

Reprint

Reasons for Entering the Reformed Episcopal Church.

ADDRESS

Delivered by

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Having decided to sever an ecclesiastical bond more than a quarter of a century old, it seems proper that I should give a public explanation. Perhaps in a sentence I can express the result of my long studies and struggles. I have been forced to conclude that the Anglican Communion is a system of political compromises and irreconcilable contradictions.

The British Parliament set aside the house of Stuart and placed the house of Orange on the throne. No revolution could be more radical. It abolished the divine right of kings and established the divine right of the people. Yet, the Stuarts rejected by the State, we canonized by the Church. Turn to the calendar of an English Prayer Book of the time of our own Revolution! Find January thirtieth! Whom did it commemorate? Charles the Martyr! Now refer to May twenty-ninth! It was consecrated to Charles the Second! This royal adulterer, who polluted his court, polluted the stage, polluted literature, polluted his times and history itself, was on the Anglican Calendar with apostles and martyrs, and angels and archangels.

The same spirit of compromise was imported into the American Prayer Book. The clergyman begins service. In the rubric he is *minister*. His Protestant title. Now he reads absolution. He is styled Priest. His Roman title. In the communion he is *minister* until he places the bread and wine on the table, and then instantly *Priest*. A few pages transport you from Geneva to Rome.

But the compromises have a yet deeper import.

Jesus struck to the heart of Phariseism when He said, "Thus have ye made the commandments of God none effect by your traditions." Always He overwhelmed tradition with Scripture. Tradition seeks human interest, and Scripture seeks human salvation. Tradition makes Scripture dependent on itself and grasps the keys of earth and heaven. It promotes its own profits and invents its own conditions. It had its root in humanity, and is hence a universal sin. It was the artifice of the Pharisee and is the device of the Pope. Tradition is the life of the Roman apostasy. Against it Anglican Fathers made a splendid protest. They were powerful and eloquent as Luther. Archbishop Sandys glowed with the spirit of the Reformation. Hear him on the difference between Anglicans and Papists:

"We disagree in the very foundation. They lay one ground and we another; we lay no one stone but on the foundation of the apostles and prophets—the foundation of our religion is the written Word—the undoubted records of the Holy Ghost."

With this the Articles agree: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation." We are to believe the Nicene Creed, not on authority, but because "it may be proved by most certain warrants of Scripture." Hence the Church, without Holy Writ, "ought not to enforce anything to be believed for the necessity of salvation."

I will not pause to prove that the regeneration of infants is taught in the Baptismal Office. It is palpable as light. After years of effort to twist the truth it was forced on me; I could bribe and blind common sense and conscience no longer; they rose up together and laughed at my devices and scorned me into extremity.

Regeneration is eternal life. The birth of a soul to God by the Holy Ghost! Transcendent and everlasting is its import! Yet as respects the regeneration of an infant Scripture is silent. It rests wholly on tradition. Article or office—which shall I follow? Article makes inspired apostles and evangelists my authority, while office bases itself on liturgies and fathers. In the one case God is my teacher, and in the other, man. Article and office are far apart as Scripture and tradition. They were two hands dragging me in opposite directions. Between them I was torn by years of doubt. In the retrospect it seems one stormy winter. Only by Scripture can I know the infant is born of the Holy Ghost. Scripture to me on the subject was still as the grave. What I do not know I ought not to affirm. Such is the bondage when we are snared by tradition.

But this is not all! Can Church without Scripture ordain one doctrine? Then she can ordain two doctrines, three doctrines, four doctrines—doctrines innumerable—anything, everything. With Pope and Pharisee she stands on tradition. She can create Scripture. She can abolish Scripture. She can drive on to a mortal's infallibility.

How momentous this question! Is the regeneration of an infant in Baptism man's invention? Then millions in the Greek and Latin and Anglican communions are building for eternity on illusions. Their spiritual fabric is human sands. The blasts of judgment will blow them away.

How we poor clergymen were complicated by that office! I said, What do fathers know? What do liturgies know? What do bishops know? What do I know? Nothing. My vow bound me to conform to the doctrine and worship of the Church. If I used the office, I said what I believed false, and if I changed the office I broke my oath. Whichever way I turned the net was about me. At last a moment came I will never forget. The place was a chancel. I was expected to baptize at the font. Then and there I said, "My lip shall never utter what my mind disbelieves." The snare was broken—but broken also the tie that bound me to the Protestant Episcopal Church.

