

Christian Churches

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Bicentenary Prize Essay.

Christian Churches:

*THE NOBLEST FORM OF SOCIAL LIFE;
THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRIST ON EARTH;
THE DWELLING-PLACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.*

By JOSEPH ANGUS, D.D.

London:

Ward & Co., 27, Paternoster Row.

1862.

Adjudicators' Award.

AT the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union, held at Birmingham, October, 1861, it was announced that an anonymous friend had offered three Prizes, of fifty guineas each, for as many Essays on the under-mentioned subjects—the competitors to be ministers of the Independent and Baptist denominations:—

- I. The Nature, Constitution, Characteristics, and Government of a Christian Church in New Testament Times.
- II. The History of the growth and development of Independent Principles of Church Organization and Government, from the Reformation till 1662. To embrace England and Wales.

III. The advantages that would result from a true representation, based on Scripture principles, of the entire body of Church Members (ministerial and lay so-called) in England and Wales, for the purposes of fraternal Christian conference and co-operation, with suggestions for the attainment of such a representation, and for safeguards against its abuse.

The conditions of competition prescribed that the essays should be popular in style, and admit of publication at one shilling each; that the adjudication should be made by Bartholomew's Day, 1862; and that the successful essays should be at the disposal of the

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adjudicators for publication, or otherwise, as they might determine.

A large number of MSS. was received; and, after careful consideration, we, the adjudicators named by the donor, award the prizes to the following essays, viz.:—

Essay I., entitled "CHRISTIAN CHURCHES: the Noblest Form of Social Life; the Representatives of Christ on Earth; and the Dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost." Writer, the Rev. Joseph Angus, D.D., Principal of Regent's Park College.

Essay II., entitled "CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HISTORY in England and Wales, from the Reformation to 1662." Writer, the Rev. John Waddington, D.D., Southwark.

Essay III., entitled "CONGREGATIONAL UNION: the Problem Solved." Writer, the Rev. Austin Lord, Hersham, Surrey.

In virtue of the discretion left with us, we have decided upon the immediate publication of the first and second essays.* We commend them to the ministers and members of our churches and congregations, as concise, trustworthy, readable, and cheap hand-books upon our *principles* and *early history*. We believe they will supply a want, generally felt and expressed, of convenient and accessible material for the information of our people, and for the vindication of our principles. The first essay is an able exposition of that form of ecclesiastical polity prescribed by Christ and His

apostles, and exemplified in the practice of the early Christian churches;—the second will be useful in removing erroneous impressions in regard

* Bicentenary Essays. Christian Churches, by Joseph Angus, D.D.; Congregational Church History, by John Waddington, D.D. Crown 8vo, 1s. each, in paper covers, or the two Essays bound together, 2s. 6d., cloth boards. Ward & Co., 27, Paternoster-row, London, E.C.

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to our origin and antecedents. While correcting historical blunders, it will authoritatively disprove assertions, assiduously circulated at the present time, in disparagement of the noble Pilgrims driven from our shores to seek freedom of worship across the Atlantic, who have been confounded, even by writers of distinction, with commercial adventurers who followed them to the land of the West.

With reference to the third essay, we have postponed its publication for the present, and have suggested the addition of an Appendix, which will, we believe, add to its value.

This competition has elicited several essays on Subject I., which, though not occupying the first place, yet, in our estimation, display considerable merit. We think that some of them may be advantageously published, if the authors should so determine. It is our intention, after a careful reconsideration of their respective claims, to give a list of those deemed deserving of honourable mention.

Signed, SAMUEL MORLEY.

BENJAMIN SCOTT.

WILLIAM J. UNWIN.

LONDON, *July*, 1862.

Ubi Spiritus Dei, ibi etiam Christus.—BENGEL.

Ubi agnovimus Christum, ibi agnovimus et Ecclesiam.—AUGUSTINE.

The Church is 'a congregation of faithful [i.e., believing] men.
 ART. ENG. CHURCH.
'I believe in the holy Catholic church, the Communion of saints.'
 THE WESTERN (CALLED THE APOSTLES') CREED.

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 I

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

§ I. The Church: its Nature.

MAN A SOCIAL BEING.

MAN is a social being. His instincts prompt him to seek the companionship of his fellows. The nobler parts of his nature—the moral qualities of justice and benevolence—all that give the highest dignity to his character, and conform him to God, have their appropriate sphere of operation *only in social life*.

THE CHURCH THE NOBLEST FORM OF SOCIAL LIFE—

2. These tendencies of man God has recognised in all His dispensations. The patriarchal religion was the religion of the family; Judaism was the religion of the tribe and nation; while the new economy that Christ founded is intended to gather from among all nations

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‘a people to His praise.’ The *family*, the *tribe*, the *nation*, and the *church*, are the successive forms that society has assumed. The laws of each deserve our inquiry, and especially the laws of what is the noblest and the last.

AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST.

3. Nor is this all. It is impossible to read the New Testament carefully without noting that the Christian church sustains an important relation to the nature and work of our Lord. It not only meets our instincts, and reflects so far *our* character; it is the special object of the Saviour's love, and is the reflection of His character; it is, in a sense, even the completion of it. If He is the head, the church is the body; if He is the wisdom of God, it is by the church that that manifold wisdom is made known; if His teaching forms the truth of the Gospel, the church is "the ground and pillar of the truth." In the *first temple* was displayed the shekinah, the visible manifestation of the divine glory. In our Lord himself, the *second temple*, dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ever since *the church* has been the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. It is the last of the three temples of the one living and true God. The formation of it is at once a means, and the end of the revelation of God's love and holiness in the gift of His Son. It is in the world, as Christ was in the world. Itself the noblest of His triumphs, it is to be the instrument to achieve

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them all. To know its laws and spirit, therefore, ought to be second in importance only to the knowledge of the office and work of our blessed Lord.

THE WORD 'CHURCH'—WHAT?

4. But what is the church, and how is it to be defined? *Etymologically*, the word means, in Greek and in Hebrew,[★] 'a chosen assembly,' the Old Testament meaning of the term; or 'an assembly legally called or convened,' its classic meaning. In English, German, Saxon, Danish,[†] &c., it means the, LORD'S' portion, body, representative, property, servant, dwelling-place. This last title is beautifully significant.

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL—WHAT?

5. *Turning to the New Testament*, we find the word used in two senses only. It stands first for the whole body of believers.‡ In this sense of the word, Christ loved the church,¶ and gave himself for it.

* ἐκκλησία; ἕρη.

† Kirche (*Ger.*), Circe (*Sax.*), Kirke (*Dan.*), Kyrka (*Swed.*), Cerkew (*Pol.*), Kirk, Church, all from τὸ κυριακόν. The Gothic nations, receiving the Gospel from the Greeks, took most of their ecclesiastical words from the Greek tongue.

‡ “Giving none offence ... to the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:32.) “Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God.” (Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6.) “To the intent that now ... might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” (Ephesians 3:10.)

¶ “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Saviour of the body ... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that He might cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (*i.e.*, by the word, which is as the bath to the Jewish bride), that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” (Ephesians 5:23–32.)

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

In this sense He is the head over all things to the church, which is His body.* This is the Apostle’s figure—a figure which he has drawn with great beauty in the 12th and 14th chapters of 1st Corinthians. Thus explained, the church is an organic union of many members, having different gifts and callings, yet all pervaded by the same life-blood, ruled by the same head, animated by the same soul, and all working together towards the same ends.

In this, the first sense of the term, all the phrases which Roman Catholic writers have used on the necessity of being in the church,

are true. 'Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus,'—'Out of the church there is no salvation.' Applied to the Roman Catholic church, in a narrow, worldly sense, this proverb is false; applied to the mystical body of Christ, it is a mere truism. To be in that church is to be a new creature—it is to be in Christ. The two phrases are synonymous. As we cannot be saved unless we be born again, neither can we be saved if we are not of that community, of which the new birth is the great distinction. Of course, the expression has no reference to mere external connection with the church; for doubtless there may be thousands of church members who are not really converted to Christ, and who, therefore, will finally perish; as, on

* Ephesians 1:22.

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the other hand, there may be thousands not connected with any visible church, who are, after all, true Christians, and as such are members of that spiritual body of which Christ is the head.

CHRIST ITS TYPE.

6. Of the history of this church, in the largest sense, our Lord is the great type. His ministry began at His baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him. Hers began, so far as her earthly manifestation is concerned, at Pentecost. Like her Lord, she heals the sick, and teaches the ignorant, and feeds the hungry. Like Him, she has to carry the cross, to be despised and rejected of men; she has even to be crucified with Him, that they may also be glorified together. In one word, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, is the rule of her devotion, as it will be one day the measure of her reward.

ADMITS OF GROWTH AND DECAY.

7. Of course, this church is the subject of historical development, and, like other societies, is subject to organic growth and progress, and occasionally to decay. All created life is essentially changeable and transitive. As the tree is first germ, then root and trunk, then branches, leaves, blossoms,—as the individual believer is first a babe in Christ, with the elements of the new life existing in him, rather virtually or potentially than in visible manifestation, and rises gradually by the use of means into perfect manhood,—so is the church subject to the same

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process of development and of growth, in numbers and purity and knowledge, till at length she be presented complete before God at the consummation of all things.

‘*Organic progress*,’ it is called, because it does not depend upon the outward mechanical aggregation of parts. It is not the gluing on of dead limbs to a living body, but an expansion of the inner life, which, in truth, is Christ himself. As man, through all the stages of his life, continues man, so the one church of the redeemed is one body—a connected whole—yet growing, and destined to grow, till it reach the fulness Christ designs for it. Our faith in *churches* does not weaken our hold on Christian unity, or lessen our joy in it. We also ‘believe in the *holy catholic church—the communion of saints*.’★

A PARTICULAR CHURCH—WHAT?

