

An Investigation
of
Presbyterianism
and Why I Left It.



By

DANIEL MACGREGOR

An Elder in the Re-organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Stratford, Ont., Box 464.

www.LatterDayTruth.org

1848

www.latterdaytruth.org

AN INVESTIGATION OF PRESBYTERIANISM AND WHY I LEFT IT.

By DANIEL MACGREGOR

An Elder in the Re-organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

This is an age of exploration and investigation. Whether we relish it or not, we cannot prevent it. It has run into every avenue open to the powers of man's perceptive genius; the stratas of the earth, the deep hidden caverns of the Atlantic, the Pacific, the frozen regions of the north, the jungles of Africa have been compelled to divulge their long-kept secrets to the never-to-be-denied son of man. The intricacies of anatomy, the remains of antiquity, and the wonders of astronomy, have opened wide their gates to the multitudes of seekers who have pressed on and on to the deepest recesses and the highest altitude with "Excelsior" as their motto. Nor has the field of research been limited to things terrestrial. The eternal, the celestial has opened to our vision. The searchers for truth along lines religious have greatly outnumbered many times over the students of all other sciences. In this they are to be commended. "Prove all things," preached Paul, and "search the Scriptures," said Christ. There was a time, however, when the child of thought dare not lift its tiny head. It lay helpless in a cradle, the cradle of the creed. It was dressed in dogmas and bound by catechisms. Bulls and decrees infused it with fear unto a blind obedience. It lived in

wretchedness and ignorance incoherently muttering "Believe, believe or be damned." For long centuries it lay stunted in growth and dwarfed in intellect. A perfect idiot.

All this transpired during the dark ages when "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots (Rev. 17:5) ruled triumphantly in the personage of the Church of Rome.

But the child persecuted and pinioned, at last rebels. Universal unrest begets investigation. It commences with Wycliffe in the fourteenth century. Jerome of Prague and John Huss continue it in Bohemia a hundred years later. And scarcely has the embers of their work died out when a strong and vigorous monk arose and personally contended with the vast hordes of deluded religionists. That monk was Luther. This was in 1520 A.D.

About the same time Zwingli overturned things in Switzerland. Calvin, a Frenchman, came to the assistance of his movement in 1541. He set up headquarters at Geneva.

In England the good work was going on. The disruption of Henry VIII. with the Papacy hastened it.

Finally Scotland bestirs herself. Cautiously she advanced. The Scot, immovable

and impregnable as his nature is, was loath to forsake the religion of his forefathers.

Forty years after Luther began his work, a young and active priest left his Scottish home to hear for himself. He visits the mainland. He consults Calvin, and from that hour dates the conversion of Scotland to Calvinism.

Knox returns; tells what he has heard, and Presbyterianism is born in a day.

It was born in the year of our Lord 1557. Its father was John Knox, a priest of Rome, who had taken orders in his 25th year. Its mother was the Church of Rome from whose loins she had been brought forth.

But the child of investigation has waxed strong. He has made friends of multitudes. To him they owe their enlightenment and liberty. Will they suffer him to be shorn of his strength in the lap of lethargy and indifference? Have they reached the zenith of all knowledge and all truth that they can afford to dispense with his services? Ah, no. This was the mistake of former centuries. The mantle of the priesthood having fallen on the ministry, the children of the Church began to look upon them as the repository of all knowledge, human and divine. They placed upon them the work of educating, of leading and of governing. Long continuance in these duties finally impressed them with the delusion that they, only, had the right to lead and govern. So long as the ministry remained diligently at their work matters went well. But luxury and indolence crept in and the ministry grew indifferent. They became lazy. Learning and investigation died.

Of the condition of the Church during the dark ages, Moshem writes: "The profound ignorance and barbarism of this century will hardly appear credible to those who have not personally examined its literary productions. What little learning and knowledge still remained, with a few exceptions, were confined to the cloisters of the monks, especially in the western or Latin Church. * * * The rude and unlearned bishops suffered the

schools which had been committed to their care to languish and become extinct. It was very rare to find among them persons able to compose their own public discourses." Book 2, pt. 2, ch. 1.

