

ing the moral character of ministers and licentiates; to admonish, rebuke, suspend, depose, or excommunicate offenders; to receive demissions, and to loose ministers from their charges; to review the records of the Sessions; to adopt measures for promoting the religious life of the several congregations within the bounds, and to visit them for the purpose of enquiring into their state and redressing evils that may arise; to deal with matters sent down by the superior courts; and in general to superintend the Congregations and Sessions within the bounds.

The "Book of Forms."

#### THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF THE PRESBYTERY.

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Presbyterian government is founded on the principle that the whole Church is governed by the whole Church, through its representatives. For this purpose, those who serve in the Word, have associated with them, in the care of the Church of God, non-ministerial members of the Church, men of approved character and matured experience. Our "model constitution" is to be found in Acts, 15th Chapter, in which there is an account of the first General Assembly.

But the faithful in certain cities and districts were organized for local government, as we infer from 1 Tim., 4: 14. The care of the Church in ordinary matters was committed to these local Presbyteries, only matters of extraordinary moment calling for the consideration of the representatives of the whole Church.

Early in Christian history, however, this Apostolic order of things was disturbed, and the right of the great body of the membership of the Church to a share in its government was denied; all authority being usurped by the "clergy," as ministers came to be designated. At the Reformation, this right was restored, at least in non-prelatical Churches; and in the Presbyterian Church, the power, which is wielded by Bishops in the Episcopal system, is vested in the local Presbyteries. It is by reason of this distinction, that our system is called "Presbyterian."

In its modern development, the Presbytery is the unit or chief factor in our system. It controls the Kirk Sessions below it, and the Synods and Assemblies above it. It is in itself a complete ecclesiastical organism. One Presbytery is enough for fulfilling all Church functions. But when the membership of the Church is large and widely extended, then arises the need of more than one Presbytery; and then, to secure unity of action and conserve the principle of the government of the whole by the whole, follows the need of Synods or aggregations of Presbyteries; and, finally, when the actions of Synods have to

be unified, a General Assembly is required, which is ideally constituted, as it is in Ireland, for instance, only when Presbyteries are fully represented in it.

But, as in a Church of great extent, an Assembly so constituted would become unwieldy, and it is besides thought undesirable that all the ministers should be absent from their congregations at the same time, it has been found necessary to limit the representation of Presbyteries in the General Assembly to a proportion of the whole, greater or less according to the size of the Church.

But with this limitation came also the necessity of limiting the functions of a General Assembly, which is really only a great committee of the whole, appointed by Presbyteries; and so it is debarred from taking any important steps beyond those to which it is moved by Presbyteries. It is mainly a medium for executing the mind of the whole Church as gathered from the actions of Presbyteries. The Presbyteries control the Assembly, for they appoint its members, whom they may instruct, if they choose, and they reserve certain important matters for their own decision. Then there are certain matters in regard to which Kirk-Sessions are bound to consult Presbyteries; so that the Presbytery is the great organ by which the united work of our Church is carried on.

#### PRESBYTERIAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.

In accordance with the recommendation of the General Assembly of last year, several additional Presbyterial Societies have been organized. A brief from of Constitution was issued by the Committee and has, in the main, been followed.

It sets forth the Object of such Societies to be "To promote the welfare and the usefulness to the Church of the young people of the Presbytery, by uniting them in friendly intercourse, the cultivation of their spiritual life, the study of the doctrines, history and work of the Church, and the support of its missionary, educational and benevolent Schemes;" the Membership to consist of "The various Y. P. Societies within the Presbytery under the oversight of Sessions; each society to be represented by its President and one delegate for every seven members.

In congregations where no young people's organizations exist, Sessions may appoint delegates in the proportion of one to each twenty names on the communion roll." Provision is also made for Meetings, for an Executive, on which the Presbytery and the Presbytery's Committee on Y. P. Societies are represented, and for necessary changes in the Constitution. The Convener will send copies of this form of Constitution on application.

Presbyterial organizations now exist in the Presbyteries of Peterborough, Whitby, Lindsay, Toronto, Orangeville, Barrie, Owen Sound, Saugeen, and Guelph, in the Synod of