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No. 8 West North Ave.,

ALLEGHENY, PA.  
A SERMON,

*Preached February 1, 1880,*

IN

FIRST REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

BY

Rev. J. M. Foster.

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“Bind up the Testimony.”—Isa. viii. 16.

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# TESTIMONY BEARING.

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“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.—Revelation xi. 3.

THE book of Revelation is the most sublime and wonderful drama that has ever been written. No human mind could have invented its grand imagery. Its author divides it into three parts: 1. The things which the Apostle “had seen”—the vision of the first chapter; 2. “The things which are”—the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor; 3. “The things which shall be hereafter”—the prophecy from the fourth to the twenty-second chapters. The prophetic part is occupied with the breaking of seals, blowing of trumpets, and pouring out of vials, symbolizing wars, famines, pestilences and persecutions. In the fourth chapter, the Apostle saw the Redeemer take the roll, sealed with seven seals, representing the decrees or secret purposes of God. The breaking of the first six seals disclosed God’s judgments upon Rome Pagan, the sixth resulting in her destruction, as we have it in the sixth chapter. The breaking of

the seventh seal opened the entire roll. The seventh seal includes the whole remaining portion of the prophecy. Under the seventh seal we have seven trumpets, representing God's judgments upon the Papacy; and, under the last three trumpets, which are woe-trumpets, we have seven vials, the sixth of which is being poured out at the present hour, and, when the seventh is poured out, "then cometh the end." The blowing of six trumpets is recorded in the eighth and ninth chapters. A pause occurs between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The tenth chapter, and the first fourteen verses of the eleventh, are a parenthesis, and represent that pause. Our text occurs in that parenthesis. The vibration of the sixth trumpet ceased about the time of the first Reformation. The "two witnesses," according to some, are Enoch and Elijah brought to the earth again; others, the Old and New Testaments; others, Huss and Jerome, or Luther and Calvin; and others still, Church and State. They can not be Enoch and Elijah, for "they were translated that they should not see death," but these "witnesses are to be slain." Not the Old and New Testaments, for they can not die—"the word of the Lord liveth and abideth forever." Nor Luther and Calvin, for they did not prophesy 1,260 years. Nor Church and State, for then there has been but one witness during the last twelve centuries. There has

been no divinely constituted State. "The witnesses are a competent number of Christians, who, for 1,260 years, insist upon the application of God's word to Church and State; and who testify against all communities who rebel against the Lord Christ." There are two, because it takes so many witnesses to establish a case; two, because few in comparison with their enemies; two, that they may correspond to the Old Testament types of Joshua and Zerubbabel, representative of Church and State. We can not tell whether the 1,260 years began in 606, when Phocas declared Boniface III. universal bishop, or in 756, when the Pope became also a temporal prince, or whether before either of these dates. We only know that their prophecy is to continue for that length of time.

DOCTRINE.—*During the period of the great apostasy, 1,260 years, there will be a competent number of faithful Christians to bear witness for God and his truth upon earth.*

I. *The Church, as an organized body, is the agent of the Lord Jesus Christ for bearing witness to the truth upon earth.*

The Redeemer has established divine institutions among men for special purposes. The Sabbath is a divine institution. It is the arrangement, appointment and contrivance of heaven for man. It is too far-reaching in its benefits for man to have originated, or even have thought of. It has its necessity in the very nature of

man, and its authority in God's word. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The family is a divine institution. Marriage is an ordinance of God. It is God's appointed method of restraining vice, of fostering virtue, of multiplying the human race, and developing the better sentiments of the human heart. It has its necessity in the very constitution of our nature, and its authority in God's word. "They twain shall be one flesh." The State is a divine institution. Civil government is that settled order of things that is manifestly in harmony with the divine will. It is an integral part of that system of moral government by which God governs mankind. It is invested with authority and powers which transcend all human organizations, and thus becomes the heaven-appointed and heaven-commissioned agent, representing the divine authority among men. It has its necessity in the very constitution of our nature, and its authority in God's word. "The powers that be are ordained of God." The Church is another divine institution. It is "the kingdom of God" among men. Its organization is from God. "Upon this Rock I will build my Church." Its authority is from God. "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Its constitution is from God. "Unto them were committed the oracles of God." Its laws are from God. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you." Its com-