8. The word in its second sense is used for any part of this whole—*i.e.*, for any society of Christians, united in faith, and gathered in one place for the worship of God, and the observance of religious ordinances—for the exercise and increase of the faculties and emotions of the religious life. It stands for any ‘congregation of faithful, *i.e.*, of believing men,’†

* These terms—"the catholic church," and "the communion of saints,"—are in this Creed interchangeable. The "one church" in which we believe is "the fellowship of all the redeemed." See *History of the Apostles' Creed* (by Sir P. King), ch. vi.

† Articles of English Church. Art. xix.

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banded together for these purposes. In this sense we read of the churches (not of the church) in Achaia, of the church at Corinth, at Rome, of all the churches of the saints, and even of the church meeting in a particular house.* As the first is THE church, the entire body of the believers, of all ages and places, so the last is A church, a particular body of believers in one place. The first includes all the saints of all dispensations, and embraces 'the whole sacramental host' of God's elect, whether dead or living; the second is part of the visible church, and is a collection of professed disciples. These two are the *only senses* of the word in the inspired writings.

* "Then had *the churches* rest through *all Judea*." (Acts 9:31.) "Paul went through Syria, confirming *the churches*." (Acts 15:41.) "*The churches of Christ*" (those, viz., round Corinth, whence Paul was writing,) "salute you." (Romans 16:16.) "*The churches of Asia*" (those, viz., round Ephesus) "salute you." (1 Corinthians 16:19.) "As I have given order to the *churches of Galatia*, so do ye." (1 Corinthians 16:1.) "The grace bestowed on *the churches of Macedonia*." (2 Corinthians 8:1.) "Who was chosen by *the churches*" (in Macedonia) "to travel with us." (2 Corinthians 8:19.) "I was unknown by face to *the churches* of Judea which were in Christ," (Galatians 1:22.) "Ye became followers of *the churches of God*, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.) "John to the *seven churches* that are in Asia." (Revelation 1:4.) "I wrote unto *the church*." (3 John 9.) "*No church* communicated with me, but ye" (at Philippi) "only." (Philippians 4:15.) "As I teach everywhere, *in every church*." (1 Corinthians 4:17.) "If *the church* be come together in one place." (1 Corinthians 14:2.3.) "When he had gone up" (to Jerusalem) "and saluted *the church*." (Acts 18:22.) "Greet *the church* that is in" (rather that meets at) "their house." (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2.)

AN ASSOCIATION OF EQUALS.

9. Examining the New Testament more closely to ascertain the nature of these societies called ‘churches,’ we find *that these churches were always independent associations of men as equals.*

PROVED.

10. When our Lord first formed the church, he took twelve men, of even rank, and perhaps not greatly dissimilar in age and in ability, and constituted them a family of brethren. There was to be no master, no servant; no priest, no people; no clergy, no laity; no rabbi, or father; no scholar, or son. The whole arrangement presupposed equality, the bond of union being their common love to their common Lord.

As the community increased, it retained its original character. All the members stood in the same relation to the common head; they were sanctified by the same Spirit, and had an equal share in all the blessings and privileges of salvation. Hence all believers are, without exception, brethren and Saints;* all have immediate access to Christ by faith, and all, therefore, form part of a holy priesthood.† The term ‘clergy,’ which in ecclesiastical phraseology is applied to the ministerial order in distinction from the laity, is applied by the Apostle

* *Everywhere* this term is applied not to *one* believer, but to *all*.

† “Ye ... are ... a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:4-5.) “And hath made us ... priests unto God, even His Father.” (Revelation 1:6.)

Peter to the Christian community at large,* who are, therefore, God’s heritage (as the word ‘clergy’ means); and Paul calls upon

his readers, by virtue of their priestly character, to make intercession for himself and for all men, † after the pattern of Christ, the eternal High Priest. ‡

THIS EQUALITY REMARKABLE.

11. This perfect equality was the more remarkable as it contradicted the notions prevalent among both Jews and Gentiles. Under the law, there were priests, sacrifices, altars, and temples. Under the Gospel, all Christians are priests in the sense of being consecrated to God, and none are priests in the sense of being exclusive mediators with Him. Christ is the only mediator between God and man; our only sacrifice is the one He offered, ¶ and our only temple is the

* “Not as lords over God’s heritage (‘clergy’), but as ensamples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:3.) The same thought is found in all such passages as Deuteronomy 32:9. “The *Lord’s portion* is His people, and Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” (Isaiah 53:12; Zechariah 2:12.)

† “I beseech you, brethren ... that *ye* strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” (Romans 15:30.) “I trust that through *your* prayers I shall be given to you.” Philemon 22.) “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications (to meet men’s needs), prayers (to promote their good), intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for *all men*.” (1 Timothy 2:1.) “Praying always ... and for *me*.” (Ephesians 6:18.)

‡ “He ever liveth to make intercession for *us*.” (Hebrews 7:25.)

¶ “There is ... one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5.) “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1.) “Who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” (Titus 2:14.) “So Christ was once offered” (rather’ once for all,) “to bear the sins of many.” (Hebrews 9:28.)

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consecrated body of believers themselves. Among the Gentiles their princes exercised dominion over them; but, said Christ, ‘it

shall not be so among you.' Men may love to be called Rabbi, but Rabbi 'ye must not be called, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' And if at times the early Christians displayed another spirit in saying, after the fashion of the Grecian sects, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' the Apostle rebuked them, not by denying the right of believers to pass judgment on their superiors, but by denying all such superiority, 'For who is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers' (or, as the word means, 'servants'—nothing more) 'by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man?', So then neither is he that planteth *anything*, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.'

ITS EQUALITY NOT CONDUCTIVE TO INSUBORDINATION—

12. Nor let it be said that this equality must end in insubordination, or in confusion. It is, on the contrary, essential to true submissiveness, and to the highest order. No man can serve two masters; and if, in the church, one man must obey another, in faith or in practice, he ceases in that particular to obey Christ. Christianity makes men free, as the first step towards making them willing servants of their Lord. It emancipates them in spiritual things from the authority of Cesar, that they may reverence the authority of God.

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—OR CONFUSION.

Nor does it create confusion. 'God,' says the Apostle, 'is the God not of confusion, but of peace,' as in all the churches of the saints:—a sentiment which he uttered, in the first instance, in immediate connection with the avowal of the perfect equality of all the members of the church. There was in the Corinthian church a diversity of gifts, and all claimed the right to exercise them. That equal right the Apostle allowed. 'Ye may *all* prophesy,' was his decision. Disorder, therefore, was to be corrected, not

by denying the right, but by teaching each Christian himself to control it. 'Exercise your gifts,' says he, in substance, 'one by one, and remember that the spirits of the prophets are subject not to one head prophet, but to the good sense and pious feeling of the prophets themselves.' Of course, if anyone spoke from vanity, and without an inward call or obvious fitness, the man was rebuked, and, if necessary, even silenced; not, however, because he was not of the teaching order, but because he had no sufficient qualification for the work. God had given him *no message*, and the rule of equality, as well as of common sense, decided that he should hold his peace.

ITS EQUALITY FURTHER DEFINED.

13. This equality of the members of the church must not be interpreted, of course, so as to deny God's right to make distinctions; or, so as to withhold the reverence due to

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His gifts. Scripture recognises the fact that some are to be very highly esteemed for their work's sake, and to some of them there is to be given even double honour. There are inequalities even in a society of equals, and the very principle of equality may compel us to make them. In well-governed communities men are equal in the eye of the law; they are alike subject to its authority; they are alike entitled to all the privileges it has to confer. Communism is an abuse of this ordinance, and is practically subversive of it. Equality lets men create differences, though itself creates none; and, indeed, if in any state men share alike, whatever their honesty, or their diligence, or their skill, there is equality of rights no more; inequality, and consequent injustice, has begun.

Applied to the church, this principle is easily explained. All Christians, members of the church, stand in the same relation to God. They have been redeemed by the same blood, and renewed by the same Spirit; they have undergone the same change; and

are heirs of the same glory; they are all kings and priests unto God; they are all sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and compared with the distinction which these dignities imply, all other distinctions are insignificant. Thus far Christian men are equal. Further, there is in the church no ruling class; all are really subject to the same laws, and all stand on a level before God. Thus far they

are equal. Further still, the only ground of distinction that remains is based upon the power of rendering service to the body; and that, *all* can render, while the grace that enables them to render it is itself the ground of new obligation. Hence, each Christian is to think of himself with humility and sobriety, according to the measure of the grace he possesses; and in memory of the fact that that grace is itself a gift, and a gift bestowed not for the honour of him who exercises it, but for the honour of the Lord, and for the good of the church. When even the apostles are praised for self-denying toils, it is in these terms, 'and they magnified the grace of God in them.' He that is least in this kingdom is the man who breaks God's commands, and teaches men so; while the chief is the man who in toil and in love is 'the *servant of all.*'

The equality, therefore, of the members of the church is not irrespective of character and holiness, but irrespective of everything else, and is modified by these only in a small degree. What men are by birth, or wealth, or social standing, or intelligence, is nothing, in the church if they are not Christians; and if they are Christians, their Christianity is their great glory,—a glory they share with the poorest of their brethren,—and every natural gift is an honour, just so far as it is consecrated to the good of the whole. To give men more than this is to forget the dignity due to a Christian, and to disown the

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equality for which we plead; to give them less, is to deny the grace which is entitled, wherever we find it, to our reverence and love.

