

THE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

A SERMON PREACHED IN
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH,
CHARLESTON. W. VA.

—ON—
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, 1899.

—BY THE—
Rt. Rev. Geo. W. Peterkin, D.D., L.L.D.,
THE BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE,

—AND PUBLISHED—
BY REQUEST OF THE VESTRY.

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“Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.”

In this sermon I have freely used the words and thoughts of others. It is published for my own people, and though necessarily brief and also imperfect, I believe it will assist many to give an answer for the faith that is in them.

G. W. P.

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Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.

Ps. 48: 12, 13.

We are frequently asked to state what are the distinctive principles of the Episcopal Church, and to explain things in her constitution and history imperfectly understood.

This we ought to be glad to do on proper occasions, and we ought always try to do it in a spirit of fairness and charity to all.

There are some, however, in every community who are satisfied with what might be called "a general allegiance to Christianity," and can hardly understand how we can have our hearts and consciences thoroughly enlisted in behalf of the distinctive features of our own Church without being narrow and intolerant and exclusive.

If any think this about us, no disclaimer will remove the impression and we can but appeal to the better judgment of a larger acquaintance.

The Episcopal Church in America.

As a first step in this discussion, which for so vast a subject must be very brief and imperfect, let me say a word about the history of the Episcopal Church in this country, and its position throughout the world.

America was in early days, largely settled by those who from various causes had left or were leaving the Church of England, the Church of their Fathers.

In asserting the cause of popular rights and liberties against the Crown—in the times of Elizabeth (1559-1603), James I. (1603-25), and Charles I. (1625-49)—owing to the connection of Church and State, many persons unfortunately, came to look upon the established Church as their enemy, and to make it, equally with the State that supported it, the object of their assaults.

And no doubt they had cause for complaint, for the great principles of religious liberty were not understood in those days—not understood or accepted either by those who remained in the Church of England, or by those that left her fold.

But at all events when these settlers came to this country, they naturally brought their old conservatism with them, and handed down to their children their bitter prejudices against the Episcopal Church; and such opposition must in a great many ways have hindered her growth in this country.

So it was that the years passed on, and the Revolutionary War came, and yet this Church had no complete organization in the New World. Many of the colonists strongly opposed the introduction of a Bishop among them, and although the Mother Church of England extended a nursing care to her daughter here, yet it was hardly possible for us, crippled and suspected as we were, to keep pace with the growth of the country.

The Revolutionary War, coming just when it did, was a heavy blow to the Episcopal Church. Some of our ministers returned to England whence they came. There was no one to commission and ordain others to take their places, and there was no authority to control or restrain and direct those who were still in the field, and there was no one to administer the apostolic rite of confirmation.

Under these adverse circumstances it is no wonder that by the

time our independence was achieved, the Episcopal Church was in many parts of the country almost extinct.

And there can be no doubt that to-day there is a vast deal of prejudice against the Episcopal Church in this country (in this State and community, as elsewhere) because there are other churches around us so much larger. Ought we not to think twice before we allow ourselves to form opinions so hastily? We must know very little about the world at large, and particularly about those great settlements of English speaking people, the world over, if we suppose that in this respect they all exactly reproduce our own little corner of it.

It may not be generally known that careful estimates give to the Episcopal Church a larger number of adherents than any other among English speaking people, and when you consider the part these people are now playing in the history of the world, the fact is deeply significant. English bids fair to become the universal language, and already it is more widely spread and more freely spoken than any other tongue. To show its marvellous spread compared with other European languages, the estimate is made that while in 1800 English was spoken by 20,500,000 people, French by 31,400,000, German by 30,300,000, Italian by 15,000,000, Spanish by 26,200,000, Portugese by 7,500,000, and Russian by 30,700,000, that now the English speaking people have increased to 111,100,000, French to 51,200,000, the German to 75,200,000, the Italian to 33,400,000, the Spanish to 42,800,000, the Portugese to 13,000,000, and the Russian to 75,000,000 (census of 1890). In other words, while in the last hundred years the number of people speaking the Russian language has declined from 19 per cent. of the whole number of people speaking the European languages, to 18.7 per cent.—and those speaking Portugese has declined from 4.7 per cent. to 3.2; and those speaking Spanish has declined from 16.2 to 10.7 per cent. of the whole; and those speaking Italian from 9.3 to 8.3 per cent; and those speaking German has remained the same, that is, 18.7 per cent. of the whole; and those speaking French has declined from 19.4 to 12.7 per cent.; that the English speaking people have increased from 12.7 to 27.7 per cent. of the whole number of people speaking European languages.

To this significant statement we add an estimate as to the comparative number in the English speaking religious communities of the world:

Of no particular religion.	17,000,000
Minor religious sects.	5,500,000
Unitarians	2,600,000
Lutherans, etc.	2,800,000
Freethinkers.	5,250,000
Congregationalists.	6,150,000
Baptists of all descriptions.	9,230,000
Presbyterians of all descriptions.	12,250,000
Roman Catholics.	15,500,000
Methodists of all descriptions.	18,650,000
Episcopalians.	29,200,000
	<hr/>
	124,130,000

This estimate is from Whitaker's (London) Almanac, and is confirmed by Rev. Dr. Daniel Dorchester, of Boston, a prominent clergyman in the Methodist Church, in the revised edition of his great book on the Problems of Religious Progress (1894).

There may not be much argument in such statistics, and I am aware that their accuracy may be called in question. I will only say that they are compiled from the most trustworthy sources at my command, and that even should we consider them in the nature of an appeal to a common and worldly test, yet we may thereby help to remove the prejudice that often arises against the Episcopal Church, because in certain localities it has a small following.

It is well in this connection specially because some persons not accustoming themselves to look beyond the narrow horizon of their own immediate surroundings practically ignore the great outside world, they forget the wonderful progress the Episcopal Church has made and is making in this country, and they forget that everywhere that the great English people have gone, this Church has also gone, and has become firmly established; that it will be found great and powerful, not only in Great Britain, but in her thirty-eight colonies, including also Canada, India, New Zealand and Australia, and that it has never been more active and useful than to-day, and that the wide world over it holds more English speaking people in its fold than any other communion whatever.

RELATION OF EPISCOPAL CHURCH TO ROME.

And now first to speak for a moment of a question about which there has been a vast deal of misapprehension.

WHAT RELATION TO THE ROMAN CHURCH?

People ask sometimes, what is the relation of the Episcopal Church in this country to the Church of Rome? Is not the Episcopal Church a branch of the Roman Church?

The answer is simply this, that the Episcopal Church in this country is the daughter, not of the Church of Rome, but of the Church of England, and that although this Church of England has no doubt come at times more or less under the influence of Rome, and sometimes to such an extent as to obscure its independence, yet it was neither founded by Rome, nor ever rightly subject to it.

We cannot tell exactly who first preached the Gospel in Great Britain, but this we know, that in the Second Century, long before the Bishops of Rome gained their coveted post as Head of the Church, Britain was Christian. She had her martyrs and confessors, and her Bishops were at her early Church councils.

The manner in which the Bishops of Rome gradually gained power over the Churches, and came at length to lord it over them, is one of the great themes of history, and we cannot enter upon it here.