Thank God those days are over. The time has come when the people demand an investigation of everything placing itself upon the market. Only recently our Government ordered an investigation of the various insurance societies. The society or sect shrinking from it, at once becomes an object of public suspicion.

But Presbyterianism is before us. Its claims entitle for it an examination. Hear them: "The outward means and ordinances for making men partakers of the covenant of grace are so wisely dispensed as that the elect shall be infallibly converted and saved by them; and the reprobate, among whom they are, not to be justly stumbled. The means are especially four. 1. The Word of God. 2. The Sacraments. 3. Kirk Government. 4. Prayer." Confession of Faith, p. 253.

Again: "This **only** is the true Christian faith and religion, pleasing God and bringing salvation to man. * * * And **only** ground of our salvation as more particularly is expressed in the confession of our faith." C. of F., p. 267.

This means, as plain as a language can put it, that salvation is found only in the Presbyterian Church. It means that those outside of the Kirk Government are in an unsaved condition. The Church of Rome makes similar claims for their church. We have no objection to the claim, providing they can make it good. But can they? Before accepting it we venture to investigate.

What of the doctrines of Presbyterianism? Naturally they followed those of their leader who had imbibed his ideas from Calvin. We submit a few of the leading ones "By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite

that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of His glorious grace. Chap. iii., par. 3-5.

The following points are prominently made in the foregoing:

1. God made a decree.
2. This decree was made before the foundation of the world.
3. It affected men and angels.
4. It predestinated them. ("Predestinate—to appoint or ordain beforehand by an unchangeable purpose," Webster.)
5. Some are predestinated unto everlasting life.
6. Others are foreordained to everlasting death.
7. This predestination was unchangeably designed.
8. This decree predestinated a fixed number for both places.
9. The number thus fixed cannot be increased nor diminished.
10. This predestination decree was made irregardless of any faith or good works in the people thus ordained.

Presbyterians pause! Silence for sixty seconds! To what horrors does not your thoughts lead you? Can it be that you and I are thus unchangeably foreordained? and that all our exercise of faith or good works cannot alter that decree?

If so, we may as well give up.

Why struggle longer?

Why pray any more?

Why sacrifice?

Why appoint ministers?

Why send missionaries to foreign lands?

It will do them as much good as it does us. They also are predestinated.

Why lament for past misdeeds?

Why sorrow over that which cannot affect the decree which has thousands of years ago sealed our everlasting doom?

Another of the Same.

"God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain **whatsoever comes to pass.**" Chap. iii., par. 1.

What a decree! Everything or "whatsoever comes to pass," is foreordained, yes, and unchangeably so.

Now, what "comes to pass?"

Let the reader hurriedly scan the last few years only.

Think of the calamities afar and near, the thousands slain in battle, the murders, the adulteries, the embezzlements, the lynchings, the debaucheries and evils of a thousand shades. But why dwell upon the scene. Sorrow not over it. It is God's way, for He has ordained "whatsoever comes to pass."

Doctrines of this nature, stultifies ambition, degrades desire, silences spirituality, breeds hypocrisy, disorganizes society, makes mockery of the sacrifice of Christ, enslaves liberty and makes of man who was created in the image of God a mere inanimate machine.

The man who invented this doctrine must have been a criminal. He was hard pressed to cover up his wrongs. At last he finds an outlet. He saddles it on the Almighty. Indeed John Calvin, the father of this doctrine had a most unsavory history. For differing with him in religious views he had Bolsac, the physician; Amurer, the senator, and several others thrown into prison or exiled. James Gruett he had several times put to the torture and finally beheaded. The unfortunate Dr. Servetus he had burned to the stake.

