

Some Traits and Emphases

The rich flowering of American Presbyterianism has been influenced by the frontier, by revivalism, by the premium set on higher education, by the presence of racial lines, and by the relative prosperity of Presbyterians generally.

Because Presbyterians are lovers of liberty and strong believers in democracy, they have seen their denominational roof extended periodically to accommodate many shades of belief. Presbyterianism itself has released the critical process in religion — from Calvin to the present. All Presbyterians hold the Bible to be “the only infallible rule of faith and practice” though some may take this principle to mean more than do others. At bottom, all are loyal to Jesus Christ as Lord, and to the one, holy, universal Church as the only divinely appointed means for the redemption of the world and the eternal salvation of mankind from sin.

Iowa Presbyterians of all eight varieties have held (some still hold) camp meetings, had their metrical Psalms “lined out” in worship, abstained from travel and secular employments on the Christian Sabbath, and professed their firm belief in the complete separation of church and state. Some take no part in politics, others admit none but Pres-

byterians of their own camp to the communion table. Some sing only "Psalms of David," others scatter uninspired secular poetry through their hymnals which otherwise are inspired. Some permit no musical instruments in worship. Many Presbyterians are teetotalers, a few others may incline their ears if the physician prescribes a little wine for the stomach's sake.

No generalization is adequate, but it may be safely said that while the "Westminster Standards" are highly esteemed by all Presbyterians, some have altered them, some even supplementing those standards with creeds of their own composition, as the United Presbyterians have done.

All Iowa Presbyterians are strongly missionary-minded. For example, the Iowa Synod of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in 1951 has registered the highest percentage increase in benevolence offerings of all the synods in America.

Finally, all Iowa Presbyterians confess that the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, hath yet more to reveal to His own, if He is but received in faith.

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