

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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No. 34.—April, 1888.

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I.

PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

THE title of Mr. George's well-known work is enough to explain its popularity. It is not only an inquiry into the cause of industrial depressions and of increase of want with increase of wealth, but it purports to have found the remedy. A medical student, when leaving college, is often told to have faith in himself, not to look perplexed or doubtful when he has made his diagnosis, but to give his prescriptions with an air of cheerfulness and assurance. Your patient is likely to have faith in you if you have faith in yourself, whereas if you tell him that there is nothing wrong with him, or that there is no remedy for his trouble, he is not unlikely to betake himself to the first quack who comes along, laden with sympathy and a panacea. Undoubtedly, Mr. George has faith in himself and in the remedy he prescribes, and he has succeeded in inspiring his followers with a like faith. His views have been subjected to criticism from many sides, but he would probably say to-day what he said in 1880 in the preface to the fourth edition of "Progress and Poverty."—"There has been nothing in the criticisms they have received to induce any change or modification of these views—in fact, I have yet to see an objection not answered in advance in the book itself." The language of his followers about the book is even more extreme. "To the law and to the testimony" is their cheerful watchword on every occasion. Start a difficulty or submit a case, and the answer is, "Read 'Progress and Poverty.'" When this has been done, and still light does not appear, "Read 'Progress and Poverty' again," is pretty sure to be the next prescription, and the next. A gentleman who undertakes to answer criticisms made

## IV.

### ORGANIZATION IN CHURCH WORK.

IN the Book of Chronicles, a lengthy and detailed account is given of the enthronement of David, as king over all Israel. That event marks a turning-point in the history of the chosen people. It was the end of a period of strife, division, and weakness, and the beginning of an era of conquest and extension. After describing how it was brought about, and recording the names of the various tribes who proffered their allegiance, the historian adds these significant words : " All these, men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel." They were not only loyal in heart, but they were all trained soldiers, men who could keep rank. " And all the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king," and there was " joy in Israel." No wonder that under such circumstances, there came a new era of advancement and conquest. The story has its lesson for those who desire the advancement of the kingdom of David's greater Son. Especially does it teach the necessity and power of organization in church work. It is not enough to be " of one heart " to make Christ king over all the earth, though that loyal purpose must underlie all true effort ; there must also be wise organization. The Church to-day needs men of war who can " keep rank," not a mob of ardent workers swayed by the excitement of the hour or led by some sudden impulse. No doubt there is abundance of personal loyalty to Christ. Never before in the history of the world were there so many sincerely desirous to make Him king over all the earth. The resources also in the possession of the Church are greater than ever before. It requires no wide vision to see that if they were all wisely combined, and the Christian forces drilled to keep rank like a Macedonian phalanx, their power for conquest would be irresistible. So many are beginning to see this, that there comes from all sides the demand for the healing of needless divisions among Christians, and for more efficient co-operation in Church work. The time is critical. Christians are at least beginning to be ashamed of tribal strife and alienations. May we not hope that the period of internal dissension is closing,

and that with a more clearly manifested unity the day of advancement and conquest for the Church will come?

As to the necessity of organization for efficient Church work, there can be no question. All life implies organization, and the higher the life the more complete and manifold is the organization. Organization does not belong to the realm of death. A living, acting church will be an organized one. It is interesting to observe how the instinct of organization manifests itself in any church, when the Spirit of God has been poured out in quickening power upon it. The life in a seed does not work more strongly or directly to embody itself in an organized form under the warmth and genial powers of spring than does the spiritually awakened church. Its members, as if moved by a common impulse, present themselves in the ranks for service; societies, prayer-meetings, mission-schools, and bands of workers are established. New forms of activity break forth on every side. Not only is this so in the local church, but it is a significant fact that those great organizations which are the glory of our modern church work, such as the American Bible and Tract Societies, and the various Boards of home and foreign missions, have sprung directly out of the life of the Church, when quickened by gracious outpourings of the Holy Spirit. The tendency to organize in the living Church is strongest when it is most truly alive, and to thwart its attempts in this direction is to destroy its life. Carelessness or opposition under such circumstances has often led to a stunted or malformed growth. Many of the malformations in ecclesiastical life can be attributed to unwise attempts to suppress this tendency to organized growth. Because it would not be restrained by old forms, or grow according to the preconceived notions of those in authority, it was condemned as evil.