But predestination, ill content with devouring its eternally doomed victims of "men and angels," darts forth its forked tongue and fastens its fangs on infants. "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved." Yes, but what about the "others not elected?" They "cannot be saved," and "to assert and maintain

that they may, is very pernicious and to be detested."—Conf. of Faith, p. 45, 46.

This doctrine of baby damnation made Calvin smack his lips; hear him, "Reprobate infants are vipers of vengeance, which God holds over the flames of hell until they turn and spit venom in God's face."—Calvin's Institutes, vol. 1. I quote from Calvin because he was the source of Presbyterian inspiration. "Their doctrines are Calvinistic."—Buck's Theological Dictionary, p. 366.

But, followed to its logical conclusion, where does this doctrine lead us? Just where it led certain rigid Calvinists some years ago, who "hold that the elect, because they cannot lose the divine favor, do not truly commit sin and break the divine law, although they should go contrary to its precepts and do wicked actions, and, therefore, it is not necessary that they should confess their sins or grieve for them; that adultery, for instance, in one of the elect appears to us indeed to be sin or a violation of the law, yet it is no sin in the sight of God; because one who is elected to salvation, can do nothing displeasing to God and forbidden by the law."—Moshier's Church History, bk. 4, part 2, ch. 2, par. 23.

How soulless and shrivelled are these doctrines! How utterly unlike the universal love of God! "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth," for "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Verily he "will have all men to be saved"; yes, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Little ones are in no wise turned away. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."—Isa., 45:22; II. Peter, 3:9; I. Tim., 2:4; Rev., 22:17; Mark, 10:14.

No marvel that men of thought, of the stamp of Dr. Briggs, Prof. McGiffert, President Patton, of Princeton, Newell Dwight Hillis and Professors Duffield and Cameron are throwing off the Presbyterian yoke, while Presbytery after Presbytery are petitioning the General Assembly to change the creed. But the creed

still stands as the "only true Christian faith and religion, pleasing God and bringing salvation to man. * * * ever styled God's true religion, Christ's true religion, the true and Christian religion, and a perfect religion."—C. of F., p. 267, 269.

Belief Waning.

"But," says the devoted one, "we don't believe those things now, and our ministers don't teach them." Why? Is it because that Presbyterianism has at last found out she was wrong; that her doctrines were unscriptural? If so, does it not put her in unenviable light? What will she do with her long-continued assumption—"This only is the true Christian faith and religion, pleasing God and bringing salvation to man"? Where now is this "perfect religion"?

But all this only points to one conclusion—that **Presbyterianism is wrong**, and as such, must admit that God was not the author of their faith. Neither is He its finisher. They are doing that themselves. This wilful manufacture and mutilation of the creed unerringly points to an unavoidable conclusion—a **man-made Church**.

Accepting, however, the statement that belief in the Confession of Faith is waning, let me ask them, what is the new faith? When was it framed? And where is it published? But echo only answers where!!

The facts are that Presbyterians to-day are obliged to support the Confession of Faith or do without one. Whichever horn they take, they are in a perilous predicament. If they choose to throw away the old creedal charts that have run their boat on a rock they are still helpless, having no new and reliable ones to guide them. Without charts a boat is rendered unseaworthy and no prudent person will take passage therein.

It may be that some clergymen refuse to preach their creed. In this they are violating the oath taken at their ordination. With uplifted hand, they swore to support the "doctrine, worship, discipline and government" of Presbyterianism.—C.

of F., p. 276. I leave it to the reader to determine how much confidence can be reposed in such men.

But it is not enough for them to violate their most solemn oaths; they add treachery to insult by continuing to unblushingly occupy Presbyterian pulpits and pose as Presbyterian preachers. Political trickery! Gross hypocrisy!

It must not be supposed that the doctrine of predestination is only an obscure one in the Confession of Faith. Far from it. A whole chapter is devoted exclusively to it, while every doctrine of the entire system breathes of its deadly fumes. It permeates the body. Even if it were but a small evil, "know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" It doesn't require much strychnine to lay low the stoutest frame.

