

# The American Presbyterian.

John A. Weir

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### "PERMANENT LICENTIATES."

A far better term is this than "Lay Preachers," which has been so much used of late years. Not because "Lay Preaching" and "Lay Preachers" are illegitimate work and workers in the Church, but because of the prevailing desire, shall we call it *prejudice*?—that those who formally address religious meetings, should have some formal license from some competent ecclesiastical authority.

And we are not sure that this desire—or prejudice—is not a wise one, in the present condition of the Church, although it is plain that the preaching of the primitive Christians was, to a great extent, Lay Preaching.

Although the primitive church was jealous of the various duties and ranks and privileges of its ministry, it still regarded the proclamation of the Gospel to the unconverted, which was the only thing then called "preaching," as the common privilege and duty of every Christian, and so the Church, not merely the ministers, "went every where preaching the word," when scattered from Jerusalem by persecution.

When our Lord ascended, he gave gifts to his Church. Among many "spiritual gifts," the highest was that of the *MINISTRY*. He "gave the APOSTLES, and the PROPHETS, and the EVANGELISTS, and the PASTORS, and the TEACHERS."

The latter class of "Pastors and Teachers," was the local ministry, as the other three were Catholic ministries. In this local ministry, there grew up gradually, and apparently from below upwards, the three orders of DEACON, ELDER, and BISHOP, as the ministers of a local parish.

"Deacon" is of course the generic term of all ministers. The Jewish priesthood are called "deacons"; Christ is a "deacon" or minister; St. Paul is a "deacon"; the ordinary ministers of a church are at first all deacons; for in the word there is a general idea of service, and so of *divine service* or ministry.

Soon, but how soon we do not know, there came to be two orders of these Deacons or ministers, which seem to have been at first distinguished as Senior Deacons and Junior Deacons, or sometimes as simply Seniors and Juniors. So of Elders or Seniors, we have frequent mention, while the Juniors carried out Ananias and Sapphira; and soon the term Deacon or Minister was dropped from the first class, and they remained simply Seniors or Elders, while Junior was dropped from the second class, and Deacons only remained. The Elders also, while the Church was in this inchoate state, were called by other titles—as Bishops, Presidents, &c.

The "Angel," who appears in the Apocalypse as the chief minister of a local church, before long appropriated the very suitable title of Bishop, leaving to the other orders the names Elder and Deacon. And so the primitive Church nomenclature was complete in the four classes of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist and Pastor, and the three orders of local pastors and teachers, named Bishop, Elder and Deacon, which may still be seen in any well-ordered Presbyterian Church, without prelatical or popish additions.

Across the line of these regular and ordinary ministries, there came an extraordinary ministry nowhere named in the New Testament, but brought before us in the special ministry of Timothy and Titus, who were "APOSTOLIC LEGATES," appointed by an Apostle to do apostolic work, and having only that special and temporary authority conferred by the Apostle. This office could not be brought into precedent, unless Apostles were restored, who could appoint such Legates.

But in this array of ranks and orders in the Christian ministry, there was no provision for confining "Preaching" to any or all of these various ministries. There was the Apostle having "the word of wisdom" for supreme rule and guidance; the Prophet with his "word of knowledge" to speak for "edification, and exhortation and comfort;" the Evangelist with his special gifts to proclaim the Gospel and found churches; the Pastors, "apt to teach," for the instruction of the organized church of parents and children, superintending the worship, ruling the

church, and gathering and distributing its charities.

But all this orderly arrangement of the Christian ministry did not shut out the Lay Preaching by which, to a great extent, the rapid evangelization of the world was carried on. Every Christian man and woman became at once a preacher of the Gospel, either to single individuals, as Christ to the woman of Samaria, or to larger and larger numbers, according to each one's ability. And so; when scattered by persecution, the Christians of Jerusalem "went every where preaching the word." Some of these went "as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch," preaching the Gospel to Jews only, and some of the converts, who were "men of Cyprus and Cyrene," went to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus to the Grecians.

And all this Lay Preaching was abundantly successful; and so the Apostles, who remained at Jerusalem as the centre of unity and authority, sent Peter and John down to Samaria, and Barnabas to Antioch, to bestow the Holy Ghost and organize. Neither did all this order and system interfere with the work of that Lay Evangelist Aquila; nor that still greater one "Apollus, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures."

