

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

WHY ARE YOU A PRESBYTERIAN?—X.

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(2) The other sacrament is the Lord's Supper. In regard to this ordinance, three views have been taken among Protestants: the Lutheran, according to which the body and blood of Christ are corporally present in and with the bread and wine, so that every communicant receives Christ Jesus when he partakes of the sacrament; the Zwinglian, according to which the ordinance is merely a commemorative, symbolic rite, and not a means of grace; the Calvinistic, according to which Christ is *spiritually* present in the ordinance, so that every communicant that receives the elements, at the same time exercising faith in Jesus Christ, becomes a partaker of Christ Jesus, and of all the spiritual benefits which He bestows.

Presbyterians consider that the Lord's Supper should be observed in the public assembly where Christians meet for worship, and do not approve its private celebration. But Romanists and Anglicans, holding the efficacy *ex opere operato* of the sacrament, and regarding it as the means of salvation, administer it to dying persons as a *vialicum*, or preparation for death. The Reformed Churches regard this use of the ordinance as superstitious, and do not administer the sacrament to dying persons. Nevertheless, when a Christian person has, through long-continued sickness, been unable to go to the place of public worship, it has sometimes been deemed for edification to celebrate the ordinance in a private house where a number of other Christians are assembled for worship. In opposition to Popish error, Presbyterians deny that there is in the sacrament any sacrifice offered to God, and denounce the Popish sacrifice of the Mass as an abomination and blasphemy against the one only sacrifice which Christ offered on Calvary once for all. They also regard the lifting up of the elements, the carrying about of them for adoration, and worshipping of them, as contrary to the nature of a sacrament, and grossly superstitious practices. In their manner of observing the Lord's Supper, Presbyterians try to follow the example of Christ and His disciples. These partook of the supper sitting, or reclining, as was their custom at an ordinary meal. So Presbyterians adopt the posture usual at social meals, and sit while partaking of the supper. Kneeling before a so-called altar and receiving the elements in that posture seem to savour of an unscriptural veneration which leads to superstitious adoration of the elements in uninstructed minds. As the germ of sacerdotalism, with its sacrifice and priesthood, has, in the history of the Church, been found chiefly connected with the ordinance of the supper, it was not in vain that the Reformers insisted on a return to Gospel simplicity in the observance of this rite.

In many Presbyterian churches, more especially in times past, the ordinance has been too seldom observed. Scripture has not laid down rules requiring the observance of it at any particular time, nor has it said how often it should be celebrated. But it is to be regretted that greater frequency does not obtain, as was evidently the practice of the apostolic Church. The observance of fast-days and days of preparation and thanksgiving is of comparatively recent origin, and with increased frequency of celebration and changes in social customs these seasons cannot be observed as they were sixty or seventy years ago. The use of tokens for admission to the table of the Lord was also a matter of order which is fast becoming obsolete, and which has no foundation in Scripture. The strong tendency of the human mind to make much of the external accompaniments of worship, and to overlook the spiritual essentials, has shewn itself among Presbyterians as well as others, by magnifying some usages at one time found useful until they have come to be regarded as parts of Christ's ordinance. A return to Gospel simplicity is in every way desirable.

(3) Presbyterians reject the rite of confirmation. The child of Christian parents, after having been properly instructed, is expected to make a profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, and thereafter to take his place as a member of the Church in full standing, and to receive the sacraments from time to time. When, therefore, a rite devised by man is interjected, and the Romish and Anglican Churches

insist upon catechumens being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of a prelate bishop, and claim for the rite apostolic sanction, they are to be resisted. The laying on of hands was commonly practised in Scripture times in connection with blessing, and with designation or ordination to any work in the Church of God. As a beautiful and edifying symbol of blessing, no objection may be made to laying hands on infants at baptism, or on catechumens when professing their faith in Christ; but to claim for it the authority of the apostles as necessary in order to Church standing, or as a means of conveying grace, is to add to Scripture, and to impose rites of man's devising on the conscience. The expression "confirming the Churches" does occur in the Acts of the Apostles, but no intelligent reader will fail to distinguish between confirming or strengthening the Churches and practising the so-called rite of confirmation by laying hands on young Christians. A further objection to the order of confirmation, as practised in the Episcopal Church, is based on its tendency to mislead, by associating the observance of this rite with regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The bishop, after requiring the catechumen to ratify, confirm and acknowledge himself "bound to believe and to do all those things which his godfather and godmother undertook for him at baptism," says in prayer, "who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins"—and after laying on hands he further says, "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more," etc. Such language, if it does not explicitly teach that saving grace is communicated by baptism and confirmation, is calculated to lead naturally to this error. Regarding, therefore, the order of confirmation as without Scripture warrant, unnecessary, and calculated to foster misconception as to the nature of regeneration, Presbyterians do not practise the rite.