THE CHURCH ALL INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION OF EQUALS.

14. And as every member of the society is thus free, because bound to judge for himself in matters of faith and practice—the brethren being equal, and the Bible their common law—so each society has the right to carry out its discipline and faith, without the control of any man or set of men. The church is an association of men as equals: it is also independent—independent of all authority but Christ's, and bound to obey only His laws. This independence is the birthright of the society, as liberty of thought is the birthright of each of its members. It rests upon the same principles, and, if given up, can be given up for such reasons only as must supersede the law, or destroy thought, inquiry, and conscience. The whole question may be put in the simplest form:—Is any *Christian* to take the belief or the practice of any other man as obligatory upon his conscience or practice? Is any *church* to take the belief or the practice of any other church as obligatory upon their conscience or practice? Or are not both to take the decisions of the Master as their sole rule? And the answer is plain. There is not a single text which bids men take their faith or their practice from their fellows; on the contrary, men and communities are freed

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from all earthly authority on such questions, that they may be subject to Christ.

EXPLAINED.

If it be said that this assertion is true of essentials, but that in things indifferent we may submit to one another, the reply again is plain. Such submission even the apostles did not claim.* Things indifferent cease to be so when once made binding upon the conscience, while each 'lessens the number of things lawful, brings the conscience of man into bondage, multiplies sin in the world, makes the way narrower than God has made it, and divides the church.'† More mischief, in truth, has been done to the cause of Christian unity by this tendency, than probably by all other causes combined. *Really* Christian men can hardly be said to be divided by anything else. There is, moreover, a beauty in 'diversities of operations,' provided only there is 'the same Spirit.'

The church is independent, I repeat, each church of other churches: nor only so; each

* "I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment" (opinion) "as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." (1 Corinthians 7:25.) "Whom I would have retained with me; but without thy mind would I do nothing." (Philemon 13-14.) "As to Apollos, I greatly desired him to come to you; but his will was not at all to come at this time," (1 Corinthians 16:12.) In Romans 14 the rule as to things indifferent is laid down: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," (Verse 5.) "Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another," (Galatians 5:13.) "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." (2 Corinthians 1:24.)

† Dr Whichcote.

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church is independent, without any visible or earthly head. Our blessed Saviour himself sets before us His only delegate on earth, when He told His disciples, in going away, that He would send 'another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever;' clearly implying that no man, and no body of men, could be the depository

of this supremacy and consolation. The members, therefore, are equal, and the church is independent.

THIS INDEPENDENCY CONSISTENT WITH CO-OPERATION.

15. And as we have seen that the equality of Christians—absolute, except as God's grace makes differences between them—is consistent with order, so is the independency of the churches consistent with harmonious co-operation—consistent with it, and even conducive to it. Christians are the more likely to combine because independent. The union of constraint must be irksome; the union of love must be welcome—not more mighty in its results than it is grateful to the hearts of Christians themselves.

GOOD WORKING OF THIS SYSTEM DEPENDENT ON WHAT CONDITION.

16. I am not unmindful of the difficulties which these doctrines bring with them, and of the abuses to which they are liable; nor am I unmindful how early in the history of the Christian church they yielded to a very different system. Only, they are obviously the doctrines of Scripture, and the true ideal of the church of Christ will never be realised

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among us till the government of the church is such as makes these doctrines commend themselves to the hearts and practice of all Christian men. With an unhallowed worldly temper, they work ill: let there be holiness and love, and they will be found to be the noblest principles upon which society can be formed. And even without holiness and love in any eminent degree, it will be found that they tend to produce and perfect those gifts. The system is designed to be a discipline of character, even when, through the imperfections of character, it works but indifferently. In churches, as in the divine life, self-discipline is the condition of all true progress, and the more difficult it is, the more essential.

THE CHURCH A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION OF MORAL AGENTS.

17. Further, *the church is a voluntary association of men as moral agents*—an association into which men are not born, but into which they enter by choice, and to which they adhere from conviction. Thus was it from the first: ‘Some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not.’ In every city, ‘part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.’ Some gave up the world, and followed Christ; others heard the Gospel, shrank from its self-denying requirements, and still cleaved to the world. If whole families joined the society, and at once, the members of them were such in age and in circumstances that it might be said of them, as

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it was said of the jailor’s, that ‘they rejoiced, believing in God;’ or, as in the case of the household of Stephanas, that they were ‘the first-fruits of Achaia,’ and had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. In those primitive times, therefore, none were forced into the Christian community, and none were made members of it, in any Bible sense, by the act of others. Still less were they born into it through the accident of the home of their parents. Whatever divine influence was put forth upon them, they were not only the objects of it; they were also the instruments. What was done *in* them was done *by* them. God worked, but it was that they might will and do. Every man gave himself first to the Lord, and then to the church.

WHAT MEANT BY VOLUNTARYISM.

18. Not, of course, that any human will was their law, but simply that acts in which the will was wanting were no acceptable offering to God; they were even an abomination. Ethics might have taught men this truth; for that science maintains that there is neither virtue nor vice unless there is volition. At all events,

religion teaches that ‘as a man is in his heart, so is he;’ ‘as a man proposes in his heart, so let him give.’* These are its laws

* 2 Corinthians 9:7. “Let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be *no gatherings when I come*” (1 Corinthians 16:2), “that the same may be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of greediness.” (2 Corinthians 9:5)

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—the first of character, and the second of holy activity. Christian voluntaryism, it cannot be too often repeated, is not the authority of self-will. It is the willing submission of the heart and of the life to Christ, and the after devotion of both to His cause.

A SPIRITUAL ASSOCIATION OF AVOWED CHRISTIANS.

19. *Further, the church is a spiritual association of men as avowed Christians.* This is its first and great distinction. Its members are professedly born of God; they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

20. That this is the true character of the church in its widest sense is plain.

The church is the ‘body of Christ’—the living members of a living head. It is a ‘building of God,’ composed of spiritual stones. It is the special object of the Saviour’s affection. He’ loved it, and He gave himself for it,’ that it ‘might be holy and without blemish.’

That this is the true character of each church is plain; for all these terms are applied to particular churches, as well as to the whole company of the redeemed; while particular churches are further described in terms that are altogether inapplicable on any other supposition.

Those added to the first churches are ever spoken of as ‘the saved,’ and they are described as ‘gladly receiving the word, and obeying it.’

PROOF FROM SCRIPTURE.

The members of the church at *Rome* were the ‘beloved of God,’ ‘whose faith is spoken of throughout all the world.’

The church at *Corinth* are said to be ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus.’

The members of the churches in *Galatia* were ‘the children of the promise by faith in Christ.’ The church at *Ephesus* was composed of the ‘saints’ in that city, ‘holy and faithful.’

The *Philippians* had their ‘fellowship in the Gospel, and the good work was begun in them.’

The *Colossians* were ‘translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.’

The church at *Thessalonica* was made up of members to whom the Gospel had come, ‘not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;’ its appropriate fruit being ‘their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope.’

All the members of the churches whom *James* addressed were ‘begotten by the word of truth, that they might be a kind of first-fruits’ of God’s creatures.

These expressions justify the conclusions drawn from them. The church is properly an association of the spiritual and faithful among men—of men who have been converted by divine grace, are relying on Christ as their salvation and their hope,

and, by virtue of their faith in Him, are bringing forth the fruit of a holy life, devoted to His cause.

21. This last peculiarity of the church—that it is a spiritual association of men as Christians—is of the last importance. A church may be *Nonconformist*, and hold that some of the rites and religious practices found in Established churches are not scriptural in their origin, and are mischievous in their influence, especially

when the observance of them is made binding upon the conscience. A church may be *dissenting*, and question the articles or the rubric of the Established creed. A church may be *voluntary*, and maintain that all religious acts, to be acceptable to God, must be the free expression of holy feeling. But unless it goes further, it has missed the great distinction 'of the churches that were in Christ Jesus.' They were associations of *spiritual* and *believing* men. Serious as are some of the ecclesiastical errors of the times, the denial of this principle is the most serious of all; as, on the other hand, our strength, and the harmonious working of our system, depend on the firmness with which we grasp it, and the holy consistency with which we carry it out.

NO CHURCH OF CHRIST WHERE THIS DISTINCTION IS NOT OBSERVED.

22. Similarly, it follows that if there be any nominally Christian community where true piety is not even *professedly* the condition of fellowship, where no

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attempt is made to ascertain the Christian character of its members, where no assurance is given of the conversion of each applicant for fellowship, where no pains are taken to guard the purity of the body, to warn the unruly, to exclude such as give reason for the inference that they have not felt or are not living under the power of the Gospel,—that community fails most essentially to fulfil the destiny of a Christian church, and has ceased to deserve the support of Christian men. It is a worldly association, superseding Christ's laws, and occupying the place of a community which He intends to be in the world, as He himself was in the world, for purposes of enlightenment, and preservation, and holiness.

THE CHURCH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST, AND THE DWELLING-
PLACE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

23. Finally, *the church, as thus defined, is the representative of Christ on earth, and the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.*

The representative of Christ.—*Doctrine and precept, statements of privileges and of duty, confirm this view. If Christ is the Vine, disciples are the branches. If He is the Head, the church is His body, the members even of His flesh and of His bones;** nor is there a single title given to our Lord in the New Testament, descriptive of His relation to the Father, that is

* Ephesians 5:30; 1 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 12:27.

