

A DISCOURSE

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE

One Hundredth Anniversary

of the Adoption of the Constitution of the

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

—IN THE—

United States of America.

*Delivered in the Presbyterian Church, Burlington, N. J.,
February 12th, 1888,*

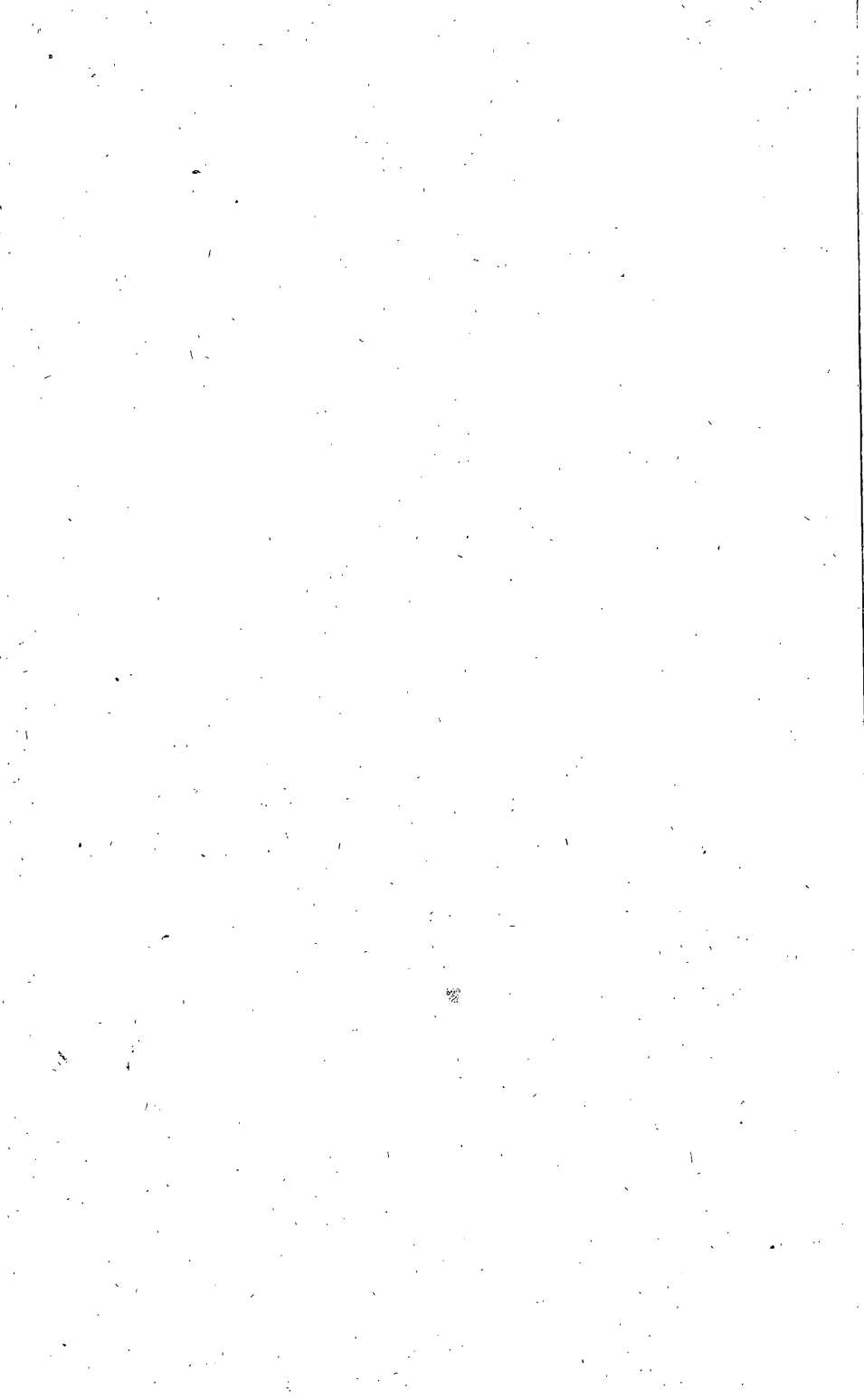
—BY THE—

REV. EDWARD B. HODGE.

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DISCOURSE.

One hundred years ago the Constitution of "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," was adopted. The General Assembly of the Church, appointed to meet in the City of Philadelphia, on the 24th day of May next, will be the one hundredth in the order of succession. It has been judged eminently appropriate to mark this crisis in the history of our Church by a Centennial Celebration. I am to do my little part in this matter by preaching a sermon to my people. I propose to call your attention: First, To the ORIGIN OF THE PRESBYTERIAN POPULATION OF THIS COUNTRY; Second, To a VIEW OF THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY; Third, To SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE PRESBYTERIANISM.

