

conduct the operations. At stated intervals he is at his post, and the machine is put in motion. Where are now the men to whom it belongs? On the Sabbath, if the calls of business or pleasure have not made it necessary for them to rest at home, they come to look on, and see how smoothly the machinery works. If there is friction in any part, how they grumble! Let the man they have selected to perform this religious work for them, suggest that their habits are inconsistent with the demands of piety, or that their relation to the work is not simply of a financial kind, and they are ready to dismiss him, or to sell out their shares and go where they can run a praying machine after their own fashion. Do they not pay their money, and ought not things to be conducted as they wish!

Much of the error which prevails respecting Christian work, arises from the false notion of a fundamental difference in duty and responsibility between the ministry and laity; a notion which originated in times, and still exists in systems, in which the priesthood was, or is, regarded as the authorized mediator between God and man, and the divinely appointed dispenser of saving grace. But there is properly no such fundamental difference. Every Christian, in connection with Christ, is a recognized and responsible agent in God's great work of salvation. An eloquent historian of Methodism asserts this truth as follows:—

“Christianity knows no technical or clerical priesthood, none other than this common priestly function and dignity of all regenerated souls, under the sacerdotal head-ship of Christ. It has its ministry, its divinely sanctioned administrators of instruction and discipline, but not a proper priesthood. It clothes all true children with pontifical robes, and commands all of them, as ‘a royal priesthood,’ to live, work and suffer for the common Church, ‘the kingdom of God’ on earth.”—*Abel Stevens, D.D.*

The study of the history of the early Church simply justifies these statements. It shows that there existed a community of interest and labour in all departments of Christian duty. This will be apparent from the following quotations:—

“It remains an established fact, that all believers had the right to teach in public worship. All alike took some share in the government of the community. Discipline was an act of the community, not of the clergy. The sacraments were equally far from being a monopoly of the clergy. These principles were so deeply rooted in the Church, that long after, when it had undergone most im-