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not also applied by inspired writers to His people. Both are sons and heirs, and priests and kings; both are anointed, and chosen, and holy; while it is in them both, and by them both, that the treasures of God's love and wisdom are revealed to the race.

Hence the peculiarity of all New Testament teaching. Religion is not merely the belief of truth and the practice of morality; it is fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Excellence is not the love of virtue simply; it is the love of Christ. Saving faith is not belief in *it*, but belief in HIM. The Scriptures inculcate holiness, and bid us walk in His steps. Even relative duties are enforced by reference to His example. 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.' To follow Him is the sum of all duty and of all blessedness.

The dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.—'Now, therefore, we are no more strangers and foreigners, but of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord.*' 'Ye are the temple of the living God: and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of

* Ephesians 2:19–21:

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God is holy, which temple ye are.’* ‘As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.’† ‘And He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.’‡ The full meaning of these expressions we cannot tell: we must not press them, nor claim for the church unearthly dignities or unattainable holiness: but this much is clear; of all associations, the Christian church ought to be the purest and the noblest. She is formed after the image, and she is on earth the chosen home, of her Lord.

These descriptions are applicable, it will be remarked, to the entire church of the redeemed, to particular churches, and to individual Christians. Each believer is Christ’s representative, as each believer is the temple of the Spirit. ‘Know ye not that *your bodies* are the temples of the Holy Ghost?’ He who raised up Jesus shall complete His work and quicken our bodies, because of *His Spirit that dwelleth in us*.§ That Spirit is to each Christian the earnest of his future inheritance,

* 1 Corinthians 3:16–17.

† 2 Corinthians 6:16.

‡ John 14:16–18.

§ Romans 8:11.

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as well as the Great Agent by whom the Christian’s meetness is to be perfected.

Such is the privilege, and such the character of Christians *individually*; while as a *whole*, they are members of the larger

body,—the church itself,—and have each their functions, responsibilities, and rewards. All are to be employed according to their gifts; some teach, some serve, some give, some pray; and ‘the whole fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.’*

§ II. The Church: its Discipline.

THE IDEAL OF THE CHURCH AND THE ACTUAL COMPARED.

24. Such is the *ideal* of the church. Its members are holiness unto the Lord, and their equality is a necessary conclusion from the sameness of their relation to Christ.

And yet the *ideal* must be distinguished from the *actual*. All the members of the church are not holy, nor is the holiness of any of its members complete. Both facts are significant.

ALL CHURCH MEMBERS NOT TRUE CHRISTIANS.

25. All its members are not holy. There was among the twelve, a Judas, who from the beginning was a deceiver. There

* Ephesians 4:15-16.

was a Simon Magus, who believed and was baptized, though shown afterwards to have been ‘still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.’ In *Galatia* there were ‘false brethren unawares brought in.’* *Peter* speaks of some as ‘false teachers, who should bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction.’† *Jude* speaks of others who had ‘crept in unawares; ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denied the

only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; † while in *John's* days men had left the church who were really 'not of it.' § Nay more, from the parable of the wedding garment, ¶ and from the startled exclamation of the men Δ who had preached in Christ's name, it is clear that deception of ourselves, or of others, may remain to the very hour of judgment; and that the revelation of a man's true character may be reserved to add to the awfulness of the disclosures of that day of terrors. Alas for us! 'All are not Israel that are of Israel.' Dead men's names too often stand upon the roll of the living—'names to live that are dead.' Even church-members will be among those who go away into everlasting punishment. 'Then I saw,' says the matchless Dreamer, 'that there was a way to

* Galatians 2:4.

† 2 Peter 2:1.

‡ Jude 4

§ 1 John 2:19.

¶ Matthew 22:12.

Δ Matt. vii. 22..

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Hell from the gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction.'*

NOR IS THE HOLINESS OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS COMPLETE.

26. Nor is the holiness of any of its members complete. Christian character is a growth and a victory; a growth in spite of the deadening influence of the world, and a victory after incessant conflict. The *Apostles* confess their imperfections. *Paul* had not attained—he found it needful to keep his body under, lest having preached unto others, he should be himself rejected. † For his personal humiliation, and to aid him in his struggle against spiritual pride, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh. ‡ *John* rebukes

all assumption of sinlessness, as self-deception and falsehood. ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’§

The facts of all Apostolic history correspond with these confessions. *James* admits that the apostles and prophets were men of like passions with us. The dispute between *Paul* and *Barnabas* was very sharp, and upon one side, at least, unchristian.¶ The inconsistency of *Peter* at Antioch is well-known, though the meekness with which he bore the rebuke of a younger apostle,Δ and afterwards commended the very epistles in which he was himself condemned, and praised the ‘beloved brother’

* Pilgrim’s Progress.

† Philippians 3:12–14.

‡ 1 Corinthians 9:27.

§ 1 John 1:8.

¶ Acts 15:36–39.

Δ Galatians 2:11.

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who condemned him, ought always to be remarked in connection with his weakness.’★

27. In the churches there were evils much more serious. Jewish converts were prone to an anxious, slavish piety, and to uncharitable prejudices against a free Gospel; and when the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was written, and the overthrow of the Jewish polity and state drew near, they showed a strong tendency to turn away from the faith. Among some of the Greek converts at *Corinth* there was a sectarian spirit, a fondness for human philosophy, an inclination to unchastity, a love of worldly distinction between rich and poor; and that in the very feast which was intended to commemorate their oneness in guilt and in redemption. Among others, at *Ephesus* and *Colosse*, lax morality, doctrinal error, lukewarm indifference, had each begun to do their part in the subversion of the truth. There was also seen, even in those early times, and when nothing seemed likely to be gained by the

profession of the Gospel, the sin of hypocrisy: *John* finding it needful to distinguish between an inward and a merely outward fellowship with the church,†

* 2 Peter 3:15–16.

† “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19.) “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.” (John 15:2.) “If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” (1 John 1:6.) “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can (such) faith save him?” (James 2:14.)

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and James, between a false and a true faith, as Paul had already confessed that the Lord alone knows them that are His, though indicating that there is one mark as decisive to us as God’s knowledge is to Him—‘Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’*

On the one hand, therefore, the mixture of error with truth, of sin with holiness, is unavoidable; yet on the other, holiness is essential to the idea and design of the church.

THE ACTUAL GRADUALLY ASSIMILATED TO THE IDEAL—IN WHAT WAY.

28. But how are these facts reconcilable? And what is the church’s duty in relation to them? Clearly she is to guard the entrance into her fellowship, and then afterwards she is to maintain its discipline. By the first she expresses her conviction of the necessity and reality of Christian life in all her members; by the second she is ever purging herself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, the evils incident to her present state. Neglecting care in admitting members, she helps men in their self-deception, confounds the church and the world, and receives into her communion those whom she will have soon to expel. Neglecting discipline, she implicates herself in the sins of her members, fosters

a poisonous element in her body, and so ultimately works her own ruin. Recognising both duties,

* 2 Timothy 2:19.

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and fulfilling both, she preserves her proper character as the body of her Lord.

CARE IN ADMITTING TO HER FELLOWSHIP.

29. The whole of this brief statement, in both parts of it, is sustained by the New Testament; and even if not, it follows from the very nature of civil society and of the Christian church. Citizenship is always sacredly guarded, and the greater its privileges, the greater care is generally taken to verify the title of those who claim it. The church, moreover, is a body of men recognised by one another, and by the world, as possessing a certain character. If this character is not avowed, the church ceases to answer to the inspired description; and if *any* kind of avowal is accepted as sufficient, the avowal itself will cease to have meaning.—But, of course, the appeal on both questions is rather to Scripture than to the nature of the case.

SCRIPTURE PROOFS.

30. Our Lord, we find, began His ministry by making disciples. Some He called, and they, leaving all, followed Him, giving therein the proof of their sincerity and love. Others who offered to follow Him, He questioned; and if, through love of wealth, or a mistaken view of earthly duty, He found them unprepared for the self-denial His cause demanded, He pronounced them ‘unfit for the kingdom of God.’

THE ACTS.

When Christ's kingdom was founded, the apostles

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preached in His name the forgiveness of sins. As the fruit of their ministrations, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, three thousand were pricked in their heart, believed, and having undergone this spiritual change, were added to the church.* This number is increased (Acts 4.), and amid severe persecutions the disciples multiply greatly, and a large company of the 'priests are obedient to the faith.' If a devout Ethiopian reads of the sufferings of our Lord, and becomes at length a Christian, he is first instructed, and then, at his own request, and on an avowal of his faith, is baptized. If a persecutor is converted, and, while as yet his true character is not known, he 'assays to join himself to the disciples,'† the reality of his conversion is naturally questioned, till it is declared how the Lord had met with him, and how the persecutor had preached the faith he once destroyed. When Gentiles first claim admission into the church, and Jews doubt whether they ought to be received, except through circumcision, facts are quoted to prove that the Holy Ghost had been given to them, and forthwith they are welcomed into the Christian fellowship, and there is joy in every breast, because God hath given to the Gentiles repentance unto life.‡ And so throughout the narrative. There is in every case the avowal of

* Acts 2.

† Acts 9:26.

‡ Acts 11:18.

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faith, and in most cases such evidence of the sincerity of it as justified the church in regarding the applicants as believing men.

THE EPISTLES.

