

THE CATECHIST AND THE SACRAMENTS.

THE OUTLOOK FROM THE STANDPOINT OF DEVELOPMENT.

In the practical working of the Home Mission Field greater difficulties are experienced in supplying stations with the sacraments of the Gospel than with the preaching of the Word of the Gospel. This paper is an attempt to remove some of these difficulties. It recalls certain theories and practices of this Church in the past, and compares with these the theories and practices of the present in the same line of subjects. This is done in order to make manifest the facts that some of the difficulties experienced have resulted from unequal development in correlated lines of theory, and unequal development in correlated lines of practice: that in equal development these difficulties would be removed; and that from the very nature of the case equal development is a necessity.

The practice of the early Scottish Church with regard to the establishment and promotion of the true religion of the Gospel was all based on the supreme importance in the Gospel ministry of the function of preaching. The preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments were indeed necessarily connected, connected in such sense that no one could any more preach the Gospel lawfully than he could administer the Sacraments lawfully without ordination, yet to the preaching of the Word was attached such significance that the qualifications for preaching were regarded as the sole qualifications for the administration of the Sacraments. The whole action of the Church in connection with the ministry was founded on this.

The theory of the Church, set forth shortly, was as follows:—The preaching of the Gospel is the supreme function

of the ministry. Inseparably connected with it is the function of the administration of the Sacraments. Both are not only functions of the ministry, but of the ministry alone. Ordination is the solemn setting apart to the functions of the ministry. It confers no special gift or grace, and cannot be "*ad ministerium vagum*." Note the declarations of the I. and II. Books of Discipline. "To Jesus Christ, His Gospel truly preached, of necessity it is that His Holy Sacraments be annexed and truly ministered." "In a church reformed or tending to reformation, none ought to presume to preach, nor yet to minister the Sacraments till that orderlie they be called to the same." (I. Bk., Chap. i-iv.) "Unto the Pastors onlie appertains the administration of the Sacraments, in lyke manner as the administration of the Word: for baith are appointit be God, as means to teich us, the ane be the ear, the uther be the eyes and uther senses, that be baith knowledge may be transferrit to the mynde." (II. Bk., Ch. vii.) "Pastors, Bischops, or Ministers are they who are appointed to particular congregations, quhilk they rewl be the Word of God and over quhilk they watch." "They that be callit to the ministerie or that offer themselves thairto, ought not to be electit without ane certain flock be assignit to them." (II. Bk., Ch. iv., sec. 2.) So rigorous was this rule that even with regard to superintendents, whose duties left them but a few months at home in each year, it is declared, "Superintendents sall have their awin special kirkis besyde the common charge of utheris." (I. Bk., Ch. viii.) Though the application is not quite so clear with regard to the doctor whose office is "To give the word of