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I. THE QUESTION OF INSPIRATION IN ITS BEARING ON THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

HOWEVER Christian men may differ respecting the nature and extent of inspiration, they are all agreed in regard to its importance. In the estimate of all it is looked upon as presenting the gravest question the church has ever encountered. Nor is this estimate of its importance to be wondered at when we consider the relation which this question sustains to all the doctrines of revelation. There is no question respecting the being and attributes of God, the mode of the divine subsistence in three persons, the origin and original state of man, the fall and the state into which it brought mankind, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, the atonement and intercession of Christ, the office of the Holy Spirit, the nature and prerogatives of the church and her unity as the one body of Christ, the doom and destiny of the finally impenitent—there is not one of these questions whose solution does not depend absolutely upon the testimony of the Bible. Within the sacred volume, and there alone, have we any reliable information on any of these subjects.

It must, therefore, be manifest that all questions in regard to the trustworthiness of the sacred record are questions in regard to the very foundation of Christianity. When a passage from this record is adduced in support of a particular view on any of these subjects, the question arises, of necessity, on what ground is it brought into court, and why should it have any weight in determining the issue? As the ultimate authority on

to spend in the education of their intellects, in the social enjoyments of home, in the praise of God. Now they are worked twelve, thirteen, fifteen hours in the day. There is no time left for the society of wife and children, no time for reading and personal culture, no time for worship; it is toil, toil, toil, that is wearisome to the body, that contracts and belittles the mind, that destroys the nobler aspirations of the soul. The men realize this. Hence they cry, “Do not work us so many hours in the day, work us for a reasonable time, that we will gladly give, but, for humanity’s sake and for God’s sake, leave us opportunity for some culture and enjoyment, and religious privilege.” This is partly their plea, and so far as this impels their strike the strikers merit profound respect and sympathy. This being denied them, they quit their work, and trouble follows. The world of capital to-day needs to remember that laborers are “souls,” not mere “hands,” and, while held to earnest and faithful labor, they ought to be sufficiently paid, and ought to be given some time for mental and spiritual improvement.

It is only when the spirit of the gospel of Christ, which values men as “souls,” not “hands,” prevails, when employers and employees esteem each other as brothers, that the perilous conflicts between labor and capital will be adjusted. When men are rightly valued the social sores will be healed.

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THE REVISED DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP.

THIS book, now before the church to be rejected or adopted without criticism at the approaching meetings of the Presbyteries, is liable to objections of a very grave kind - objections which, taken either singly or together, render its adoption very undesirable. If they touched only the small points on the surface, they might be overlooked for the present as blemishes to be erased after the book has been adopted. And yet it is very questionable whether the church should enact as organic law an instrument on which even a slight blemish is perceptible, because no change in such law can be made without exceeding difficulty. Certainly a Directory, prescribing the manner of worshipping God in public throughout the church in the whole world, should not be adopted as a whole and finally until the Presbyteries at previous meetings have shown a virtual unanimity on the question.

To say that, because the last Assembly sent it down by a unanimous

vote, therefore the mind of the church is practically one, is surely a mistake. It is well known that the Assembly, in order to save time, dispensed with the formality of taking the vote on the paragraphs *seriatim*, and substituted for it a rap from the moderator's gavel; and it has been in print by the religious press for five months uncontroverted, that some of the members of the Assembly testified to the bewildering haste with which the book was disposed of.

But further and conclusively. It is far from true that the mind of the church is practically one in favor of the book; for when it was before the Presbyteries two years ago, forty-one out of sixty-four Presbyteries voted to reject it. This is about a majority of two-thirds. Since then no change of importance has been made in it, except the addition of a marriage and burial service, on which no Presbytery has had an opportunity to express its judgment. Public opinion on the adoption of constitutions must be allowed to ripen slowly.

Many objections to the book have been brought in the religious press. It has been urged that the book contains no new principles; that every principle in it is in the book we now have, and consequently, nothing of *permanent* value will be gained by its adoption; that the Sunday-night worship in church has been disparaged, and thus the tendency of our time to convert the Lord's day into a holiday will be encouraged; that the social prayer-meetings in the congregations will be discouraged by emphasizing the power of the session to control such meetings; that a number of important omissions is noticeable; that the virus of sacramentarianism, retained from popery in the present book, is retained in the new.