So, neither in our own day, should our organization shut out any of these sorts of Lay Preaching; and yet, in the present condition of the Church, we cannot doubt that official authority would be wisely given to every Apollus and Aquila in our Churches; whether they be tent-makers like Aquila, or merchants, or mechanics of modern trades.

If the Home Missionary Committee, or the Presbyteries have failed to bring forward such a class of men; we believe it has been for one or both of two reasons; either for want of this very official authority which the Permanent Licentiate would have, or, and that mainly, because they have aimed too high in the social scale. They have sought for the literary men, for lawyers and judges, and others who are mentally over-taxed during the week, and need the Sunday rest, or who may be too proud or too worldly to take such a position. For this work we want plain men, whose daily business is more of the hand than of the brain, and who are humble enough to preach in houses or barns or fields, and to the plainest and most ignorant people. And there are many men of this sort, who can think out a Sunday's talk in the midst of their daily work, and who would be very acceptable with a "Permanent Licentiate's" authority, to very many precious souls who would not understand your lawyer or judge or doctor.

He who asks, "Can you get Judge This or Doctor That to do this work?" fails to see, at all, the things aimed at by the advocates of this measure. We don't want such men, and have an entirely different class of men in view, and a different sort of work.

Some of the Presbyteries will probably overture the Assembly this Spring on this matter, and whether it will attract any notice or induce any action now, still, let the friends of the movement continue to agitate in ecclesiastical bodies and papers until it is accomplished. Probably it will be found best to give these "Permanent Licentiate's" ordination as Deacons or Elders in some local church, so that as we have now Bishop-Evangelists, we may also have in this new arrangement Elder-Evangelists, and Deacon-Evangelists; all of which may help to bring us back to primitive views and practice with respect to the two lower of the three orders of our ministry.

Many of our readers can at this moment think of men just suited to this work, to whom such arrangement and authority would give the requisite courage to do formally, and in a pulpit, in a vacant charge, what they now do with great acceptance in the less formal prayer-meeting.

Let us have the Permanent Licentiate's.

THE APPROACHING SABBATH-SCHOOL CONVENTION.—Five years ago the presence of eight hundred delegates in a Convention of teachers and friends of Sabbath-schools held in this city, formed a scene which our Christian friends will be glad to see repeated. And repeated we expect it will be, with no abatement of interest, on the 28th inst., the time appointed for the meeting of a State Convention in the church, corner of Broad and Arch. A preparatory meeting was held on Monday evening, for completing the ar-

rangements, and the public will no doubt, be furnished with seasonable notice of further particulars. It is expected that the hospitalities of Christian-families will be tendered to delegates from abroad.

### GOWNS AGAIN.

Since the altar is gone, at least in a great portion of the American Church, where is the room for the priestly character in the minister? Is this, after all, not the point in the fight between the gown and the citizen's dress?

These two inquiries contain the gist of a column editorial in the *German Reformed Messenger* of last week, called out by a brief paragraph of our Rochester Correspondent, in which certain Brooklyn preachers were spoken of as "disfigured" by gowns in the pulpit. We do not know that we have any response to the *Messenger's* criticism beyond an affirmative answer to its last question. The denial of the priestly character of the ministry in any literal sense, and the removal of the altar from the church as a purely Jewish piece of furniture, are essential to Protestantism in our view, and the gown, though of less significance, naturally goes with them. Our excellent friend of the *Messenger* and his esteemed associates are, we fear, by these criticisms, on a matter in itself trifling, shown to be fast drifting to a point where it will be difficult to say what claim they have to the honored title "Reformed."

We commend the *Messenger* to the table of Scripture titles given to ministers of the Gospel in the New Testament, found in the opening paragraphs of Vinet's Pastoral Theology, where as the author remarks, no name in common use for this office is wanting but that of priest alone; where we find minister, deacon, bishop, presbyter, apostle, pastor, steward, ambassador, angel employed; but where the word "priest" is never applied except to the whole body of believers. We also commend to them Vinet's definition of the Christian minister, to which, we think, all who refuse to accept the doctrine of the real presence in the Sacrament will subscribe: "He is the Christian; but the Christian consecrating his activity to making others Christians; or to edifying those who have embraced that religion. He does habitually that which occasionally and in a special manner becomes the duty of all Christians." Vinet's *Theologie Pastorale*, Deuxieme Edit. pp. 15-17.

### THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT IN PHILADELPHIA.

The following communication comes from an old and constant friend of the Temperance cause. The entire absence from the religious papers of any notice, either of the call or of the proceedings of the late great temperance demonstration in this city, had before arrested our attention. So far as this paper is concerned, the reason is correctly stated below, and we infer that the same was the case all through. Neither "Cold Water" nor any other of our regular readers need to be informed that we have given the most prompt and earnest welcome to the late efforts to revive the work; or, that, through all its vicissitudes, we have stood by it, basing our advocacy of it on the gospel principle of personal self-denial for the public good, and urging total abstinence and legal prohibition of the traffic as the only hopeful measures for carrying out the Reform. We confess ourselves more than surprised by the inadvertence, if such it be, of the executive management of the late meeting, in failing to call the religious press to its aid. Such papers keep no corps of city reporters, and are in the main obliged to depend upon information volunteered by those who have the interest to be forwarded in special charge.

EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, DEAR BROTHER,—I missed what the city dailies of the next morning told me was a great and lively temperance demonstration at the Academy of Music, on the evening of the 18th ultimo. Your paper, and as I have since learned, other religious papers, contained no notice of it, and gave no account of the proceedings. I depend upon such papers for my information of meetings to be held, or the doings of meetings which have been held, in behalf of the great moral movements of the times. I have generally a quick scent on the temperance track, but, in the way mentioned, I lost it on that day, and was decidedly chagrined by the silence

of the religious press concerning it, both before and after its occurrence. I have since been informed that on the part of those entrusted with the duty of getting the affair before the public, there seemed to be an entire ignoring of the existence of the religious papers. At least I am definitely informed that, in the case of some of the most important of them, they received no notice of the meeting, and were furnished with no opportunity to give its doings to their readers. The aid of the secular press was properly invoked and secured, but the editors to whom it would have been most natural to turn for the most hearty and efficient support, were left in entire darkness concerning the affair. This is the more strange because of the prominence which the Christian community must bear in the restoration of vitality to the temperance cause, if any thing of lasting efficiency is expected from it—because also of the fact so plain to all who walk through this community with their eyes open, that there is nowhere such a readiness of action on this subject, such a ripeness for new and enlarged efforts as among the evangelical papers, clergy and churches. There may be exceptional cases of delinquency, but I have no hesitation in claiming that the statement is signally true of the evangelical element in this city as a whole. And it is a condition of things, which it will be madness to neglect in any fresh effort to abate the intolerable nuisance of dram shops, or unburden our people of the misery of drunkenness. The scheme of divorcing the temperance reform from Christianity, has had one fair trial. Our good ship comes out from it almost wrecked. For the time to come, let us give that coast a wide berth.

### COOPERATION IN THE BENEVOLENT SCHEMES OF THE CHURCH.

AN OVERTURE TO THE ASSEMBLY.—The following overture speaks for itself. It meets a subject that demands a full discussion in the General Assembly and by the Press.

The Third Presbytery of Philadelphia, whilst rejoicing in every good work, and bidding "God-speed" to every agency for the spread of the Gospel, by whomsoever conducted, yet has observed with deep concern, that those benevolent movements which have been organized by our Branch of the Church, through its General Assembly, which are controlled and directed by our own churches through the Assembly, which have been commended as most vital to the success of the body in its efforts to evangelize the country and the world, are embarrassed, and crippled by the lack of means for the prosecution of their appropriate work.

Facts make it undeniable that very few of our churches give their co-operation to all of the Assembly's schemes for evangelization and benevolence, each year; and that no one of the Committees has the support of the whole, if even of the half, of the churches connected with the Assembly.

Believing that this is a great evil, and one loudly calling for reform, the Presbytery overtures the Assembly to take such action on the subject, as in its wisdom shall seem adapted to remedy the evil.