In nearly every Epistle the same principle is acknowledged, though in different forms. The *Romans* are forbidden to judge their fellow-members in matters indifferent, and are commanded to take to their hearts* all whom God has received, while they are to mark them that cause divisions contrary to the doctrine they have learned, and avoid them.† In the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, the duty of exercising care in admitting members to Christian fellowship is set forth in the clearest terms. Ministers and all who build are warned to take heed that they lay upon the foundation of the church only precious, living stones, or it may be ‘gold and silver,’ ‘men of *worth*,’ in the best sense, ‘metal of the true ring;’ for he that putteth thereon wood, hay, stubble, will one day suffer loss, and though he himself be saved, it will be as through fire. Well for each builder if he incur not the punishment of those who mar the temple of God.‡ In the second Epistle, ‘all unequal yoking with unbelievers’ is condemned, and Christians are enjoined to keep themselves separate, that so God may be a Father to them, and they be sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.§ In

* Romans 14:1 (*προσλαμβάνεσθε*).

† Romans 16:17.

‡ 1 Corinthians 3:17.

§ 2 Corinthians 6:17–18.

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‘the *Thessalonians*,’ the brethren are ‘commanded to withdraw from (or rather, as the word implies, to *steer clear of*) every brother who walks disorderly (refusing to keep the rank), and not according to the instruction which the Apostle had taught. *Timothy* is exhorted ‘to stand aloof* from men whose morbid taste was for speculation and logomachy, and not for wholesome truth, while from others, who had the form of godliness,† but were strangers to its power, he was ‘to turn away.’‡ The *Apostle John*, writing

much later, bids Christians test men by their doctrines as well as by their practice, and commands them not to receive into their houses those who bring not with them the faith. §

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

31. What is decisive evidence of conversion, and what are the doctrines which every man who wishes to join the fellowship of the church should hold, it is not difficult to

* “If any man is a teacher of other doctrine, and assenteth not to wholesome words, even the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is puffed up, knowing nothing, with a diseased taste for questions and contentions of words ... From such *withdraw thyself*.” (1 Timothy 6:3–5.)

† “This know also, that in the last times” (*i.e.*, even in our dispensation), “hard times will come. For men will be fond of themselves, fond of money ... having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ... From these also *turn away*.” (2 Timothy 3:1–5.)

‡ ἀφίστασο, ἀποτρέπον.

§ “If there come any unto you” (as some had come) “and bring not this doctrine” (the doctrine that Christ taught, or the doctrine of Christ coming in the flesh), “*receive him not* into your house, neither *bid him good speed*, for he that biddeth him good speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (2 John 10–11.)

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define in words, though the application of the definition in actual life requires spiritual insight, tenderness, and wisdom. Repentance and faith, submission to apostolic and inspired teaching, is *one* summary. A sense of sinfulness, trust in Christ as our Redeemer, with the resolution in God’s strength to be holy, as His word sets forth holiness, is a *second*. All that is necessary to constitute a Christian must be required, and besides, the acceptance of God’s word as the authority in matters of religious belief and practice, is a *third*. The last part of the definition in each case some would regard as included in the former, but in fact there

are Christians who acknowledge other teachers besides the Bible—tradition, inward light, the church. Their Christianity there may be no reason to question, but before they are admitted to a Christian church, they must recognise the Gospel as the apostles recognised it; they must agree upon their ultimate appeal—their standard of faith.

DISCIPLINE THE MEANS OF PRESERVING AND PROMOTING HOLINESS.

32. The discipline of the church is, in brief, a mutual contract for essential truth and for holiness. Sin, or essential error, violates the compact, and calls for rebuke. Continuance in sin, or in antichristian error (as John names it), dissolves the bond. For everything else *within* the church, the rule is gentleness, forbearance, and love. For everything else *beyond* the church, there is no

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law. “For what have we to do with them that are without?” Of them that are without God himself is judge.

If this view be sound, penal sanctions, wars called holy, the diffusion of the faith by the power of the sword, are all alien to the Gospel of Him who said, “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.”

ERRORS AND SINS THAT ARE TO BE REBUKED.

33. The sins that were visited with this discipline were, gross immorality, fundamental error, and a quarrelsome, factious spirit. Thus *Paul* prohibits the Corinthian church ‘even to eat with any man *as a Christian* who is a fornicator; a greedy person (so the word implies), an idolater, a railer, a drunkard, or an extortioner,’ and peremptorily requires that such offenders be ‘put out’ of the church.* He seems also to include in the same treatment all who

should preach another Gospel than the one he himself had delivered.
c Let him,' says he, 'be anathema'†

* "I have written in my letter that you are not to be mixed up with fornicators. Yet it is not with the fornicators of this world I mean ... What I write is, that you are not to be mixed up—if any man *called a brother* is a fornicator, or a greedy person, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one not even to eat ... Therefore *put away* from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Corinthians 5:9–13.)

† "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any Gospel unto you other than that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said already, so say I now again, If any man preach to you any Gospel other than that you received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8.)

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—excluded from your fellowship. Similarly, the Apostle *John* forbids the fraternal recognition of any who denied that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, or that Jesus is the Son of God. The Docetism of the first error (the view, namely, that our Lord's life was a mere myth, and not a solemn glorious reality), Paul had previously rebuked in the same strain, when (as in the case of Hymenreus and Philetus) * it denied the fact of the resurrection. The party-man, partial in his attachments to truth, and of a quarrelsome spirit (αἰρετικὸς), was subject to the same discipline. From such men, after the first and second admonition, the church was to withdraw.†

ADMONITION.

This "*first and second admonition*" has a double reference—(first) to Jewish practices, and (then) to the rule of our Lord‡ Sinning brethren are to be first spoken with in private, then publicly, before the church; and if, after that, they will not hear, they are to be to us as heathen and as publicans. Such is our Lord's

law. Similarly among the Jews admonition was the first stage of discipline, and anathema, or exclusion, the last.

34. This final, solemn exclusion from Christian

* 1 Timothy 1:20.

† “A man that is a heretic” (fond of party, and prone to indulge a heretical and quarrelsome spirit) “after the first and second admonition, reject,” shun, *ask to be excused* from associating with him. Titus 3:10.)

‡ Luke 17:13.

EXCLUSION THE ALL OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH.

fellowship was the act of the whole church, in the name of Christ. Nor did even apostles take part in it, except as representatives of the body. Paul, indeed; excommunicated the Corinthian member in virtue of the full power committed to him by Christ; but he says expressly that it was done while his spirit was united with their spirit, and in reliance upon their concurrence.* He took as granted that the whole assembly would ratify his sentence, and would as a body repair the mischief which had been inflicted upon the body by the sin of the offending member.

THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE TWOFOLD.

35. The secondary purpose of this discipline was the good of the sinner himself. It is the office of the church not to destroy, but to edify and save. Temporary exclusion fails of half its end, unless it lead to final restoration. Even the severe bodily afflictions which apostles seem to have had the power of laying upon hardened offenders, ‘the delivering unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,’† ‘the delivering unto Satan that they might be taught not to blaspheme,’‡ were really desperate remedies, intended to arrest

men in sin, to drive them to repentance, and so to save them in the day of Christ.

The kindly, wise treatment of excluded members is a lesson we still need to learn in modern times.

* 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.

† 1 Corinthians 5:5.

‡ 1 Timothy 1:20.

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WHAT EXCLUSION IMPLIED.

36. It will readily be noted, too, that neither admonition nor exclusion denied of necessity the piety of those who were excluded. When Paul directed the church to put away the unworthy member, he hoped thereby to bring him to repentance; and this hope, he tells us in the second Epistle, was fulfilled. Discipline, while essential for the vindication of truth and the maintenance of purity, is consistent both with charitable judgments and with tenderest, truest, Christian love.

OBJECTIONS TO INQUIRY INTO THE REALITY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

37. Truth is seldom objectionable till it comes to be applied. So long as it is held in principle only, men are ready to commend it; but when it is pressed home upon themselves, or when it is found to condemn systems they have long known and cherished, they begin to regard it with suspicion. And thus it has fared with the truths we are now expounding. Nearly all churches started with the theory that membership is a privilege; that it is to be given to those only who have the appropriate character, and that for certain acts it may be withdrawn. And herein nearly all agree. But once apply the principle, and it becomes, in the judgment

of many, tyranny, or persecution, or uncharitableness. At best it is deemed impracticable.

All these forms the objections of opponents have assumed. *Tyranny*, however, it is not. Tyranny is the supremacy of mere will. The government of

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the church is the supremacy of the divine law. Tyranny and the supremacy of law are, in truth, opposite terms. *Persecution* it is not; all secular penalties the church disowns. Church membership is no civil right; and *that* is all that Christian discipline withholds.

The other pleas deserve more consideration. Is it uncharitable? Is it impracticable?

It is maintained,* then, that this system of affected purity is a denial of the rule laid down by our Lord. He tells us that the tares and the wheat are both to grow together till the harvest. An apostle still further enforces this precept by bidding men not to anticipate the decisions of the great day, and 'to judge nothing before the time.'

ANSWERED.

But is this the meaning of our Lord's parable, or of apostolic teaching? In our Lord's interpretation of the parable, He tells us that the field is *not the church, but the world*; and the command that bids us let both grow together, though a sufficient reason for not leading a heretic to the stake, is no reason for keeping him in nominally Christian fellowship. Elsewhere, moreover, he bids us to tell our brother his fault, and if he refuse to hear us, we are to tell it to the church, and if he will not hear the church, he is to be to us as 'a heathen man and a publican.' In the very Epistle,

* Trench.

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too, where men are forbidden to judge anything before the time, the Apostle directs the church to put out from among them the leaven that was leavening the lump; in no other way, he reminds them, can they worthily keep the Paschal feast, or free themselves from contamination and guilt. Clearly, while *some* judgment is forbidden, *other* judgment, and exclusion even, are enjoined.

ANSWERED.

