

said, they did not claim for every detail in the regulation of church affairs a scriptural sanction, and they taught, that the church might modify these details, as the spirit of God guided her to do, to meet the changing circumstances through which she might be called to pass. The main positions therefore of our church order are entirely scriptural. Our system is not responsible for the errors we find in blue books, or which men may indulge in, in church courts. Presbyterianism rightly administered is a reasonable orderly system, although as we see it sometimes administered it may not appear to be so.

As is always pointed out when speaking on this subject, our system contains several elements which commend it in a special manner. 1. Our church order has this excellency, that it avoids on the one hand the evils of Hierarchism, or priesly domination, which is another name for prelacy. It is preserved from, and guarded against the prelatic spirit, which is always despotic. On the other hand, it is preserved from the confusion and disorder which arise from unregulated democracy. I do not speak with disrespect of the prelatic or independent systems of government. Great and good men, and powerful churches have adopted these systems. We believe however that our own system avoids evils into which these systems have fallen, on the one side, or the other. 2. Another excellency of our system is, that it secures in an efficient manner the great principle of all righteous government, namely, the utmost liberty of, and justice to the individual, combined with, a decorous and educative order. 3. Again our system secures unity throughout the membership of the church. Our meeting to-day is intended to illustrate this feature. We are of one family, and the least member should have the power and sympathy of the whole church to protect him should he require it. Each congregation is part of a whole. It is not independent.