

WHY AM I A CHURCHMAN?

I am a Churchman —

III. Because SEPARATION FROM THE VISIBLE COMMUNION OF THE ONE BODY HAS ALMOST INVARIABLY LED, IN COURSE OF YEARS TO DEPARTURE FROM THE FULNESS OF THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD.

It is only with very deep pain and sorrow that we make this assertion, for as long as the Truth concerning the Deity of our Lord is held, even though it be in separation from the One Body founded by Him, that Truth must draw souls to the Light. But, nevertheless, if it is true that *schism*, almost inevitably, leads to *heresy* on this fundamental article of the Christian faith, we must boldly proclaim it as a warning to those who know not whither their steps are leading. That it is only too sadly true, history plainly testifies.

On this subject we cannot do better than let a late Presbyterian minister speak. In a remarkable book, "A Presbyterian in Search of the True Church," Mr. Mines says:

"That which, more than all considerations, loosened the hold of my former creed upon my confidence, was the historical fact, that it had been found, after long and fair experiment, in every possible variety of circumstances, *insufficient in any one instance to protect and preserve inviolate the faith.* And if the things I am about to allege be true, I do solemnly appeal to my former brethren to weigh well the matter, and abjure a system which all his history has shown to lack that vital force with which every seed in nature has been endowed by its Creator; to propagate its like, and to perpetuate itself."

"How fares it with the Presbyterian Church in Scotland? Her disruption into eight or ten communions, all strictly Presbyterian, and all owing their origin to alleged unsoundness in each other's discipline or faith, shall be considered when we come to speak of schism: and we allude to it here, only as indicating a general restlessness under the *Westminster Confession*, and a constant tendency to remodel its provisions. And what was the condition of the Kirk itself at the beginning of this century? Who will deny that under the workings of an Arian, Arminian, and Pelagian leaven in different proportions, what is now regarded as distinctly the Evangelical doctrine, was almost universally lost?"

"And what has been the fate of Presbyterian churches in England, where they have been sufficiently detached from the Scottish Kirk, to evade the legislation of an Episcopal Parliament? *Of 260 parishes established in their glory in the days of Cromwell, 240 are now Unitarian!* I was personally informed a few years since in London, by men who bewailed the fact, that up to a recent date, every Presbyterian church and chapel in the Metropolis had lapsed into Socinianism. . . . On this account I found myself advised and obliged, everywhere in England, to drop the name of Presbyterian, or if I still bore it, uniformly to explain it."

"And what, at the time we speak of, was the state of the denomination in Ireland? Where it was not Unitarian, it was Arian, from centre to circumference, and that within 100 years of the most wonderful awakening, and 'revival,' that history has recorded. . . ."

"Not long after this, as has been commonly the case under the operation of like causes, opposition to Creeds began to be made, and Pelagianism, Arianism and Socinianism, and especially the views of Dr. Priestly, prevailed, and were current at the beginning of this century. . . ."

"Let us cross the channel that divides England from the Continent. The glorious Church of the Huguenots and the Vaudois. . . . Where is this Church at which, for its virtues and its prowess, the whole world wondered? It is fallen! It is fallen! It is a cage of unclean birds; it is the hold of every foul spirit; it is the worst of anti-Christians; it denieth the Father and the Son. . . . Of her 600 Presbyterian clergy, I

was informed a few years since, upon the spot, 'that there were not found ten' who dared to affirm that Jesus Christ was 'God manifested in the flesh.' Who can wonder that infidelity has 'hastened to the prey,' and that Property has divided the spoil?"

"Passing over to Switzerland, let us go through her 22 Republics, beginning at the home, the Church, the pulpit, the grave of Calvin. I saw in the heart of Geneva a proud sepulchral monument to Rousseau, but, to forgotten Calvin, 'they raised not a stone they carved not a line.' The Confession of Faith continues, as it does in France, to be subscribed; but it is no longer believed. The ashes of Servetus, to whose fiery death Calvin gave his voice, have been scattered over lake and hill, and have broken forth in blains and boils upon the whole Presbyterian body; while the opinions for which Servetus perished are preached with trumpet tongue in the very Cathedral from which Calvin hurled his anathemas against him. Of the whole venerable Synod of Geneva, but one solitary pastor, as I was informed when on the ground, was even *suspected* of believing in the Divinity of Jesus. They began by denouncing it a superstition to bow at His name; they have ended by declaring it idolatry to bow to Him at all. When a few years ago, the venerable Malan dared to say in a discourse, that Jesus 'is the true God and eternal life' he was driven from the pulpit and hooted on the streets as profanely as if he had cast his pearls before a Musselman mob in Mecca, or Beyrout. The same was the state in the other republics. In short, the old Church of Switzerland, the Church of Zuinglius and Bucer, and of Calvin has become openly Socinian and infidel. . . . And what has been the fate of the faith in Germany, the land of Luther? . . . It is taught by some of her pastors, that there is no other God than in the things we see, and that man himself is the highest impersonation of Divinity, and in such a one as Christ Man may therefore be lawfully adored. As to the Bible, it has been justly said, that if Luther could return from the dead, he would find the Bible as much banished from the communities professing his doctrine, as it was in the worst times of the Papal Policy. And if the Bible has begun to reappear in those lands at all, it has been in many an instance, if not in absolutely all, by the direct or indirect agency of British residents, or of a British and Foreign Society" (p. 155).