Or the objection takes another form. The process is impracticable. Men cannot certainly decide, it is said, who are Christians, and is it not presumptuous to try? Better leave each man to his conscience and to God.

JUDGMENTS ARE FALLIBLE, AND YET MEN MUST FORM THEM.

The objection is common and popular. It commends itself to many who accept it as much from humility as from any theory they have formed on the duty of the church. "Our judgments are fallible," is their first principle; and it is as old as the hills. Our fathers long since said, 'We shall meet in heaven some we never expected to see there, and we shall miss some upon whose presence we had counted more certainly than upon our own.' But is this fallibility peculiar to the judgments we form of the religion of others? Do we cease to judge of a man's honesty because we have been deceived? Did an apostle cease to judge himself because compelled to say, 'I am conscious of no wrong, yet am I not thereby justified, for

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He that judgeth me is the Lord?' If men know not what true religion is, then indeed they may scruple to test the religion of others. But if they are themselves converted, they are bound to

watch over one another, and unitedly to seek the salvation of the world. For both purposes they must judge. To forbid them to judge others is as absurd as to send medical men to visit infected districts, and to administer remedies indiscriminately, without allowing them to ask the symptoms of the disease they seek to heal, or even to ascertain, in any given case, whether the enforced patients are diseased at all.

38. Thus much to the objectors. Let it be added, for the guidance of the church—

HOW PIETY IS TO BE ASCERTAINED.

All we need, in those who seek to enter our fellowship, is credible evidence of a divine change. How that evidence is to be obtained—and what shall be deemed sufficient—are questions Scripture does not decide. The *first converts*, when ‘pricked in their hearts,’ cried out in the presence of the multitude. They *seem* to have received the word with gladness, and to have obeyed it. Their conversion was proved by evidence as palpable as their guilt. *Ananias*, on the other hand, needed and received a special communication from God, attesting the reality of Paul’s conversion. *Barnabas* afterwards reported the facts to the church at Jerusalem, and

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on that testimony the church welcomed him. Peter witnessed the descent of the Holy Ghost on the first Gentile converts, and himself reported the facts to the church at Jerusalem. Some gained admission into churches by letters; others were themselves ‘living epistles,’ and carried in their spirit and in their labours the evidence of a divine call. In these primitive times the power of the Gospel was often manifested even while it was preached; and as nothing was to be gained by joining the Christian fellowship, the very desire to join it, accompanied, as it was, with confessions of sin and avowals of faith, was in most cases itself enough. When great sinners professed repentance, and the fire of persecution,

that later tested men's sincerity, was as yet unkindled, they were asked, as in the case of the Pharisees, for 'fruits meet for repentance,' or, as in Paul's case, were looked upon with suspicion, till some one could show 'how that the Lord had met with them.' In short, the modes of ascertaining the piety of professed converts, and the degree of evidence requisite in each case, varied with the circumstances. Christian men and Christian churches were left, it seems, to exercise spiritual discernment, and to use their common sense.

MISTAKES.

39. It is admitted that on this question churches have made mistakes. They have forgotten that, in all that is essential to the Christian life, men are very much what

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they *really wish to be*. They have kept inquirers waiting whom they ought to have welcomed. They have insisted upon peculiar types of piety, rather than upon the reality of it. They have preferred talkativeness to quiet penitence. They have applied tests that are at once too lax and too rigid, and so have hesitated to receive some whom Christ long since received, while they have kept out the diffident and the thoughtful. All this may be admitted. The process, moreover, of determining on character is always an anxious and a difficult one. It involves responsibilities from which most men would willingly be free. But, nevertheless, whatever the imperfections of this work, and whatever its difficulties, it must be done. Without it there can be no intelligent Christian effort, and no satisfactory Christian fellowship. The church will soon cease to be a holy brotherhood, and Christian men, who have refused to ascertain the piety and to judge of the character of their brethren *for church purposes*, will be compelled to ascertain and judge for their *private comfort*. If we be Christians, we must have Christian intercourse; and Christian intercourse there can be none, unless it be based on mutual knowledge, and sympathy,

and love—that is, on the exercise, by individual men, of the very insight and discernment now claimed for the church.

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§ III. The Church: its Government.

40. The government of the Christian church is remarkable for simplicity.

SIMPLICITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SYSTEM.

THREE CLASSES OF OFFICERS.

41. There seem to have been at the first three classes of officers—Bishops, Elders, or Pastors; Deacons; and, connected with some communities, Evangelists. The *first* were, speaking broadly, the overseers of the flock; the *second* visited the sick, relieved the poor, and managed the secular concerns of the church; the *third*, called sometimes ‘the messengers of the church,’ preached or taught wherever the providence of God might call. Sometimes this last office was filled by men set apart to it; sometimes by men who filled other offices—deacons, pastors; more frequently by the members of the church generally, who, when driven by persecution, or invited by hopes of usefulness, ‘went everywhere preaching the word.’

PASTORS: THEIR POWERS.

42. Of these officers, Pastors were invested with authority. They are therefore called superintendents, or presidents,* leaders,†

* προισταμένοσ. “Know them *that are over you* in the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12.) “He that *ruleth*,” (the same word) “with diligence.” (Romans 12:8.) “A bishop, then, must be ... one that *ruleth well* his own house: for if a man knows not how to

rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Timothy 3:45.)
 "Let the elders that *rule well* be counted worthy of double honour." (1 Timothy 5:17)

† "Remember *your leaders*, who

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ποιμήν, ποιμαίνω.

or governors; and, indeed, the name "pastor" is quite as descriptive of authority as of teaching. By *authority* is meant that they were empowered to see to the execution of the law. It was their business to arrange so as to have everything done for 'edifying'—'decently' (becomingly, honourably), and 'in order.' Those that walked disorderly and created divisions they were to censure, and, if need be, to have excluded. In short, the pastors of the church had all the authority of the church. They were entrusted by the body, and through them by Christ himself, with the administration of the law. *Legislative* authority they had none: *executive* authority they exercised within their proper province, and subject to the great laws which the Lord Jesus, or the apostles in His name, had prescribed.

These pastors had, none of them, it will be observed, mysterious functions, unearthly honours, or an exclusive spiritual office. The people were bound to *love* them, for they were engaged in an arduous benevolent work; bound to *honour* them, for they represented the body, and, if rightly chosen, were called by Christ himself to their

spake to you the word of God; whose faith follow" (imitate), "considering the end" (the issue) "of their life" (conversation). (Hebrews 13:7.) "Obey *your leaders*, and submit yourselves. Salute all *your leaders*, and all the saints." (Ver. 17, 24.) The same word often means ruler, or chief, and is so used by the LXX.

THE RULERS OF THE CHURCH,

office; and bound to *obey* them when they spoke in the name of the law: but nothing more. They had the dignities of Titus: 'Do any inquire of him?' says the apostle.* 'He is my partner and fellow-helper.' Such as he are the '*messengers of the churches*, and the *glory of Christ*.' Elders they were called, from the Jewish title of the members of the Sanhedrim; bishops, or overseers, from the Greek title of a somewhat similar office. Both titles imply that the church is to reverence and obey them; while they, on their part, are so to act as to secure the respect and affection of all over whom they preside.

AND ITS SERVANTS.

This office, it will be seen, originates entirely in a regard for the church's interests, and is to be used for the church's good. It is not a profession, in the common sense of that term; nor is it to be made the means merely of securing a living, of enjoying literary ease, or of gaining a social position. Christian churches are not formed for the sake of Christian ministers, but ministers for the sake of churches. To the church they wholly belong; for the church they study, and pray, and labour, and preach. Even in their crosses and blessings they are not their own, 'for whether we be afflicted or comforted,' says the Apostle, 'it is

* 1 Corinthians 16:16.

for your consolation and salvation.' Pastors are, in a word, the servants of the church. The church, indeed, is not their master; but they are, nevertheless, its servants. Their time and their strength they themselves divide; their talents they use as in their

conscience they think they can best please Christ;—only the good of the church is to be the end of the whole.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PASTORATE.

43. This work of blended authority and service is necessarily an office of great anxiety and self-denial. It has been said of those who fill it that ‘they live to please,’ and they must, therefore, ‘please to live;’ nor unfrequently have appeals been made to the favoured condition of clergymen of Established churches as evidence of a sounder ecclesiastical organization. But to us the trials of the Christian ministry are among the proofs of the soundness of our system. There is not a single difficulty with which dissenting ministers have to contend, that apostles did not encounter. If our trials had been less numerous, or of a different kind, it might have been feared whether we had not departed from the apostolic model. Nor should it be forgotten that Christian churches are schools of discipline, and that the Christian minister is the teacher. When the office becomes a sinecure, as one day it may, its end will be gained, and the office itself will cease.

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THREEFOLD DUTIES OF THE PASTORATE.

44–46. The duties of the pastor, in addition to this general superintendence, are threefold:—

MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

(a.) He is to give himself to the ministry of the *Word*; he is the *servant* of the Bible; he must do its bidding, and maintain its supremacy; he must study, and explain, and apply it; seek out acceptable words, even words of truth, and adapt his message with holy skill to the condition of his people, and to the ever-

shifting necessities of the age. While thus strengthening the weak, and instructing all, he is to announce or proclaim the Gospel; declaring ever the whole counsel of God; warning every man day and night with tears, that he may present men perfect in the day of Christ. In every part of this office, Paul, and with reverence be it spoken, our blessed Lord, is to be his pattern.

A PRAYERFUL SPIRIT.

