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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AUGUSTA. GA.

Special Number

Giving information about the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Articles written by leaders of that denomination.

North and South over the question of slavery in 1845. The New School Presbyterians divided into North and South over the same question in 1857. But the Old School Presbyterians held together through thick and thin until after the nation was divided by the Civil War.

However, all the causes which divided the nation were tending to divide the Presbyterian Church into North and South. But the immediate cause of the withdrawal of the Southern Presbyterians was that the General Assembly in May, 1861, passed the famous Gardiner Spring resolutions, calling upon all Presbyterians, North and South, "to promote and perpetuate the integrity of these United States, and to strengthen, uphold, and encourage the federal government in the exercise of all its functions."

By the passing of these resolutions the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church undertook to decide the political question as to where a man's allegiance belonged in those troublous days. Did Christian men owe their first allegiance to their native states, with their older governments, or to the newer federal government? That was a difficult question at best. At any rate Southern Presbyterians believed that it was a purely political question, and that the General Assembly in passing those resolutions left its real spiritual sphere and entered into the field of politics. The Gardiner Spring resolutions, therefore, became the immediate cause of the withdrawal of the southern presbyteries from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

On December 4, 1861, commissioners of all southern presbyteries met in Augusta, Georgia, for the purpose of organizing a General Assembly of their own. It is interesting to note that Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, the father of Woodrow Wilson, was pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Augusta at that time, and that Woodrow Wilson was then a bit of a boy about four years of age.

Dr. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans, one of the greatest preachers the Southern Presbyterian Church has ever produced, was chosen moderator of that first Southern Presbyterian General Assembly, and preached the opening sermon. His text was Ephesians 1:22-23, and his subject was, "The headship of Christ over the Church." He emphasized the fact that Christ, and not Cæsar, is the head of the Church and that the mission of the Church is purely spiritual, and not in any sense political.

That first General Assembly issued a remarkable address to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the world, giving the reasons for withdrawing from the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and at the same time stating what we call the distinctive principles of our Church. The most distinctive principle of all is that the Church of Jesus Christ has a purely spiritual mission and should have nothing to do with political matters. We believe in the complete separation of Church and state. Yet the Southern Presbyterian Church has never hesitated to express herself on great moral and ethical questions, but not in a political way.

Our first General Assembly organized four executive committees as agencies of the Assembly to take the place of Church boards in other denominations. They were the executive committees of: foreign missions, home missions, Christian

education, and publication. A distinctive feature of the Southern Presbyterian Church was that these executive committees were to be directly amenable to the General Assembly, and under its full authority, instead of having the degree of independence which the boards of some other Churches had in those days. With the passing years the work of these executive committees has been greatly enlarged, and their powers have been somewhat enlarged to meet the changed conditions. Through these executive committees the Southern Presbyterian Church is today doing a large missionary and educational work at home and abroad.

The Women of the Church are thoroughly organized under the name of the Woman's Auxiliary in practically every individual church. These are bound together by presbyterial auxiliaries, these in turn by synodical auxiliaries, and all are bound together by a church-wide organization known as the advisory council of the Woman's Auxiliary, with the superintendent of woman's work taking oversight of the woman's work of the entire Church. The growth of the woman's work for the past fifteen years has been phenomenal.

The men of the Church have a secretary, and are organizing for more effective service under a constitution and plan wrought out by the General Assembly.

The young people of the Church are also effectively organized, and are showing enthusiastic interest in the work of the Church. The young people's conferences, which are held in each synod every summer, are among the most encouraging signs of the times.

There is a growing spirit of evangelism in the Church. This is shown in the preaching of our ministers, in the organization of men's evangelistic clubs, and in the fact that classes for the study and the actual doing of personal evangelism are being organized in many parts of the Church.

The Southern Presbyterian Church is homogeneous in its ministry and in its members. There are no divisions among them. They are conservative in doctrine and progressive in methods. They preach and teach the great doctrines of grace and redemption as set forth in the Scriptures and as interpreted in our Presbyterian standards.

Our Church is popularly called the Southern Presbyterian Church, but its technical and legal name is "The Presbyterian Church in the United States." This has been its name since 1865. If you will look up its record under this name in the various year-books that are published, you will soon discover that the Presbyterian Church in the United States has had a steady growth since the day it was organized. It has doubled its membership in the last twenty-five years, a thing which very few denominations in the world have done. The reports to our last Assembly showed that we have 17 synods, 91 presbyteries, 2,235 ministers, 3,601 churches, and 462,177 members. The territory of the Southern Presbyterian Church covers practically all of that part of the United States which lies south of a line drawn from Baltimore to Kansas City, and east of a line drawn from Kansas City to El Paso, Texas.

Even a glance at the history of our Church and its work shows that we have a rich heritage, and that our fathers have left us a noble birthright.

The Creed of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.

BY THORNTON WHALING, D.D., LL.D.

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THE Southern Presbyterian Church derives its doctrinal and spiritual heredity from the Westminster divines, who, in the middle of the seventeenth century, drew up the most complete and Biblical creed yet framed in the history of the Christian Church. This descent comes largely through the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Churches, with a generous infusion also of members from the Reformed Churches of Holland, France (Huguenots), and the German Palatinate. This Church's history ran parallel with that of the U. S. A. Church until 1861, when a fundamental difference emerged as to the spirituality of the Church, or visible kingdom of Christ,

which led to the organization of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

This Church requires all of the officers, including ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, to affirm their acceptance of the following vows of subscription:

1. "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"

2. "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"

While all the details and the *ipsissima verba* of these doctrinal symbols are not enforced, "the system of doctrine" does bind, and is enforced. For example, the statement found in chapter 25, article 6, that the Pope of Rome is "that anti-Christ, that man of sin, that son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church against Christ and all that is called God," would not disqualify the great Charles Hodge for membership when he says, "It does not follow that the Papacy is the only anti-Christ" (Vol. III p. 822). There may be other and even worse anti-Christ's to come.