These objections are valid, and load the book heavily. But there are others, on which stress must be laid, which seem fatal to the work.

It contains the germs of an elaborate liturgy that must in time supplant that simplicity which is our glory. Ages gone by the Presbyterian Church refused the liturgy, because it cramps the freedom of the mind in worship, and runs the thoughts and feelings into grooves along which the worshipper slips without consciousness of what he is doing. Her face has been steadfastly set against it. Efforts have been made in the General Assembly of our Southern Church at different times—certainly twice in the last thirty years—to introduce it, but without encouragement. Now it is woven into this book at many points.

Those who urge the adoption of the Directory disclaim any intention to ritualize our worship. The forms are optional, they say. Then

why incorporate them in such a book as the Constitution, which is presumably a scheme of the permanent and fundamental features of the church? Why not print a book of optional forms, to be kept on sale by our Committee of Publication, as our Hymn Books are? (These forms, including those in the body of the book, take up about twenty-four out of forty-nine pages, or about one-half of the book.) Then those who want such forms may buy this, or that of Dr. A. A. Hodge, now used by some; or some one of the many such compilations that are kept in stock by the large booksellers. And when one set of forms wears smooth and becomes unedifying to themselves and hearers, they may buy another.

Two years ago, while walking about in Old St. Giles' church in Edinburgh, with Dr. W. G. Blaikie, whose fame as author, scholar, and preacher, is known throughout the Presbyterian Church, he said, "this is the first time I have been here in seventeen years." And yet this is the church in which Knox preached and Jennie Geddes worshipped. Here she threw the famous stool at the head of the Dean who was reading the liturgy, under orders from King Charles. The outburst of popular indignation, occasioned by this act, was the beginning of the great struggle for religious liberty in Scotland. When asked, with much surprise, (for the Doctor teaches his classes almost in a stone's throw of St. Giles'), the reason for this fact, he answered, because it is no longer Presbyterian in worship, it has been renovated into the likeness of a cathedral, and a minister of the Established Church, with ritualistic tendencies, put in charge, and the flavor of formalism has become so strong as to render me uncomfortable here. This is, as nearly as I can recollect, his very language.

If now this camel's nose has turned out the Old Scotch Covenanters from old St. Giles', how long will it take to turn us out of our Southern Presbyterian Church, or split the tent in twain?

This Directory contains a doctrine contradictory to the express teaching of both the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism. In the Confession of Faith, chapter twenty-eight, article first, on baptism, it is written: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace." Thus two valuable benefits are secured by it—(1), a solemn admission into the visible church; and (2), the outward evidence as well as inward confirmation of the grace which is conveyed to the subject in the covenant. Baptism is the visible entrance to the visible

church where all the gracious benefits of redemption are realized, and where the subject grows up (under proper training) in all things into him who is the head.

The Larger Catechism teaches the same doctrine in questions 165 and 166. Thus: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament . . . whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church"; and "Infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized."

Regarded in this light, baptism, either of the adult or infant, is seen to be a solemn duty and a precious privilege. It justifies the importance assigned it in the words of our Lord Jesus and in the Acts of the Apostles. It does not teach the Romish or high prelatical doctrine of baptismal regeneration, *ex opere operato*, through "the corporate influence of the church"; but it teaches the value of the covenant relationship with God and with his church into which children are brought by the sanctifying influence of the former. For this reason the faithful in all ages have set great store by it and observed it with deep and solemn reverence. And the history of those families that have held this view and conformed to it in their practice, justifies the claim made for its efficacy in the Scriptures. It would be an interesting and edifying work for some antiquarian in church lore to collate facts from any old Presbyterian settlement illustrating the efficacy of baptism in sealing the blessings of grace from generation to generation.

What, on the other hand, is the doctrine of the Revised Directory? In chapter third, paragraph second, it is written, "The Scriptures teach that the children of a professed believer are born members of the visible church. Their baptism is now, as their circumcision was under the Old Testament, a public acknowledgment, made by both the Lord and his church, of their interest in the covenant."