This, however, we may say, that the more clearly we study the history of the English Church and of the English people, the more clearly it will appear how the pretensions of Rome were from time to time, according to the power and fortune of the reigning prince, met with a firm resistance, and notwithstanding advantages which the Popes sometimes gained, yet through many difficulties the Church of England fairly maintained her national independent character.

For the proof of this we need only refer to some indisputable facts.

When William of Normandy sailed on his expedition against England in 1066, with the view of strengthening his weak title to the succession, he sought the blessing of the Pope, and in gaining this he had committed to him a consecrated banner which he displayed at the decisive battle of Hastings. The Pope, who was no less than Gregory VII., the able and imperious Hildebrand, no doubt sanctioning the invasion with the hope of overcoming the independence still retained by the island Church and Nation. But when William had done his work and conquered England, and was requested by Gregory to do fealty for the crown, he absolutely refused on the ground that he had not promised it, and

that it never had been done by the Kings of England before him, and not only so but he forbade the clergy to go to Rome, or acknowledge a Pope or receive letters from him without his approval.

Later, in 1215, when England had come under the contemptible rule of John, the Barons met him at Runnymede, and extorted from him the famous Magna Charta, the very first Article of which declared that the Church of England should be free, and enjoy its whole rights and liberties inviolable. No wonder that Pope Innocent III. described it as a low, ill-favored and disgraceful compact; but for all that it has stood through the ages.

And not to multiply instances, we find the same spirit of independence manifested by all the worthier Kings. In the time of Edward I., 1272-1307, a statute was passed to restrain the transfer of lands to the Church; and in the time of Edward III., 1327-1377, another statute was passed to restrain the giving away of English benefices by the Pope; and still another to restrain English ecclesiastics from carrying appeals to Rome against legal decisions, and this was re-enacted in the time of Richard II., 1377-1399.

And finally in the time of Henry VIII., in 1535, the convocation of the English Church made formal declaration that the Bishop of Rome hath no greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God over this country, than any other foreign bishop, and this declaration was confirmed by Parliament in a final and decisive statute, 1537.

And so at length the time of Reformation came, and in God's providence the Church of England was able, by taking advantage of the political situation, to throw off altogether the yoke of Rome.

The character of the English King, Henry VIII., has nothing at all to do with the claims and position of the Church of England. He no doubt lived and died a Romanist, but for all, his personal quarrel with the Pope served undoubtedly to lessen the power of Rome in England, and encouraged his people finally to break away from it altogether and to stand by the declaration of the Convocation that the Bishop of Rome hath not greater jurisdiction conferred upon him by God in this realm of England than any other foreign Bishop, but this was merely to return to the ground that William the Conqueror had taken, and which many kings had endeavored more or less successfully to maintain.

An English clergyman was once asked by a Jesuit in Rome, "Where was your Church before Henry VIII.?" He answered

promptly, "Where were you this morning before you washed your face?"

The reply was no mere joke, but profoundly true. Accretions of various kinds would constitute no part of the human countenance, and washing, which would remove them, could neither change the lineaments of the human face, nor destroy its identity.

By the washing, the features would not be altered, they would only resume their natural appearance.

In the same way the superstitions of the ages, whether Roman or otherwise, formed no part of Christianity, and the Reformation, which cleared the Church of these superstitions, in no way altered its essential constitution, much less did it destroy its identity.

The English Reformation was not one but many acts, extending over years. It was not a revolution or reconstruction, but a Reformation.

We find in the English Church no ruling master mind to give direction to the whole movement according to some formal theory. We find no man of such influence and control that he could stamp his individuality upon this Church, no man to impress himself upon the English Church as Luther did upon the Lutherans, and Calvin on the Presbyterians, and Wesley on the Methodists. The position of the English Church is to be determined then, not so much by reference to the history and the views of any of her great men, admirable as they may have been, in the use of the good, old-fashioned phrase, Catholic and Protestants.

That is, on the one hand, connected indisputably with the system of the Primitive Church, and on the other hand resolved at whatever cost to clear itself of the corruptions of faith and practice, which had gradually encrusted it.

The English Reformation did not then spring into full-blown existence, as conceived in the brain and accomplished by the energy of some great man, but it gradually worked itself out along the lines marked out by the needs, the aspirations and the possibilities of succeeding generations.

It was at once its glory (with its friends) and its reproach (with its enemies) that it was essentially conservative, not desirous of new things, but keeping to the old historic constitution of faith and polity, clearing it indeed of the corruption that hath gathered around it in the ages, but never sweeping it away in order to put something new in its place.

How often have men failed to understand this great principle of the English Reformation. When they have charged the Church of England with likeness to Rome, they have overlooked the distinction between what is Romish and what is Catholic. Supposing, shall I say thoughtfully or ignorantly—that any likeness to Rome, even in points not Romish was at all hazards to be denounced and condemned.

We cannot follow up in detail the history of what is called the Reformation in England, but I think it will appear, the more closely we study the subject, that the leaven was working through many years; that from the very time of the conversion of the Saxons up to Henry VIII., resistance to the pretensions of Rome was, with more or less consistency, steadily maintained.

The Pope did not give up the struggle even when the Church of England in her convocation, formally repudiated his claims to supremacy. He tried time and again to regain his lost power, and it was not until the twelfth year of the reign of Henry's daughter Elizabeth, that, seeing that it was useless any longer to continue his efforts to enslave the National Church, he set up a rival communion and worship in the land, and that was properly the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church in England in 1570.

He called upon the English people to leave the old, time-honored Church of their fathers, and join that one which he had set up as its rival in the Kingdom, but to their honor be it said, that out of 9400 clergy in England at that time, less than 200 obeyed the call,—that is, about one clergyman in fifty, on the call of the Pope, left the Church of England for the Church of Rome.

Thus it will be seen how these two churches stand related, and how baseless is the claim that the Episcopal is a branch of the Roman Church.

NO PECULIARITIES.

But to turn now more directly to the work of explanation of which I spoke.

We will suppose some one to ask, What are the peculiarities of the Episcopal Church?

To this we make answer that as far as we know there are none. In other words, we believe that a candid examination of our Doctrine, Discipline and Worship, would show that there was nothing peculiar about them, that in these things we are simply walking in the old paths, standing fast by that Constitution of the Church,

and that Confession of Faith which have been from the beginning, and peculiarity would consist not in adhering to but in changing these.

DOCTRINE.

And first in regard to Doctrine. We need not say much on this point because our Prayer Book, which contains the Creeds and Articles of Religion, is open before all. It is freely circulated from house to house, and it may be evident to all who will patiently examine the subject that the teaching of this book is the teaching of Holy Scripture.

We desire to have the Prayer Book tested and judged by Scripture. We want everybody, as far as they can, to test and judge it for themselves. We have nothing to conceal and nothing to apologize for.

But the trouble with many is not so much with the main body of Doctrine, when they come to understand it, as the manner of stating some Doctrines and facts they do not understand.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

For instance, I have found objection made to that Article of the Creed in which we declare our belief in The Holy Catholic Church, and strange as it may appear, this objection is made by some who do not appear to know that the very same article is embodied in their own Confession of Faith.