mission is from God. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And its duties, as God's witness-bearing agent, have been promulgated from his throne. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." This kingdom of Christ, which is "not of this world," in any proper sense, is his witnessing body upon earth. The Jewish Church was God's organized kingdom for bearing witness to the truth; and the Christian Church, which is simply the Jewish Church continued under modifications, is his organized kingdom for bearing witness to the truth. The entire canon of revelation has been committed to the Church's custody and guardianship. "Nor do we regard this as meaning no more than that the letter of Scripture is to be faithfully kept. Of course, this is not to be overlooked; but much more is meant. The written word has been committed to the Church that it may be studied, believed and incorporated into the Church's living organism, become the rule and law of her life, and thus be steadfastly kept, vindicated, promulgated and applied."—*Watson.*

II. *The Church's creed is her fundamental law or constitution.*

"In civil affairs, there is an important difference between fundamental or constitutional law and ordinary enactments. The former determines the structure of the government. The latter meet, at the time, the incidental wants and

varying exigencies of the nation. Fundamental laws settle the policy of the government, and the principles of its operation. When the ship sets sail, she has fundamental rules laid down for her direction in all circumstances of wind and weather. The end and object of the voyage, and general rules for the safety of the passengers and freight, are all specified and settled when she starts, and are applicable in every condition of the ship. So the Ship of State must have her fundamental laws."—*Mac Alister*. All this is equally applicable to the Church. The Church's creed is her fundamental or constitutional law. The "reed like unto a rod," in the first verse of this chapter, means the Church's creed. It can not mean the Bible, for this part of the prophecy was fulfilled in the sixteenth century, and the Church had the Bible long before that. It means Luther's ninety-five Theses, Calvin's Institutes, the Augsburg Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, etc. These were the "reed like unto a rod" given to the Church at the first Reformation. The reed is the Church's creed. And this she must have.

3. *To secure harmony and co-operation among her members in accomplishing the great design of her organization.* In the formation of a literary society, the members agree as to the principles they hold, and the rules by which they are to be governed, in the adoption of a constitution. They know that it is necessary to

adopt a constitution in order to secure harmony and co-operation among the members in accomplishing the object for which the society is formed. The people of the United States, "in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty" to themselves and their posterity, ordained and established the Constitution. These great ends can be compassed by the State in no other way. Now, the Church, as an organized society, must adopt the same great principles, and must walk by the same rule, in order to secure harmony and co-operation in promoting the great ends of her existence. Without this, there will be discord, and that is contrary to the very genius of the Church's life. Over and over again the Scriptures insist on the duty of cultivating unity of sentiment and of feeling among the members of the Church. "I beseech you, brethren," says the Apostle, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." It is manifestly the duty of the members of the Church to cultivate unity of spirit, and to cooperate in maintaining the faith of the gospel. These ends can be accomplished in no other way than by a creed. 2. *That she may discharge her appropriate duty as a witness for the truth.* The Church, in her organized capacity, is the divinely appointed witness for God and his truth in the midst of an ungodly world. "The Church of the living God," says the Apostle, "is the pillar and ground of truth." As the pillars and the foundation support the building which rests upon them, the Church, which is founded upon a rock, is under her exalted Head, the support of the truth upon the earth. "The Church is a noble column on whose sides the lines of truth are so deeply engraved as to defy the obliterating hand of time; and so highly raised that the mutilating hand of man can not reach them, while from its lofty summit the heaven-lit lamp of truth sheds afar its cheering and life-giving rays."—*Symington*. Now, this organic testimony of the Church can be given officially in no other way except through her creed. The Constitution of the United States is the nation's declaration of

principles, the profession of the nation's faith; and, because it does not have the name of God in it, European nations say, ours is the only nation in the world without a God. So the creed is the Church's official declaration of principles, her organic testimony. There is a difference between the facts as they exist in a case of litigation and the witness' statement of those facts. The witness' statement of the facts is testimony; and that testimony is valid only as it corresponds to the facts in the case. So there is a difference between the facts of revelation, as they exist in God's word, and the Church's statement of those facts. The Church's official statement of the facts of revelation is her testimony; and her testimony is valuable only in proportion as it corresponds to the Bible facts. That the Church may discharge her appropriate duty as a witness for the truth, it is necessary that she adopt a creed which contains a plain and explicit statement of the doctrines of the Bible. 3. *That she may preserve her purity in doctrine and life.* To secure the presence and blessing of the King of Zion, in his Church, the preservation of her purity is a matter of the first importance. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." He who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks prefers the charge against the church of Pergamos, that there