Another fact is equally plain; it is that there is a wonderful power in wise organization. It draws out and multiplies force. All this has so often been said that it has become commonplace, but it is none the less sadly overlooked in practice in the church. The world understands this power, and accordingly organizes in politics, commerce, and trade. Men in the same business overlook their rivalries and combine; they pool their issues, and become a hundred-fold stronger. Workingmen, no longer distracted by jealousies, are learning how to "keep rank," and thus combined wield a power that enforces their demands. The Church can here learn a lesson from the wisdom of the men of this world. There are passages also in its own history that are rich in instruction on this point. It was the compact organization of the Jesuits, so thoroughly military in its character, that stayed the progress of the Reformation and saved to the

Papal Church its supremacy in Europe. And it is that same organization that constitutes Rome's most potent aggressive force to-day. The great movement in the Protestant world inaugurated by John Wesley owes its wonderful progress and success more to its organization than to any other one thing. No one can study the history of Methodism without being impressed with the wonderful genius of Wesley for organizing. The class-leaders in the Church, the rotation in the pastorate, by which the fortunes of the ministers become involved in the success of the Church as a whole rather than in any particular local church, and the system of presiding elders and bishops—all tell of a compact military organization, disciplined and officered for aggressive warfare. Again, the wonderful results produced by the combined efforts of Christian people in a community, when organized and led by some wise evangelist, emphasize the same truth, and show what could be done through proper organization in Church work. The last few years have furnished another illustration of this power, in the rise and growth of the Society of Christian Endeavor. Young people's societies in the churches were not novelties; they had been a long time in existence with various degrees of success. But their power was limited; they would grow with vigor to a certain degree and then decline. Many of them existed in a languishing condition, like a prisoner in his cell. Then came the idea of combining them in one organized host, and no sooner were they enrolled and standing side by side than a new life and enthusiasm spread through all. Again was confirmed the old adage, "In union there is strength." Enthusiasm and devotion are mighty forces and essential to success, but in warfare the best disciplined and organized army wins. The little Macedonian phalanx was more than a match for the countless hordes of Persians. The disciplined Roman soldiers who could "keep rank" were easily victorious over the reckless and death-defying bravery of the undisciplined multitudes of the barbarians who opposed them. Organization reacts upon enthusiasm and devotion, and makes them stronger and more steadfast. It begets confidence; it sustains the weak and faltering, and makes the brave man doubly brave. He moves forward with the strength of a host. It is a patent fact that the tremendous power of the Church of Rome lies chiefly in its organization. Destroy that, and it would be like Samson shorn of his locks.

It has authority and discipline. The dominant idea controlling its life is authority, and with this comes its corollary—obedience. But in Protestantism the dominant idea has been liberty, and with it impatience of all human restraint, and consequently a strong tendency to individualism. In our recoil from ecclesiastical despotism,

resulting from the abuse of authority, we need to be on our guard against the opposite extreme. The next step beyond individualism is into disintegration and anarchy. In looking over the history of the past, and marking the conditions of greatest strength and weakness in the Church, one cannot but wish that it was now more thoroughly pervaded with a military spirit—that is to say, with the idea of authority, discipline, and drill for aggressive work. The Church, indeed, still calls itself the Church militant, but the military conception of it is not the chief or controlling one. We think of it as organized for worship, or charitable purposes, or as a teaching body concerned in moral or social reforms, or as a witness for the Truth. Our ideas control our conduct. If the scriptural conception of the Christian life as that of a soldier, and of the whole Church as an army under the leadership of Christ, could become dominant, there would be a consequent shaping of organization in conformity with the controlling idea. In this connection the existence of the Salvation Army is very significant. Sober-minded men may look upon it as an excrescence, an abnormal growth destined soon to wither. But may not the Church at large learn a lesson from it? With a thorough military organization, it presents the idea of the Church militant in its grossest and crudest form. Yet with no culture, with little or no doctrinal knowledge, without wealth, and with its recruits gathered from among the humble and illiterate, it has made itself felt as a power in the midst of the most intelligent nation of the Old World. It is a growth within the Church, and however perverted and unsightly, is still the manifestation of some divine instinct in the life of the Church. At least it gives us a hint of the power that lies in the Church, to be brought out through appropriate organization. Surely the dullest can see that if the Church was thoroughly pervaded with a martial spirit, leading it to organize its forces for service at home and abroad, so that every one stood in his place in the Sabbath-school, the prayer-meeting, and mission-school, as well as in the sanctuary, it would have an aggressive power such as the world has never seen.