Now I need hardly tell you that the word Catholic in the Creed, as applied to the Church, means simply universal, i. e., extending to all mankind.

The significance and importance of such an article in the Creed arises from the fact that the Jewish Church was not a universal or catholic church, but a local national church only, not fitted or designed to extend beyond the little land of Palestine, or to embrace any but the Jewish people.

When, then, the risen Saviour gave commandment to His apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he changed the constitution of the Church, and transformed it from a local and national Church into a Church for all lands and all people, a universal, a Catholic Church.

The difficulty in this matter comes from the fact that it is common to speak of the Roman, as the Catholic Church, but the expression is not an accurate one, inasmuch as it is giving to a part

the name of the whole, and also encourages that intolerance and exclusiveness which denies to every Protestant body, the name and privileges of a Church.

No doubt many use the term in question merely as a matter of courtesy, and certainly such a spirit and motive ought to be respected.

In like manner we speak of one of the Protestant Churches established among us as the Baptist Church, because it has adopted that official title, although we do not mean to imply, by using such a title, that this is the only Church that baptizes.

In the case of the Roman Church, however, it does not appear that the same courtesy requires us to use the term "Catholic" in speaking of her, because she has not adopted this as her official title.

The Creed of Pope Pius IV. (1559-66), which I suppose we should all have to subscribe did we join that Church, begins thus: "I believe and profess with a firm faith each and all the articles contained in the Creed which the Holy Roman Church adopts, etc., etc."

You will find also on the title pages of many, if not of all their books of devotion, the same name applied. Those titles will be found to read The Roman Breviary, The Roman Missal, etc., as the case may be.

I find also the name Roman expressly claimed by the present Pope, Leo XIII., for in writing an official letter to Cardinal Gibbons under date of January 22, 1899, after speaking of the unity and catholicity of the Church, he says, "Since God has placed the centre and foundation of unity in the chair of blessed Peter she is rightly called the Roman Church, &c."

It is no discourtesy in speaking of a Church to use the official title she has formally adopted.

THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

Again some persons are offended at the expression in the Creed, "He descended into Hell."

We might dismiss this objection by simple reference to the 16th Psalm, in which David says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell," and to St. Peter's explanation of these words in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, when he says that David was a Prophet, and in writing these words was referring to Christ's resurrection, that His soul was not left in Hell.

If, then, his soul was brought up out of Hell, it must first have descended into it, and this is just what we say in the Creed according to St. Peter's Sermon, that Christ died and was buried, that He descended into Hell and then rose from the dead.

The simple truth is that the word "Hell" in the Scriptures often means nothing more than the place of departed spirits, and has no reference to the place of punishment. This, then, is what we mean in the use of these Scriptural words in the Creed, that when Christ's body was laid in the grave, that His soul went into the unseen world, the place of departed spirits.

WHAT DOES THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH STAND FOR?

But some may consider the want of peculiarity in Doctrine, as itself a peculiarity.

They may ask, what is the special phase of Christian life, what is the special scheme of Doctrine which the Episcopal Church emphasizes and champions, what are those things for which it stands forth specially as a witness before men?

It is not too much for me to say that we have nothing peculiar of our own to emphasize, no pet doctrines to champion, but that we desire to hold forth and minister the Word of Life in its completeness and fullness.

As one evidence of this, you will find that we divide the Christian year into periods which are marked by certain significant days, as Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Whit Sunday, Trinity Sunday and such like, which days are monuments and memorials of Christian story.

The importance of these will appear when you remember what has been well said, how we all have a tendency, according to our several constitutions and circumstances in life, to adopt partial views of truth, to insulate certain doctrines from their natural accompaniments, and then call our favorite fragment "The Gospel."

We sometimes hold a few texts so near our eyes that they almost hide the rest of the Bible. And then whatever we cannot refer at once to our chosen centre, seems to us insignificant, and what we can so refer, seems to us important only in that connection.

Now then, the Episcopal Church seeks, by the regular course of the Christian year, to correct this evil tendency. She seeks by the regular recurrence of all the days of which I have spoken, and

by the appointment for them of such services as will recall and illustrate the events they commemorate, and bring out very distinctly the doctrines involved. She seeks by these things not only to foster the piety of her children, but also to preserve a due proportion and equilibrium in their religious views.

While we follow her prescribed services, the Church will not suffer us to isolate our chosen facts and favorite doctrines, but spreads the Gospel history in all its fullness across the surface of the sacred year.

By a sort of chronological Creed, by the very revolutions of times and seasons, we are compelled to give its proper place and dignity to every separate article.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and the tone of each holy anniversary is distinct and emphatic. Thus our Church year with its constantly recurring seasons, marked as I said with monuments and memorials of Christian story, becomes a bulwark of the true faith, as real as our Articles and our Creeds.

It will not suffer caprice or perversity to distort or suppress. It will not suffer rash or self-willed men to rob the precious story of one single glorious fact or truth, but sets our whole goodly treasure in due proportion before us that of all which God hath given us in the Gospel of his own Son we should lose nothing.

And I add to these words the testimony of another who was not of the Episcopal Church.

He says that by the special services appointed for certain days, the great events of the Gospel, which are the very foundations of our faith, are wrought into the memory of the worshippers.

And so by seasons, longer or shorter, of special religious observance and efforts, this Church satisfies the same want that others satisfy by weeks of prayer and protracted meetings, and long revival services.

The more familiar we become with the workings of this system of which we are speaking, the more clearly we shall understand, I think, how this Church seeks with large foresight to provide for all the manifold wants of human nature, and how she seeks to unfold the whole scheme of Divine truth, avoiding on the one hand omission, and on the other such undue emphasis of particular doctrines which often amounts to distortion and perversion of the truth, and how she refers everything to the infallible test of Holy Scripture, not requiring anything of her children to be believed save what may be read therein or proved thereby.

We shall find that this Church is comprehensive enough to em-

brace all men within her fold, and that every denomination of Christians in so far as its characteristics are based on the word of God, and it is contending for the faith once delivered to the Saints, may find a banner of its own, and a broad camping ground within the broad area of the Episcopal Church.

GOVERNMENT.

And now we come to enquire about the Discipline of the Episcopal Church, having special reference to the order and government. Is there anything peculiar about this? We think not.

We find in our Prayer Book these words: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been these three orders of ministers in Christian's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

In other words, we pronounce Episcopacy to be of primitive and apostolic antiquity, and therefore we require Episcopal ordination for all our ministers.

We not only have no desire to depart from this order ourselves, but we would not feel at liberty to do so, and therefore, laying down rules for our own guidance and government, we count him only who hath had Episcopal ordination, a lawful minister in this Church.

Now if this were something new, some new regulation we had invented, we might be blamed for making so much of it, however admirable we might think it to be; but it is not a new thing, we are not insisting upon any new regulation, we are as a matter of fact simply adhering to the faith and order that the Church of England has held from time immemorial, and we do not think we can be fairly called upon to abandon, or practically ignore this Constitution of the Church which has been handed down to us through the ages.

