbyterian position and less with the *Report's* conclusions, and again since its firm rejection of "cultural limitations" is so gratifying—it may not be altogether improper to skip to pages 132ff. on *1 Timothy* 3:8-13. That the *Report* on this page does not accurately state the Reformed Presbyterian position has already been made clear. But the "exegetical debate over *1 Timothy* 3:11," on which "hangs the demonstration of biblical warrant" for the ordination of women, "centers on the meaning of the word *gunaikas*." Therefore the *Report* must *demonstrate*, by strictly valid implication—or as the *Confession* says, "by good and *necessary* consequence"—that *gunaikas* must mean "women deacons," and cannot possibly mean wives of deacons or elders.

Far from being a necessary deduction, the *Report's* argument is deficient both in premises and procedure. Note its starting point on page 133: "We may *confidently* dismiss [the view that *gunaikas* means either women in general or that it means wives of elders and deacons]." This confidence, however, is based on the assertion that "it would not be *probable* that Paul would break his train of thought." But, first, probability is not demonstration. Second, we have already seen how frequently Paul "breaks his train of thought." And third, he does not really break his train of thought,

though he may put a coach or dining car between two Pullmans. Hence the *Report's* "probable" and "unlikely" (page 133) have no force in proving its conclusion.

It is here true that if Paul had inserted a *tas* (article) or an *auton* (pronoun), there could have been no doubt as to the translation *wives*. But then Paul frequently enough omits the article where English requires it. The *Report* asserts that the *King James* translation "gratuitously" supplies the word *their*. But if neither Paul nor the congregation had any idea of ordaining women, the article or pronoun was unnecessary. The *Report's* argument tends to circularity: *Their* is gratuitous because Paul meant women deacons, and he meant women deacons because *gunaikas* does not mean wives, and *gunaikas* does not mean wives because the *King James* *their* is gratuitous. Hence Paul approved the ordination of women.

The *Report* next reverts to what is "unlikely": "It is unlikely that he would carefully comment on deacons' wives and neglect those of the elders." But this, too, is rather circular. How does the *Report* prove that Paul neglected to speak of elders' wives, if he actually spoke of deacons' wives? Only on the ground stated above that "it would not be *probable* that Paul would break his train of thought concerning deacons." On the contrary, it is quite possible—and by the text quite probable that—after Paul had spoken of elders (3:1) and deacons (3:8), he inserted a parenthetical remark (3:11) concerning their wives, elders' wives as well as deacons' wives.

The *Report* takes notice of this latter interpretation, but it claims that its own view is "more likely." Now aside from the fact that the present article does not think the *Report's* interpretation is more likely—in fact considers it less likely and even quite improbable—one must insist that the *Report's* conclusion requires necessary consequence and valid argument. A doubtful likelihood about a single verse is not sufficient to overturn the Presbyterian view of ordination.

The *Report* continues with an argument about Phoebe, but this was disposed of a few pages ago.

Phoebe was never "Madame President" (page 134) to Paul.

This is the end of the *Report's* argument. "Conclusions and Recommendations" follow. This is also the end of this paper's argument. Its conclusion can easily be anticipated.

Using the wording of the *Report* (*Diakonate*, page 135), but contradicting its sense by switching positives and negatives, the conclusion is:

The office of deacon is an office that involves the exercise of ecclesiastical authority. In the Pauline churches it was closed to women. It therefore must be closed to women in our churches. And furthermore—with the pope, John Knox, the Scottish Kirk, and all Christendom—we believe that the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in refusing to ordain women is solidly Biblical, against which likelihoods have no logical force.

Postscript: Subsequent to the circulation of the Report and of this essay, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod did not adopt the Report's recommendation that it ordain women as deacons, but it did allow women to be appointed—but not ordained—to boards of deacons.

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Paul on Women Speaking in Church

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*Editor's note: If women are forbidden to speak in church meetings, as the Bible says, then they cannot vote either, let alone hold office. The contemporary debate over the ordination of women could arise only because the prior question of the silence of women in church was answered in an anti-Christian fashion. In this short essay, Benjamin Warfield of Princeton Theological Seminary explains the role of women in church meetings. For a longer discussion of the issue, and three examples of how contemporary authors deny what the Bible says, see *Scripture Twisting in the Seminaries, Part 1: Feminism*, by John W. Robbins.*

I have recently received a letter from a valued friend asking me to send him a "discussion of the Greek words *laleo* and *lego* in such passages as *1 Corinthians* 14:33-39, with special reference to the question: "Does the thirty-fourth verse forbid all women everywhere to speak or preach publicly in Christian churches?" The matter is of universal interest, and I take the liberty of communicating my reply to the readers of *The Presbyterian*.

It requires to be said at once that there is no problem with reference to the relations of *laleo* and *lego*. Apart from niceties of merely philological interest, these words stand related to one another just as the English words *speak* and *say* do; that is to say, *laleo* expresses the act of talking, while *lego* refers to what is said. Wherever then the fact of speaking, without reference to the content of what is said, is to be indicated, *laleo* is used, and must be used. There is nothing disparaging in the intimation

of the word, any more than there is in our word *talk*; although, of course, it can on occasion be used disparagingly as our word *talk* can also—as when some of the newspapers intimate that the Senate is given over to mere talk. This disparaging application of *laleo*, however, never occurs in the New Testament, although the word is used very frequently.

The word is in its right place in *1 Corinthians* 14:33ff, therefore, and necessarily bears there its simple and natural meaning. If we needed anything to fix its meaning, however, it would be supplied by its frequent use in the preceding part of the chapter, where it refers not only to speaking with tongues (which was divine manifestation and unintelligible only because of the limitations of the hearers), but also to the prophetic speech, which is directly declared to be to edification and exhortation and comforting (verses 3-6). It would be supplied more pungently, however, by its contrasting term here—"let them be silent" (verse 34). Here we have *laleo* directly defined for us: "Let the women keep silent, for it is not permitted to them to speak." Keep silent—speak: these are the two opposites; and the one defines the other.