And Priest! Jesus never applied this word to His ministers. St. Peter is not called a priest; not one of the apostles is called a priest; no bishop, no presbyter, nor deacon, nor pastor, nor teacher, nor evangelist, is called a priest. Yes each believer is a priest. In the New Testament, priest is not the designation of a minister, but of a Christian. Every Christian is of a "royal priesthood." In the celestial city all Christians with immortal lips will sing the immortal song, "Thou for us wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy

blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

But you say, "Why care for a word?" Does not Hooker twist priest from presbyter? Whatever the derivation, let us look at facts! Where do you find altar-worship and saint-intercession? Wherever you find priest. Where do you find legend for Scripture, and darkness for light? Wherever you find priest. Where do you find auricular confession, and personal absolution, and private penance? Wherever you find priest. All in flower in the Greek and Latin Communions, and all in bud in the Anglican Communions. We suffer when we depart from Scripture. A name rejected by the Master breeds tyrannies and superstitions He foresaw. The title of a clergyman is vital. It stamps his thoughts, his feelings, his habits—his very face and manner. Ritualism roots itself in this word priest, and now spreads its shadow over two worlds. I renounce it forever; no man shall ever again give me the title; it is full of peril. I withdraw from the company of Greek and Latin and Anglican priests, and enter the brotherhood of Protestant ministers.

Also the exclusiveness of the Apostolical Succession lay on me like an iceberg. Its atmosphere was to me a chill. I was forced to admit the orders of the priest who wore his scapular to save him from lust, pestilence and purgatory, and to deny the orders of a Hall, a Storrs, a Simpson and a McCosh. I never found a word in the Bible to show that the Apostolate was continued in the Episcopate. In the Epistles, Bishop and Presbyter are one. I accept the view of Lightfoot, the prince of English learning; but this view embarrassed all my relations to my Church. History showed me the Hierarchy ever fostering under its shadow, ignorance and servitude. Apostolical Succession and priestly prerogative! You find them together. Apostolical Succession and element-adoration! You find them together. Apostolical Succession, Monkery and Mary-worship! You find them together. Long they were confined to the Greek and Latin churches. Puseyism revived them in England, and despite Articles and Homilies and Association—despite the wrath of mobs, and the learning of universities—despite both the Civil and Ecclesiastical courts, priestly usurpations and superstitions are stifling Protestantism in the Anglican Church. I found reform a dream. Nothing was left but to be suppressed, or to withdraw.

But are not Episcopal Bishops fraternizing with Protestant Ministers? Are they not sitting together on platforms, singing hymns together, reciting creeds together? And is not this a fair and inviting spectacle for the American public? I answer, apply the test! Ye Protestant Minister, ask those fraternizing Bishops to acknowledge your orders! They say we cannot because this is against the law. Will they change the law? I know the American Episcopate. Not a man would dare permit you to preach in a pulpit, or assist in a communion. Such a procedure would rend the Church. Disgust and disdain would be nearly universal. Let me tell you the truth, ye

Protestant ministers! Bishops will meet you in the hall, and refuse you the parlor; they will welcome you on the porch and repel you from the altar; they will sit with you on platforms and smile at you around dinnertables. As servants they will treat you, but not as equals. On this ground you renounce your orders and your self-respect. You play too into the hands of Pope and Ritualist. Weak people applaud; the wise smile and pity. I am tired of such insincerities; I leave them all. I turn with joy to a Church which says on the front page of its Prayer Book that it "recognizes and adheres to Episcopacy, not as of Divine right, but as a very ancient and desirable form of Church Polity." It condemns and rejects the following erroneous and strange doctrines as contrary to God's Word. I. That the Church exists only in one order or form of ecclesiastical polity. II That Christian ministers are priests in another sense than all believers are a royal priesthood. III. That the Lord's Table is an altar on which the oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ is offered to the Father. IV. That the Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a Presence in the Bread and Wine. V. That Regeneration is inseparably connected with Baptism.

I have reserved to the last a most important consideration. It turns on the relation of Scripture and Church.