A.—OUR ORIGIN. Look over the waters to the kingdom of FRANCE. Louis XIV, surnamed "The Great," sat upon the throne. By his side sat a stately woman, with sparkling eyes, fine complexion, beautiful teeth, and exceedingly graceful manners. She had risen from poverty and the humblest occupations to be the intimate friend and able counsellor of the great monarch of France, and at last his wife. This woman virtuous, intellectual, sagacious, yet narrow and intolerant in her religious views, and a slave to the influence of the Jesuits, undertook to lead the King in the paths of piety: i. e., after her own views of pious behavior. And the King was in the mood to be led. He had lived to see the vanity of earthly glory. He was without that true religious sense which teaches kings as well as peasants to bow to the will of God, and seek His glory as their chief aim; but had rather that perverted religious notion which would try by some vast act of piety to make amends for a life of self-seeking and self-indulgence, and crime. Madame de Maintenon, the stately woman with sparkling black eyes, encouraged the thought. The act of merit was easily suggested. Let the King employ the vast power and resources of the crown for the utter extirpation of Protestantism in France.

The French Protestants were known as "Huguenots." They were Presbyterians. Their Confession of Faith was drawn up by Calvin. Their Book of Church Order corresponded with our own. They had grown to be numerous and influential. Some of the noblest and best men of the age were of their num-

ber. Under "the Edict of Nantes," which granted liberty of conscience, they had thriven and become great. Louis XIV, in an evil hour for his kingdom, revoked the Edict, A. D. 1685, and required conformity to the Roman Catholic religion. His dragoons passed through the kingdom like a devouring pestilence. Two hundred thousand French Presbyterians perished. Another two hundred thousand contrived to escape from the country: some over the mountains into Switzerland; some down the Rhine into Germany; some across the channel into England; some over the ocean into America.

In Boston, as early as 1686, they were numerous enough to have a Church of their own. In New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Carolina, they found a home. These immigrants and exiles for conscience sake, brought the best blood of France to our shores, and became a very important element in our American Presbyterianism.

In ENGLAND those Protestants in the reign of Queen Elizabeth who objected to the white surplice, on the ground that it was the recognition of a minister as a priest; to kneeling at the Lord's Supper, on the ground that it recognized the Roman Catholic error of Transubstantiation; and to the sign of the Cross in Baptism, as unauthorized and superstitious, became known as Puritans. Elizabeth refused to yield to their objections. Their numbers were greatly increased in the days of Charles I. The name "Puritan" was applied at this time to those Episcopalians who refused to read in the Church's the King's "Book of Sunday Sports;" to the Independents, who objected to any government in the Church, beyond that of the congregation over itself, and to Presbyterians, who were restive under the power of the bishops. The Presbyterian Puritans were much the most numerous. Their position was trying. They were Presbyterian in principle; but unwilling to leave the Church of England, or cause division and strife. They endeavored therefore to associate in Presbyteries without leaving the establishment. Such was the Presbytery of Wandsworth; formed in 1572. A Form of Government, thoroughly Presbyterian, was drawn up and printed in 1574. It was signed by more than 500 clergymen of the Church of England, as agreeable to the Word of God, and to be promoted by all lawful means. The Archbishop advised that every copy of this book should be burned. It was republished in 1644.

The Westminster Assembly was called by Parliament, July 1st, 1643, and continued in session until February 22d, 1649. This notable body drew up the famous Westminster Standards; the "Confession of Faith"; the "Shorter" and the "Larger" Catechisms, and also a "Directory for the exercise of Worship, Discipline and Government." At that time—so

Mr. Bancroft says—"the majority of Parliament was with the Presbyterians. * * * They represented a powerful portion of the aristocracy of England. They had, besides the majority in the Commons, the exclusive possession of the House of Lords. They had numerous and active adherents among the clergy. The English people favored them." The Presbyterian Form of Government was now established by law of Parliament. The Church of England therefore became Presbyterian; but it must be observed that it was not in the way recommended by the Westminster Assembly. "The Presbyterians had passed a resolution that Jesus Christ had established a form of government for the Church, distinct from the civil magistrate." In fact, however, self government was not then, and has never been, allowed to the Church of England, and the resolution of the Presbyterians was utterly unsatisfactory to Parliament. That body claimed supreme authority over Church and State alike. Accordingly it was Parliament which abolished Episcopacy, and Parliament which established Presbyterianism as the law of the land. Then, as now, the decisions of the spiritual judges were liable to be reversed by an appeal to a civil tribunal.