It is important to observe, now, that the pivot on which the injunction of these verses turns is not the prohibition of speaking so much as the command of silence. That is the main injunction. The prohibition of speech is introduced only to explain the meaning more fully. What Paul says is in brief: "Let the women keep silent in the churches." That surely is

direct and specific enough for all needs. He then adds explanatorily: "For it is not permitted to them to speak." "It is not permitted" is an appeal to a general law, valid apart from Paul's personal command, and looks back to the opening phrase—"as in all the churches of the saints." He is only requiring the Corinthian women to conform to the general law of the churches. And that is the meaning of the almost bitter words that he adds in verse 36, in which—reproaching them for the innovation of permitting women to speak in the churches—he reminds them that they are not the authors of the Gospel, nor are they its sole possessors: let them keep to the law that binds the whole body of churches and not be seeking some newfangled way of their own.

The intermediate verses only make it plain that precisely what the apostle is doing is forbidding women to speak at all in the church. His injunction of silence he pushes so far that he forbids them even to ask questions; and adds with special reference to that, but through that to the general matter, the crisp declaration that "it is indecent"—for that is the meaning of the word—"for a woman to speak in church."

It would be impossible for the apostle to speak more directly or more emphatically than he has done here. He requires women to be silent at the church meetings; for that is what "in the churches" means, there were no church buildings then. And he has not left us in doubt as to the nature of these church meetings. He had just described them in verses 26ff. They were of the general character of our prayer meetings. Note the words "let him be silent in the church" in verse 30, and compare them with "let them be silent in the churches" in verse 34. The prohibition of women speaking covers thus all public church meetings—it is the publicity, not the formality of it, which is the point. And he tells us repeatedly that this is the universal law of the church. He does more than that. He tells us that it is the commandment of the Lord, and emphasizes the word "Lord" (verse 37).

The passage in *1 Timothy* 2:11ff. is just as strong, although it is more particularly directed to the specific case of public teaching or ruling in the

church. The apostle had already in this context (verse 8, "the men," in contrast with "women" of verse 9) pointedly confined public praying to men, and now continues: "Let a woman learn in silence in all subjection; but I do not permit the woman to teach, neither to rule over the man, but to be in silence." Neither the teaching nor the ruling function is permitted to woman. The apostle says here, "I do not permit," instead of as in *1 Corinthians* 14:33ff., "it is not permitted," because he is here giving his personal instructions to Timothy, his subordinate, while there he was announcing to the Corinthians the general law of the church. What he instructs Timothy, however, is the general law of the church. And so he goes on and grounds his prohibition in a universal reason which affects the entire race equally.

In the face of these two absolutely plain and emphatic passages, what is said in *1 Corinthians* 11:5 cannot be appealed to in mitigation or modification. Precisely what is meant in *1 Corinthians* 11:5, nobody quite knows. What is said there is that every woman praying or prophesying unveiled dishonors her head. It seems fair to infer that if she prays or prophesies veiled she does not dishonor her head. And it seems fair still further to infer that she may properly pray or prophesy if only she does it veiled. We are piling up a chain of inferences. And they have not carried us very far. We cannot infer that it would be proper for her to pray or prophesy in church if only she were veiled. There is nothing said about church in the passage or in the context. The word "church" does not occur until the 16th verse, and then not as ruling the reference of the passage, but only as supplying support for the injunction of the passage. There is no reason whatever for believing that "praying and prophesying" in church is meant. Neither was an exercise confined to the church. If, as in *1 Corinthians* 14:14, the "praying" spoken of was an ecstatic exercise—as its place by "prophesying" may suggest—then there would be the divine inspiration superceding all ordinary laws to be reckoned with. And there has already been occasion to observe that prayer in public is forbidden to women in *1 Timothy* 2:8, 9—unless mere attendance at prayer is meant, in which case this passage is a close parallel of *1 Timothy* 2:9.

What must be noted in conclusion is:

(1) That the prohibition of speaking in the church to women is precise, absolute, and all-inclusive. They are to keep silent in the churches—and that means in all the public meetings for worship; they are not even to ask questions; (2) that this prohibition is given especial point precisely for the two matters of teaching and ruling covering specifically the functions of preaching and ruling elders; (3) that the grounds on which the prohibition is put are universal and turn on the difference in sex, and particularly on the relative places given to the sexes in creation and in the fundamental history of the race (the fall).

Perhaps it ought to be added in elucidation of the last point just made that the difference in conclusions between Paul and the feminist movement of today is rooted in a fundamental difference in their points of view relative to the constitution of the human race. To Paul, the human race is made up of families, and every several organism—the church included—is composed of families, united together by this or that bond. The relation of the sexes in the family follow it therefore into the church. To the feminist movement the human race is made up of individuals; a woman is just another individual by the side of the man, and it can see no reason for any differences in dealing with the two. And, indeed, if we can ignore the great fundamental natural difference of sex and destroy the great fundamental social unit of the family in the interest of individualism, there does not seem any reason why we should not wipe out the differences established by Paul between the sexes in the church—except, of course, the authority of Paul. It all, in the end, comes back to the authority of the apostles, as founders of the church. We may like what Paul says, or we may not like it. We may be willing to do what he commands, or we may not be willing to do it. But there is no room for doubt of what he says. And he certainly would say to us what he said to the Corinthians: "What? Was it from you that the word of God went forth? Or came it to you alone?" Is this Christianity ours—to do with as we like? Or is it God's religion, receiving its laws from him through the apostles?