

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

WHY ARE YOU A PRESBYTERIAN?—V.

BY REV. JOHN FAIRBANKS, M.A.

We have seen that the Presbyterian Church is distinguished from other branches of the Church of Christ in certain matters of doctrine, particularly by its views on salvation by grace, imputation, the nature of the Church, and the sacraments. Partly as the natural result of those distinctive tenets, and partly on independent grounds, a difference further obtains regarding the government of the Church.

The Church is not a mere human association, but a divinely instituted society; hence Presbyterians look to God in His Word and to Him alone for the constitution and laws of His Church or kingdom. Not being of the nature of a club or voluntary association, the Church may not enact terms of admission or by-laws as adopted by its members. It has simply to receive from Christ, its Head, His laws for its existence and administration, and to act accordingly. It may not receive nor cut off any but those whom Christ in His Word directs to be received or cut off. For constitutional principles and rules of administration Presbyterians turn to Scripture generally. Somewhat is thrown upon the subject, particularly as to principles, in the Old Testament, but it is chiefly in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles that details are found for guidance in the government of the Christian Church. Presbyterians hold that nothing can be binding on the Church but what is commanded in Scripture, and that everything enjoined should have a place in the constitution and government of the Church, and nothing else.

1 Here first in opposition to Brethrenism we find that there are governors, having rule, in the Church of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 28); overseers (Acts xx. 28), to whom the members are to submit themselves, and whom they are to honour and obey (Heb. xiii. 17), and who have authority to rebuke and exercise discipline (1 Tim. v. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2). To the apostles in their day, and to Timothy and Titus as they laboured in the newly-founded Churches, this function belonged; not to them exclusively, however, for in all the Churches men were appointed for this work in the absence of apostles and evangelists or associated with them (Acts xiv. 23; 1 Thess. v. 14); now that these extraordinary officers have ceased the ordinary overseers remain (1 Peter v. 1, 2).

2 When we inquire more particularly as to the character and functions of these governors or rulers, we find only two classes mentioned, viz.: Bishops and Deacons (Phil. i. 1), *episcopoi* and *diaconoi*.

(1) Concerning the first, we find them also called elders, *presbyteroi* (Acts xx. 17, 28). This latter name seems to have come down from the Jewish Church, if it may not be regarded as naturally given to men of age, experience and discretion, among all communities, to whom the power of government is entrusted. The former title, bishop (*episcopos*), is of Greek origin, being given to the civil officer whose duty it was to administer government in each community. Turning to the Old Testament for guidance, we find (Gen. i. 7) that there were elders among the Egyptians. Among the children of Israel, before they left Egypt (Exod. iii. 16), a similar class of leading men were in existence. The law of Moses (Deut. x. 12) provides for them and prescribes duties for them; they are recognized (Exod. xviii. 12) as acting in the wilderness; they are found after the settlement in Canaan (Judges ii. 7; 1 Sam. xvi. 4); in the time of the monarchy (2 Kings vi. 32); in the captivity (Ezek. viii. 1); after the Restoration (Ezra vi. 14); and in the time of our Lord (Mark v. 22). The Jewish Church always had these rulers, and although, as Church and State under the theocracy were not distinct, some of their functions were of a civil character, still all ecclesiastical matters and church government were in their hands. Quite naturally, then, we find that when the Christian Church took the place of the Jewish synagogue, in the churches everywhere a bench of elders were appointed who managed the affairs of the church (Acts xi. 30).

(2) Of the deacons we have less full information. That there was such an office is evident (1 Tim. iii. 10). The seven men appointed "to serve tables" (Acts vi. 1), are generally regarded as the first that held the office in the Christian Church. The appointment of these men certainly shows that the apostles felt the

necessity of having other men than those who labour in word and doctrine appointed to attend to the temporal concerns of the Christian Church. That Philip was also an evangelist and afterwards preached and baptized does not shew that this is the function of the deacon, but only that one who was a deacon also preached and baptized; and on the whole it seems that deacons in the Apostolic Church were a class of officers distinct from the elders, to whom appertained the care of money matters and temporal concerns.

III. This classification of office-bearers in the Church is peculiar to the Presbyterian or Reformed Churches.

(1) The Church of Rome and the Church of England contend for a threefold ministry, viz. prelate bishop, priest and deacon. As this was the ministry of the Church of Rome at the time of the Reformation, it will be proper to ask, why the Reformed Churches, except that of England (which was only half reformed), unanimously objected to it? The answer in a word is, "We do not find it in the New Testament Church."

According to the prelate theory, the Christian Church is modelled not after the Jewish synagogue, but the Jewish temple. As there, it is argued, we find high priest, priest and Levite, so in the Christian Church there ought to be apostle, priest and deacon; but as prelate bishops are the successors of the apostles the Church ought to have prelate bishops, priests and deacons. Now, it is generally admitted by the better informed and more candid Episcopalians, such as Alford and Ellicott, that, so far as the New Testament goes, bishops and elders were the same persons, and that not until the end of the second or beginning of the third century was any officer at all corresponding to the modern prelate found in the Church. Indeed, the fourth century was far spent before a bishop in the modern sense was known. Having no Scripture warrant, therefore, for a prelate bishop, Presbyterians firmly reject such an officer from the Church of God. Apostles, as such, have no successors. They were inspired men who had seen the Lord and had power to work "the signs of an apostle." Their peculiar function was to found the Church of God. Before they passed away that work was done by the canon of Scripture, as a full directory for the Church in all ages was complete. So there are no apostles now, and Presbyterians regard the claim of prelates as the arrogant unscriptural pretension of false apostles.