These principles, which are so plain as to be axiomatic, have a twofold application. First to the local church. Every pastor should be an organizer, and his ability to set others to work will be the measure of his success. It can be accepted as a rule, that the most successful church is the one that is the best organized. The fault with many pastors is, that they seem determined to do all the work themselves. They have a vague idea of doing the Church good by incessant preaching and visiting, yet complain that it does not flourish and grow under their administration. There is no way of mak-

ing a working church save by setting it to work. To do this there must be a plan, a method of action. Fervent appeals, eloquent sermons, and visiting from house to house by the pastor will not be enough ; he must organize the people. What the special organization will be, the wise pastor must determine. It must be suited to the denominational life and the various gifts of the people. It must not be something theoretical, a novel contrivance by which he expects to run the Church. The difference between mere machinery and true organization lies in this : one is mechanical, an attempt to work the Church from the outside ; the other is a proper and natural growth, a genuine form of life. In the Presbyterian Church we have an organization which we believe to be scriptural and natural. It is true to the genius of our life. We have our elders and deacons, each with their appropriate functions in the administration of the Church, with the pastor as bishop or overseer. Instead of ignoring these or fettering their power, as is sometimes the case, they should be honored and used in their divinely appointed functions. Elders and deacons have as much to do in the successful working of the church as the pastor. Instead of trying to absorb their functions in himself, a wise pastor will set them to work, and find in them his most efficient colaborers. The roll of every church should be divided among the elders for the work of household visitation and oversight, and the care of the poor and the distressed laid directly upon the deacons. It ought to be a disgrace to any Presbyterian church, with its board of elders and deacons, that it should ever be less carefully shepherded than the Methodist Church, with its class-leaders. But the officers are for the Church, and not the Church for the officers. Organization must go further, before the Church will be working efficiently. There will be Sunday-schools, aid societies, mission bands, children's bands, young people's meetings, visitors, and tract distributors ; in short, a natural arrangement and assignment of work to each and all, a discipline by which all shall be brought to keep rank and move together. But may there not be too much organization, which, like too much machinery, absorbs all the force in running it ? Yes ; organization, like redundant growth, needs cutting and pruning. There is a tendency to multiply societies which must be restrained. Nor must organization be carried so far as to destroy individuality of action. Some men work best by themselves, and as long as they work efficiently and without interfering with others, it is best to let them alone. But whatever the plan proposed may be, the pastor should be the recognized leader, and receive the co-operation of the Church. No plan will run itself. Some opposition, misunderstanding, and friction must be expected and patiently

overcome. Alas! how many plans on paper have been presented to the Church, only to be abandoned when the execution was attempted. Dreams, theories, and good intentions will not answer. Leadership and organization mean toil, endurance, self-control, self-sacrifice, and perseverance. To guide the action of those who are at work, to drill raw recruits, and to make a wise subdivision of labor, is a work that will tax the best powers of the pastor and bring weariness to mind and body. But it is none the less a blessed work and worthy the doing tenfold over. There is a growing disposition to employ more paid labor in connection with our churches, especially in our cities. There is in many cases an urgent necessity for this, and the employment of Bible-readers and visitors would not only be a great relief to many an overworked pastor, but, better than all, would add greatly to the efficiency of the Church. We need not less but more trained laborers in the service of the local Church. But it would be a most serious mistake for any church to content itself with hired labor. A man may properly multiply his power by sending a substitute where he cannot go himself, but there are some things in Christian life that no substitute can do for us. We cannot give proxies in calls to self-sacrifice, self-denial, sympathy, and personal effort for the salvation of others. The disposition on the part of so many to hold themselves aloof from active work in the Church, on the ground that they are too busy in temporal affairs, and that they give liberally to hire others, is a sure sign of decline in spiritual life. Those are dark days for any church when there is nothing done in it, save that which is done for hire. The most urgent need in many of our strong churches is not more money, but more consecrated men, more personal effort and self-denial for Christ's sake. A truly organized church implies that all its members are filled with the same spirit, and that each member is ready to discharge his appropriate part. Dead matter is cast out of the living organism, or, if it remains, it is at the peril of what is alive.

