

JUS DIVINUM PRESBYTERIANISM.

For the sake of the unlearned, it may be necessary to explain that Jus Divinum Presbyterianism is a Presbyterianism which claims a divine right to be. There used to be a great deal of this kind, but we fear it is coming to be scarce. Much of the Presbyterianism of the present day is a spineless, boneless kind of thing, of so little worth in the eyes of its votaries that they feel no compunctions of conscience in swapping it off for something else. Such was not the kind of Presbyterianism that Calvin gave to the churches of the sixteenth century. He got his Presbyterianism at first hand from the Bible. He made this so manifest to the citizens of Geneva that they met together in their Great Council and said: "We have ordained and established to follow and to keep in our own territory the ecclesiastical polity, following which is taken out of the gospel of Christ." This explains how it was that Calvin was able to establish and maintain such a rigid discipline. He believed and taught the people to believe that the church government which he administered was of divine origin, and that he was, therefore, ruling them according to the will of God. It was this conviction that constrained him to wrestle for years in a life-and-death struggle with the turbulent democracy of Geneva. He felt that he had no option; he must make his scriptural scheme effective in the government of the city or perish in the attempt. To develop his efforts would be disloyalty to God. It was by inspiring the majority of the citizens with the same conviction that he was able finally to win the day, and to rule that city as no other city has ever been ruled.

Discipline is a lost art. We still have our definitions of an offence, and our rules of process against offenders. We feel no longer bound to call offenders to account. The sense of a divine obligation is wanting. Our Presbyterian machinery is still intact, but there is no motive power to set that part of it in motion which has to do with vindicating the honor of Christ and promoting the purity of the church. We are not under the constraint of a divine requirement to run this part of the machinery, and in as much as the running of it is disagreeable, producing painful friction, we let it stand still. Gradually the world has crept into the church until now, in most of our large cities no line can be recognized between those who profess to serve God, or those who profess to serve Him not. Elders and deacons patronize the theatre and look at and listen to the worst that daring managers venture to offer them. Bridge-whist, with accompanying prizes, is the common entertainment provided by church members and advertised unblushingly in the social columns of the newspapers. When public balls are announced on State occasions, church officials are not unfrequently announced as patrons and participants. If a church member can keep out of the police courts, and avoid indictment by the grand jury, he is not likely to have any trouble with the church session.

Perhaps it would not be a bad outcome of the present Calvin celebrations if they should result in putting a little of Calvin's zeal for purity both of doctrine and practice into those who nominally bear rule in the church. Much will be said in praise of Calvin's work in Geneva, his transforming that notoriously wicked city into a city famed for its sobriety and morals. It is easy to point out how it was done and to extol the courage of the great reformer who put his life in peril in order to do it. But who

is going to imitate his example, and try his methods on modern church life? No doubt, they would prove effective now as then. No doubt also they would raise a storm now as then. Such being the case, we shall probably excuse ourselves by suggesting that Calvin's spirit was a little too harsh, and his methods too severe. He went a little too far, and to avoid this extreme we will not go at all. We are building the sepulchres of the prophets and garnishing the tombs of the righteous. Had we not better see to it that we do not bear witness against ourselves by a total failure to exhibit the heroic zeal which we praise in them? The note of authority has not entirely gone from our pulpits, but the exercise of authority by our church course is well nigh a thing of the past. We may still tell our members with some degree of positiveness what they ought, and what they ought not to do. But that is the end of the matter, and our preaching amounts to nothing more than advice, to be accepted or rejected according to the hearer's pleasure. A little Jus divinum in the sphere of discipline would doubtless have a most wholesome effect.—Presbyterian Standard.

WHEN DISCOURAGED.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

Many a Christian is in a critical condition when he is thoroughly discouraged, and it is because he is most apt to be inclined to slacken his zeal for the Lord, and exercise less faith in God, and pay smaller heed to divine things. A merely nominal Christian is very likely to abandon his profession of religion at a time of pungent discouragement. It has been so in thousands of instances. The professed Christians have felt that they could no longer endure such an experience, and so they quit and made no further effort to live the Christian life.

