

1. The office-bearers were chosen by the people.
2. The office of a bishop and an elder was identical.
3. There was a plurality of elders in each Church.
4. Ordination was the act of a presbytery — that is, of a plurality of elders.
5. There was the privilege of appeal to the assembly of elders: and the power of government was exercised by them in their associate capacity.
6. The only Head of the Church was the Lord Jesus Christ.

A fair comparison of the three principal forms of Church government into which the Christian world falls — Prelacy, Independency, and Presbytery — shows that Prelacy conforms to none of the above principles; Independency to only three of them; while Presbytery conforms to all six. We conclude, therefore, that Presbytery, since it has the approbation of Scripture, is of divine right, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH'S MESSAGE

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HIS ASCENSION TO GLORY, our Lord gave His apostles the Great Commission: to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all men everywhere. Ever since, this has been the Church's obligation. The Gospel which Christ would have us preach must be determined by the Word of God.

1. It is a message, first, that deals with man's sin

The teaching that man is a sinner, that he is guilty before a holy God, and that his sin, if unrepented of, will bring him to everlasting ruin, is peculiarly unpalatable to the natural man. The Bible itself recognises this. But whatever we may think about it, it is a doctrine which is inscribed in the Word of God as with a pen of iron. Our Lord said: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). If man is not a sinner, if he is not in danger of God's punishment, there is no point to the Gospel. It is a Gospel of salvation through Christ Jesus. But salvation from what? Man's guilt and condemnation lie at the back of preaching. So, first, man's sin must be emphasised.

2. It is a message which stresses man's inability to save himself

The currently popular gospel teaches that man can by his supposed good deeds win his way to the favour of God. This teaching is just the essence of Pharisaism — something against which Jesus thundered. No! Man cannot save himself. He is, as far as human power and ingenuity is concerned, beyond redemption. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Galatians 3:21). "If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"

(Galatians 2:21). The Bible teaches that man is spiritually dead, and that only by the power of God's Spirit can he be given life and brought to trust in Jesus. Unless man is convinced of his utter hopelessness, Christ Jesus is of no relevance to him. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick" (Mark 2:17).

3. The Gospel message, however, does not abandon man to his lostness

It comes to him where he is. It proclaims the remedy: it points out the way of deliverance: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). What does this mean? It means that God has provided for man's lostness. Christ Jesus, by His holy, sinless life, has met the claims of God's law and justice: by His death on the cross, He has endured the sinner's punishment. He died the innocent for the guilty. Hence, the way of acceptance with God is through Christ and Him crucified. The requirement of the Gospel in order to our salvation is repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

4. The Gospel calls for a life of holiness

Those who, by the grace of God, respond to the Gospel call and who believe in Jesus, will manifest their trust in Him and their love to Him by a life of obedience to His Word. This is the proper order because it is the divine order. The sinner rests in Christ alone for salvation and acceptance with God: but this being done, the new life is expressed in holy, fruitful conduct, and effective witness-bearing. The motive is love to Christ. This response to Him, we call evangelical obedience. Multitudes who profess to believe in Jesus as their Saviour contradict their profession by living unchristian lives. Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

This adherence to the whole Word of God represents what the Free Presbyterian Church stands for. We do not believe in accommodating the Bible to appease the prejudices of men. We let the Scripture speak for itself, and when it has spoken, we say: "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

We invite you to join in our worship. We hope you will be blessed among us, because we trust you will find what you cannot get everywhere: "The whole counsel of God."

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