UNTIMELY [?] DISCUSSION.—The excellent correspondent of the *Christian Herald* "E. P. P." has been discussing the question of Reunion from a stand-point similar to our own. In a late letter he writes of the criticism which he has encountered for so doing, to the following effect:

"Some of my friends think I have been 'too sharp' in my articles on 'Reunion.' I have meant to utter simply the truth about the facts of the case. I have endeavored to be honest and candid, and not uncharitable towards our Old School brethren. There were some things that needed to be spoken, in my judgment, and I had as well speak them as any one. It is not always a pleasant thing to utter the truth that ought to be uttered. We may be too rash, or too prudent, Bro. Jas. Gallaher used to say, 'there is such a thing as being prudent to death.' There are cases where prudence runs into cowardice; and where, through fear of giving offense by plain speaking, immense harm has been done. I am in favor of reunion just as soon as there is piety and principle and enlarged liberality enough on both sides, to make it productive of peace and harmony, and the increased efficiency of the Church. I am not in favor of it any sooner. I fear that state of things has not yet come. Let the two General Assemblies recommend the

union of all feeble churches lying contiguous to each other. Let a majority decide as to the Presbytery with which they shall unite. This ought to be done at once. Then let the churches and Presbyteries carry it out in good faith. Let not all the steps lean in one direction. Let there be frequent exchanges of pulpits, and let ministers and members be received on their letters of dismission from each side, without the suspicion of heresy in a new examination. Let there be inter-communication of Churches, and Presbyteries, and Synods, and General Assemblies. Let us all study the things that make for peace, and reunion will come of itself, and as soon as is desirable."

### "NO ALLUSION TO POLITICAL QUESTIONS."

—One of our city dailies a few days since contained a letter from a Norfolk correspondent, giving an account of the celebration in that city of the recent "Thanksgiving" of the Order of Odd Fellows. Rev. John D. Keely, "Past Grand of Petersburg," was the orator. "Speaking of faith, one of the mottoes of the Order," says the letter, "he said, 'Washington, the great rebel, had faith; rebelled and cut loose from England, and thus secured the independence of the colonies; I see signs, and know them in the color of the skies, and have faith in them, but will not now tell what they mean.' He referred to his efforts to procure the release of Mr. Davis," &c., &c. So runs the sketch of the oration. But the cream of the thing is found in the beautiful naïvete of the correspondent, who adds, "No allusion was made to political questions."

THEIR TERMS.—The *Union Presbyterian* of April 3d specifies on what basis the growing liberal wing of the United Presbyterian Church would be willing to negotiate for union.

1. On the subject of communion could not the O. S. Presbyterian Church take the ground that it is not proper to invite to the Lord's table all the members of such Evangelical Churches as admit to probationary membership, and such as confirm persons who do not give "scriptural evidence that they are true Christians?"

2. Could she not print in her Book of Psalms and Hymns such a version of the entire book of the Psalms of the Bible as would be acceptable to United Presbyterians, so that all our ministers would find in all her churches a hymnology which they could conscientiously use, and which would be as ample as the one at home?

Could she not do something to make her hymns real versions, or, at least, moderately close paraphrases of some part of the New Testament, or other portions of scripture?

3. Could not her General Assembly address a pastoral letter to all her churches, affectionately showing all her members the entangling nature of the permanent secret societies of this country—not, indeed, proposing to make withdrawal a term of communion, but giving light, on this subject, and offering cogent reasons in favor of the abandonment of these orders?

There is good reason to believe that a majority of the ministers of the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church would be willing to accept the same terms.

CONFESSION.—The wife of Rev. H. M. Field, in a letter from Paris, gives some of her girlish reminiscences when a child in the Catholic Church in France. One of them we cut out:—

"When the time came for me to go to the first confession, I was greatly puzzled what to confess. My old *bonne*, who was in a pet that day, said I was such a naughty child that I might as well confess all the sins in the book! So taking her direction to the letter, I copied the whole list of offences. With this fearful catalogue in my hands, and a trembling heart, I went to the priest, who sat dull and heavy in his confessional box. He paid little attention as I rattled off my lesson, till I came to one word which struck upon his ear. It was "simony" which was one of the sins I was confessing. "What is that, my child?" he said. "I do not know, *mon pere*." He then asked how I came with such a formidable registry of evil doings; and when I told him, he laughed so immoderately (he was a huge fat man like those burly monks we saw in Italy) that I thought he would tumble out of his box. But he gave me full absolution for simony and all other offences, and spoke a few kind words, and I crept away, with an inexpressible relief to my poor fluttering heart that I had not committed the unpardonable sin. Of course this little incident proves nothing but the ignorance of a child, but it may show you how impressions are mingled in the memory of those far-off years."

We shall publish a reply of Rev. Mr. Eva, on Millenarianism next week, and with this shall close the formal controversy on the subject.