(4) Matrimony is by the Romish Church held to be a sacrament; and in all Protestant Churches has been connected with Church worship more or less explicitly. Inasmuch as marriage is an ordinance of God's, and should be observed according to the laws laid down in Scripture to regulate the union of the sexes, it is proper that God should be acknowledged in the celebration of marriage; hence ministers of the Word have commonly been charged with that function. In order also that due publicity be given to marriages, and a check be put on improper connections, the parish churches were made the place where the banns of marriage should be proclaimed. But customs have to a great extent changed in these respects. The Legislature treats marriage as a civil contract, and in many places has authorized magistrates to celebrate marriage, and appointed courts to deal with all questions of marriage in their civil bearings. Nevertheless, most Christian people prefer to have marriage celebrated with religious worship and by a minister of the Church. According to Presbyterian usage, the essential thing in the marriage bond is the public declaration of the parties that they take each other as husband and wife. The use of the ring in marriage, or any other particular rite, is immaterial, and not necessary to the validity of the marriage.

It is not necessary to do more than say that Orders, Penance and Extreme Unction, which by the Church of Rome are held to be sacraments, have no Scripture warrant, and are consequently rejected from the worship of the Reformed Churches. The ordination of Church officers is practised, as being the orderly investiture with office of those who have been called by God and by the Christian people to do the work of the Church; but nothing in that service is peculiar to the worship of Presbyterians.

SCRAPS OF A TOUR IN MORMONDOM.—II.

The last jottings sent were so hastily penned and so desultory that some more are needed to make those intelligible, not the less so by reason of a few amusing slips of the type-setter, e.g., "idiot" instead of "edict," in describing "blood atonement" of Mormonism. Of course your readers, as all the world, are already familiar with the darker points, such as the Mountain Meadows massacre of 119 Gentile immigrants, the butchery of the Morris party of about fifty apostates, etc. Hence there is no need to touch on these or similar matters further than to say that the day of that style of extending or defending

the system has passed, and other more subtle and safe methods are adopted. Persecution of Gentiles or apostates takes the form of various annoyances, e.g., refusing to buy or sell anything, such as food, land, etc. Some years ago, Brigham Young in a public meeting urged the destruction of that "wolf"—the Presbyterian minister recently located in the place, who was in the audience at the time! But the advent of law and the public opinion with Gentiles has changed that method. Now churches and manses are stoned and services disturbed; but even these attacks are confined to outlying parts, where there are few non-Mormons. Still, slander, obloquy, refusal of all business relations, social ostracism—for Mormons and non-Mormons are as Jews and Samaritans to one another—are the usual weapons even in this city. The newspapers lead the van in these trades, though Mormon speakers on Sunday, in their tabernacles or ward meetings, devote a large portion of their harangues to slanders and maledictions. The leading daily paper on each side keeps up a continual fusillade on the other party. The skill displayed in raking up all sorts of scandals, family or other, ringing the changes on these, in suppressing favourable points of the opposite party, and exaggerating the bad ones—in a word, in general one-sidedness and abusiveness and acrimony, the political papers in Canada are thrown somewhat in the shade, though that may seem incredible. Your columns would not admit specimens of the more emphatic compliments or pleasantries that daily pass between these editors. But a mild excerpt may be tolerated—e.g., the Gentile editor eulogizes the leading Mormon as "one of the smoothest liars in the United States." The other editor returns a column or two of gentle epithets and hints—e.g., "Satan would not be seen in his company," and so forth. It was a common practice of Brigham Young—and is of some of the speakers yet—to mingle the most profane street oaths and curses with his Sunday talks before the vast audience, while publishing perhaps a new "revelation from the Lord!" And yet, in the face of these and other flagrant sins admitted to be so, his followers of all degrees of morality and intelligence cling to the idea that he was a "prophet of the Lord." The only possible or plausible explanation we can conceive of is that they are given up to a "strong delusion" to believe a lie, as those described in Isaiah xlii. 20: "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" In this connection it is well to note the remarkable fact that nearly all the converts to Mormonism are persons who have been members of Christian Churches. There are few exceptions to this; few sinners or non-professors of religion "join the Church" in America. Some of the lower strata in Europe are swept in from the world by the offer of help to emigrate to Utah, but even in Europe the great mass is drawn from the roll of the churches. There was a rare chance to observe the most varied phases of Mormon saints at the semi-annual conference gathered here recently from every quarter. Perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 visited the city. Not less than 13,000 were daily jammed into the tabernacle—delegates and visitors, male and female—a motley host of all nations, tongues, shades and grades. The vast majority were far below the average in intelligence. The leading type of men may be aptly classed as "lewd fellows of the baser sort." The face of the polygamist is an unmistakable yet familiar one. Such may be seen on the streets of any city, in all walks of life, in the State and in the Church. How indelible are the marks of sin! Silks, satins, broadcloth, high position or polished manners and exterior cannot bury the evidence in the face of secret vices. But the majority are not polygamists; the large proportion of men and women may be classed as religious enthusiasts or fanatics of unbalanced or eccentric minds. The system seems to attract, like a magnet, such to it. The Mormon brand, as it may be termed, as seen in the conference and streets, is that well known as the nondescript—low receding forehead, large eyes and mouth, long nose, with all conceivable permutations of the relative size of these; effervescing emotions, with shallowness of nature in general; such as bore religious meetings everywhere with their talkativeness. There is an indirect advantage in massing them all in one sect or body, as there are enough here to bore all the prayer and other meetings in Christendom. The system seems to afford an outlet or escape from family troubles.