were in her communion those who held "the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication;" and also others, who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, "which things," saith he who "hath the sharp sword with two edges," "I hate." It is the will of God that the Church eliminate all error, and conserve the pure word of God; and that her members keep themselves unspotted from the world. But the Church can not cast out all error by simply accepting the word of God. "The Bible is my creed," shouts the untutored professor. But such a principle is false. The Bible is no man's creed. It is the very truth itself. Such parties pretend to a great range of liberality; but they are virtually bigots. Certainly, so far as error is concerned, they are liberal enough, for men may believe what they please, so far as they are concerned; but, so far as the truth is concerned, they are the narrowest and most bigoted of any, for they are determined, so far as in them lies, to break down all distinctions between truth and error. All denominations, orthodox, semi-orthodox and heterodox, unite in professing their faith in all the doctrines of the Bible. The only way in which the Church can maintain her purity of doctrine, is by adopting a creed which contains a clear, distinct and explicit statement of all the doctrines of the Bible.

But purity of doctrine is connected with purity of life, as cause and effect. We sometimes hear it said: "It is no matter what one believes, providing his heart and life are all right." Well, I suppose there is a sense in which that is true. It is no matter if the fountain be corrupt, providing the stream be pure. It is no matter if the tree be bad, providing the fruit be good. It is no matter if both compass and sailing-chart be wrong, provided the sailing be all right. But who ever heard of such a thing? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" A man whose principles are wrong, his heart and life will be wrong in the same proportion. Simon Magus thought he could purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit with money, and, that being his belief, he offered the apostles money, and drew upon himself Peter's just rebuke. The Mormons think it is right to have a plurality of wives, and they have them. The Roman Catholic thinks it is right to pray to the Virgin Mary, and he is guilty of idolatry. The Hindoo widow thought it was her duty to mount the funeral pile and be consumed with her husband, and she did it. The old Spartans thought it was right to steal, providing they did it secretly, and they stole. Saul of Tarsus thought it was his duty to persecute the Church, and so he steeled his otherwise tender heart against the claims of humanity, and imbrued his hands in the martyrs' blood. A man whose principles

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are wrong will be wrong in his heart and life. Purity of life can only flow from pure principles. As a means of preserving the Church's purity in doctrine and life, a creed is indispensably necessary.

III. *The Church's creed, her organic testimony, must be "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."* Its character must be: 1. *Direct and pointed.* The artillery of truth must not be fired at random. This heaven-furnished ordnance must be leveled against the strongholds of Satan. The Church's testimony must be directed against the evils and errors of the times, and against those who hold and practice them. 2. *Full.* It must embrace all the great truths of revelation. It extends away back to the councils of eternity, when thoughts of peace and purposes of mercy were conceived in the Divine Mind for a lost and guilty race. It looks to the Son offering himself as our surety,<sup>†</sup> declaring his delights to be with the sons of men. It points us to the origin of the universe, when the Omniscient Word called all things into existence. It includes the fall of the human race, the destruction of sin in the incarnation and death of Christ, the mission of the Holy Spirit, and the ultimate triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom. It urges the shrinking spirit forward, through the valley of the shadow of death—through the dark and populous empire of the grave—into the august presence of

the Judge of all the earth, to the home of the beautified, to the pandemonium of the wicked, and onward into the immensities of the everlasting future! O what a wonderful trust! You have the key to those mysteries into which angels desired to look! What an awful responsibility does it entail! How shall we appear before Him who is "a consuming fire," if we prove recreant to this trust! 3. *Progressive and cumulative.* At first, the Church's creed was brief and simple, embracing a few of the leading fundamental doctrines of the Bible. But, in process of time, false doctrines were promulgated, and the Scriptures were misinterpreted to make them countenance these doctrines; and hence it became necessary for the Church to enlarge her creed from time to time, and declare distinctly and explicitly the teaching of Scriptures. The Church's creed arose out of controversy. The doctrine of the Trinity grew out of controversy. The Church decided, for all time: "1. That God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are not three gods, but one God; 2. Each has incommunicable properties peculiar to Himself; 3. No one of these, without the others, is God; 4. Any one of these, with the others, is God." In the fourth century, the Arian heresy arose. Arius taught that Christ was only a created being. Accordingly, the first oecumenical council was called at Nice, 325 A. D. This council decided