But then came the Restoration of Monarchy, and Charles II, was seated on the throne. At that time, says the historian Neal, "The Presbyterians were in possession of the whole power of England. The Council of State, the chief officers of the army and navy, and the governors of the chief forts and garrisons, were theirs. Their clergy were in possession of both Universities and of the best livings of the kingdom."

But Charles proceeded promptly to re-establish Episcopacy. What was called "The Act of Uniformity" was passed, which required the re-ordination of those who had been presbyterially ordained; assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer, and submission to the doctrine of passive obedience: i. e., the doctrine that the King, ruling by Divine right, must be obeyed in all things without resistance.

To these things Presbyterians could not submit, and two thousand clergymen were ejected from the ministry, including such men as Richard Baxter and Edmund Calamy, with Banton, Bates, Mead, and others almost equally distinguished.

Under circumstances such as I have thus alluded to, which placed in a most embarrassing situation men of Presbyterian views under James I and Charles I, and at the Restoration under Charles II, great numbers turned their eyes to America.

A considerable number of the 2,000 Presbyterians ejected from their places in the Church of England found refuge in

New England. There they made common cause with the Congregationalists, and the Churches were sometimes modelled largely after the Presbyterian pattern, and Ruling Elders were for a time a common feature in the government of the Church.

We read that Mr. Williams, one of the first ministers of Boston, lamented on his death-bed, among other "sins of the people," a growing opposition to Elders; the disposition on the part of the congregations to take the government directly into their own hands and to decide all things by a vote of the whole membership; and also the making light of, and not submitting to, the authority of Synods, without which, in his opinion, the Church could not long subsist.

Here was involved the doctrine, dear to Presbyterians, of the UNITY OF THE CHURCH; each congregation forming but one member in one great organism, and each part being subordinate to the authority of the whole, as represented in the Synod. The disposition among the New England people to give up the office of Ruling Elder, was distasteful to others besides Mr. Williams. "I came from England," said one of the early inhabitants of Boston to the Congregationalists, "because I did not like the lord-bishops, but I cannot join you because I would not be under the lord-brethren."

It is important to remember then that Puritanism in Old England was very largely Presbyterian, and that Puritanism in New England was Congregationalism with a very large, and, among the clergy, at times almost controlling Presbyterian influence. (Hist. of Pres. Church, Hodge, i, 39, note.) New England has been like a hive sending forth swarms of busy bees. Its influence has been wide-spread and powerful. It contributed largely and influentially to the Presbyterian Church in this country; and it is for this reason important to remember that the men who settled New England were not Independents or Congregationalists alone, but to a large degree men of very decided Presbyterian principles, whose influence was great in giving tone and character to the doctrine and government of the Church. Presbyterian Puritans came, however, to other parts of America besides New England. Many went to Long Island, many to New Jersey, and a few here and there settled along the southern coast.

So far we have looked at those constituent elements of our Church which we derived from France and from England. But we should omit an important matter if we overlooked the fact to which Bancroft calls our attention, that as the Reformation, followed by collisions between English non-conformists and the Anglican hierarchy, colonized New England, Long Island, and part of New Jersey; so the Reformation, emancipating HOLLAND and the Low COUNTRIES, led to settlements on the Hudson River;

and thus these lands divided with England the glory of having planted the first colonies in the United States; as well as the glory of having set the example of popular freedom. In 1626 in the month of May, we see Peter Minuit paying over the equivalent of \$24 to the Indians for the whole of Manhattan Island with an extent of 20,000 acres, laying out the southern point for a "battery," drawing lines for a fort, and naming it New Amsterdam. The Sabbath dawns. No minister has come, but the people gather from some thirty houses,—odd-looking houses with straw roofs and wooden chimneys,—glance at the great swinging, creaking wings of the windmills which they pass on the way, and sit down to listen to two men bearing the title of "consolers of the sick," who read to them texts out of the Scriptures together with the creeds. Two years later we see a church established with fifty communicants. Peter Minuit is one of its two elders, and Jonas Michaelius is the clergyman. In 1630 Kiliaen Van Rensselaer is sending out colonists, good Dutch Presbyterians, to occupy his great tracts of territory extending above and below Fort Orange for twenty-four miles on each side of the river and forty-eight miles into the interior. The same year Michael Pauw bought Staten Island and became patroon of Hoboken and Paterson where Jersey City stands now. And thus good, solid, orthodox Presbyterianism was imported, and in good measure, from Holland and Belgium and the Low Countries, the men who brought it having learned at home the value not of freedom only, but also of federation and union.