Suppose that I had no book but my Bible! I compare the prophecies of the Old Testament with the Life of Jesus in the New. My reason discovers innumerable correspondences. Between the prediction of the prophet and the narration of the evangelist is the relation of outline to picture. Now I study the character of Jesus! What wisdom in His words. What power in His deeds! What moral beauty in His life! What sublimity in His death! What grandeur in His resurrection! What majesty in His ascension! Jesus is an ideal for the universe. Around Him is a glory impossible to human invention. His character as delineated on earth is worthy the everlasting study and admiration of heaven. Between His terrestrial life and Godhead is no want of harmony. Jesus in the manger! Jesus on the Cross! Jesus on the throne! Angels might well adore! In the life of Jesus is a moral standard for creation. He winds the verdict of my reason; He gains my faith; He improves my character; I know He cannot lie. In Him imposture is absurd. When He affirms the Old Testament I believe Him. When He predicts His resurrection I believe Him. When He speaks after He leaves His grave I believe Him. When He promises the Holy Ghost I believe Him. When He assures His presence with His true people always and everywhere I believe Him, and thus my *reason* receives on His authority both the Old Testament and the New as the inspired Word of God. The Scripture now to me is a rule of faith and life. It is a self evidencing book, and illuminated in its own light. All its promises beam with hope and joy. I have an infallible guide from time to eternity. The credibility of the Bible is this in itself. Between it and my soul shall come nothing but the Holy Ghost.

The *canonicity* of the Bible is another question. While my Bible is *the* Book of God, history is *a* Book of God. I must not cut myself away from the past. I wish to know how the Bible took its rise, how the early Christians received it, and a thousand interesting facts connected with it. Here Greek and Latin Fathers are invaluable helpers. Out of quotations in their writings I can reconstruct the whole Bible; As *witnesses* to facts they are indispensable.

Now the General Theological Seminary tells me that the Bible is to be received on the authority of the Church. It believes in the Bible because it believes in the Church and does not believe in the Church because it believes in the Bible. It reverses the Protestant order of Homilies and Articles, and makes the Church first and the bible last. But where does it find the opinion of the Church? Only in the Greek and Latin Father. That is, as the Roman Communion place the Pope between me and my Bible, so the General Theological Seminary places the Fathers between me and my Bible. I settled the Roman question by three books: Milman's Latin Christianity, Von Ranke's Lives of the Popes, and our own Motley. From Clement to Leo I studied these men. My reason decide; on the history of their lives I said I can never believe the Popes infallible and can never let them come between me and my Bible. Now we must try Fathers as we try Popes, and with this advantage. We can try the Fathers by their own writings. By such a test I find them utterly untrustworthy. When we pass from Old Testament to apocrypha, and from the New Testament to Fathers are we exchange the company of inspired men for that of credulous children. Let us begin with Clement! This most ancient Father illustrates our resurrection by the silly fable of the Egyptian phoenix which he relates as a fact. The feebleness of Barnabus is incredible. Polycarp we venerate as a martyr, but not as a guide. Ignatius is so narrow, extreme and corrupted that he loses value as witness, while Irenaeus, against all history, taught that our Savior was crucified in advanced age. And Tertullian most eloquent in the illustrious line! A degrader of wifehood and a glorifier of monkery, he believed that an angel stirred the water of Baptism, and that Montanus, the heretic, was an organ of the Holy Ghost. What shall we say of the immortal composer of that most majestic hymn ever written by an uninspired pen? Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, author of the Te Deum, under circumstances strongly suspicious of collusive fraud, disinterred two gigantic headless skeletons, buried many years before, but whose fresh blood saturating the earth, restored a blind man to sight, and whose bones wrought incredible miracles. The magnificent Augustine! What a master of Ciceronian eloquence. Yet he prayed to martyrs, orders the sacrifice of the altar to expel demons, and records cures at Stephen's shrine puerile and contemptible as any mediaeval legend, or pious fable of Butler. Basil! The Gregories! Chrysostom! Full of the same loathsome stuff. Soaring like eagles and crawling like worms! Now in the clouds and now in the dirt! Extolling monks as terrestrial angles! Sickening in laudation of the nun at the expense of the wife and the mother! Praying to

saints, invoking martyrs as patrons, believing in bones and shrines and relics to heal diseases and expel demons, until we blush to find such masters in intellect and oratory daudling like nursery maids and babbling like children. such are Greek and Latin Fathers! Such they are proved by their own pages. And such are the men to come between me and my Bible! In some respect better interpose Popes than Fathers! As *authorities* it would be difficult to choose between the Popes of the Roman Propaganda, and the Fathers of the General Theological Seminary.

