

of rich Gospel truth, a sermon of such surpassing excellence as the greatest pulpit orator of the day might have been proud of, a sermon of such depth of thought and telling practical effect as secured the rapt attention of the audience to the very close. Not the least remarkable feature of the discourse was the intimate acquaintance which the preacher showed with the progress of scientific research and discovery, for it was filled with references to the latest inventions and discoveries in science and art, proving that the preacher, in that far distant island of the sea, was keeping pace with the spirit of the age.

But, great as were his intellectual attainments and pulpit eloquence, the influence which he exerted in his intercourse among the people was greater still. He was in labours abundant, and these labours were most successful. As minister of Fetlar and North Yell, he had many hardships to experience and dangers to encounter. Six miles of sea separated the two islands; and on every alternate Sabbath he had to cross that strait, sometimes at the imminent hazard of his life; but he never shrank from the danger, and many a hairbreadth escape did he experience from the fury of the winds and waves. When translated to the parish of Unst he continued his labours with equal assiduity and success. The record of his labours there forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of philanthropic enterprise.

Unst is the most northern portion of the British Empire, with nothing but a long stretch of ocean between it and the North Pole. It is remarkable as being the most fertile and beautiful of all the Shetland Islands; and the traveller after experiencing the bleakness and desolation of the other islands of the Shetland group, is struck with admiration when he beholds its superior loveliness. In the north of the island rises a hill to the height of nearly 1,000 feet, the view from which far exceeds in magnificence anything that the human mind can conceive. I never expect to see in this world a sight equal to that which I beheld when standing one day upon that northern summit. Away to the north, and east, and west, far as the eye could reach, stretched an unbroken expanse of waters; while, turning to the south, the eye rested on a multitude of islets, encircled by the silvery sea, on which the sunbeams were sparkling with a dazzling brightness almost too beautiful to gaze upon; while all around the base of the mountain lay meadows carpeted with verdure and bespangled with flowers, the season being the early summer, the loveliest season of the year in these northern latitudes.

When Dr. Ingram began his labours in Unst in 1821, religion and morality among the people were at a low ebb. The island had been long under a Moderate ministry; religious ordinances were little attended to, and drunkenness and licentiousness to a great extent abounded. But soon his energy and zeal produced a marvellous reformation. The fervour of his ministrations drew the people in multitudes to the house of God, and he set a-going movements which elevated the tone of society, restrained the evil influences which prevailed, and nearly extirpated drunkenness and immorality. He was held in unbounded esteem by the whole community, and his influence and example were felt to the remotest corner of the island. During the later years of his ministry he was greatly assisted in his labours by his son, the Rev. John Ingram, who was settled as his colleague in 1838—a man of superior intellectual power, an earnest and faithful preacher of the Gospel, beloved by all the inhabitants of the island, and unceasing in his efforts for their temporal and spiritual good.

The most memorable incidents in the closing years of this eminent servant of God were the visit of Dr. Guthrie in 1871, and the attention which this drew at the time to the remote island and the venerable patriarch; and the celebration of his centenary in 1876, in which all ranks, and classes, and denominations, united to do him honour.

The close of his life, like the evening of a long summer day, was spent in rest and retirement, seclusion from the world with its cares and anxieties, and patient waiting for the change. Of him, more than of most, are the Apostle's words applicable: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

Judge, shall give me at that day." His calm departure, after the toils and labours of his life, was more like a translation to a higher sphere than a disruption of the ties of life, and we can think of him now as having entered upon the heavenly rest, and the higher service there. Now that his abundant and successful labours here are ended, and God has seen meet to remove him to his heavenly home, long will his memory be cherished with the fondest gratitude and affection by the simple-minded islanders among whom he lived and laboured. The results of these labours are abiding; they will be felt by generations yet unborn; but how great they are, the day of accounts will alone declare. Of his long, laborious and useful life, the inhabitants of that island have reason for gratitude to God, for sparing him so long to be their guide, counsellor and friend, to impart unto them the consolations of the Gospel amid life's adversities and sorrows, and to point the way to a better world. Of his life and work, now that he is translated to a higher sphere, we may adopt the beautiful lines of Longfellow, in which he drops a melodious tear on the grave of his friend Sumner, one of the greatest of American statesmen:

Were a star quenched on high,
For ages would its light,
Still travelling downward from the sky,
Shine on our mortal sight.