The GERMANS too came trooping from Europe. In New York west of Albany they settled on the "German Flats." In Pennsylvania they were found as early as 1682 or 1683, and their name abides in Germantown, that delightful suburb of Philadelphia. Already in 1772 it was estimated that one third of the population of the province of Pennsylvania, or say 100,000 souls, were German or of German descent. Over the line into Maryland and Virginia they found their way, and made homes for themselves in North and South Carolina and Georgia. Some of these were Lutherans; but a very large number were Presbyterians.

And the WELSH must not be omitted. Six townships on the left bank of the Schuylkill River were soon occupied by them, and names like Gwynedd tell us still by whom the land was first occupied, the forests felled, and religion and freedom introduced.

Come with me again across the waters. It is the 23d day of July 1637. Charles I is king of Great Britain. Thomas Wentworth is his lieutenant in Ireland. Soon he writes to his sovereign that Ireland lies at his feet in absolute subjection. Laud is his ecclesiastical lieutenant in England. With his Star Chamber and Court of High Commission, and his system of spies,

he boasts that no "conventicle," as he calls the meetings of the non-conformists, can be held without his knowledge. Next Scotland must bow the knee. The decree has gone forth for uniformity; which means that the Liturgy which Archbishop Laud has prepared, and no other, must be read in all the Scotch Churches.

It was no new thing among Scotch Presbyterians to hear prayers read out of a book. They were accustomed to a Liturgy; but it was their own "Book of Church Order," prepared by their own John Knox, adopted of their own free will, by their own General Assembly, and without a word in it of a human priesthood, or a Romish doctrine of the sacraments. They were not a people to submit to the imposition of a book against their will, imposed by Prelates, whose authority they denied, and containing views which they regarded as little better than ill-disguised Romanism.

On the 23d day of July 1637, at St. Giles's Church in Edinburgh, the people were gathered. The Dean entered the sacred desk. The hated book was opened. The reading began, but was speedily interrupted. Jennie Geddes, an old woman in the Church, had taken up her folding-stool and hurled it in hot indignation at the head of the astonished Dean. That act of hers has become famous in history. It had momentous consequences. Hurry with me to Old Grey Friars' Church in the same City of Edinburgh. It is the 28th of February, 1638. The Church is packed full. The elite of the Scottish nation are there, and the masses of the people. The Churchyard without is filled as well as the building within. Alexander Henderson, one of the noblest of godly ministers, offers fervid prayer. The illustrious Earl of Loudon delivers an eloquent address. The enthusiasm of the people has been raised to the highest pitch. The Solemn League and Covenant, binding all who subscribe it to live and die in the defence of religious liberty, is unrolled; and all of all classes and conditions, amidst stillness and solemnity, subscribe their names. It is now carried to the Churchyard, laid upon a level tomb, and names and initials are added until not the least space upon the vast parchment remains unfilled. Some draw the blood from their arms, and write their names in crimson characters, adding the words "till death." It is a momentous hour. It is the death-knell of Charles, and Wentworth, and Laud. It is the beginning of a struggle of fifty years. It issues in the Religious Liberty of Great Britain. But the time was long. The sufferings of the Covenanters were great. Many crossed to the North of Ireland, taking their principles with them. Under successive monarchs they had varying fortunes. If the Act of Toleration under King William gave them relief, they were oppressed under Queen Anne. The Scotch-