We do not pronounce judgment upon others, we do not unchurch or condemn them, but on the other hand we do not think they can justly find fault with us, because we do not by freely exchanging pulpits with the ministers of other Churches, and so continually dispensing with Episcopal ordination, practically say that after all we do not consider it a matter of much consequence, one way or the other.

At the time of the Reformation all of the Churches of the East, and in the West were thus organized, that is with the three orders of the ministry.

And when we go back to earlier times, say for instance to the 4th Century after Christ, and read the histories, and the books of all kinds written then, we find no other form of Church polity but Episcopacy existing anywhere in the Universal Church.

The same facts meet us in every preceding century up to a time when one at least of the Apostles, St. John, was still living, and there is no record, not even a hint of any change having been introduced into the order of the Church.

The Christian writers of each age are unanimous in assigning to this form of Church polity an Apostolic origin.

When we come to the Scriptures we find Presbyters and Deacons and the Apostles over both, i. e., three orders in the Church, and further we find St. Paul, as in the case of Timothy and Titus, delegating to individuals a portion of his Apostolic authority, the functions they were to exercise being similar to those which now belong to the office of Bishop.

It appears to us then that the Episcopal Constitution of the Church is not only agreeable to the mind of the Apostles, but that in its beginning it was so sanctioned and ordained by them that it cannot be dissociated from their influence and example.

It seems to us also that every institution which we have reason to regard as Apostolical, comes to us with a prima facie claim upon our acceptance, and may not be lightly set aside. It is a significant fact that we find no discussions on this subject in the Church of the first centuries after Christ, and this because there were no differences, but one uniform practice. However much the Churches in various places differed about doctrinal questions and about matters of smaller moment, (and there was no end of differences and discussions on these subjects), and however tenaciously they clung to their own local customs, all were agreed as to the Episcopal Constitution of the Church.

To suppose, as some have done, that after the death of the Apostles there was a radical change in the Constitution of the Church, whereby for the first time it became Episcopal, is to advance an opinion for which there is no proof whatever, and to make the incredible supposition that such a complete and radical revolution could take place, and yet excite no remark, and leave not a trace behind, such a change could not have taken place in such a way in the first or second century any more than it could now.

The whole argument is summed up in a word when it is said that for fifteen hundred years and upwards, the Church of Christ

continued under the sacred regimen of Bishops, and even taking the lower view of universal Church custom, it seems to us rash and presumptuous to depart from it, or overthrow it.

I am afraid we shall have to admit that sometimes Episcopals are disposed to criticize too sharply churches which lack this distinctive feature of their organization, but upon a question like this we are not bound to defend the opinions of individuals, but rather to set forth what the Church teaches in her standards, and it would help us all to a better understanding, if no one was ever driven by the apparent necessities of controversy to go beyond this position. This ought always to be remembered, that while the Church preserves Episcopacy for herself on the ground of Apostolic origin, yet she has not thought it her place to declare that those who have it not, are by this cut off from the Church of Christ, or thrown back simply on an individual Christianity.

If, then, we of the Episcopal Church in West Virginia differ in this respect from the majority of those just around us, we can show good reason for the difference,—we can show, as we think, how that this difference is due, not to any new departure we have taken, but rather to this, that in time past many, some, under what appeared for the time at least, to be the exigence of necessity, and some I fear with little or no reason, left the usual ways of the Church.

Like our Mother Church in England, we retain Episcopacy because it has come down to us from the Apostle's times.

The presumption is that we are right in doing so. We have made no change, but are walking in the old paths.

If others have seen fit to leave these old paths, and choose new ways, it is not our place to judge them, but certainly it is neither unreasonable nor uncharitable for us to say "Brethren, we wish you God speed." We rejoice that many are with us contending for the faith once delivered to the Saints, but we feel bound to adhere to what we believe to be the order as well as to faith of the Apostolic Church. If we depart from either there is nothing we more earnestly desire that to be shown our error, and to be brought back.

CONFIRMATION.

I may say a word in this connection about confirmation, which is one of the appointments to be observed in the Episcopal Church

Confirmation is the rite of laying on of hands upon those who have been baptized, and have come to years of discretion.

This rite was universally practiced until about 350 years ago. Then when some of the Reformers, feeling constrained by the exigence of necessity, left the usual ways of the Church and organized without Bishops, by whom Confirmation was administered, it very naturally fell into disuse.

Among those who baptize infants, some such rite seems necessary, and as a matter of fact some corresponding service or ceremony, more or less appropriate, is generally used.

Why we use this particular one of Confirmation will, I think, very plainly appear when we study the subject in the light of the practice of the early Church, and of the example of the Apostles.

Suppose, however, that at this time, to be as brief as we can, we consider the testimony given to Confirmation by those outside of our Church.

John Calvin, in commenting on Heb. vi., 2, in which the Apostle speaks of the Doctrine of Baptism, and the laying on of hands, says: "This one place abundantly proves the origin of this ceremony to have flowed from the Apostles, and it is at this day to be retained.

In the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1813, a committee was appointed to report upon the best course to be pursued with the baptized children who had come to years of discretion. They said that in the Early Church a rite called Confirmation was administered to such persons.

In the Confession of Faith adopted by the Baptist Association which met in Philadelphia in 1742, we find these words: "We believe that laying on of hands with prayer upon baptized persons as such is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to be submitted to by all who are admitted to the Lord's Supper."

And I have the authority of the late Dr. Norton, of Louisville, for saying that Dr. Alex. Campbell, remarked late in life, that if he had to organize his Church system over again, there was one thing more he would put into it and that was Confirmation.

WORSHIP.

But one question remains for me to answer in pursuing the plan proposed. Is there anything peculiar in the worship of the Episcopal Church?

In this worship we find what is perhaps the most noticeable

difference between the Episcopal Church and those immediately around it in this State and community.

We use a set form in the Episcopal Church. In most of the other churches none is prescribed, and yet it cannot properly be said that there is anything peculiar in our practice in this respect.

Set forms have been used from the earliest times, and we believe that our Lord himself in the prayer He taught gave us not only a model, but a form of prayer.

The vast majority of Christian people in the world use such forms to-day. Not only do we find forms used in the Roman and Greek and other Eastern Churches, but also in the Episcopal and Lutheran Churches, which comprise so large a part of Protestant Christendom.

It deserves also to be remarked that the Methodist Churches use set forms for their most solemn services, such as ordination and communion, and therefore cannot object to the principle involved, cannot seriously object to the use on ordinary occasions of public worship, that which they find appropriate and helpful on extraordinary occasions.

Indeed when we come to think of the very general prevalence of such forms in all ages of the Church, we feel compelled to say that so far from their appearing to be anything peculiar in the use of them, it seems to many a little peculiar not to use a set form of some kind.

The truth is that in public worship where one person is to lead the devotions of many, they must follow him, and his words are, for the time at least, a form to the congregation.

Practically the question resolves itself into this, whether the congregation will use a form prepared by the minister in his study, or on the spur of the moment, or whether they will use one that has grown up through the ages, according to the needs of the Church, and containing in itself the accumulated treasures of her wisdom and piety.