So when a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION AND THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

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Holding that questions of Church order occupy a very subordinate position when compared with the great doctrines of the Gospel—believing that the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" rather than the embodiment of a systematic polity—Presbyterians are not much accustomed to dwell upon the reasons which have induced them to adopt the principles of Church government which are exemplified in their ecclesiastical system. Consequently many outside our communion, and not a few within our pale, have been led to conclude that the system is one of expediency merely, having no very clear foundation in Scripture or antiquity, or, if, through being faithfully instructed in "the whole counsel of God," they have seen clearly that here, as in every other part of her creed and discipline, our beloved Mother Church has taken the revealed Word as "a lamp to her feet and a light to her path"—that, in the words of one of her earliest historians, her reformers "took not their pattern from any Kirk in the world, no, not fra Geneva itself, but, laying God's Word before them, made Reformation according thereunto, both in doctrine first and then in discipline" (Row)—yet they have regarded with little interest the arguments based upon the practice of the early Church. They have said, "If we have the Bible on our side we care not for the voice of antiquity where it contradicts the one supreme and infallible Rule. Behind the walls of this fortress, safely bidding defiance to the enemy, we refuse to be drawn out to do battle on the plain. We are building the walls of Zion; we are doing a great work, so that we cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst we leave it and come down to every (vaunting) opponent who, from what we believe to be a prejudiced study of history and incorrect interpretation of Scripture, concludes that, because we have not a hierarchy, we are no true Church of Christ?" But, acting on this principle, we are in danger of allowing the case to go by default. Through the force of mere assertion, rather than by strength of argument, many seem to have been persuaded that we are silent because we know that history is against us. "You dare not," say they, "take the evidence of the early Church, for you know that it would require you to revise your interpretation of Scripture. The statements of the Apostles would convey a very different meaning when read in the light of the Apostolic Fathers. The Church history of the New Testament would yield the germs of a very different Church polity when interpreted by its development in the next five centuries." Again and again we are told that there can be no Church where there is no bishop, and the doctrine of the Trinity is scarcely more insisted upon than a trinity of ecclesiastical orders.

That the constitution of the early Church was Presbyterian is clearly inferred from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

This is a title applied to those immediate pupils of the Apostles whose writings are extant. They fall into two groups, viz., the disciples of Paul, Barnabas, Clement of Rome and Hermas, and the disciples of John, Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias. Let us briefly examine these.

Clement of Rome (died about A.D. 100) is the reputed author of an epistle from the "Church of God which sojourns at Rome," to "the Church of God which sojourns at Corinth." This epistle contains a fraternal remonstrance with the latter Church in regard to the dissensions which had arisen within it. Had there been a bishop in Rome, why does such an official document never mention his name? Had there been a bishop at Corinth, why is he never once referred to?

On the contrary it is presbyters who fill the episcopate (c. 44); it is against presbyters that they have made insurrection (c. 47); it is unto presbyters that they are exhorted to submit themselves (c. 57). How could the brethren at Rome, if under the benign rule of a right reverend father in God, thus write? When writing to rebuke faction, how could the Church and its prelate be so forgetful as not to point to "the one remedy for the divisions of Christendom"—the apostolic succession of bishops? If prelacy promotes unity, peace and subordination, then what a pity that it was not tried just here where it was most needed. So far from suggesting such an expedient the Romans write, "Only let the flock of Christ be in peace with the presbyters who are set over it" (c. 54). One does not wonder that such a candid historian as Milner should acknowledge that "at first indeed, and for some time, Church governors were only of two ranks, presbyters and deacons. The Church of Corinth continued long in this state, as far as one may judge from Clement's epistle" ("Church History," I. 161).

As Clement is probably the person referred to in Phil. iv. 3, so Polycarp (died about A.D. 167) is in all likelihood the "angel" of the Smyrnan Church, to whom the epistle is addressed in Rev. ii. 8-11. His epistle to the Philippians is extant. It begins, "Polycarp and those who with him are presbyters," and is addressed "to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi." In it Polycarp calls himself a presbyter; he addresses his letter to no bishop of Philippi, and never mentions one past, present or prospective throughout the whole epistle. This is the more remarkable when we find that it consists largely of exhortations to various family and social duties, and the practice of the Christian virtues. It alludes at length to the duties of deacons and presbyters, and bids the people be "subject to the presbyters and deacons" (c. 5); but does not in the remotest manner refer to the duties of any higher official, or the respect due to him from the people. He mentions the case of a presbyter, Valens, who had been deposed for immorality; but gives no hint that any bishop was concerned in his deposition, or was necessary to his restoration. The Church is counselled to treat him with moderation and kindness. When we compare these facts with the address of the Apostle Paul to the same Church (Phil. i. 1, "bishops and deacons") we have surely as strong evidence as could be obtained that the rulers of the Church at Philippi were presbyters—bishops and deacons.

It is of no use to "suppose" that at Philippi and Corinth the bishop "may have been temporarily absent." There is no evidence before us that he ever was in either place, or was ever expected, and the burden of proof surely lies with those who frame theories to escape difficulties. Had these sees been vacant, we cannot understand how, in epistles of such a character, no reference is made to the fact. These are the only two churches regarding which we have authentic contemporary information in the first century. The writings of Polycarp and Clement present us with no trace of episcopacy in them, and no list of their bishops has ever been found. What right have our opponents to conclude that other Churches, regarding which we have no contemporary records, were at this time episcopal?

Regarding the writings of Ignatius (died not later than A.D. 116) there has been much controversy. The most certain fact about them is, that they have been expanded by interpolations of a much later date.