Cannot Fall From Grace.

"May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace? A.—True believers by reason of the unchangeable love of God and His decree and covenant to give them perseverance, * * * can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."—Larger Catechism, Q. 79.

The reader will please look over the following texts: "By which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached." "Ye are fallen from grace." "Lest at any time we should let them slip." "How shall we escape if we neglect," etc. "Lest any man fall." "Lest any man fail of the grace of God." "Beware lest ye also * * * fall." Even stalwart Paul feared he might become a "castaway" while "a falling away" was clearly foreshown. It is certainly evident that Judas fell and angels "kept not their first estate." We read of a class, who, having fallen, it is impossible to restore them: I. Cor., 15:1-2; Gal., 5:1, 4; Heb., 2:1-3; 4:11; 12:15, 25; II. Peter, 3:17; I. Cor., 9:27; II.

Thes., 2:3; Act, 1:25; John, 17:12; II. Peter, 2:4; Jude, 6, 7; Heb., 6:4-6; 10:26-29.

Twixt the Devil and the Deep Sea.

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands and of good use both to themselves and others, yet because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word, nor to a right end the glory of God, they are therefore sinful and cannot please God or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is **more sinful** and displeasing to God."—C. of F., p. 58. What is the poor fellow to do? He'll get it anyway. Doomed if he does and doomed if he don't! Profound doctrine! Let it take its place amid the debris of everlasting destruction and its memory written on the sea washed sands.

Preferable, is it not, to recognize that "truth is truth where'er 'tis found, on Christian or on heathen ground," that the beauty of the lily nor the fragrance of the rose is not diminished though blooming in some dreary dale far from the haunts of the florist's field. "And behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give to **every** man according as his work shall be."—Rev. 22:12. Good works are like good seed, the which, when sown by anyone, will bear its fruit at the harvest. "Whatsoever good thing **any** man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord whether he be bond or free."—Eph., 6:8; Luke, 12:47; I. Peter, 1:17; Eph., 6:8; I. Cor., 15:41; Matt., 16:27; II. Cor., 5:10.

The Godhead.

Humanity possess an innate desire to worship. That which they worship is their God. If it be the true and living God then is their worship commendable, but if it be some other God, then is it idolatry, and no idolater has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Many are the gods that have been created. Some of them are of wood, stone

and brass, while the sun, moon and stars claim their suppliants.

Idolatry is a gross evil. It is prohibited in the very first commandment. Notwithstanding this, it is a universal sin. There is more Scripture devoted to a denunciation of this wrong than any other. It has prevailed in all lands and among all peoples. Even Israel, the children of the Most High, prostrated themselves before a golden calf.

Idolatry is still rife. It infests the modern churches. Presbyterianism proclaims it. Yes, proclaims it! Read their creed wherein they define their God as "a most pure spirit, **without body, parts or passions.**"—C. of F., p. 21.

Our forefathers went to the extreme in worshipping at the shrine of gross inanimate objects, but Presbyterians have taken the other horn of opposite leaning, and have dissolved their deity into vapor thinner than air, declaring him to possess neither body or parts. A being of this nature can exist nowhere only in the imagination. He cannot be seen for he has no "parts," and the scriptural declaration "the pure in heart shall see God" is only a delusion. He is less than an essence or extract, for they possess body. Indeed the only way to comprehend him is by mathematical calculation $0 + 0 = 00000$.

But no need of any remaining unenlightened respecting the personality of God. Do we not read that He "appeared" unto Abraham, Jacob, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and that Solomon saw Him twice? "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne," declared Micaiah and Isaiah, while Stephen saw our Saviour at his right hand. So frequent and familiar was the visitations of the Lord that He even "spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend," and with His finger wrote the tables of testimony. Is it not written that "God created man in His own image?" And are we not advised that the Son of God, who, naturally like His Father, being "the express image of His person," did indeed possess a body? Was He not born, buried and resurrected? Did he not eat, drink and move from place to place?