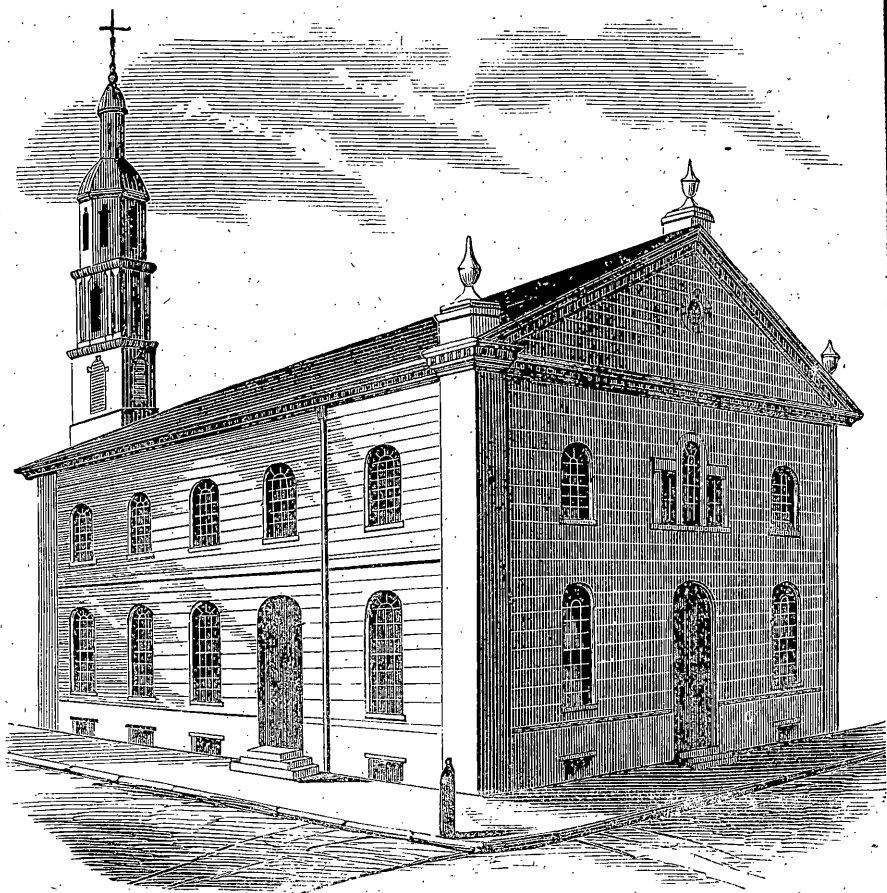
Irish, the men of Ulster, will move westward once more. Civil and religious freedom they must enjoy. America is the land of destiny for them.

It was not until the eighteenth century that the movement had fairly begun; but from that time until the beginning of our troubles with Great Britain these men, trained for liberty, came by thousands to our shores. It is said that 12,000 sailed yearly for America. Ireland lost. Our Church and country gained. For none among the immigrants from the lands I have named surpassed the men of Ulster in love of learning, and in zeal for freedom. New York, East Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, all were strengthened by this accession of the sturdy sons of liberty.

I think I have now made it plain to you that American Presbyterianism is the product of a great variety of causes. These have exerted a mutually modifying influence. It has been impossible to bring together all these elements in harmonious union except by insisting only upon essentials and allowing wide liberty with respect to other things. Thus the Church has been made truly Catholic while characteristically and devotedly loyal to fundamental truth.

B.—But let us now look in on the FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY. The place is Philadelphia. The Church in which the Assembly meets is the Second Church, a plain brick building on Arch street at the corner of Third, with a steeple at the west end which was afterwards removed as unsafe. The aisle leading to the pulpit was paved with brick and adorned with the tomb-stones of departed pastors. It was George Whitefield who gathered the converts that constituted the Church at its beginning; and Gilbert Tennent was its first pastor. I have many a time in my boyhood days spelled out the inscription on the tablet set up in the new building on Seventh Street to the memory of these men of renown, while I waited for service to begin in that old church of my fathers. The first Presbytery was the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Unhappily one page of the Book of Records is lost. The first meeting actually recorded is that of December 26, 1706, at Freehold, N. J. The Presbytery consisted of seven ministers at that time. But so rapidly did the Church grow that in September, 1716, measures were taken for the formation of a Synod to consist of four Presbyteries. And in 1788, one hundred years ago, it was decided that the Synod, having grown so great, should be resolved into four, and that a General Assembly should be convened, constituted out of the four Synods, in the city of Philadelphia, in the Second Church, on the third Thursday of May 1789.