Some three or four years ago, Mr. Spurgeon, the eminent Baptist Preacher, brought a terrible indictment against his brother Dissenting Ministers in England. He said that for a long time there had been manifest a very rapid Down Grade tendency in matters of faith, and that now it was very uncertain, indeed, in what chapel you would hear the full faith preached. Though certainly no friend of the Church of England, he, at the same time, acknowledged that in its churches alone one could be almost *certain* of hearing the truth in its fulness.

The late Dr. T. C. Ewer, Rector of Christ Church, New York, in a remarkable series of Sermons called the *Failure of Protestantism*, preached in New York, in 1868, quotes a Protestant Minister, with regard to the present state of religion in Geneva (p. 78).

"The statements made by Mr. J. Wright, a Unitarian, are, alas, too true! viz.: that the successors of the very magistrates who condemned Servetus, of the pastors who excommunicated him as the denier of the Trinity, now themselves unite in *rejecting* that doctrine! The faith of the great Churches of Geneva is Unitarianism. The number of inhabitants in Geneva amounts to about 61,000; among them are about 40,000 Unitarians, 18,000 Roman Catholics, and the *miserable balance only are left to Protestant Trinitarianism.*"

Concerning New England, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, the most Protestant part of the States, the original home of the Pilgrim Fathers (1620), he gives the following from the *Hartford*

Courant: "The Congregational Ministers of Connecticut have thoroughly canvassed their parishes to ascertain the actual religious condition of the State. The result was unexpected." The Committee on Home Evangelization say, in their published report: "The returns give the impression that the Roman Catholic population do not often sink to so low a grade of heathenism as the irreligious native-born population. They do not entirely abandon some thought of God, and some respect for their own religious observances. *Uniformly the districts most utterly given over to desolation* are districts occupied by a population purely native American. A similar state of things is reported to exist in some parts of Massachusetts" (p. 80).

The same writer says (p. 81): "Look at Harvard University, once Trinitarian, but descending, after a while, into Unitarianism. Yale College was established, if I mistake not, owing to the Unitarianism of Harvard. At any rate, President Clap, on entering on his duties there, publicly acknowledged not only the *Westminster Catechism* and *Confession* and *Saybrook Platform*, but also the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as agreeing with the Word of God." In 1822 all tests were abolished. "Thus in regard to the formal teaching of theology in the 'Church of Christ, in Yale College,' as required by statute, it began with full, definite, established formulas of Faith, and ended in nothing." With regard to Germany, he quotes a letter by Rev. Abel Stevens, a leading scholar among the Methodists, that appeared in the *Methodist*, who says: "Indifference to all vital religion seems to be a characteristic of the mass of the Germanic race. . . . Religious indifference is the leading characteristic of the masses, as free-thinking and materialism are of the cultivated classes, and between them religious life has mostly died out."

It is a most significant fact that there have been over three hundred "sects" that, at different times, separated themselves from the One Catholic Church. Of over two hundred whose names have come down to us from the period before the Reformation ("some of which grew to enormous size in their day, and lasted for centuries"), the *only one* that is now in existence and that can, therefore, with any reason, claim parentage previous to that, is the one whose members deny our Lord's Divinity—the Unitarians.

May we not well say, "I am a Churchman because it is not safe to leave that Holy Church which is the 'Pillar and ground of the Truth.' My love for the Lord, and my zeal for His honor compels me to abide with Her who, even though some of Her Ministers should be faithless, by Her Creeds and Sacraments *must* ever witness that He, Her Beloved, is truly 'Very God of Very God.'—*Qui Appelle Messenger.*"

BISHOP NEELY'S LENTEN PASTORAL.

According to the custom of former years we again address to you a word of exhortation at the approach of this holy season of Lent asking you prayerfully to consider it. Before looking forward and making plans and resolutions for self-denial, look *back* and look *within*. *Scrutinize* your life as in the sight of Him who knows the secrets of your hearts. Try, at least, to correct what you know to be wrong about it, and do not rest satisfied with self-examination which is merely superficial. If you have neglected your duty to God, acknowledge your neglect, instead of excusing it. The spiritual influence of Lent will enable you to make *real* confession of sins and to keep any resolves you make to amend.

The Grace and help of God are pledged to those who humbly seek His aid in the distances of His Church, and He who on the days of His earthly life refused not to listen to the appeal of the sinner and the needy, is as ready now to utter the word of