Indeed was He not "in all things * * * like unto His brethren?"—Gen., 12:7; 35:9; 1:27; Ex., 24:9-11; 33:11; I. Kings, 11:9; 22:19; Isa., 6:1; Heb. 1:3; 2:17.

No wonder that the Presbyterian God is uncommunicative. Having neither body nor parts He is necessarily lacking in the organs of speech. He has forever maintained the deepest silence. And if any ventures to question the propriety of it, he is assailed with the creed that the "whole counsel of God may be deduced from Scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men."—C. of F., p. 19.

That settles it. Presbyterians are stolid in their devotion to a bodyless, partless and consequently dumb deity. They even prohibit "revelations of the Spirit."

It would be well for idolaters to study up the law—"neither shalt thou set thee up any image which the Lord thy God **hateth**"; then will they be better advised as to whether he has passion or not.

Baptism.

The nature and use of baptism, as understood by Presbyterians, is best described in their own language. "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a **sign and seal** of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His spirit, of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life, **and whereby** the parties baptized **are solemnly admitted into the visible church**, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lords." "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise." L. Cat'm, ans. to Q. 165, 166.

In this it is held forth that whereas baptism is a means of solemnly admitting parties into the visible church, it is not to be administered to any that are outside of said church. An amusing inconsistency this! What think you of a builder who,

upon erecting his house, immediately placarded the door, "Not to be opened (administered) to any that are outside?" One would naturally wonder to what purpose the door served. Was it a means of egress only?

But it is said that Christ ordained "the washing with water to be a **sign and seal** of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His spirit, of adoption," etc. Where is the proof? This is only an assumption, born of imagination. In an entirely different light does the Bible view this question. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, **and wash away thy sins.**" Act, 2:38; 22:16.

The scriptural purpose of baptism thus stated is "**for the remission of sins.**" No "sign" and "seal" about it. It's the whole deed and document conveying the dowry of deliverance from sin.

Instead of being reserved for those who have been supposedly "ingrafted," and have imagined unto themselves a "remission of sins," it was intended for the sinner, the world, to those, who in the bitterness of anguish, begotten by a consciousness of sin, cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to **every creature**. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Act. 2:37; Mark, 16:15, 16.

Verily it was a saving ordinance, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." I. Peter, 3:21.

This doctrine is so manifestly plain that even Calvin could not help but see it. He wrote as follows, "Baptism resembles a legal instrument properly attested by which he assures us that all our sins are cancelled, effaced and obliterated. For He commands all who believe to be baptized for the remission of sins. Therefore, those who have imagined that baptism is nothing more than a mark or sign by which we profess our religion before men, have not considered the principal

thing in baptism, which is that we ought to receive it with this promise, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" Calvin Inst., I, 4, 115, p. 327.

Here is a wide difference of doctrine between Calvin and his followers, and the Presbyterian urging that Calvin was wrong only rings the death-knell of their institution to all claims of divine origin.

Infant Baptism.

In the Confession of Faith, Ch. 28, we read, "The infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized." The others, those who are not so fortunate as to have "believing parents," must necessarily do without it.

But why this discrimination? Is it because the children of unbelievers are so much holier than others that they can get along without the ordinance? Or is it that they are so irretrievably bad and deeply dyed in the arts of vice that baptism is powerless to help them?

This doctrine looks as though God was a respecter of persons, which won't do. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Where, then, is the ground supporting such a teaching? Surely not in the broad general invitation of Christ, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." No selfish limitations expressed here. It is not in the heart of God to turn away a prattling innocent, just because its parents are not members of the congregation.