that "Christ is very God of very God." That corner-stone of the Church's walls has never been removed. Then the Apollinarian heresy arose—the denial of Christ's perfect humanity. The second ecumenical council was called at Constantinople, 381 A. D. This council decided that the Scriptures teach that "Christ had a true body and a reasonable soul." Then the Nestorian heresy arose—the separation of the two natures of Christ into two persons. And the third ecumenical council was called at Ephesus, 431 A. D. This council defended the *unity* of his person. Then the Monophysite heresy arose—the denial of the two distinct natures of Christ. And the fourth ecumenical council was called at Chalcedon, 451 A. D. This council decided that Christ has "two distinct natures, but one person forever." It also gave a deliverance respecting the person and office of the Holy Spirit. These decisions are granite blocks in the walls of the Church's defense that have remained immovable. The so-called ecumenical councils that have since convened were not universal, and were manipulated by Popes and Emperors. Here we enter the dark ages. All through the medieval period these principles were preserved by the Waldenses in the valley of Piedmont. The Waldenses—the Israel of the Alps—who received the gospel from the Apostle Paul, who "remained the representatives of the Universal Church, and were the

precursors and not the disciples of the Reformation," fought the Papacy over these walls for ten centuries. On the 31st of October, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of Wittenburg Cathedral, a large addition was made to these walls. Great contributions were made in the Christian Institutes of John Calvin, the Augsburg Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. But the last and great work was done by the Westminster Assembly. This assembly was called by the Long Parliament, and convened in the Chapel of Henry VII., July 1, 1643. It consisted of one hundred and twenty-one clergymen and thirty laymen, ten of whom were lords and twenty commoners, together with four clerical and two lay commissioners from the Church of Scotland. The assembly is described as learned, faithful and pious. Their first act was to swear the Solemn League and Covenant. They continued their sessions until 1649. They submitted the *Directory of Public Worship* to Parliament in 1644; the *Confession of Faith*, in 1646; the *Shorter Catechism*, in 1647, and the larger Catechism, in 1648. They did not aim at originality, but fidelity. It was not their purpose to draw out these doctrines from their own minds, as the spider draws her web from her own bowels, but only to gather up, and state in systematic order, the doctrines of their pre-

decessors. The doctrines that were so ably defended by Luther and Knox, and so powerfully stated by Calvin, were the doctrines of Augustine, Athanasius, Huss and Jerome. And the doctrines of this assembly were those of the former divines. So that the Westminster Assembly represents the attainments of the Church up to that time. This is the last free general assembly that the Church has had, and by its decisions we are bound until God in his providence gives us another. When the martyrs of Scotland were brought to the stake or scaffold, from 1560 to 1688, Scotland's *killing time*, they were always wont to say, "I die by the decisions of the last free general assembly, and I appeal for vindication to the next free general assembly." God has not given the Church another yet; and, until he does, we are bound by the decisions of the last. There is no denomination at the present hour that does this fully except the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We accept of *all* the attainments of the Church and their consequences. We stand on the broad platform of the first and second Reformations. We occupy the sunny heights of Mount Zion; and, when the next free general assembly convenes, which will be the precursor of the Millennium, the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church will be accepted by all, and upon this platform the Church will be united. We are not afraid to stand alone on the battlements of

Zion. Wave after wave of error has raged and dashed itself against these walls as vainly as the wind-swept waves when they lash their foam against the unyielding rock. First, the deep-rolling wave of Judaism, with its traditional ossification of doctrine and righteousness of good works, dashed against the walls. But the Apostle Paul and his cohorts laughed in scorn as they saw it fall harmless at its base. Then the towering wave of Platonism and Aristotelianism, crested by Gnosticism, with its wild and extravagant compound of Oriental theosophy, Greek philosophy and Christian ideas, and Manicheism, with its Persian dualism—the eternal conflict of good and evil, of mind and matter—came rolling up with tremendous force. But Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine, and the other sentinels upon the walls, despised it when they saw it break and fall powerless. The flood of waters from the Devil's mouth could not move the Church. All the gates of hell could not prevail against her. Then came the far-reaching wave of Popery, freighted with the icebergs of Scholasticism, and wrapped in the fogs of Mysticism, with its infamous claims of infallibility, of priestly power to forgive sins and deliver from Purgatory, of Mariolatry and worship of saints and angels, of works of merit and supererogation, of the real corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament, of power to perform miracles, and of the right to coerce the con-