All such cases are saddening to a genuine child of God. But I have a word of advice to the Christian for his help in times of discouragement. Let him take it for granted that he will have hours of such feeling. It is an attendant of life in this world. It is connected with the frailty of human nature. What shall one do at such a time? Keep on doing full duty. Pray as earnestly as possible. It is just the time to pray. Indeed, it is more necessary for one to pray then than it is at some other time, for it is a danger point. Pray that you may not lose the spirit and exercise of prayer. Pray that you may continue to pray. It is when one is discouraged that he is tempted to think that there is no use in his continuing to pray. Satan says that it is needless to pray any more; but God and the Bible say that one ought always to pray, and not to faint.

Perhaps you have been praying for the recovery of a sick one; you become discouraged because at times that one seems to be getting worse, instead of better; but pray, even then, for with God all things are possible.

You may be praying for the conversion of a member of your family; you get discouraged because there are times when he or she seems harder in heart than formerly; but mind not that; pray all the harder, and exercise more faith when you are discouraged than when you are encouraged. You say that you cannot—you can if you determine to. Abraham did, Paul did, and you can. This is one way to grow in faith.

Dr. Cook, the discredited discoverer, of the North Pole, according to a private despatch received in Ottawa, is said to be hiding in a small town in Northern Quebec, in a hotel in the Lake St. John region. He keeps, it is said, very much to himself, never going among the other guests, and has his meals sent to his room. Dr. Cook's brother has given out that he is at present in Europe. A number of reports are at present in circulation having reference to the whereabouts of Dr. Cook. They will all be taken with a large grain of salt!

IMMERSIONIST DIFFICULTIES.

We were told a few days ago, by a most excellent woman, of a case of Baptist immersion in a little home in a country place in Kentucky. An aged man was very sick, and wished to be received into the church. There being only the Baptist church in the place, he must be immersed, of course. So a bathtub was hauled out from the city, brought into the room and filled with warm water, and then the sick man was put into it in order to satisfy the crude and undisciplined ideas of this primitive people. It is hard for any ordinary reader or student of the Bible to believe that any such thing is called for under the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is sent out to all the world, and is adapted, in the divine wisdom, to the needs of all the race.

But if immersionists have difficulty carrying out their theory they have difficulties of a different sort when they deviate from it. We read, recently, of a Baptist minister who baptized his daughter on her death-bed by sprinkling, and his association is reported to have disciplined him for it by suspension from the ministry. The New York Sun gives what are said to be the facts in the case.

The Living Church, the Episcopal paper, tells of another case of difficulty as follows: "An unbaptized woman, a regular attendant of Baptist meetings, was in a hospital in grave peril of death. She sent for the Baptist minister and sought baptism at his hands. He was, of course, unable to immerse her, but he might have told her that she would have the baptism of desire, since she wished for it and was hindered from having it. He did not tell her so; instead, he sent a note to the Methodist minister, saying, in substance: 'Mrs. A. is at the hospital, and wants certain ministrations which I cannot give her. Please to see her and do what she wishes.' The Methodist went, baptized her by infusion, and she recovered. Then naturally she left the Anabaptists and turned Methodist."

Now we do not believe that an ordinance would be instituted and made obligatory on all which is attended with so much external difficulty and confusion as is immersion, and our study of the Word and Providence of God makes us certain that the true form of baptism is that of sprinkling, to impress the fact of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon us for cleansing of our hearts.

The Western Recorder, a Baptist paper, reports the following case, and comments upon it adversely: "Seven were to be immersed at the close of the meetings held by two churches. There were two ministers; one of them had been ordained, and the other not. The ordained man had a withered right arm, and could not immerse. The brother who had not been ordained was 'large and brawny,' but had not been authorized as yet to administer baptism. Both of them 'went down into the water.' The crippled minister stood still and the strong minister brought the candidates one at a time to him, and the crippled minister lifted his hand, 'said the ceremony,' and the strong minister 'put them under.' It is hard to determine whether this is more pathetic or ludicrous. Certainly, believing, as we do, from the Scriptures, that no such an act is called for at all, the sight of it is calculated to cause one to recoil.

The sacraments of the New Testament are simplicity itself. The cup and bread of the feast were taken to be elements of the Lord's Supper for all lands and ages, and the sprinkled water on the bare face or forehead is the true form of baptism, which has been provided for God's people and their little ones of all centuries and climes. Where there are manufactured obstructions to the simplicity of the gospel they should be swept away by those who wish to be in line with the mind of Christ.—Herald and Presbyterian.

One who thinks for himself imagines that no one ever traveled that road before. But if he would take the trouble to look around he would find the footprints of others all along the way.