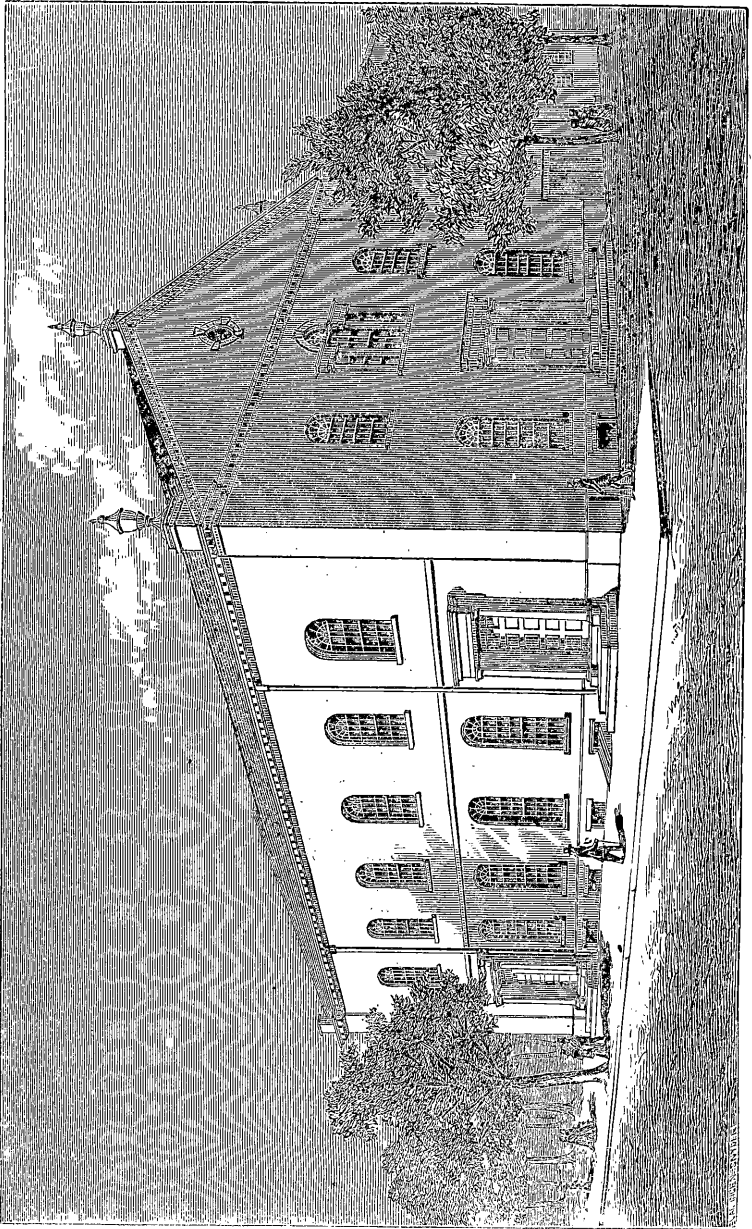
The Constitution of the Church was adopted in 1788, comprising the "Form of Government and Discipline," the "Directory of Worship," the "Confession of Faith," and the "Larger and



OLD SECOND CHURCH, THIRD AND ARCH STREET, PHILADELPHIA—BUILT IN 1750.

Shorter Catechisms." Twenty-three ministers and eleven ruling elders, representing less than two hundred ministers and about four hundred Churches, took their seats in that plain, but commodious Church to constitute the First General Assembly. At 11 o'clock all eyes were directed toward the pulpit which stood against the side of the Church. It was a very large and high pulpit of mahogany, with staircase on each side, and a large sounding-board overhead, while a high mahogany desk in front was occupied by the precentor. Presently there arose the most distinguished clergyman of the Presbyterian Church of the day; indeed one of the most distinguished men of America. It was John Witherspoon, Ecclesiastic, Statesman, Patriot; a combination declared by Dr. John DeWitt to be almost unique in history. He cites Ambrose among the Latin Fathers as having played such a double role successfully; Anselm of Canterbury among the mediæval bishops; John Knox and John Calvin among the reformers; John Witherspoon among Americans. Have you seen his name as he subscribed it to the Declaration of Independence in 1776? Have you read his stirring words on that memorable day when the famous document was spread before Congress, and there was wavering, hesitation, debate? "There is," said he, "a tide in the affairs of men—a nick of time. We perceive it now before us. * * He that will not respond to the accents (of that noble instrument on your table) and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions is unworthy of the name of freeman. For my own part, of property I have some, of reputation more. That reputation is staked, that property is pledged, on the issue of this contest. And although these grey hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they descend thither by the hand of the executioner than desert, at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country." He is described as always clear and far-sighted in political vision; courageous, alert, calm in every trying crisis; knowing his own mind, and capable of impressing his views powerfully upon those whom he sought to influence. He was the sixth in the honored line of Presidents of the College of New Jersey; laborious, successful, eminent, there as in the other departments of his varied duties.