science. But Luther, Calvin and Knox, and the other watchmen upon the walls, saw its tremendous force broken, and heard its roar die away. Then the great wave of Deism, originated by Herbert, of Cherbury, and carried forward by Hobbs and Tindal, of England, Helvetius, of France, and Kant, of Germany, with its absolute denial of a supernatural revelation, and its claims of the all-sufficiency of natural religion, rolled up with haughty crest. But Baxter, Howe, Flavel, Payson, and the other watchmen, have seen its power broken. At the present hour, the great double wave of Communism, with its white-cap of infidelity, and Roman Catholicism, with its white-cap of Jesuitry, is rolling up. But Sloan, Milligan, Wylie, Sproull, Mac Alister, Stevenson, and the other sentinels, will see its power soon broken. And then the high towers occupied for these long years by the Reformed Presbyterian Church will be revealed. These glorious principles, for which we have been contending, so long despised by the nations, and lightly esteemed by those who profess Christ, will be exalted, and the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church will be vindicated. Truly, "no weapon that is formed against Zion shall prosper." Her walls of defense are immovable. They are high as the shadowy cone of night. The enemy can not overtop them. They are strong as the impregnable Sahara. The enemy

can not penetrate them. No wonder her walls are called "Salvation," and her gates "Praise."

IV. *The privileges of the Church are to be enjoyed in subjection to the authority which Christ has placed in his Church and upon the basis of her organic testimony.* Only those can enjoy the privileges of the Church who swear allegiance to her authority, and profess loyalty to the truth, as she holds it in her fundamental law.

The Church is to be viewed in its twofold aspect of visible and invisible. "The visible Church is a society made up of all such as do, in all ages and places of the world, profess the true religion, and of their children." "The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one under Christ their head." So we have a twofold fellowship. 1. *We have Christian fellowship with all the members of Christ's mystical body.* The ground of this fellowship is the life of Christ in the soul. All who have the image of Christ in their hearts can have Christian fellowship together. As our Confession says: "And being united to each other as members of one body, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obligated to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man." We may enjoy Christian fellowship with any of God's people in reading his word together; in talking of his

wondrous works; in sitting down around the family board and asking God's blessing upon the meal, or returning him thanks for it; in singing the songs of Zion, reading the Scriptures, and kneeling down around the family altar and praying to the beautiful Giver of all good; in distributing to the necessities of saints; in carrying forward Christian enterprises, etc. In any of these ways we may have Christian fellowship with any upon whom the name of Christ is named. But, 2. *We have ecclesiastical fellowship with those only who accept of the testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and profess loyalty to her government and discipline.* We have ecclesiastical fellowship in the ordinance of *Baptism*. Only those should enjoy ecclesiastical fellowship in this high privilege who accept the standards and submit to the authority of the Church. We also have ecclesiastical fellowship in the ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*. Only those should enjoy ecclesiastical fellowship in this high privilege who accept the standards and submit to the authority of the Church. Hence, we are opposed to open communion: 1. Because it is inconsistent with the principles on which distinct ecclesiastical organizations are established. The Bible makes no provision for a divided Church. The Church is there viewed as one. These divisions originated in sin, and they have been productive of much harm. That denomination, and that only, has

a right to an existence which stands upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. All others exist in schism. The Reformed Presbyterian Church accepts the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of Christ and his apostles. It is the only denomination that does this fully. It alone has a right to exist. In so far as other denominations fail to accept this platform they forfeit their right to exist. But the apostles would hold ecclesiastical fellowship with none who would not accept of their platform and promise due submission to their authority. Then we can hold ecclesiastical fellowship with none but those who accept of our testimony and submit to our authority. It is one thing for an individual to go to a literary society and listen to their performances, and quite another for a member to enjoy organic fellowship with the society in the privileges of voting, advocating measures, performing, holding office, etc. The former can be enjoyed by any who are interested in literary culture. The latter can be enjoyed only by those who have given their assent to the constitution and by-laws, and promised to submit to the authority of the society. This is necessary in order to accomplish the object for which the society was organized. It is one thing for a foreigner to come to the United States and enjoy his natural rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and quite

