

dividual or by the church as a whole. You see it is main line Christianity. It is a position in between these two opposite extremes, and that is difficult to maintain properly. It is very difficult. I think I can say the Presbyterian system of government is an ideal. It is probably not often realized. It is an ideal toward which we should strive, the ideal of having enough of organization, enough of leadership that we get efficiency, that we move forward and yet never having enough that it stifles ~~the~~ democracy and hinders the full participation of all. It is an attitude in between these two extremes which are characteristic of so many other denominations.

Now the Presbyterian denominations are not the only ones with a government of this type, though most have gone further in one direction or the other from it. But this is what the meaning comes from.

Now as we think of church government, we think of the matter of agencies to carry on the work. And here we see the wisdom which has been characteristic of Presbyterianism through the ages, the wisdom ~~which~~ ^{that} has shown itself in the presbyteries devoting themselves to the business of presbyteries and not trying to do what is not the business of presbyteries because when an organization tries to do what is not its business it usually neglects some important phase of what is its business. And so Presbyterianism has always been characterized by the fact that the purpose and duty of the presbytery was to ~~carefully~~ ^{carefully} inspect those who were candidates for the ministry, to ~~carefully~~ ^{carefully} oversee the doctrinal attitudes of the churches under their care to make sure that sound doctrine was maintained, but not to try to run the churches or to dictate to the churches how they shall do their work. The churches are to have freedom as to the means of advancing the kingdom of Christ, freedom for ~~their relation~~ ^{variation} among them fitting a particular situation but ~~careful~~ ^{careful} oversight that they do not depart from the doctrinal teachings of the Word of God. And when presbyteries branch out into trying to run mission agencies, to run schools, to run organizations, to do all this sort of thing, they ~~are~~ very soon are found to be neglecting what their primary duty is - the maintenance of sound doctrine-and before long we find that this is the very loophole