Such was the man whom the Church delighted to honor, and who had been appointed by his brethren to preach the sermon at the opening of the First General Assembly. On him all eyes were riveted as he announced his text:—I Cor. iii, 6. "I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." We can only imagine the appearance of that great congregation hanging on the words of the patriot-preacher, their ornament and their pride, to the very end. But mark now that reverend, benignant, dignified clergyman who is taking his seat after sermon in the chair of the Moderator. His brethren have given to him,



OLD SECOND CHURCH, THIRD AND ARCH STREET, PHILADELPHIA—ENLARGED IN 1868.

as perhaps the best known and most influential of the pastors in the Church, the high honor of being the Moderator of the First General Assembly of our Church in the United States. This is Dr. John Rodgers of New York. He is described as a man of noble intellectual gifts, of unusual wisdom in counsel, and exceptional energy in administrative work; disinterested and unambitious as a Churchman, yet faithful and determined in his efforts to establish the Presbyterian Church in the metropolis of the country in spite of the cruel injustices and persecutions to which our cause was then subjected. He is said to have had an eloquence born of deep and unaffected piety, delighting in his pastoral work, helpful in the homes of the sorrowful, faithful in seeking and saving the lost. We count it a privilege to have had his great-grandson and namesake as one of the elders of this Church, to have his family still residents of our city, and to know from continued works zealously wrought in the Church, that love and loyalty are still associated with the honored name of Rodgers. The father of our elder was the Rev. Ravaud K. Rodgers, D. D., for forty years the untiring and efficient Stated Clerk of the Synod of New Jersey. I cannot take up your time with naming all even of the most distinguished members of this distinguished body of men. But I must not omit the name of Dr. John Ewing, pastor of the First Church, Philadelphia, and Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, as Dr. Witherspoon was President of the College of New Jersey; a prodigy of wide and various learning, an eloquent preacher, and a man of fine social qualities. I must add the honored name of Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, son-in-law of Dr. Witherspoon, Professor in the College of New Jersey, and afterwards occupying with ability, piety and learning his father-in-law's post of President. Let these names suffice. There were others almost equally worthy of mention. I resist the temptation that I may reserve a little space to speak of some of the characteristics of a true Presbyterianism.

C.—CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE PRESBYTERIANISM. I shall mention, first of all, LOYALTY TO THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD. Presbyterians regard it as the Charter Book of Human Liberty. They have said for ages what Prince Bismarck said in the ears of a listening world a day or two ago in the German Parliament: "We Germans fear God, and we fear nothing else," simply substituting the word "Presbyterians" for the word "Germans"—"We Presbyterians fear God, and we fear nothing else." That is to say, we recognize absolutely no other authority but that of God. All other authority, so-called, if rightful, is simply delegated by Him. Magistrates, parents, WHOEVER exercises authority, must do so as the minister and agent of Almighty God, and in accordance with His will. But where is that will expressed? In the Bible. But how do we know that the Bible is the Word

of God? On the authority of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, who set upon the Old Testament the seal of His unquestioning acceptance, and gave us the New by the inspiration of His own apostles. Rome sets the Church before the Bible, and appeals to the Church as authority for its dogmas, whether they can be found in the written Word or not; and this disposition has not been unimitated in Protestant communions, as you are well aware. I do not think it is anything more than historic truth to say that the utterance of Chillingworth has been in a peculiar and emphatic sense true of Presbyterians: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants."

2.—I shall mention second, a SCRIPTURAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT. It is impossible to find all that Rome teaches about Government or Doctrine in the Bible. She does not profess to do so. She puts her traditions in the same category with the Holy Scriptures. Presbyterians, however, have never been satisfied by the assurance that the government of the Church by prelates; claiming the authority of the Apostles of Christ, is an ancient and honored form of government. The experience of their fathers has been of oppression, and bitterness, and woe, and blood, and death, in connection with prelacy. They demand that God's Word alone, without the traditions of men, shall decide the form of government to be imposed upon the Church. This, their loyalty to the Bible exacts of them. And, on the other hand, their Catholicity is shocked by a system which compels those who adopt it, by a cruel and inexorable logic, to separate themselves from the Church-fellowship of those who hold to a different opinion, and are manifestly owned of God. Presbyterians have a horror of PRIESTCRAFT. They deny that the title of priest is anywhere given to Christian ministers in the Word of God. They claim as a fundamental principle that the people are given by that Word a substantive part in the government of the Church, and that the eldership is God's own provision by which, from the most ancient times this power has been exercised; the elders being the representatives of the people. They believe in the UNITY OF THE CHURCH as a whole, and the subordination of the several parts; and therefore are organized as Churches, Presbyteries and Synods, with one General Assembly over all, and with authority over all. In a sentence, then, they think that the Bible teaches that there is ONE ORDER OF THE HOLY MINISTRY ONLY; that MINISTERS ARE NOT PRIESTS, and MAY NOT GOVERN ALONE, but that the people, through their representatives, must be associated with them; and that the CHURCH IS ONE BODY HAVING MANY MEMBERS, which must yield obedience as subordinate parts.