I cannot forbear to give in this place the testimony of the late Dr. Charles Hodge, who was for many years a Professor in the Seminary at Princeton, and generally recognized as one of the most distinguished clergymen in the Presbyterian Church.

It is valuable as giving evidence of the felt need of a Liturgy among some who have for a long time tried extemporaneous forms and found them wanting.

He says: "It has often been said that there is no more propriety in a minister's using prayer prepared to his hand, than in his using sermons prepared by others. If he is fit to preach, he is fit to pray."

"There is, however, a very great difference between the two cases. In preaching the minister is not the organ of the people, in prayer he is. They listen to his preaching, they join in his prayers. It is then of great importance to their spiritual edification that there should be nothing with which they cannot sympathize or which offends or disturbs their feelings.

If the preaching offends them, that is one thing, but when they themselves draw near to God, and are made to utter incoherent, wandering or irreverent prayers, it is a very grievous affliction."

It is a very mistaken zeal for his Church, Dr. Hodge goes on to say, which leads any man to deny or defend these frequent blemishes in her sacred services.

One great advantage which we think would attend the introduction of a Liturgy, would be the improvement it would tend to produce in the conduct of public worship, and in the celebration of other religious services.

There is another advantage of scarcely less importance. There are literally thousands of cases in which religious worship should be conducted, and the dead buried, when no minister is at hand.

In vacant Churches, destitute settlements, in the army, the navy, and merchant vessels, there is a demand for some authorized forms.

For the want of a Presbyterian book of the kind intended, the English Prayer Book is used in all parts of the world, and it will continue to be resorted to even by Presbyterians, until their own Church provides a book better suited to their necessities.

He goes on to say that the Presbyterian Church has suffered more than can well be estimated from those faults in the conduct of her simple services, which our venerable ministers have so often pointed out, and from failing to supply her scattered children with those aids to worship which their exigencies demand.

It may be, however, that although there be no controversy as to the principles involved in forms of prayer, there may very naturally be differences of opinion as to the particular forms used.

Lest I should be counted too partial a witness to testify in regard to the excellence of our own forms, I will quote the words of a distinguished minister, not of this Church. He says:

The Episcopal Church offers for our use the most venerable

Liturgy in the English tongue. In English there is no devotional book that can stand for a moment in comparison with the Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church in the twofold quality of richness and age.

However many wise things may be said about the excellencies of this Church in other respects, yet the pious multitudes that frequent her courts are drawn thither mostly by love of the prayers and praises and litanies and lessons of the Book of Common Prayer.

You rarely hear in any Church a prayer spoken in English that is not indebted to this Book for some of its choicest periods, and I doubt whether life has in store for any of you an uplift so high, or a downfall so deep but you can find solace for your soul, and fitting words for your lips, among the treasures of the Prayer Book.

And as the consequence of the use of such a book the Episcopal Church preserves a very high degree of dignity, decency and propriety in all her public offices, and there is an accumulating worth of holy associations which is at once grateful and helpful.

Let me add to this, the testimony of Adam Clark, the great Methodist, who said, next to the Bible, the Prayer Book is the book of my heart.

And still further, the testimony of the Presbyterian, Dr. Phelps. "The spirit of worship is deepened by the use of Liturgical forms, in which holy men and women of other generations have expressed their faith. It is a most formative element in the religious culture of children, that they are taught to pray in the words which a godly ancestry have hallowed. To offer the prayers which their fathers offered, and to sing the hymns which their mothers sung, will set going sanctifying influences which will grow with their growth." But you ask, "will not the use of ancient form degenerate into nothing but forms? Always possibly, never necessarily. I seriously question whether such repetition induces any more formality than the silent attempts of listeners to follow the impromptu thought of a leader in extemporaneous prayer. Prayer impromptu may be the superior to the leader, but to the hearer, the following is a difficult and complicated act. It requires a quick mind to follow with no loss of devotional sincerity.

To children it is commonly a dead loss of time, they do not participate in it, and are not reverently interested in it. During the

first fifteen years of a child's life, the public devotions of our churches are generally a blank."

It is strange that in arguing about the propriety of using forms in the worship of God so many seem to have forgotten that our hymns are many of them only prayers in poetical form. And yet almost all use the hymns without scruple, although they are pre-composed. And they use the same hymn over and over again, and so far is it from wearing out that it seems to be only the more valuable as it grows older, and as we grow more familiar with it.

The fact that some who object to forms of prayer yet freely use hymns, which are poetical forms of prayer, gave occasion for the lines of John Newton:

"Some men freely will rehearse
Forms of prayer and praise in verse,
Why should, then, some men suppose
Forms are sinful if in prose?
Must my form be deemed a crime,
Simply for the want of rhyme?"

CHURCH AUTHORITY.

"And here I may add a word about the authority of the Church to make rules for her own government, and for the general administration of her services.

There can be no doubt, we think, that the Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, provided nothing be ordained contrary to God's word, and provided also that besides the written word she does not attempt to enforce anything to be believed as necessary to salvation.

Of course, when we say that the Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, we do not include things of the same nature as Sacraments or other ordinances of the Gospel. Two sacraments were ordained of Christ and the Church cannot make others like them. The Church cannot alter them, or add to them. But we mean that since the rules laid down in the Scripture for regulating public worship and administering the ordinances of religion are very general, and to be carried out need to have the details ordered and arranged by some authority, and since there is such variety of opinion and feeling among Christian people that unless there were some rules for public worship beyond the plain words of Scripture, we should utterly fail to live up to the apostle's command, "Let all things be done decently and in or-

der" that therefore the Church should order and arrange such details so as to honor God, and edify the people.

St. Paul seems to lay down this very principle, that in such matters people ought to yield their own judgment to the custom of the Church, when he says in reference to a dispute about such things in the Church at Corinth, "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God."

In these words he not only asserts his own authority as an Apostle, but he says that except on Scriptural grounds and from necessity of obeying God rather than man that no one is justified in departing from the established usages of the Church in matters of public concern.

It has seemed necessary to say this much because there are very many who think they are conscientiously opposed to everything in the way of a rite or ceremony, if they cannot find some plain and expressed word of God commanding it.

Why, as a matter of fact, every organization must exercise this discretion and authority in some way. There is no help for it. When you come to look into the matter you will find that all bodies of Christians, however opposed they may be to what they call ceremonial, have yet exercised and do constantly exercise the power of decreeing rites for their own bodies.

However bare and free from ornament their public worship may be, yet in some way or other it is ordered and regulated if it be public worship at all.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are administered with some degree of regularity; preaching and praying are arranged after some kind of order; and how simple soever that order may be, it is an order derived from the authority of their own body, and not expressly prescribed in Scriptures.

Scripture teaches all things necessary for Salvation, but all details of ceremonial it neither teaches, nor professes to teach. Such therefore must be left, in some degree, to the authority and wisdom of the Church.

MINISTERIAL DRESS.

It may be sufficient for me to say only a very few words in regard to the use by our ministers of a particular dress when engaged in the public service of the Church.

We use such dress because it is sanctioned by the usage of the Church in all ages past, from the very earliest, and also because

we think it helpful in promoting order and decency and solemnity in our public worship.