But this narrowness is as unscriptural as the ordinance. The whole thing is wrong. Not the slightest support for it anywhere. Preceding the administration of baptism the candidate must be **taught**. "Teach all nations, baptizing them." He must **believe**. "When they believed . . . they were baptized, both men and women." "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayst." "He that believeth and is baptized." "They that gladly received His word were baptized." He must **repent**. "Repent and be baptized." These conditions invariably attached to the ordinance of baptism, and are such that no

infant can comply with. Moreover, the prime purpose of baptism was "for the remission of sins," a purpose that loses its force and fails in its application to a child, seeing it is without sin. "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God." Act, 10:34; Mat., 28:19; Act, 8:12; 37; Mark, 16:16; Act, 2:41, 38; Mat., 18:3.

Even Calvin repudiated the doctrine, "Because Christ requires teaching before baptism, and will have believers only admitted to baptism; baptism does not seem to be rightly administered except faith precede." In Paed. Exam., Vol. 2, p. 272.

The only ordinance established for children under the Gospel dispensation was that of Blessing. We read where Jesus took them up in his arms and blessed them, and He himself, when a child, received this "laying on of hands" from Simeon. In this he was "leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." Mark, 10:16; Mat., 19:15; Luke, 2:28; I. Peter, 2:21.

Well might Isaiah say, "They have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." 24:5.

Mode of Baptism.

The method as adopted by Presbyterians is a kind of an undecided one. "Dipping of the person into water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." C. of F., Ch. 28.

This is a kind of an on-the-fence statement. Two modes are approved and the third permitted.

Now, which is the right one? Why didn't they make a short cut and say "baptism is any way you like." It would be just as enlightening.

But is this the spirit of inspired teachers? No! Never! When God's servants expressed themselves on ceremonies or commands it was always with decision. No middle course pursued. No straddling of questions.

Naaman, the leper, sought Elisha for light and he got it, and not in any go-as-

you-please fashion. He got it definite and decisive, and no other course was open.

And this is the spirit of the entire system of Christianity. Undeviating are the declarations of God. "One law shall be to him that is home-born and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." Ex., 12:49. This may be an utterance of the Old Testament, but its force is by no means lessened in the New. "There is one body and one spirit, one Lord, one faith and one baptism." Eph., 4:4, 5.

No sprinkle-dip-or-pour triple theory expressed here. **One means one.**

The Scriptures speak clearly on this matter. It is only reasonable that they should. An ordinance that engaged the attention of one of the greatest prophets; that was committed to the apostles to be preached in all the world; that received the approval of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; and unto which the very Son of God did bow in humble obedience, suggests at once its importance. And surely an ordinance of such imposing magnitude cannot but reveal its form in the greatest clearness. And it does.

"Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism." Rom., 6:4.

The language is unequivocal. The expression "buried" has but one signification in all lands, and it suggests anything but "sprinkling" or "pouring."

But this was no haphazard expression. It was used again four years later in the epistle to the Colossians, "Buried with him in baptism." 2:12. Evidently a carefully studied statement.

Every instance of baptism in the New Testament points unmistakably to this mode, "And were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan"; "and they went down both into the water, both Phillip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water"; "and Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water"; "John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim because there was much water there." Mark, 1:5; Act, 2:38; 8:38-39; Mat., 3:15; 28:19; John, 3:23.

The word "baptize" is from the Greek "baptizo," and invariably means to dip, plunge or immerse. This is supported by such Lexicographers as Greenfield, Pickering, Groves, Donnegan, Schrevilious, Hiddle and Scott, Stourtz, Conant and a host of others.

Presbyterian Calvin was obliged to admit it. "The word baptizo (baptize) signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was performed by the ancient church." Institute in Paed. Exam., Vol. 1, ch. 2.

This great leader possessed the unhappy distinction of being ignored where he was right and followed where he was wrong.

Organization.

All religious bodies possess an organization. It is impossible to maintain the existence of any institution without it.