But organization for Church work should extend beyond the local church. Not seldom a particular congregation is well organized, and as a consequence thrives and becomes strong. But its organization is unhappily subordinated to its own needs. It becomes selfish, and seeks its own good exclusively. As a result, it has its decline. What are called independent churches—and the church that practically isolates itself from its sister churches is such—generally die out with the removal of the master spirit that organized them. Nor were they during their vigorous life very helpful to others. They were absorbents, not radiators. The utter selfishness of many churches, and their jealousy of any movement which might seem to

diminish their prominence, have often presented greater obstacles to the advancement of the general interest of the Church in particular localities, than the unbelief and indifference of the world. In our Presbyterian system, we maintain, through our Church courts, the organic unity of the Church. We seek to organize it, not in fragments, but as a whole. It is one body, under one government, having one object in view. Theoretically considered, no form of government surpasses or even equals it in preserving true personal liberty on the one side, and the supreme authority of a common life on the other. We hold to the unity of the Church in its organized form in the sense, that a smaller part should be subject to a larger part, and the larger to the whole. While such is our theory, unfortunately the parts often act as if they were absolutely independent of related parts or of the whole. Individual churches decide for themselves in utter disregard of Presbyteries, and Presbyteries obey the General Assembly only so far as is convenient. Any one can see that, with the weakening of the bonds of established authority, the work of disintegration begins. The relaxation of discipline in any army invites defeat. A revival of the spirit of discipline in all of our Church courts and a proper recognition of authority would be an immense gain to us as a church. It is well worth serious inquiry in this centennial year of the organization of the General Assembly, if some new adjustments cannot be made to make our ecclesiastical machinery more efficient. We need no new principles. We claim to have the scriptural form of government, nor is it an experiment. It has stood the test of time and brought forth fruits by which we are willing to have it judged. But we need new applications of our principles. There is a sense in which we must march with the age in which we live and adapt our movements to its necessities. Arrangements which were quite suitable one hundred years ago may not be the best now; and as we stand at the threshold of a new century, it is the part of wisdom to ask what changes are demanded in our ecclesiastical organization, in view of the enlarged work before us. A blind conservatism may fetter us with antiquated forms. The regulations of the old Continental Army which Washington led to victory would not be helpful in modern warfare. In view of the experience of the past and the demands of the present, it would be easy to suggest changes that could be made without contradicting our principles, which might make our organization more efficient. For example, the hasty and voluminous legislation of our General Assembly should be restricted by statutory enactments. The utter freedom with which all sorts of subjects are introduced, and the contradictory actions taken through want of consideration, make obedi-



ence on the part of the lower courts impossible. When the head is distracted, what wonder that the action of the members is irregular! It has come to pass that too often the action of our highest court, even in regulative matters, is regarded simply as an expression of an opinion, to be taken for what it is worth. It is plainly evident also that our mode of representation in the General Assembly needs revising, if we would adjust our organization to the necessities of a church covering a continent. Along with this is the need of magnifying the functions of our Synods. They seem to have been of comparatively little use in the past, or were in our system like some nascent physiological powers in the body, awaiting their proper time for development. That time has come for the Synods. They are imperatively needed as provincial assemblies, for the thorough organizing and direction of the work of the Church in the various parts of the country. The stream of Presbyterian life should henceforth flow through them into the General Assembly, and not, as hitherto, around them. In our Presbyteries also, we need a stronger administration and more united action on the part of the churches under their care. It is well worth asking if the time has not come to give the Moderator of Presbytery more of authority and responsibility? Why not make him a presiding bishop not of order, but of office, for a year, and hold him responsible for his administration? We as Presbyterians have no patience with the notion of an "historic Episcopacy" charged with "the grace of orders" and divinely appointed to rule over the Church. The parity of the ministry is not for a moment to be questioned. But neither is the right administration of authority to be questioned. The fact is, that the doctrine of the parity of the ministry has at times been a hindrance to efficient action, because no one stood forth as a representative of the body, or was authorized to act for it. Jealousy of Episcopal domination and a determination to guard our individual rights have led us, as a church, to look with suspicion on any movement or regulation that would seem to destroy our ministerial parity. But, at the same time, we should not blindly oppose all movements toward a strong administration of law, which can be secured only through some subordination to proper authority. The National Government is not a monarchy or in danger of becoming one, because we have a chief magistrate or governors charged with the administration of law. Nor would ours be less a Presbyterian form of government if some one was for the time specially chosen and charged with the administration of Presbyterian affairs. The truth is, that headless organizations do not amount to much. They may flutter around for a while with the aimless energy of beheaded chickens, but they soon cease

their struggles. Who does not know that too often our Presbyteries are simply called together to ratify the decrees of prominent pastors or churches, instead of being, as they ought, supervising and governing bodies, whose decisions should be administered by some responsible official?