Many famous seceding English and American clergymen have seen that, what the Fathers have not, the popes have—a grand unity, an imposing succession, a magnificent ritual and charms for the imagination which are seductive to reason itself.

What misled Newman? What won Manning? What deluded the sons of the great Wilberforce? What tempted from ourselves the fickle feet of Ives and Forbes and Stone and Connelly? What in the future is to seduce thousands of aesthetical men and sentimental women to the embrace of the Pope? This exaltation of Church—that is, Fathers—and thrusting them between the soul of man and the word of God. It makes strong faith in the Divine Promise impossible. It emasculates the spirit. Outside of Rome it creates a hybrid compound of Pope and Protestant. This I believe to be the inevitable result of a course in the General Theological Seminary in its effort to exalt man above God and Tradition above Scripture. And yet, if I gave a dollar to the Domestic Board of the Protestant Episcopal Church, it was to send forth over our Republic, graduates of that Institution, who are expected to multiply, especially in the West, until their number in Diocesan and General Conventions will enable them to obliterate Protestant from Prayer Book, strike out the Protestant Articles, hurl down every Protestant bulwark, trample our Protestant banner in the dust, and drive the communion headlong toward the fellowship of the Pope. A time came when I felt I ought to withdraw myself from men who abhor Luther, detest Calvin, despise Knox, are kindled into no enthusiasm by the martyr-fires of Hooper and Ridley and Latimer, repudiate the Reformation, discredit the work of the Wesleys and exult at the prospect of bring back the world to the pomp and chill and gloom and servitude of mediaevalism.

About twenty years since was published a letter explaining how Ritualism was to papalize Anglicanism. Evangelical hymns were to be replaced by ecclesiastical hymns. Then chants and banners, and incense and altar lights and altar-obesance! Next the cults of the Virgin and all priestly rites and practices. Crown of all, fellowship with the Pope! Canon Bergen and Bishop Ryle alike denounced the conspiracy which brought to full flower the English Church Union and the English Church Association. Soon will be gathered the bitter fruits of disestablishment and disruption.

In this country guilds and fraternities work by the same methods for the same end. England and America are now witnessing efforts to extinguish Protestantism. Hence in New York this deadly enmity to the Reformation and these Roman innovations condemned by Articles and Homilies. You can in this city worship Mary with an Episcopal clergyman. You can be absolved by an Episcopal clergyman. You have mass from an Episcopal clergyman and with an Episcopal clergyman pray for the repose of the dead, if not invoke them as patrons and trust them as guardians. This is mimic Rome. Shall *we wonder* if the most sincere of the imitators soon prefer the coin to the counterfeit? I am forced in the other direction. The banner which the Protestant Episcopal Church flings down, the Reformed Episcopal Church lifts up. Let her hold it aloft! Be it her glory to complete the work halted by Laud and arrested by Pusey! Supremacy of Scripture! Justification by Faith! Ring out the old battle cries! Their spell is not dead. Not, however, as mere party watchwords. Preach forgiveness of sins through faith in the blood of Jesus to save souls! Point to the Bible that men may find the bread and water of life and grow into Christ! With the faith and fire of Paul may we have the love and light and image of Jesus!

As the only liturgical Church in this country representing the Reformation, our Communion will be confronted with the Roman question. This then, let me finally consider. I will begin with one of the most remarkable facts in the history of the Papacy.

Henry Lasserre was a colonel in the French army. He was a devout Catholic. Grateful to the Virgin for a cure at the Lourdes he wrote a brilliant book. His picturesque pages made the shrine famous, and the author rich. One glad day he discovered the Gospels. He was transported with joy and wonder. Others must share his treasure. The spell of Jesus was on Lasserre. He translated the Gospels into French, and his work became the literary success of the times. Twenty-five editions were published in a year. France seemed coming under the power of the Gospel and a new era opening to Rome.

Lasserre had written a long preface to his translation. In this he condemned the withdrawal by his Church of the Divine Book from the people. He laments, "the watery and sugary effusions which, under the form of works of piety, have replaced in the case of the majority the Gospel nourishment."