another for him to be naturalized and enjoy the privileges of a voting citizen or legally qualified elector. The latter can be enjoyed only by those who have sworn to support the Constitution of the United States and to be loyal to this Government. This is necessary for the Government to maintain its existence as an organized body. So it is one thing to enjoy Christian fellowship with all Christ's people, and quite another to enjoy ecclesiastical fellowship in the privileges of the Church as an organized society. The latter can be enjoyed only by those who accept our testimony and submit to our authority. This is necessary to maintain our existence as a distinct organization of Christ's house. 2. It is inconsistent with the exercise of discipline. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Here the Head of the Church has invested the divinely appointed officers in his house with authority to open the doors of admission to all those who comply with the laws of the kingdom, and to close them against those who are not willing to submit to the authority of the King of Zion: to deprive those of ecclesiastical privileges who walk disorderly, and to remove the penalty when they have been brought to repentance. This authority can not be exercised in consistency with the theory of open communion.

To illustrate: A member of our church goes and joins the Freemasons in violation of the laws of our Church. The session calls him to account. He obstinately refuses to sever his connection with the fraternity, and is suspended. He goes and joins the Presbyterian Church, which filiates the members of the Lodge. The next Sabbath the communion of the Lord's Supper is celebrated at our church. He attends. Now, must I stand up in the pulpit and invite him to come forward to the table because he is a member in regular standing in the Presbyterian Church, and thus override the discipline of our church? Had he not gone and joined another church the session would have been called on to have kept him back from the table, on the ground that he was under censure. Does his joining another church remove the censure or change the nature of the offense? Not at all. And the session is under as much obligation to keep him back after he joins another church as before. Then, I can not invite him to sit down with us at the communion table. But the church that takes him in is as much a party to his errors and wrong-doings as he is. Therefore I can not invite any of the members of his denomination to come forward. The same holds true with reference to all denominations outside of our Church. So it appears that this theory of open communion is a delusion and a snare. And the officers of Christ's house stultify themselves, and set at

naught their own authority, in practicing it.

3. The Scriptures expressly command to refuse ecclesiastical fellowship to those who hold errors or walk disorderly. To the Roman Christians the Apostle gives the following directions: "Now, I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Error is the tap-root of division. Those who embrace and propagate erroneous principles, are the parties at whose door the sin of "divisions and offenses" lies. And the direction of the Apostle respecting such is, "Mark those, and avoid them." This can mean nothing else than organic separation. It implies refusing them all ecclesiastical fellowship. Again, in his instructions to the church in Thessalonica the Apostle gives the following direction: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." Here we have a solemn command, based upon the authority of the Head of the Church, to organically separate from a brother that "walketh disorderly," "who breaks ranks in disregard of the authority of his Commander." The command is, that such an one be officially suspended from enjoyment of the privileges of the Church. But, according to the Standards of our Church, every other denomination is guilty of holding errors and walking disorderly.

Then, all the members of every other denomination must be denied ecclesiastical communion with our Church.

4. It is inconsistent with our position of dissent against all other denominations. Our testimony says: "When any church imposes sinful terms of communion, when the constitution is antiscritptural, when the administration is corrupt, and attempts at its reformation have proved ineffectual, it is the duty of Christians to separate from it." *i. e.*, we are justified in organic separation from those bodies that hold erroneous doctrines or tolerate irregularities. This is only carrying out the Scripture injunction, "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." This can mean nothing else than organic separation from organized evil, whatever its nature may be. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." Although this is a command addressed to God's people, calling upon them to separate from the Papacy, it is equally applicable to all other forms of organized evil. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Then, if it is our duty to organically separate from all those bodies that hold erroneous principles, or tolerate sinful practices, we can not invite them

to sit down with us at the Lord's table and enjoy the high privilege of the communion supper.

But, lastly, the highest privilege in the Church is *preaching the word*. The Presbyteries of our Church will ordain no man to the office of the ministry who does not cordially accept of our testimony and promise due submission to the courts of God's house. A minister entering our pulpits does so on the specific condition, that his preaching and all his official duties will be according to the word of our testimony, and that he will honor the authority of our Church. Then I have no right to invite a minister of another denomination to occupy my pulpit, who will not take upon himself these obligations which I have come under. If I do, I am usurping authority. I am guilty of setting at naught the authority of the Church. In the nature of the case, this interchange of pulpits is wrong. It is the letting in of waters that will prove the destruction of our high position. It is the breaking of our walls to admit the Trojan horse which will destroy our denomination. But if I can not invite a minister of another denomination to preach for me, then I can not go to his church and listen to him preach. We have the following grave objections to occasional hearing: 1. *It is most unnatural*. What would you think of a student who went one day to Hughes' high-school, an-