3.—I shall mention last the ZEAL OF PRESBYTERIANS FOR SOUND DOCTRINE. They believe that it makes a vast difference what a man believes about ANY thing, but especially what he be-

lieves in religion. They hold that knowledge is in order to holiness, and that therefore it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of truth: They hold further that all truth is consistent; and therefore when the truths of religion are brought together they must make up a consistent whole, or a "system of doctrine," as it is called. This system is substantially involved in the simple utterance which the Apostle John puts upon the grateful lips of redeemed men: "We love Him because He first loved us." (I John iv, 19.) There is a whole system of theology in that outcry of gratitude. PREDESTINATION is there; the word which has frightened so many. But what is meant by it? Let me put it in a Bible phrase. Here it is: "He loved me and gave Himself for me." When did He love me? Before I was born; in His own eternity. Why did He give Himself for me? Because He had a DESTINY in view for me. What was that destiny? That He might present me to Himself "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," but "holy and without blemish." (Ephesians v, 27.) And what we call PARTICULAR REDEMPTION is in that outcry of gratitude; the doctrine that Redemption deals with PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS, and not simply with masses and classes. Ask a Christian; ask PAUL, to give an account of his conversion. This will be his account: "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His grace in me." "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Call this "particular redemption," call it "election," call it what you will; there it is in the Word of God; there it is in the experience of believers. "EFFECTUAL CALLING" is in that outcry of gratitude. Put it in Bible imagery again. Because He loved me He went after me, "Good Shepherd" that He was, how long, and how far? "UNTIL HE FOUND ME." Having loved me in His own eternity, having a destiny for me, a place for me in His presence, where, when cleansed from all sin, and rid of all imperfection, He might make me His heart's delight, He used all resources at His command to secure me, until He had effected His purpose. Name this work of His "effectual calling," or name it by some other name, but there it is in the Bible; there it is in the system of doctrine in its logical and appropriate place; there it is in the experience of believers. And here in this outcry of gratitude is finally, the PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. "We love Him because He first loved us." Love has awakened an answering affection. A union has been consummated between the believer and the Lord Jesus. It is the union of LOVE. Shall it ever be dissolved? Divorce is common on earth. Is it possible between the soul and Christ? Press the question in the ear of Christ. Wait for His answer. Looking over the sheep whom He redeemed with His blood, He replies: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John x, 28.) Ah! beloved, who shall

do this thing? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? * * Nay in all these things (it is not enough to say we are conquerors), we are MORE than conquerors, through Him that loved us." Rom. viii, 35, 37. This is the "perseverance of the saints." Call these things by what other names you may prefer, but here is the chain of doctrine, the system of belief, which Presbyterians love for the two reasons already assigned; FIRST, because they find it in the Bible; and SECOND because they find it in the religious experience of believers. I might add that they love it BECAUSE IT IS SO GLORIOUS. Here is a system of doctrine that exalts God, the infinitely holy and eternal God, whose will is all-wise, all righteous, all-good; puts the crown on His head, and the sceptre in His hands; and spreads the universe at His feet, to be regulated and governed by the unerring counsel of that holy will, and by the might of that omnipotent hand. Here is a system that humbles all creatures in the dust before their Maker, and raises from the lips of all that love holiness the exultant shout: "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Here is a system that provides for the absolute security of the believer, and simply EXTINGUISHES fear in his heart. Here is a system that engages him in a service the issue of which is assured victory; and so sends him forth to the conflict with an enthusiasm born of confidence and made irresistible by the very power of God Himself. The believer realizes that he is an arrow prepared by the Almighty, hidden in His quiver, brought out in the crisis and emergency of battle, fitted to the string, and sent well-aimed to the destined mark.

This is the system, these are the doctrines which have been the heart and soul of every great and glorious movement in the past; the inspiration of the reformers; the battle cry of the great champions of the oppressed; the inscription in letters of light upon the banners of the advance-guard of the host that are moving to-day with steady tread into the realms of the kingdom of darkness; the death-shout of the martyrs, who have died and are dying for Christ. If there has been anything great and glorious and worth commemorating in the one hundred years of our history which is past, these doctrines of the grace of God have been the inspiration of it all; these doctrines which have been the pride and the joy of our Church; but which are not ours alone, but the common heritage of all who make the simple Word of God the source of their knowledge, the ground of their faith, and the rule of their conduct.