"Petty devotions," he says, "have too often taken the place of noble sentiments and high virtues; trifling practices have taken the place of manly actions. The true type of perfection has been falsified, altered, and attenuated, We must lead back the faithful to the great fountain of living water, which flows from the inspired Book; we must make them hear and taste and relish the direct lessons of the Savior, the words of grace and truth that fell from His lips; we must put before them those teachings which have been given for all ages by the perfect life—the life perfectly human and

perfectly divine of Him whom no sincere intelligence can compete without bending the knee, whom no true soul can hear and see without loving, without being seized with the desire to follow Him, and the will to serve Him. We must put the earth face to face with Jesus Christ."

Pope Leo sanctioned both preface and translation. The Secretary of State of the Holy See wrote to Lasserre, that his Holiness "Changes me to make known his earnest desire that the object which you pursue, and which you indicate in the preface of your book, may be fully attained. Yielding most willingly to your desire, his Holiness sends you from the bottom of his heart, his apostolic benediction and I myself profit by this opportunity to declare myself with much esteem, your very affectionate servant, L. Cardinal Jacobini, Rome, 4th December, 1886."

This book of Lasserre received the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Paris, and was publicly approved by Parocchi, Cardinal Vicar to his Holiness, the Archbishop of Albi, and the Bishops of Grenoble, Rodez, Oran, Annecy, Rochelle, and Limoges.

Under such patronage success was assured. The twenty fifth edition was made splendid. All ages illustrated the magnificent volume. It was enriched by explorations of the Catacombs, surveys of Palestine and masterpieces of genius. Never were the Gospels published with such a wealth and brilliance of adornment. The Book of Lasserre became the Family Bible of Catholic France.

Then fell the thunderbolt. A conclave was summoned. Pope and Cardinals revoked their procedure. Hear the decree in its own words:

"The following works to be put on the Index of forbidden books—The Holy Evangelists, New Translation, by Henry Lasserre, Paris, 1887. And so let no one of whatever rank or condition dare in any place, or in any tongue, either to publish in future, or if published to read or retain the fore-mentioned condemned and proscribed works, but let them be held bound to deliver them to the ordinaries of the place, or to the Inquisition of heretical iniquity under the penalties proclaimed in the Index of forbidden books.

"These having been referred to our most Holy Lord, Pope Leo XIII, from the secret councils of the Sacred Congregation, his Holiness approved the decree and ordered it to be issued. Granted at Rome on December 20th, 1887."

The Letter of Pope Leo approving the Gospels bears the date December 4th, 1886, and the decree of Pope Leo proscribing the Gospels bears date December 20th, 1887.

You perceive that for more than a year Pope Leo gave France the Gospels. If Pope Leo could give France the Gospels for a year, Pope Leo could give France the Gospels forever. And if Pope Leo could give the Gospels to France, then Pope Leo could give the Gospels to the world. More over, if

Pope Leo could give the Gospels to the world, also Pope Leo could give the Bible to the world. That is all we ask him. Let him have his throne and crown and dominion! Let him have his palace, his cathedral and his splendor! Let him sit amid the magnificence of his hierarchy and rule from Rome his millions! We want neither his subjects, his revenues, his tiara, nor his capital. Rather we would augment, than diminish his papal glory. What do we beg from him? The Bible for America. This is to wish him well. Did his predecessors chain and burn our ancestors? We, their sons, for blood return love; for faggots, prayers; for fetters, liberty, and for Inquisition, Scripture. We wish the Holy Father well! If the first Pope Peter had a wife, the last Pope Leo cannot defend clerical celibacy. His own Vulgate Bible tells us that the Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons of the Gospel were married. Might not his Hierarchy better follow the wisdom of Paul than the will of Hildebrand? And these sad and solitary priests whose faces bring no joy to the streets of America! Their Christian manhood would be brightened and ennobled by home. Celibacy like a wall separates them from our people. Let them break it down, and become of ourselves! It would advance, not retard their cause. Suppose where the Catholic invokes Mary he should supplicate Jesus! Would it harm him? For the intercession of human saints let him substitute the mediation of his Divine Saviour. Will he be worse? The Life of Jesus for the legends of Butler! Exalting exchange! For his scapular we would give the Catholic his own Bible. He will find, better than trust in saints and amulets, is faith in the living God. Overthrow the Pope! No! Let his throne stand forever—not on his own infallibility, but on the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief cornerstone! We would have him rule and shine, not in his own strength and wisdom, but pray that "Jehovah may be to him an Everlasting Light, and his God his glory."