(b.) He is to cultivate, in an eminent degree, a devotional spirit. This duty, binding upon all Christians, is specially binding upon the Christian pastor. The inspired writers, indeed, seem to place it first. 'We,' says the Apostle, 'will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word,' while the intensity of the expression he uses* implies that ministers must bend their strength to it. They

* προσκαρτερήσομεν. (Acts 6:4.)

must pray with the concentrated energy of their whole spirit, with mingled ardour,—'give ourselves,'—and patience,—'continually,'—with mingled boldness and humility. Of all duties, indeed, this is at once the most animating and the most exhausting—the secret of our strength, and the proof of our weakness. Whence the difficulty arises it is not now needful to discuss; partly from the indolence of the soul, that cannot easily be stirred to think and feel intensely on subjects that are not *material*, that seem to have no visible results, and where all vanity and self-consciousness are forbidden; partly from the inherent dislike of imperfectly sanctified natures for work so spiritual and humiliating; partly from the busy activity of public life, and partly from the direct temptation of the great foe. The *fact* is, it is difficult;—and yet is it most important.

The ministers of the Gospel depend largely for their fitness on personal character. In secular life we distinguish between the occupant and the office. A man may be personally base, and officially blameless. But in the ministry this distinction cannot be made. As the man is real or unreal, earthly or spiritual, such will his ministry be. If he is cold, or unholy, or unloving, his people will be colder, and unholier, and not simply unloving, but quarrelsome and divided: and how else is the true spirit of such an office to be maintained but by prayer?

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For all the details of his office the same culture is required. In pastoral work the minister needs insight, tenderness, wisdom. He must enter into the trials of his people; he must strive with the obdurate, and seek to win them; he must himself remain humble amid success; he must be undaunted by anxiety: and how else is this spirit to be maintained but by prayer?

Moreover, it is prayer that lays hold of God's strength. It is prayer that honours God. It is in answer to prayer that the Spirit works—that Spirit without whose light all is dark, without whose touch all is still, without whose breath all is dead. By prayer others are moved, as by prayer ministers are moved themselves.

Preaching, therefore, without prayer leaves the *more essential half* of the work *of the ministry undone*.

EXAMPLES OF BELIEVERS.

(c.) The pastor is, besides, to be a 'model man;' an apostolic description, or it would be presumptuous to use it. 'Be thou,' says the Apostle Paul, 'an example (a pattern) of believers in word, in conversation (*i.e.*, in behaviour), in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.'*

* 1 Timothy 4:12. "Neither as bring lords over God's heritage, but being *examples* to the flock." (1 Peter 5:3.) "In all things shewing thyself a *pattern* (the same word of good works.)" (Titus 2:7.)

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This precept implies that there is a power in a living example, as well as in direct effort. The power of the former is even mightier, for it is unceasing, and it steals insensibly over the soul. Direct efforts, on the contrary, are necessarily numbered, and men have time to resist or guard against them. True of all men, this remark is specially true of teachers, who have no privacy, and are ever exerting unconscious influence for evil or for good. While human nature remains as it is, men will interpret the doctrines by the life; and here an apostle seems to sanction the tendency.

What he thus enjoins he practised. 'Ye know,' says he, 'from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears.' 'Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.' 'The things that ye have seen and heard *in me* do, and the God of peace shall be with you.'

Model men! '*Take heed, therefore, to yourselves*, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.' '*Take heed to thyself*, and to the doctrine; ... so shalt thou save thyself and them that hear thee.' Model men! an office so filled is a public blessing, even apart from the teaching of the ministry. The man who

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fills it as he ought is himself 'a living epistle,' read and known of all.

PIETY ESSENTIAL TO THE MINISTRY.

47. And yet it is sometimes questioned whether a preacher *need* be a converted man. But, not to speak of the mischief done to truth by the ‘Talkatives’ of the allegory—pilgrims of bold face and fluent speech, but the scandal of the world, and the grief of the church—or of the absurdity of listening to homilies on watchfulness from some dreamy sleeper on the enchanted ground, or of the danger of travelling under the convoy of a ‘Great-heart,’ who neither knows the road nor is the friend of the King of the country through which we pass,—how can bad men *pray*? And if preaching without prayer is enough—a good message, but a bad character—why did Paul and Silas refuse to accept the testimony of the damsel with the spirit of divination? And why did Christ himself, recognised by the devils He was about to eject, sternly bid them to hold their peace; except that truth itself was rendered suspicious when uttered by such lips. No; Christ’s commission is not fulfilled, and Christ’s church is not served, by any pastor who is not first of all a *good* man.

DEACONS.

48. The second office in the church was filled by those who are now called deacons. The name is used in the Book of Acts, both of the apostles who were ministers (‘deacons’)

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THE NATURE OF THEIR OFFICE WIDER THAN IS GENERALLY SUPPOSED.

of the Word, and of those who are said to have served (*i.e.*, acted as deacons of)★ tables, and to whom the management of the temporal concerns of the church seems to have been entrusted. On a careful examination of the New Testament, with such a help as ‘The Englishman’s Greek Concordance,’ where the reader

is enabled, to investigate for himself all the passages that contain the Greek word, it will be found that whoever served the church or aided the pastor, either in spiritual or in temporal work, was called 'deacon.' The Apostle *Paul* went to Jerusalem, acting as 'deacon' to the saints.† In some of the early apostolic journeys, *John Mark*‡ was deacon of the preachers; as was *Erastus*§ (the chamberlain of Corinth) of Paul. At *Corinth* it is said that there were in the church diversities of 'deacons,'¶ or services, but one Lord; and in the 12th of the Romans, where there is an enumeration of the primitive gifts, the 'deaconship' is put before teaching,Δ and is expressly distinguished from giving or distributing a man's own bounty, or the bounty of the church. In the *Pastoral Epistles*, the deacons are represented as possessing qualities that are evidently needed for an office of wider scope than the mere serving of tables, though that is clearly part of their

* Acts 6:4, 2.

† Rom. 15:25.

‡ Acts 13:5.

§ Acts xix. 22.

¶ 1 Corinthians 12:5.

Δ Romans 12:7.

work;* and, in fact, the deacons mentioned in the Acts were not only men of good repute, but 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,'† while some of them were eminently successful as preachers of the Gospel.‡ Hence it is plain that, while in the early church deacons were first appointed to attend to the secular concerns of the Christian community, they were also helpers of the pastors, and of the church at large. They might teach as well as distribute; and they formed, with the pastor, a band of *presbyters*, to whom the general management of the affairs of the community was committed,—within what limits will be hereafter seen.

DEACONESSES.

49. With such duties, it will be readily supposed that the office might be entrusted to members of either sex. Phœbe was servant ('deacon') of the church at Cenchrea, and the first of the apostles was himself indebted for many acts of service to her kindness and skill.

EVANGELISTS OR APOSTLES OF THE CHURCHES.

50. The evangelists, the *third* class of labourers, were either private Christians who preached (a somewhat loose application of the word), or they were formally set apart for their office. As such, they are called apostles—that is, 'messengers,' or 'missionaries'—

* 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

† Acts 6:1-5.

‡ "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders ... among the people ... And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6:3, 10.) "Philip went down, ... and preached Christ unto them." (Acts 8:5.)

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of the churches, just as the twelve were called 'the apostles of our Lord.' These last were sent immediately by Christ, as witnesses of His resurrection, and as inspired teachers of His truth.

ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH MIGHT PRAY AND TEACH.

51. The necessity for defining the duty of these last-mentioned offices is the less urgent, from the following fact. In the early church, all members were regarded as equals. Anyone might pray or preach, if only he possessed the requisite gifts, and could exercise them to edification. Even women seem to have prayed and prophesied in public.* They also sometimes taught, though this last practice the Apostle rebuked as inconsistent with the

divine order of nature, which places the woman in subjection to the man, and as injurious to her right influence in the sphere of private life.† The practice of *praying* and *teaching* by all (with this exception) the Apostle allows and encourages; only he requires that divine gifts be exercised in order, and for mutual profit. The Apostle *James*, indeed, intimates that with many teaching had become a mania. Talking being so much more

* “Every woman that *prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered* dishonoureth her head.” (1 Corinthians 11:5. Compare Acts 2:17, and Acts 21:9.)

† “Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are to be under obedience, as also saith the law.” (1 Corinthians 14:34.) “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man.” (1 Timothy 2:12.)

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easy than working, multitudes had set themselves up as teachers from mere vanity, and without any inward call.* Still, though this abuse is condemned, and there were appointed teachers, the rule remained in force. All might teach, provided that they had the gift, and that this gift was used in humility, and under a sense of increased responsibility.

52–54. Those who were formally *appointed* teachers showed themselves, both in the manner of their election and in their mode of ruling, rather helpers of the faith of their brethren than lords over it.

First. They were appointed by the people, or with their consent.

ALL APPOINTED BY THE PEOPLE OR WITH THEIR CONSENT.

The inward call to any spiritual office, and the necessary gifts for it, come only from the Holy Ghost; and so *He* makes men overseers of the church,† but that fact does not exclude the *co-operation of the Christian assembly*; still less does the fact that Paul

and Titus are said to have appointed elders.‡ The Apostles themselves were indeed chosen by Christ as His agents

* “My brethren, be not many *teachers*, knowing that we (teachers) shall receive the greater condemnation.” (James 3:1.)

† “Take heed therefore ... to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (bishops.) (Acts 20:28.)

‡ “And when they (Paul and Barnabas) had ordained (rather chosen) them elders in every church ... they commended them to the Lord.” (Acts 14:23.) “I left thee in Crete that thou shouldest further *Set right* the things that were left undone, and *appoint* elders in each city, as I directed thee.” (Titus 1:5.)