On the other hand, it is pleasing to notice that not a little progress has been made, especially during the past twenty years, within our denominational bounds in the way of higher and more widely extended organization. It is notably so in the case of Woman's work in the churches. The wealth of blessing that it has brought to the Church at large, and the efficient aid it has given to the different Boards, more than justify its existence. It is one of the most significant movements in modern church work, a sure indication of increasing life. Before it are the possibilities of still larger and more abundant growth. The noble women who organized it "built more grandly than they knew." They have developed a ministry of Christian womanhood whose influence is felt throughout the world.

Nor must the patient and constant labors of the various Boards be overlooked, in estimating the power and effects of organization in the Church. Their direct labors in the home and foreign missionary fields and in educational work have been fruitful in great results. They have led the aggressive work of the Church with increasing wisdom and efficiency. But in addition to this, their reflex influence upon the Church itself should be considered. They have increased its spirit of benevolence and self-sacrifice, elevated its aims, and multiplied its power. Imagine them destroyed or taken away, and what a sad decline alike in spirituality and efficiency would surely come to pass! As much as our Church courts, whose agents they are, they have helped to enlarge the spiritual life of the Church, and to maintain its unity.

But however important organization in church work may be within denominational lines, there remains a wider field for its operations. Thoughtful men have observed the critical character of the times in which we live, and have been proclaiming with urgency the importance of devising some method by which the forces of the whole Church shall be organized for united effort. On the one side perils that threaten our Christian civilization press upon us; on the other, grand opportunities for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, such as no previous century has produced, invite us to prompt and enlarged action. No one denomination of Christians, however well drilled, is able of itself to meet the emergency. We must in some way combine. We certainly need more intelligent and fraternal cooperation among the various branches of the Protestant Church.

We can no longer afford to oppose or ignore one another. Wise co-operation is, if not organization, a step toward it, and a most important one. It helps to secure results that no denomination, laboring by itself, could reach. We are not asking for uniformity, a unity to be seen in drill, uniform, and regimental organization. A great host, saying daily the same form of words, repeating exactly the same creed, and submitting to the same ecclesiastical government, is not the true ideal of organized spiritual life. The law of organic growth admits of an ever-varying variety of form. Life is no stereotyped affair. But surely it is not too much to ask, that needless divisions should be healed, and that the glory of the particular denomination should be made subordinate to the greater glory of the kingdom of Christ. It is doubtless true that we can do our best work within denominational lines. We must, to be effective soldiers, be willing to "keep rank." But through all and over all must be the great controlling purpose to make Christ king. To this everything local, sectional, and denominational must yield. With this purpose supreme there will come, sooner or later, a mutual understanding between the various denominations as to fields of labor and combined effort. It will lead to systematic efforts to reach the unchurched masses at home, and the unevangelized peoples abroad. Any one who reads the history of the last fifty years of denominationalism can see that much progress has been made in this direction. The tendency toward closer co-operation is becoming stronger every year. Already in some of the foreign fields, as in Japan, it has produced results for which the whole Christian Church should rejoice. The decline of the bitter sectarian spirit of the past, the better understanding existing between the different divisions of the Church, and the increase of intelligence are all preparing the way for future advances in this direction. Some may hold back glorying in the past, and endeavoring to retain "the former things," but it will be in vain. The great movement of God's eternal purpose is toward the manifested unity of the Church of Christ. Spiritual unity does, indeed, exist, but it will ever strive to clothe itself in appropriate form. It is the Spirit of Christ living in all His members. Certainly it is the part of wisdom to carefully observe its movings and demands in the Church at large. It is not the spirit of disorder or license. It seeks to organize. It works to bring the whole body, with its separate members, into harmonious action, and make it loyal to its divine head, Jesus Christ. Happy will it be for our beloved Church if it is ever most ready to yield to its promptings. What may occur in the near future, in the way of enlarged organization or reorganization, can only be a matter of conjecture. There are signs that seem to

indicate that important changes are at hand. But of this we may be sure : they will not lead the Church backward or divide it into warring fragments. They will in some way lead on to the predestined end, when we shall " all attain unto the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

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