other to Woodward's, a third to the University, and so kept rotating from week to week? Why, you would say, "Such a course is absurd. He will make nothing but an ignoramus. And, moreover, the teachers would not permit him to pursue such a course. He must attend *some one* regularly or not at all." What, then, must we say of these rounders in the church, who go one Sabbath to the Methodist Church, a second to the Presbyterian, a third to the Baptist? etc. Why, you would say, "That is just as absurd as the former. They are worthless to the Church. They grow up weak, puny, sickly, ignorant Christians, and deserve nothing but the supreme contempt of all God's people." What would you think of a soldier who drills to-day in the 5th regiment, and to-morrow in the 25th; who fights *one* battle with the cavalry, and another with artillery? Why, you would say, "Military discipline would not permit such a thing! Every soldier has his own regiment, his own company, and his own colors, and, whether drilling or fighting, he must be at his own post." What, then, must we say of those Christian soldiers who are to-day in the Methodist ranks, next Sabbath in the Baptist ranks, and a third under the Presbyterian banner? Why, you would say, "Such persons are not soldiers. They will not fight. They will not receive a soldier's reward." The Reformed Presbyterian Church is the highest high-school that the Redeemer has established

upon earth. And those who would be scholars in it must attend regularly, punctually, exclusively. The Reformed Presbyterian Church is the select regiment in the army of the Lord, to whom he has committed the old blue banner, "For Christ's crown and covenant," and those who would be soldiers in it, must be always at their posts, and must be loyal, brave and true.

2. *It involves neglect of duty.* The members of our church have pledged themselves to perform all their duties to the church, the family and themselves. Those who neglect our preaching, and go to hear ministers of the other denominations, are guilty of breaking their oath, and that means perjury. Those who neglect our prayer-meetings, and go to wait upon other ordinances, are guilty of breaking their oath, *i. e.* —they perjure themselves. But when we have spent the body of the Sabbath in God's house, we owe the evening hours to the family, and he is guilty of a criminal neglect of duty who denies the family his attention during this time, in order to gratify his vain appetite for the novel. This argument may be stated in another form, thus: The Reformed Presbyterian Church owes it to each of her congregations to provide them with Sabbath worship, either preaching or prayer-meeting. This she has done. The members are, under oath, bound to attend these officially authorized services. If they leave them to attend other services, they are covenant-breakers.

When the body of the Sabbath has been spent in these officially appointed services, the evening hours should be spent in the family, and to neglect this for the sake of attending upon the services of other denominations, is criminal. The ideal Sabbath, is spending the leading portion in the house of God in the public worship, and the evening hours at home, recapitulating the sermons of the day, catechising, reading verse about in the Bible, etc.

3. *It is contrary to God's word.* "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Who are more chargeable with "having itching ears" than those who, not satisfied with the trumpet notes of their own ministers, search the other churches in quest of something pleasing and delightful. "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." But it is not the reward they seek. It is judicial blindness. "They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Occasional hearing is dangerous. The occasional hearer has set his face toward that road that leads from the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The occasional hearer has pitched his tent toward Sodom. Beware of the beginnings of evil! It may be said, this doctrine involves the denial of ourselves of a great deal



of good preaching. To this we reply: To be a Reformed Presbyterian implies self-denial. Those that are not willing to deny themselves, have no place in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The witnesses are clothed in sackcloth. The question is, are we willing to wear the sackcloth. "Except a man deny himself and take up his cross and follows me, he is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven." We are to enter the kingdom of heaven through great tribulation. When the Apostle John saw the Church triumphant around the throne in heaven, he exclaimed: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" To whom the angel answered: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Brethren, a solemn trust has been committed to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and it carries with it the obligation to be faithful. From all quarters comes the call to us, the descendants of a noble ancestry, "Be thou faithful." From the land of the covenants, where many a hard-fought battle has been waged and won, we hear the call, "Be thou faithful." From the late covenant, to which we, with uplifted hands, have sworn, comes the obligation of our oath, "Be thou faithful." But, above all, from the lips of the Master himself, as he speaks down to us from his glory heights, comes the call, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."