

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Some Features of The Southern Presbyterian Church.

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PRESBYTERIANISM is a definite yet flexible system. Its doctrines are clearly stated in its creed, its polity is plainly set forth in its form of government, and its mode of worship and type of piety are alike definite and well understood.

At the same time the Presbyterian system has a flexibility which renders it suitable to people in all conditions of life. Its creed, its polity, and its worship, being closely scriptural, are adapted to all classes and conditions of men, just as the contents of the Bible have this remarkable and universal adaptation. The learned and the unlettered, the cultured and the uncultured, the dwellers in the city and in the rural districts, the people in Christian and pagan lands can all be effectually reached by Presbyterianism, if there be willing hands and earnest hearts on the part of those who are its representatives.

As a result of this definiteness and flexibility we find that Presbyterianism has strength, and that it at the same time has developed within certain lines a variety of types among different peoples and in different countries. Its type in Europe is not quite the same as that in America, and that on the continent is not the same as that in Britain. Even in Britain Presbyterianism in Scotland, in Ireland, and in England has its peculiar types.

In the United States the same variety of type may be seen, arising partly from diversity of source in the Old World, and partly from the different conditions under which it has developed in various sections of this wide land. Presbyterianism in New England is quite unlike that in Pennsylvania, while its type in New York can be distinguished from that of Philadelphia. And so in other sections.

This diversity of type is distinctly seen in the Northern and Southern States. Prior to the great civil conflict of a generation ago this diversity was observable, for Presbyterianism in the South was almost entirely of the Old School type. Since the Southern Presbyterian Church was organized, amid the throes of that terrible civil struggle, it has continued to develop its own well-defined type of the great system which it represents, and some of its distinctive features are to be briefly described in this article.

The first feature of the Southern Presbyterian Church, which has marked it from the outset of its career, is its close adherence to the doctrinal system of its Standards. These Standards consist of the Confession of Faith and the two Catechisms, and of these the Southern Church makes what may be termed a strict construction. Its type of doctrine is distinctively Old School. In its Seminaries this has always been the type of doctrine taught without any toning down or explaining away. In other words it adheres strongly to the Calvinism of its doctrinal symbols. The great majority of her pulpits are manned by men who preach the Gospel with doctrine after the manner of Calvin, of Knox, of Augustine, of Paul, and, we may add, of Christ himself. In regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, the lost estate of man in sin, the atonement of Christ, the necessity of grace to recover him, the security of the believer, and similar doctrines of the Calvinistic system, there is almost always no uncertain sound. The volume of sermons recently issued by the Committee of Publications at Richmond, Va., from the pens of leading ministers in the Church, very clearly shows this feature. In doctrine this Church holds firmly by the Standards to which it professes adherence.

A second feature of this Church is the firm grasp it has of the spirituality of the Church of Christ, and its clear idea of the respective spheres of Church and State. This is one of its leading characteristics, as the very circumstances of its origin would lead us to expect. It was the failure to recognize this important principle of the spirituality of the Church, as they understood it, which led the Presbyterians of the South to separate from their brethren at the North and organize the new Church in 1861. In all questions referring to the relations between the Church and the State, the position of their entire separation is constantly maintained. Unless a clearly defined moral question is involved, the Presbyterian pulpit of the South is silent as to what are usually called political subjects. Even in the last great struggle at the polls, when the money question was so keenly discussed, and feeling ran high, there was nothing said about the issues of the day in the Presbyterian pulpits of the South. Prayer for divine wisdom, and for grace to allay the passions of men was constantly offered, but the political policies of the respective parties were

never handled in the sermons. Whilst care is taken by the Church to hold firm ground on all moral questions, equal care is taken in all the courts of the Church not to pronounce upon any special public legislation in regard to those questions about which good and honest men may differ. The wisdom and practical value of this clear distinction can often be seen. This Church believes in a free Church in a free State, and holds fast by the spirituality of the Church, and it constantly maintains the absolute headship of Jesus Christ over His own Church.

A third feature which is noticeable in this Church is its homogeneousness. The Presbyterianism of the South has always had this feature in a marked degree. Its sources in the old land are partly the cause of this, and the fact that there has been less admixture of foreign elements in the South than elsewhere also explains to some degree this feature. The people now in the Church are largely of Presbyterian lineage, and her ministers are largely of Presbyterian training. Very few ministers are received from other Churches, and considerable care is exercised in their reception. This goes far to preserve the distinctive type, and to maintain the homogeneity of the Church. The same general spirit or temper consequently prevails in all sections of the Church, and enables it to present united ranks against the common foe. It can scarcely be said that there are any distinct schools or types of Church life in the Southern Church. This must not be taken to imply that there are no differences of opinion among the members of the Church in regard to important matters, or that there is an absence of controversy in the courts of the Church. Indeed, it may be truly said that discussion and debate are marked features of the Church, and that much controversial ability is often exhibited in the Synods and Assemblies of the Church. All this, however, is quite consistent with the general temper, spirit, and attitude in regard to both theoretical and practical subjects.