It will not do to say of such things that they are not absolutely necessary and therefore may be laid aside. To what would such a principle lead us?

Why, even the consecrated Church building in which we offer up our prayers, and hear the word of God read and preached, cannot be said to be absolutely necessary, for oftentimes true religion has flourished without them.

We might worship God in spirit and in truth in some humble private dwelling, just as so many have done before us.

We might pour forth our petitions where the dark forests were waving around us, and the heavens above formed our only canopy, like the ancient Christians when in days of persecution, far away from the abodes of men.

They shook the depths of the desert's gloom.

With their hymns of lofty cheer.

But we know that the mind and the devotional feelings are reached through the outward senses, and therefore it is meet and proper that some spot should be set apart in which week after week we may assemble before God.

By being thus separate from all unhallowed wordly and common uses, it will fill men's minds with greater reverence for God's glorious majesty, and affect their hearts with more devotion and humility in His service.

And the same regard for the principles of association would dictate that when the minister officiates in the solemn rites of the sanctuary, even his outward apparel should declare to those before whom he stands, the sacred duty in which he is engaged.

Then the recollections of this world are broken in upon. Men forget the individual, and remember only the office which he holds.

THE PAST VS. THE PRESENT.

As I draw these remarks to a close let me say that one reason why persons are prejudiced against us is that, in this busy, restless, self-asserting age in which we live, many persons show a disposition to part altogether with the past, and to arrogate to these latter days such wisdom as can gain nothing from those that have gone before.

But is not this a great mistake? Is it not a positive loss to break up the continuity of the life of a nation, or of a church? If

experience teaches us that a nation cannot possess a nobler treasure than the unbroken chain of a long and brilliant history, shall we not say the same thing in regard to a church? Is it not a blessing to have the continuity of its life also unbroken, and to see in its history realized the truth of the poet's words,

"The child is father of the man,
And I would with my days to be,
Bound each to each by natural piety?"

Is there any special wisdom shown in going against all customary usage, in trying to lay again in these latter days the foundations of all things? May it not be possible to over-estimate our own wisdom at the expense of those who have gone before, and especially in religious and ecclesiastical affairs?

Thus it is that a single generation is drawn up in array against all that have preceded it, and has to make good its pretensions, not only with no assistance from the great and good men who sleep in the Lord, but against their united forces.

Covenant is broken with the mighty dead, and they whose ever-living wisdom whether it speaks to us in books, or yet more impressively in the institutions, which they have sanctioned or improved or contributed to form are set aside to make room for the new, capricious, dogmatical, untried authorities of the day; for partial interests, sectarian prejudice and temporary fashion; for the despotic sway and idolatrous worship of the present; as if there were neither voice nor vision in the past.

There are two ways of dealing with these institutions which have come down to us through the ages, even when it appears that they require some modifications amid the present surroundings.

The narrow-minded, the men of mere practical understanding, without imagination to call up those manifold recollections which lie beyond the span of the understanding, they who see one thing clearly or distinctly, and who straightway conclude that it is the only thing to be seen, who walk between two high walls, and suppose that the whole world is included between them, they who have no reverence for antiquity, no faith in a higher spirit guiding and shaping the actions of men and pervading their institutions, they who trust in their own wisdom and their own will, and who desire to see that wisdom and that will reflected in everything around them, and such persons will often destroy an ancient institution as worthless and set up some creation of their own in its stead.

They on the other hand, who have learned to distrust their own

wisdom, and to suspect their will, who have discovered the limits of their faculties and how narrow they are, who have perceived how far the largest part of what is valuable in their minds is owing to the unnoticed influence of the thoughts and principles and institutions amid which they have grown up, they who have discerned that in churches also as in nations, the child is father of the man, and that the only sure progress of national and of religious life lies in transfiguration, not in destruction on some new model, such persons will always be anxious to preserve the institutions which their fathers have left them, not, however, in any worn out or dilapidated state, but restored to completeness and vigor, with a new life kindled in them.

Thus, dear brethren and friends, have I tried during the few minutes allowed for our discourse, to walk about our Zion, and go round about her, to tell her towers and mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces.

It is possible some may think that we have with too partial an eye, looked upon her beauty and her strength, and yet even this ought not to hinder them from the calm and candid consideration of all that I have said. I have dealt in no abstruse and difficult statements, but have tried to tell a straightforward story. I have tried to tell something of the early history of the Church in this country, and of her position throughout the world.

I have tried to show that this Episcopal Church established here among you is the child, not of Rome, but of the Church of England, and that that has been from time immemorial substantially and rightly an independent church, so that here in this country she is a free church in a free state.

I have tried also to show that this Church cannot fairly be charged with peculiarity in Doctrine, Discipline or Worship, but that she walks in the old paths, standing fast by the Constitution and order of the Church as she has received the same, handed down through the ages, from father to son.

Much more might be said, but this is enough for the time and purpose.

The wise man has said, Let another praise thee and not thine own mouth. I may therefore fitly close these remarks in the words of another not a member of this Church.

Citizens and Christians all! Because this Episcopal Church is a Reformed Church and not Revolutionary; because her Book of Common Prayer is rich and venerable beyond all in the English tongue; because her Ritual promotes decency, dignity and pro-

priety; because her historic union through the apostles with Christ comforts and satisfies so many souls; because she adopts her infant children and provides for their education and drill; because with large hospitality she proffers her sacrament to all true believers of every name, therefrom her own Psalter let us take the words to bless her. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.

For my brethren and companions' sakes I will wish thee prosperity, yea because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek to do thee good.

I take the liberty of adding to this sermon as preached, several brief papers, the first being my answer to the question, Why am I a Churchman? and the second being a declaration of principles we all ought to keep in mind, and the others notes of information it may be well to keep in mind.

I. WHY AM I A CHURCHMAN?

Since I cannot state what I would have been under totally different conditions, I feel bound to say:

First. That I am a Churchman because of birth, education, and association; everything has tended that way.

But, since my observation, study and experience have all helped to confirm me in my attachment, and loyalty to the Church of my fathers, I say again:

Second. That I am a Churchman (1) Because the historic continuity of the Church, involving its Apostolic order, satisfies and commands me. As a workable system and a practical basis of unity, it commends itself to my judgment, and as most agreeable to the institution of Christ, it commands my allegiance. (2) Because the faithfulness of the Church to Scriptural ideals, in its Doctrine and Ritual, and in its attitude towards society, realizes Christ's promise of presence; so that if the Master is still to be sought in the company of His friends, I know not where else I can have such guarantee of finding Him. (3) Because the educational value of rite and service is what I continually need; while the administration of sacraments in which Christ's teaching touching the great fundamentals of the New Birth, and Redemption through the precious Blood is so clearly set forth—as far as I can see, without defect or excess of statement—has no parallel in any other branch of the Church. (4). Because of the Catholicity

of the Church, in that she does not attempt to be wise above what is written, and will not be driven by the apparent stress of the argument, to insist upon rules of life, and tests of membership, which are neither stated in the words of Scripture, nor authorized by its spirit. This makes me feel that thus best, by her instrumentality, can the Gospel be most effectually preached to every creature, and the great Father extend a welcome, and provide a home for all His children.

II. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

The Episcopal Church aims to offer a common ground of fellowship, and a place for worship and service, to all who "Love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity."

She rests her claims upon the following considerations.

1. The historical fact that she is the Mother Church of English-speaking people.

2. She has Gospel teaching, embodied in a Creed of Apostolic origin, so simple that a child can learn it, so definite that unbelief cannot get around it, and so comprehensive that nothing essential to the soul's health is left unsaid.

3. She furnishes her children with a reverent and solemn worship, which is also congregational and responsive, wholly free from crudities of thought and expression, enriched by the devotional experience of the past, and suited to the daily wants of the present; most truly a "common prayer," since it belongs to ministers and people alike, and allows the living voice of the congregation to be heard.

4. She is served by a Ministry in three orders, ordained according to the Apostolic model, and in her ordinary routine of worship and service she adheres to significant and edifying customs which extend through Christian history.

5. She practices a Christian Nurture that cares tenderly for the lambs of the flock; teaching them from the first, that as baptized children they belong in the Good Shepherd's fold. Thus, by a system of holy education, she trains the children to venerate and love the Church as the mother to whom they belong by a Divine covenant in a blessed and joyous inheritance; and to heed punctually all the ordinances that are means of heavenly grace.

6. She keeps the Christian year—with its days and seasons, such as Advent, and Christmas, and Epiphany, and Lent, and Good Friday, and Easter, and Ascension Day, and Whit Sunday,

and Trinity, and such like, which are all of them monuments and memorials of Christian story. And so the Church hallows and blesses the passing seasons by associating them with the events of our Saviour's life on earth, and with the great facts of Redemption. This quickens the memory; satisfies the instinctive desire of believers for special seasons of devotion; gives balance and symmetry to the thoughts; and is a guard against narrow and one sided views of revealed truth.

7. She has Scriptural and simple terms of admission to sacramental privileges, not making the Church less comprehensive than Christ has made it, nor imposing conditions of membership other than those which Christ Himself has laid down.

8. She admits the people to share with the clergy in the government of the Church, in nomination of those who are to be ordained to the ministry, and in the selection of pastors for their congregations, and is the management of all business affairs of these congregations.

9. She insists upon the duty of every man, woman and child baptized into the body of Christ, to lend a helping hand in the work of building up His kingdom.

III. THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

To speak a little more in detail of that part of the Church with which we are more particularly identified, I would say that it is well for us to remember that the history of this Church does not begin with the political independence of the United States, or with the erection of a local Episcopate. This Church of ours is the same church, the same continuous institution that existed in England for centuries before this continent was discovered by Europeans. We are walking in the old paths of faith and order; and we are witnesses for these things. The history is plain, it may be known and read of all men.

Our church dates its organized existence in this country from the establishment of the first permanent colony at Jamestown, Virginia, May, 1607. But in those early days there were so many dissensions in the colonies, and such trouble in England, too, culminating in the Revolutions that after 50 year of conflict resulted in dethroning the Stuarts—that the Church, unfortunately, left to itself, without Episcopal supervision, came to be in an almost hopelessly depressed condition. And although there was a notable reaction in her favor before the Revolutionary War, yet

such were the effects of that prolonged struggle upon a church which was not fully organized or equipped, that in some quarters of the land she seemed almost extinct. The explanation is not hard to find. Bishop Meade says, "For about two hundred years was the Episcopal Church forced to try the experiment of a system whose constitution required as a head a Bishop whom they could not secure. There was no such officer to watch over and direct clergy, none to administer the rite of confirmation or to ordain men to the sacred ministry. It must be evident that the Episcopal Church without such an officer is more likely to suffer for the want of godly discipline supervision than any other society of Christians, because all others have some substitute; whereas our own Church makes this office indispensable to some important parts of ecclesiastical government and discipline, and to the good conduct of its affairs."

In the providence of God, however, it was only a few years after the Revolutionary War, viz, 1784, that the organization of the Church in this country was completed by the consecration of Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut, followed in 1787 by the consecration of Dr. White, of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Provost, of New York, and in 1790 by the consecration of Dr. Madison, of Virginia. The Church remained for some years in a depressed condition owing to causes into which we cannot enter at this time, and when the revival came, it was at first slow, but it has nevertheless been steadily advancing onward until to-day, in 58 dioceses and 27 missions (of which missions 8 are abroad), we have nearly 5,000 clergy and about 700,000 communicants.

IV. THE CHURCH IN WEST VIRGINIA.

To speak still more particularly of our own Diocese—it was in 1821, i. e., 77 years ago, that the subject of a division of Virginia was first agitated—but no practical move was taken for 30 years; that is, until 1851—i. e. 47 years ago. This move, however, failed, and it was not until 1877 that the division was made.

The organization was perfected by the consecration of the Bishop in 1878—just 20 years ago.

Since of the, perhaps, 60 clergy and laity who compose this council (1898), not more than three or four took part in those deliberations of 20 years ago, I may be allowed to speak of that time somewhat more particularly. It was but a small showing it must be confessed that the Church in West Virginia made in

those early days. There were nominally 14 clergy in May, 1878, but two of them had resigned and presently left the Diocese, so the working force was practically only 12, of whom one, viz. Rev. D. D. Tompkins, was 75 years old. The number of communicants reported at the first annual council, held in Charles Town in February, 1878, was 1,112, and although no doubt there were a few others scattered about, they were as sheep without a shepherd, not touched by the ministrations of the Church, and adding nothing to her strength or promise; and if the number of clergy and communicants was small their distribution was in some respects singularly unfortunate. Of the 12 clergy spoken of above, and the 1,112 communicants, the counties of Jefferson and Berkeley, with 570 square miles and perhaps 30,000 population, had 5 of the clergy and nearly 500 of the communicants, leaving only seven clergy and about six hundred communicants scattered about over the remaining 23,000 square miles and among more than 550,000 population. In other words, while in the two counties of Jefferson and Berkeley we had one clergyman to every 100 square miles and 1 communicant to every 60 population, in the rest of the State, 40 times as large and with nearly 20 times the population, we had only 1 clergyman to every 3,000 square miles and 1 communicant to about every 900 population. It was this condition of things in this larger territory, comprising the vast bulk of the State, that made the problem so grave and perplexing when we set ourselves to solve it. Before I go farther it may be interesting to note that now in the two eastern counties where the church always has been so much stronger, proportionally, than in other sections of the State, we have 8 clergy instead of 5, and our communicants have increased from 1 in 60 to 1 in 30 of the population, and also that in this so much larger western part of the State, we have 28 clergy instead of 7, and our communicants have increased from 1 in 900 to 1 in 250 of the population.

The geography of the State also seriously complicated the problem. The formation of the State was a war measure, and it took many of the people a long time to get accustomed to it.