The New Testament church is no exception. Its organization is declared in Eph., 4:11, "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers," Again in I. Cor., 12:28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

These officers thus placed had a specific work to perform, "For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph., 4:12.

That their continuance is necessary is evidenced everywhere by the imperfections and ignorance existing. A structure half built suggests the need of builders.

That their continuance was intended is indicated in the next verse, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

As yet we haven't reached this perfection period. There is anything but a "unity of the faith." And so "He gave

apostles and prophets . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith."

This organization served as a protection to the church; it was her clothing, shielding her from the biting blasts of deception "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." V., 14.

The revelator saw her thus adorned, "and there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." Rev., 12:1. "Clothed with the sun" denotes light, inspiration, revelation, consequently prophesy and prophets. "A crown of twelve stars" signifies the quorum of twelve apostles.

But in contradistinction to this beautifully apparelled woman or church, Presbyterianism introduces us to an organization possessing only "pastors, teachers, and other church governors (elders) and deacons," woefully misnaming her "a perfect religion." C. of F., p. 304.

What a contrast! Why she's hardly presentable! Perfectly nude! No garments of inspirational light and prophesy. Indeed she has sworn against wearing them. "Nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the spirit or traditions of men."

No apostolic crown whatever. This cannot be the queen and "bride."

But then Presbyterians are greatly in love with her. "This only is the true Christian faith and religion pleasing God and bringing salvation to man. . . . and therefore we abhor and detest all contrary religion and doctrine." C. of F., p. 267.

But why support the continuance of "pastors, teachers," etc., and refuse to entertain prophets and apostles? Did not the same God ordain all? Was there more inspiration in the appointment of a teacher than that of an apostle? What superiority is there in the office of a deacon to that of a prophet? This acceptance of the humbler offices of the church and ignoring the greater looks like the Pharisaical sin

of "omitting the weightier matters of the law."

"But," says the Presbyterian, "the officers which Christ hath appointed for the edification of his church and the perfecting of the Saints are, some extraordinary as apostles, evangelists and prophets, which are ceased." C. of F., p. 304.

Who "ceased" them? God never—at least we have no account of it. Moreover the last enactment declares that he gave apostles and prophets "till we all come in the unity of the faith." No man can disannul this. With equal propriety may another claim that "pastors, teachers, elders and deacons" have ceased. Just as much authority for it. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you **neither shall ye diminish ought from it.**" Deut., 4:2.

That prophesy and prophets were to continue is evident from the exhortations of the Apostle Paul. "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy and forbid not to speak with tongues." I. Cor., 14:1, 39.

No amount of doctrinal deviations can resist the fulfillment of prophesy, and God has said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Act., 2:17.

The Scriptures predict the advent of two prophets whose ministrations are yet to be in the streets of Jerusalem; of an Elijah before the coming of the "great and dreadful day," and of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord.

The Lord's hand has not slackened, nor yet his power failed; neither has he changed his mode of dealing with mankind. His blessings still abound and He is ever ready to reveal himself unto those who ask.

No marvel that faith is weak, when great and influential churches array themselves against the pure promises of Jehovah, and frown upon any who venture

to believe His word in looking for a fulfillment thereof.

The time has come to test those who claim to be churches of Christ, and that test has been supplied us. It is found in the last instructions of our Saviour to mankind, "And these signs shall follow them that believe, in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Mark, 16:17, 18.

How many of the modern churches will stand it? But, it is upon us; the people are becoming restless. The preachers realize it, and so to prolong stupefaction and deadness they have introduced doctrines which stultify faith, and do away with the manifestation of the power of God.

Authority.

The question of authority must ever remain a vital one.

By it, kings rule, generals command, parliamentarians make laws and magistrates enforce them. Even the humblest of our public school instructors are restrained from teaching until authorized by the Provincial power.

And this question concerns the kingdom of God. Its authority, however, comes from a higher source. It comes from God, as manifest in the appointment of its ambassadors for "how shall they preach except they be sent."—Rom., 10:14, 15.