This contradicts the foregoing. The one teaches that the infants of believers are within the covenant and therefore entitled to membership in the church. The other teaches that such infants are members of the church from their birth. Both cannot be right. This says it is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace; that says it is a public acknowledgment of their interest in the covenant. According to the one it is a means to an end. According to the other it is an end in itself. The one declares it to be a seal of an invisible covenant. The other declares it to be a mere badge of a visible relationship to a visible church.

The inconsistency is unavoidable unless it can be shown that there is a *radical* difference in the signification of adult and infant baptism, a difference of which there is no hint in either book. Unless we are ready to stand before the Christian world with a constitution violently inconsistent with itself, a revision of both our Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism also will be obligatory as soon as we adopt this new Directory.

That the doctrine of this new book is held by some ministers in our church we do not deny. It seems to have been introduced by Dr. John M. Mason's book on "The Church of God." This book he wrote when a minister in the Associate Reformed Church, combating High Church Episcopacy. And while it has been of great service to our church, yet any careful reader will see that, on this particular phase of his subject, his own mind was not clear. In one place (p. 103), he speaks of the excision of infant members from the New Testament Church, or, if you prefer it, their *non-admission to her privileges*. Again (on p. 108), he says: "the infants of believing parents are . . . fully entitled to its *initiating ordinance*." Thus he puts our doctrine in the clearest light, but elsewhere countenances the other view.

Our present Directory, in its statement of the purport of infant baptism, sets the matter in a deeply solemn light, and renders it very dear to the believing parent. No such one can consent to leave his child out of the church, and thereby deprive it of the blessings of grace stored up in the church. But if we set aside this doctrine, there will be no difficulty in understanding why infant baptism will become quickly obsolete. Probably a failure to comprehend this view explains why it has already lost its hold on many in the church. For why should a parent present his child for baptism, if it already belongs to the church and shares its benefits with its parents? Intelligent parents, free from superstition, not led by others, but thinking for themselves, want a good and sufficient reason for their faith and practice. Unless a very plain, unquestionable order is found in the sacred Scriptures, an inference will not compel obedience, against their natural sense of propriety.

And here the proposed Directory is again at fault. In undertaking to say what infant baptism is, it imports a novelty into our Presbyterian nomenclature. It says, "Baptism is a public *acknowledgment*, made by both the Lord and his church, of their interest in the covenant." This word "acknowledgment" seems to be used here in its legal sense, as the "avowal of one's signature, or of the validity of a docu-

ment to which one's name is signed." (*Worcester*.) But baptism is the seal itself—the setting one's name to the document, which makes it valid. The "acknowledgment" of this signature is a different act. In law, the acknowledgment attests the seal.

The definition says, it is "a public acknowledgment, made by both the Lord and his church, of their interest in the covenant." Whose interest? That of "the Lord and his church." Then the child has no interest in it, and is left out, or the definition is imperfect.

Suppose we take the word in its other senses, that is, either as an "admission of the truth of a fact," or "gratitude for favor received" (*Worcester*): what then would baptism become but simply an act of worship without any sealing value—as a prayer or a song? No, not this either; for this admission is "made by both the Lord and his church," and God does not worship himself. What does it mean? We cannot tell.

The book says: "The Scriptures teach it." Where? With the help of both Cruden's and Young's Concordances we cannot find it.

Unfortunate as it would be to bind up in the same lids, though in two different portions of the book, two statements of doctrine that do not hold together, it would yet be more unfortunate to adopt a Directory of Worship that is inconsistent *with itself*.

In the third chapter and fifth paragraph of this Directory it is written, "baptism is a sacrament whereby those baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church," and, as we have seen, in the preceding paragraph, it is written, "that the children of a professed believer are born members of the visible church." We read these two inconsistent statements almost in the same breath; the one lands us immediately upon the other. If the two statements were separated from each other in different parts of the same book, this inconsistency might be unobserved; but when brought immediately together, the mind of the thoughtful reader halts at once and asks how is this? What explanation can be given? The only possible explanation is that the book, the same chapter, is treating of two things radically different, that the baptism of an adult has a meaning and efficacy altogether different from that of an infant. Can this be shown from the Scriptures; or is there any hint of it in our Standards, as we have already asked?

There is no such discord in the Directory we now have. The logic of the Westminster Assembly is unassailable. Moderator Twisse and James Gillespie, and their colleagues cannot be drawn with this hook.

For these and other reasons, as we must choose between the old and the new Directories, let us take the old.

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