A fourth feature of the Church, South, is its aggressive evangelistic spirit. This is one of the features which has greatly developed in the plans and efforts of the Church during recent years. In Presbyteries, Home Mission work is diligently pushed; in Synods, there has been marked expansion; and in the Assembly as a whole, Home Mission work receives much attention. There may be a diversity of plan and method along these different lines, but on the whole there is a decidedly aggressive front presented to the unevangelized masses in the several communities where the work is carried on. This aggressive work is also conducted in city centres, although in the South there are not so many large cities as in the North. Still the Presbyterian Church in the South seeks to discharge her duty to these fields of her service, as the cities are increasing in size. One of the best proofs of this aggressive Home Mission work, and of the success which has blessed it, is the fact that in less than twenty years the membership of the Church has doubled, and that the rate of increase has been in advance of the rate of the growth of the population. The membership of the Church is 210,500, making it the fourth in size of the branches of Presbyterianism in the world. The contributions for all purposes amounted to nearly \$2,000,000, and this in spite of the financial depression in this country.

A fifth feature, which is pleasant to note, is the earnest interest in Foreign Mission work. This has always marked the Southern Presbyterian Church, for from the very first it has been actively engaged in this important work, and has from year to year been expanding its service in the Foreign field. In Mexico, in Brazil, in China, in Japan, in Corea, in Greece, and on the Congo. She has her main fields among those who are without the Gospel. Last year \$142,000 was raised for this cause, and nineteen new missionaries were sent out, making about 150 now in the various fields occupied by the Church. This is one of the hopeful features of the work of this Church; for the Christian community that is keenly alive to the interests of others who are destitute of the Gospel is itself likely to be the more richly blessed.

A sixth feature worthy of mention is one which has always marked Presbyterianism both in Europe and America, and that is an abiding interest in education, and a liberal support of schools and colleges. There are four theological schools: Richmond, Va., Columbia, S.C., Louisville, Ky., and Clarksville, Tenn., where nearly 200 students are in training for the ministry. There are at least a dozen of our colleges, and a great many schools and academies, which are under the management of the Church in various ways. There is also nearly a score of colleges for young ladies under Presbyterian auspices. More and more the need and value of these schools and colleges of a denominational nature is felt, and the development in this direction has been very great in recent years. Presbyterianism has always stood for a good education, and in the South she is seeking to be worthy of her good name in this respect.

Other features of this Church might be noted, but space forbids further statement, and we conclude

with a general remark in reference to the Canadian and Southern Presbyterian Churches. In many respects they have points of resemblance. They are nearly the same in membership, and raise about the same amount of money for all purposes. The type of Church life, and the general temper of the two Churches are not unlike, and their work of Home and Foreign Missions is in many ways similar. Perhaps in some things, such as the relation between Church and State, the sphere of woman in the Church, and in practical methods of work, she is more conservative than her Canadian sister. It may be, too, that the Canadian Church is feeling the effect of the present liberal tendencies in the Scottish Churches more than the Southern Church. For the new and untried, for the lax and latitudinarian, the Church, South, has little liking. Perhaps her best counterpart in these respects is the Irish Presbyterian Church. Both are conservative and aggressive, and both, as well as their Canadian sister, are good types of generic Presbyterianism, alive and earnest.

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A Cosmopolitan City.

BY REV. GEORGE SIMPSON.



WITHIN the memory of persons now living Chicago has grown from a scattered village around Fort Dearborn to one of the front rank cities of the world. Its growth has been phenomenal. Its greatness, enterprise and colossal proportions have been and are themes on which writers and speakers become eloquent even to monotony. Nothing delights the average Chicagoan more than unqualified praise of his marvellous city. Nothing offends him more readily than frank criticism of its defects. Of its greatness, the civic pride of its merchant princes who have contributed to its development, its part as a factor in the world's commerce, there is no dispute. The daily operations on the Chicago Board of Trade are eagerly noted in the world's commercial centres. Its influence on the national life is becoming greater year by year. In the recent presidential election the headquarters of both political parties were located in Chicago, and for a time it was a question whether it should be made their permanent abiding place. It is a centre of trade, industry and commerce. To these interests Chicago is ardently attached. Thousands of its inhabitants devote all their energies to material pursuits and to material pursuits alone. They find recreation in formal social functions, and in the amusement the theatre and opera house afford. They have no time and little inclination for aught else. The city is also a great educational centre, a place of great intellectual activity.

Chicago is one of the most cosmopolitan cities on this continent. Its many public buildings exemplify various orders of architecture. Some are fine specimens and others are pretentious nondescripts. The sky-scrapers, in some of which during the day are housed as many people as would constitute villages and even respectable small towns, are imposing structures and marvels of modern building, but somehow their contemplation does not impart unmixed gratification to the beholder. What if one of them were to collapse? The streets are not up to modern ideas. They are unclean at almost all seasons of the year. The reason why they are not better kept is due to municipal mismanagement. As to the government of this great city it could not well be worse. On all hands it is admitted that a number of the aldermen form a venal crew, ready to sell valuable franchises to powerful corporations for what they can exact, without regard to the popular welfare. Vice and crime in their most loathsome forms are rampant in the city. On this it is not necessary to enlarge as these painful facts concerning Chicago are well known. Of the great moral forces at work for the betterment of the community less is heard. Reformative influences operate in every direction. Prominent citizens have formed a civic federation whose object is to purify public life by endeavouring to forward the election of competent and worthy men for public office and urging the prosecution of offenders against the laws. Already this philanthropic body has made its influence for good appreciatively felt. Then there are numerous benevolent institutions for ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate of all classes and ages. The population is decidedly mixed. Almost all nationalities are represented. The enumeration of those present at the memorable Pentecost mentioned in the Acts would not cover the dwellers in Chicago. Within a radius of a few miles in the south-western portion of the city nearly twenty different languages are spoken. No wonder that a visitor from a quiet Canadian city or town expresses surprise, not unmingled with regret, to see to what uses the Sabbath is put. Thousands have to work