Moses performed the high and holy functions of his office by reason of the right conveyed to him through an angel of God. Aaron was separated unto the ministry by a revelation through another. The Levites as a tribe were set apart at the command of Jehovah, and Joshua was ordained by the direction of the Lord through Moses.—Ex., 3; 4:10, 16; Deut., 18:5; Num., 27:18.

This system of conferring authority prevailed also in New Testament times. There was no difference. The apostles

occupied office only upon the call of Jesus Christ.

After His ascension the work of selection and appointment was carried on by the voice of the spirit, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers. . . . as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said: Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost departed," etc. Act, 13:1, 4; Luke, 6:13.

So stringent was the law protecting the divine appointment of God's servants that self-assumers and usurpers were invariably punished. Saul tried it and lost his kingdom. Uzziah, the king, for the same sin, was smitten with leprosy and dwelt in a pesthouse till the day of his death. And the seven sons of Sceva, for attempting to do the work of Apostle Paul, were set upon by devils. I. Sam., 13; II. Chr., 26; Act, 19:13, 16.

Even Christ did not venture to clothe himself with ministerial authority, for he "glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto him, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Heb., 5: 5, 6.

The general law governing in this matter is as impartial as it is clear, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Heb., 5:4.

This sounds like an inviolable decree, and certain it is the perpetual pattern governing the ordination of the ministry. The reader will please observe that the "call" of Aaron was not evolved out of some feeling of the heart. A theological seminary did not do it, nor yet was he made a minister by the vote of a congregation. The facts are that God spoke. He spoke to Moses ordering Aaron's appointment. No modern method in vogue then, whereby Aaron was left to receive and present his own "call." Such a course would open the door for imposters who are

ever ready to receive a "call," particularly when there's a wealthy congregation and fat salary in sight.

But how does all this compare with Presbyterianism? Suffer us to propound that Scriptural question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" and we are answered, "The power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole Presbytery." C. of F., p. 316.

The word Presbytery signifies a body of elders. It will be observed, therefore, that the source of the authority upholding and guiding this church lies in a **body of elders**, who possess "the **whole work of ordination.**" What part does God take in this? Why he's not even mentioned. Apparently he may be utterly ignored, since the "whole work of ordination" can be done by the Presbytery.

But from whence received this body of elders their authority? From the generation of elders preceding them; and so on back, generation succeeding generation, until we reach the original organization. Of this, the Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 19, says, "The initial conditions of Scottish Presbyterianism are seen in the historical facts—(1) that the Reformation was the form taken by the triumph of a violent and grasping aristocracy over the encroachments of the sovereign, and an alien church; and (2) that John Knox was its spiritual leader. Under his advice the Protestant nobles in December, 1557, **formed themselves** into a covenanted body called The Lords of the Congregation."

Here, then, is the source of Presbyterian authority. It comes from a number of "violent and grasping aristocracy," who "formed themselves" into a church. If all this was done at the command of God it might savor of legitimacy, but no! It was done only and exclusively "under the advice" of John Knox.

But how came Mr. Knox to possess authority, seeing he was the "spiritual leader?" The following from Rev. J. W. Harding will inform us, "His talents pointed him out as a fit person for the ministry, but he was very reluctant to de-

vote himself to that important charge and was only induced to do so after a severe internal struggle by a solemn call from the minister and the assembled congregation." Sacred Biography, p. 563.

Thus Knox's authority came from the congregation, the church; and the church's authority came from Knox. Fair exchange! A clear case of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." Thus

Presbyterianism started on a swap. But we are told that this was a "solemn call." Solemn farce!

What further evidence need be adduced to show that Presbyterianism in its origin and make-up is nothing more or less than a **man-made church**; and as such must surrender all claims of being the Church of Christ. For this reason have I severed my connection from it.



Supplement to
The
Canadian Messenger
Jan 1 1907