The system of doctrine which binds is the accepted creed of evangelical Christendom, representing the *Communis sensus* of God's people, to which is to be added the consistent and generous Calvinism of the Confession and Catechisms. The evangelical creed of all branches of the visible Catholic Church cannot be briefly stated. It is embedded in the thirty-three chapters of the Confession, beginning with the Holy Scriptures and ending with the Last Judgment. It is found in the 106 questions and answers of the Larger Catechism, which is the most complete statement of Christian and Biblical belief ever found in Church history. It is found in more brief and simple form in the 106 questions and answers of the Shorter Catechism. Of course, the virgin birth, the literal resurrection of the body of Jesus from the grave, the second coming of Christ, are here, along with the still more central doctrines of the Trinity, of Christ the Mediator, the new birth, justification, the final estate of heaven or hell, and others of necessity involved in these majestic universal beliefs.

But there must be added, and the consistent practice of the Southern Presbyterian Church does add, the distinctive creed of so-called Calvinists, or Augustinians. Judged by the test of common consent during the whole course of Church history, this has been the most widely-accepted creed of Christian believers. It includes, of course, the sovereignty of God in the realm of salvation, which bears the scriptural name of election. This view satisfies Scripture, and the Christian heart as well, because it commits the question of salvation to the only being in the universe marked by infinite love, mercy, grace, and compassion, and He will make it embrace as wide as infinite wisdom, justice, and love will permit.

This system also includes firm belief in the scriptural statement that men by nature "are dead in trespasses and sins." They are alive physically, mentally, and morally, and can do

many things required and commanded, but they are spiritually dead, and can render no real spiritual service until raised from the dead. They can recognize, as men often do, their death in this supreme realm, and cry for mercy and life, which they will certainly receive.

The atonement and satisfaction of Jesus the Christ has merit sufficient to secure the salvation of all, and it does secure for all the delay of just punishment, while a sincere offer of salvation is made to all men, but it avails certainly and efficaciously for those whom His Father has given Him, His own sheep or people, as He calls them.

The grace of the Holy Spirit is given to all men, for the Logos is the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and this common grace is sufficient to convince every man of sin, and renders him without excuse in not applying for divine forgiveness and mercy. But the efficacious and irresistible grace, which raises the spiritually dead, gives the new birth, and makes a "new creature in Christ Jesus," is reserved for those whom Christ calls "My sheep," "those whom the Father hath given Me," and who are thus distinct from the world amongst whom they live.

The final perseverance of the saints is due to their final preservation by Him who said, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

The Westminster Standards as interpreted by the U. S. Church allow one to be a post- or pre-millennialist, a traducianist or creationist, a believer in mediate or immediate imputation, and other divergences along the line of scholastic differences, which they do not attempt to settle; but a true Biblical evangelicalism plus a generous and sincere Calvinism represent the doctrinal *status*, and the proposed union with the United Presbyterian Church awakens a thrill of genuine enthusiasm, because most of our people are convinced that both Churches stand side by side on this safe, sane Biblical platform, and thus a true National Presbyterian Church may come to be. The hope also burns that the other Presbyterian communions will awake to the discovery that their heritage, history, and mission call in no uncertain tones for the same historic and scriptural basis of Presbyterian work and service.

The Foreign Missionary Work of the Presbyterian Church in the United States

BY S. H. CHESTER, D.D.

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EVERY member of the Presbyterian Church in the United States who believes in foreign missions—and this now includes practically our entire membership—is proud of the fact that our first General Assembly, meeting in Augusta, Georgia, in December, 1861, issued the following declaration: "The General Assembly desires distinctly and deliberately to inscribe on our Church's banner, as she now first unfurls it to the world, in immediate connection with the headship of her Lord, His last command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' regarding this as the great end of her organization and obedience to it as the indispensable condition of her Lord's promised presence."

Up to the close of the Civil War we had no access to any foreign field, but our Church conducted under its foreign missions committee a work among the Indians of the Indian Territory. This work was later taken over by our committee on home missions, and is still being conducted by that committee.

Immediately after the close of the Civil War we took over a mission in China which had been conducted by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions before the Church was divided. The missionary in charge, being a man of southern birth and traditions, decided to come under the direction of the Southern Church, which arrangement was made and his sup-

port undertaken by our Church. This mission has now developed into our two China missions, the Mid-China and the Northern Kiangyin missions, which are trying to occupy and evangelize a territory lying along the Yangtse River and the grand canal, supposed to contain a population of about 18,000,000 souls. In this territory there are now working over 200 missionaries, at 12 main stations and 280 outstations. There are 13 hospitals, 250 schools, with 8,000 students, and 200 Sabbath schools, with about 10,000 pupils. The churches established by our missions in this field now have a communicant membership of over 10,000.

We have a mission in Brazil which was opened in 1869, in which there are working today about 50 missionaries, at 13 main stations and about 140 regular preaching points. In coöperation with the mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in this field, we have succeeded in establishing an indigenous church, entirely selfgoverning and increasingly self-supporting, of about 30,000 communicant members. We have three organized missions in Brazil, one working in the northern part, with Pernambuco as a center, one in the southern part, with Lavras as a center, and one in the east, with Campinas as a center. In these missions we are doing coöperative work with the missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. in two