Yet, further, the priesthood and Levitical service have passed away in Christ. The Lord Himself is the High Priest of the Christian Church, and it is a dishonour done to the Lord of Glory when an officer in His Church arrogates to himself the title of Lord Bishop or Supreme Pontiff, and claims to be the analogue of the High Priest. The presbyter is not a priest in the sense of an Aaronic priest; he has no sacrifice to offer and makes no intercession, and for an elder of the Christian Church to pretend to offer sacrifice and incense, or to intercede in the sense in which the Jewish priests did, is to do dishonour to the sacrifice and intercessory part of the system of tabernacle and temple worship. That has passed away forever, and a Christian deacon has nothing to do with ceremonial and ritual which are now abolished in Christ. Presbyterians, therefore, regard the whole claim of prelatists, deduced by analogy from the Jewish Church, as unfounded, preposterous and unchristian, and reject it. As there is no other semblance of argument for a threefold ministry, we conclude that the only office-bearers in the church are presbyter, bishop and deacon, and we reject the diocesan bishop or prelate with his claims to superiority as a mere human invention, not to be tolerated in the Church of Christ.

(2) The Independent theory which assumes that each church is a voluntary association formed by individual professing Christians, recognizes the presbyter bishop as a teacher appointed by Christ's authority, but does not recognize in each church a bench of rulers. In these churches the deacon is associated with the pastor in administration, but all rule is exercised by the united membership of the Church, or by committees appointed from time to time. Presbyterians regard this as coming far short of the teachings of Scripture which speaks of elders—a plurality of elders in every city and church, and of a class of persons (*proetoles*) in the church who are over the people in the Lord.

(To be continued)

"THE JEWS—CRUCIFY THEM!"

BY THE REV. D. MIAN MORRISON, M.A., OWEN SOUND.

(Concluded.)

IV. Again, the wealth and strength of the Jews as a people give them great political importance in any country in which they may take up their residence. Every healthy, well-to-do immigrant that touches these shores is said in a rough way to be worth \$500 per annum to the country. If so, how are we to compute the value we have received from the Jewish race—that race which England is her blindness twice over expelled from her shores? They have been the world's great civilisers—the *seed bed*, so to speak, from which the Almighty has been transplanting for many years. We owe much to the Jews. Who were the great missionaries of the Cross? Jews—men who quailed before no tyrant and feared no danger. Who were the sacred penmen? Jews. None but they were ever permitted to take up the sacred *stylus*. None but they were ever made the subject of the *afflatus divinus*. Who have been the great librarians and custodians of divine truth? Jews; and so carefully have they done this work that amid all the conflicts and confusions through which they have passed—all the copyings and conveyances from hand to hand that have taken place through these many years—not one truth has been obscured or one promise or precept lost.

And then to come to general literature—Who does not know that our obligations to the Jews are great? Roger Bacon has placed on record that he was indebted for much of his extraordinary knowledge to their libraries, so rich in science and historic lore, which on their expulsion from England they were compelled to leave behind. Politically, they have been of great importance to the nations among which they have resided—a matter which the great Napoleon as well as Oliver Cromwell readily recognized; and, indeed, were the first legislators to recognize; and we have only to mention the names of the Rothschilds of London and Paris, the Todlebens of Russia, and the Disraelis and Montefiores, once of Venice, but latterly of England, to shew the political importance of the Hebrew race? But are we not all Hebrew? Are we the Anglo-Saxon race, not the lost ten tribes? If that be so, it is strange that the country was so long in coming to the front. If the ten tribes in the form of a large immigration settled in the west—in Great Britain and Ireland—as early as 200 B.C., we surely should expect a people so energetic and so far advanced in civilization to have made their presence felt at an earlier period. A Hebrew settlement consisting of thousands in the British Isles 200 years before Christ! Strange that the ancient Britons were so savage that Cæsar found them running wild upon the shores 150 years after this supposed settlement, and sunk in the grossest idolatry, and stranger still that we can find no trace of their existence. In the case of the Romans we find traces everywhere—in the names of places, old forts, walls, buildings, bridges, viaducts—but we look in vain for any such reminders of a Jewish immigration. Surely if there had the English face would be more Jewish in its cast and contour and the English tongue more Hebrew in its tone and structure, and some places in those isles, at least, to bear some impression of their sojourn. But this very circumstance shews what a power they have been in the world, and we cannot but think that the God of Abraham has still a great work for them to do among the nations—greater than anything yet accomplished. Say not that God hath cast off His people. He hath given them indeed into the hands of their enemies in order to convey blessings to the world, but though cast down they are not destroyed. They have fallen low and are scattered everywhere, but their dispersion is a blessing to men; and if their fall has gone to enrich the world, what shall their fulness be? *If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the recovering of them be but life from the dead? They shall be among many people, as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that tarry not for man nor wait for the sons of men. In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

V. Once more, the brotherly kindness of the Jews—their readiness to assist one another—sympathize with one another in joy or sorrow—should not be forgotten. Among the graces for which Lord Beaconsfield was distinguished, none was more conspicuous than this,