The two counties spoken of above, though so small in extent and population, had nearly one-half of our total church strength in West Virginia, and their clergy and laity were warmly attached to the old Diocese of Virginia, and did not favor separation from it. Their feeling was natural, but was certainly an element of weakness in the new organization. And beside all this, the State was and still is divided into several distinct sec-

tions, which have not that intimate connection and association with each other which is needed to create and foster such common feeling of fellowship as ought to characterize sections of the same Commonwealth. Take, for instance, Charles Town and its surroundings; Wheeling and its surroundings; Charleston and Bluefield and their surroundings respectively, each section is not only separate from all the rest by many miles of travel, but also distinct in its interests and associations. When you come to give full weight to all these hindering circumstances, it seems wonderful that the State and the Diocese have attained the present unity they enjoy. I mention these things because they certainly are to be taken into account in stating the conditions of the past and present problem of church development in West Virginia. I cannot speak of this without adding that we have to be thankful to God, that in spite of such manifest hinderances, the feeling of unity has steadily grown in the Diocese. Our church people, clergy and laity, are so widely scattered that they have difficulty in getting together even in our annual gatherings for counsel and fellowship as will appear when I say that the average round trip for all delegates made in attending our council this year will amount to 500 miles. There is also comparatively little intercourse between the different sections of the State at other times, yet we have worked most harmoniously together, and have developed a common feeling and interest to a really wonderful extent. In all this we have been much assisted by the material development of the State; the facilities of internal travel are vastly greater than they were, and as the natural result there is more of such travel, and as our people mix with each other the more there comes to be a better understanding, and we can count upon a more cordial co-operation in our common work. There are now perhaps 40 places I find accessible by rail which could not thus be reached 15 or 20 years ago; and also 25 or 30 places in visiting which at that time we had to call into use the boats which are now happily dispensed with, and these facilities of travel are increasing every year. I mention all this because it has a direct bearing upon our church work. In going over this matter in time past I have sometimes thought that in no Diocese, certainly none east of the Mississippi, were the clergy obliged to spend so much time and energy and money in getting at their work, as in West Virginia. As we gradually fill up our ranks of working clergy we are continually making this burden lighter. This filling up has been a very gradual process and sometimes in our impatience

we are apt to become discouraged, because the wheels of the chariot seem to move but slowly, but I think that for our encouragement we may sometimes go a little more into detail and see just how the matter really stands. Taking then our full nominal strength in May, 1878, we find that at that time what we now call the eastern convocation had 5 clergy, 7 churches and 485 communicants.

They now have 9 clergy, 19 churches and 1,181 communicants.

In the same way the central convocation had then 2 clergy, 3 churches, and 121 communicants.

They have now 8 clergy, 9 churches and 483 communicants.

In the same way the northwestern convocation had then 3 clergy, 8 churches and 401 communicants.

Now 9 clergy, 18 churches and 1,163 communicants

Also the Kanawha convocation had then 2 clergy, 5 churches, and 212 communicants.

Now 6 clergy, 17 churches, and 766 communicants.

The New River convocation had then 2 clergy, 1 church, and 58 communicants.

Now 6 clergy, 13 churches, and 379 communicants.

And so it has come to pass that little by little we have increased our working force of clergy from 14 to 36.

Our churches from 25 to 76.

Our communicants from 1,200 to 4,230.

During the same time we have increased our rectories from 8 to 31. All this has been done very gradually and quietly. So that the result has come upon us rather in the nature of a surprise after all.

Of course these numbers are very small after all, small when we consider the size and population of the State, and also the imposing appearance that the other churches occupying the same territory, make. Thus not to mention others, the census of 1890 gives the United Brethren 175 churches and upwards of 12,000 members; the Presbyterians 150 churches and about 11,000 members, the Roman Catholics 62 churches and nearly 16,000 members, the Baptists 429 churches and about 43,000 members, the Methodists nearly 1,100 churches and upwards of 85,000 members. When we look upon this goodly array of those who have Christ's name, named upon them, we must say, Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity—the Lord add to His people how many soever they be an hundred fold, and grace and truth be multiplied to them. It is, however, gratifying to find

our little band growing not only in numbers but in consistency and steadiness, in the spirit of self help and in aggressive power. Our forces hardly yet form an ordered column or battalion, but as they make something like a thin line, in which the men can touch elbows, one with another, for mutual encouragement and support, our church now, as an organized body, can be depended upon to carry on with increasing power the work we find to do.

It is a gratification to feel that our beloved Church in West Virginia is growing in all helpful ministrations, and now that our congregations have gotten through with so much in the way of self equipment that was absolutely necessary, may we not hope that they will have more and more a high enthusiasm for the extension of the kingdom for gathering souls into the church, and training them for service, while they teach them all things a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health. This is the glory of a congregation and of a church. It ought to be a power for good in every community, not only a witness for the truth and for righteousness, but as leaven leavening the whole lump; as a lamp not covered up, but put on a stand in such wise as to give light to all that are in the house. As a force which through its individual members, and with all the power of its organized effort, shall in the highest sense be continually working for Christ and the Church.

V. EPISCOPACY PRIMITIVE.

Had Christ meant His Church to be anything but Episcopal, St. John would have known it, and so would his friends, the Bishops of Antioch and Smyrna, and their friend the Bishop of Lyons, and the rest. Or, to reverse the process, the Church of the third century, which was nothing if not Episcopal, must have known whether the Church of the second century was Episcopal or not and the venerable bishops and teachers who were associated with St. John in the latter part of the first century must have known whether or not the Church was Episcopal from the start. We have their testimony. There is no break in the chain.

Take the admission of Gibbon, and all candid scholars, that the Church was universally Episcopal at the close of the first century. How shall we account for it? Well, it either started so, or else, if it started with any other polity, that polity, whether it was Presbyterian or Congregational, was abandoned so soon, so unanimously, so universally, as to show that it was regarded as a stu-

pendous failure, abandoned so soon that the change was made before the apostles were cold in their graves; so unanimously that not a single presbyter or layman lifted his voice against the usurpation of those who are said to have made themselves bishops; so universally that not one solitary, isolated congregation in the forests of Britain, in the mountains of Spain, in the valleys of Gaul and Italy, on the deserts of Africa or the fertile banks of the Nile, on the islands of the Mediterranean, in the cities of Greece, on the sands of Arabia, on the prairies of Babylon, in the jungles of India, or on the hallowed hills of Galilee and Judea, not one single congregation of any sort or size survived to witness against the alleged Episcopal usurpation, and say, like Job's messenger, "I, even I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

When I shall see, therefore, all the fables of the Metamorphosis acted and proven true stories; when I shall see all the democracies and aristocracies in the world lie down and sleep and awake into monarchies, then will I begin to believe that Presbyterian Government, having continued in the Church during the Apostles' times, should presently after—against the Apostles' Doctrine and the will of Christ—be whirled about like a scene in a masque and transformed into Episcopacy. In the meantime while these things remain thus incredible and in human reason impossible, I hope I shall have leave to conclude thus:

Episcopal Government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church presently after the Apostles' times.

Between the Apostles' times and this presently after there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration.

And, therefore, there was no such alteration as is pretended.

And, therefore, Episcopacy, being confessed to be so ancient and Catholic, must be granted also to be Apostolic. *Quod erat demonstrandum*, ("which was to be proven.")