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for laying the foundation of the church; but as soon as there was a community of believers nothing was done without its active participation. *Peter* laid before the *whole congregation* of one hundred and twenty his opinion on the necessity of electing some one to take the place of Judas. The *whole assembly* nominated two. The *whole* prayed to be informed of the Divine will. The *whole* cast their lots, and so Matthias was chosen.*

Much more may it be expected that the general rights of Christians would be regarded in the choice of the ordinary officers. Hence, when the *first deacons* were to be appointed,† the *twelve* call the *whole multitude* of the disciples together, and require them to choose. They chose, and presented to the Apostles the men they had chosen. Of the first pastors it is said‡ that *Paul* and *Barnabas* appointed them to their office by taking the vote of the people. The word§ no doubt is sometimes used more loosely, as in Acts the tenth, and verse 41, where it is applied to God; but its proper meaning seems the probable one: and the word is applied by Paul himself to those who were elected by the churches to carry their gifts to Jerusalem; they were ‘chosen deacons’ for that business.¶

The apostolic directions given to *Timothy* and to *Titus* are perfectly consistent with this view.

* Acts 1:15,23–24,26.

† Acts 6:1–6.

‡ Acts 14:23.

§ Xeirtonew.

¶ 2 Corinthians 8:19; compare 1 Corinthians 16:3–4.

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Such directions were essential; for as yet the churches had no written Bible, nor could they know but by direct instruction the qualifications needed for the offices they had to fill.

These conclusions, drawn in part from the rights of the church, and in part from Scripture, are sustained by the early Fathers. They generally understood the New Testament on this point, as these pages explain it. Clement of Rome, and even, in the third century, Cyprian, admit or formally assert that the Apostles appointed bishops and deacons *‘with the full concurrence of the church.’**

Secondly. When pastors had been thus chosen, they were not to lord it over God’s heritage, but to be as patterns of the flock. They were to exercise control, not so much by force of law as through the church’s convictions of duty, and to pay a just regard to its rights in all things.†

This was the course adopted by the Apostles. Their epistles and decisions are addressed not to ministers, or to ministers and deacons alone, but to the *whole body*. If Paul once excommunicated a person at Corinth, it was because their spirit was united with his.‡ Even in controversies the

* Clement Ep. to Cor. i. chap. 44. “A bishop” (says Cyprian) “is made by the selection (judicio) of God and His Christ, the testimony of the clergy, and *the votes of the people,*” (Plebis suffragio.) Ep. 52, in Ep. 68.

† 1 Peter 5:1–5; 2 Corinthians 1:24.

‡ “For I have judged already ... *ye being gathered together, and my spirit,* to deliver such a one unto Satan ... that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 5:3–5.)

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Apostles consulted the brethren, and when at Jerusalem an important question was to be decided the deliberations were held in the presence of the whole congregation. Peter appealed to facts in support of his views; the whole community joined in the final resolution;★ the written decree went forth in the name of all, and is addressed to the collective body of Christians in Syria and Cilicia. The entire strain of the inspired writers even, is that of men speaking indeed with divine authority, but seeking to rule only through the convictions and affections of the people they addressed.

THE SUPPORT OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

THE PRINCIPLE.

55. For the efficiency of the church, it is often essential that its officers should give themselves entirely, or largely, to their work. In such cases our Lord has laid down the principle that ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire,’ and has himself applied that principle to the question of the support of the ministry, both pastoral and evangelistic. The same principle is affirmed by the Apostle *Paul*, and is illustrated by various similitudes; the soldier and his pay, the vinedresser and the vineyard, the shepherd and the flock. ‘Do ye not know,’ says he, ‘that they which minister about

★ “The apostles and elders and brethren ... to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria and Cilicia ... it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.”
(Acts 15:23–25.)

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holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the

Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* When writing to Timothy he goes even further, and recognises the principle that men may be recompensed in this office as in others, according to their efficiency: 'Let the elders that rule *well* be counted worthy of double honour;† a precept that includes support, as the original implies, and as is clear from the following verse, where it is taught that men are to show themselves grateful to those by whose labour and skill they are served.

WHO ARE TO BE SUPPORTED?

56. The limit of the application of this principle is fixed by the nature of the church, and the necessities of the case. In Christian churches *secular work* will never be extensive. The collection of funds ought to be a simple process, for such funds are to be the free offering of the people, made not under pressure, but with a willing mind; and the distribution of such funds comes within the sphere of the freewill service which each Christian owes to his fellows and to his Lord. Yet, if churches combine for evangelical labour, so that the collection and distribution of funds grows into a business, the principle applies, and the brother who devotes his time

* 1 Corinthians 9:6–13.

† 1 Timothy 5:17.

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to this work 'is worthy of his reward.' He ministers *about* holy things, and he may therefore live of the things of the temple. He waits *at* the altar, and may be partaker with the altar.

THE PERSONAL ACTIVITY OF CHRISTIANS NOT SUPERSEDED BY CHURCH OFFICES.

57. Spiritual work, on the other hand, will often require the entire service of several, and all these may fairly be supported by the body; not to fulfil the, duties of individual Christians, and so to supersede the *personal* activity of the members of the church, but to do constantly and fully what each Christian is bound to do at times and in part. Pastors and evangelists are not *substitutionary* agents, they are *supplemental*; and they will prove a curse rather than a blessing, if the church devolves on them the loving, personal labour, which of right is required at the hands of every disciple.

58. And is this so, that each disciple owes loving labour to the church, and personal service to its Lord and to the world, for His sake—service that can be superseded by no hired agency or money—gifts?

This is certainly inspired teaching. If we ‘are not our own, but are bought with a price,’ it is ‘with our bodies’ and ‘with our spirits’ we are to glorify God. *Ourselves* we are to present as a living sacrifice. ‘Diversities of gifts’ there are, but we are to use them ‘according to the grace given to us;’ we are to ‘minister the same one to another, as good stewards, according to the manifold

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grace of God.’ To every Christian man is ‘given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.’ As a church, we form one body, and EVERY member has its place and function.

We may not be *in office*, but neither was Andrew, when ‘finding his own brother Simon, he brought him to Jesus.’ Neither was Philip, when he found Nathanael, met his difficulties, and bade him ‘Come and see.’ Who was commanded to go and tell what great things God had done for him? The poor demoniac, whose chief qualification was that he had been healed. What first led the Samaritans to believe ‘the talk,’ as they phrased it, of a woman who then understood little else than that she was a sinner? Who

gave the Gospel to Antioch and to Rome? ‘Certain men,’—not apostles—whose names were not worth recording. How came the Gospel to be at first so widely diffused? Persecution scattered the disciples, and they ‘all, except the apostles, went everywhere preaching the word.’

We may have *small gifts*. Let us be the more careful to use them. It was the man who had *one* talent who was unfaithful to his trust. But if we know the Gospel, and love the Gospel, we are entrusted with more than ancient prophets possessed. The *least* in the kingdom of God is greater than they. We can watch over one another, weep with those that weep, warn the unruly, comfort the feeble

minded. We can say with John, ‘Behold the Lamb of God;’ with our Lord, ‘Only believe;’ and if we doubt the power of this message, let it be remembered that it is God’s word, and entitled to God’s blessing. Nor should the inspired estimate of the comparative value of spiritual gifts be disregarded: ‘I had rather *speak five words* to teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue: In the one case I can edify only myself, in the other I edify many—it may be even a church.’ Yes, our work for Christ is a right: we *may all* prophesy. But it is also a duty. Gratitude, healthy spiritual life, the condition of the church and of the world, the command of our Lord, the very instincts of our new nature—all demand it. It is right and duty combined.

THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH NOT A TRADE OR PROFESSION.

59. And yet, though the labourer is worthy of his hire, the service of the church must not be turned into a profession, or be made a trade. Disinterestedness is one of the most needful qualifications of the preachers of a free Gospel: ‘Freely they have received, freely they are to give.’ The Apostle Paul inculcates the same truth, while maintaining his own right, and the right

of all servants of the church, to live by the Gospel. He warns all against the love of filthy gain, and exhorts bishops and deacons to be contented, hospitable, and generous. His precepts he enforced by his own example. He toiled sometimes night and day for his own support, that he

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might not be burdensome to churches that were made up for the most part of the poor;* that he might be a worthy member of that blessed partnership, 'The Gospel;' and that he might silence the uncharitableness of those who questioned his motives, and insinuated that he made his 'godliness gain.' His disinterestedness at Ephesus and at Corinth is a model on this subject for every age.

WHAT THE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT SHOULD BE.

60. What this support should be is a question at detail which the Gospel does not decide. Some have said that churches should do all they can for the ministry. Others have said that the support of ministers should be in proportion to the church's appreciation of their message and work. But neither rule seems a wise one, and no such rule is laid down in the New Testament. For churches to do all they can for the ministry would end in many cases in large incomes, and in the neglect of the great duty of evangelization; and for churches to pay their ministers as they themselves appreciate the Gospel, would be to pay the servant for the worth of what he brings, instead of paying him for bringing it. The only principle laid down in Scripture seems to be that he who preaches the Gospel is to *live* by the Gospel; and *that* cannot mean that he is to have for preaching his daily bread only, his widow and

* 1 Corinthians 1:26-28.

children being left to be fed and schooled (*educated*, it is not) on charity. He is to make no gain by the Gospel, that is clear; neither is he, nor are his, to starve. Decent, adequate, moderate maintenance for himself and his household—this seems the inspired rule.

REMEDY FOR INADEQUATE SUPPORT.

61. If this rule cannot be carried out, then either there is something wrong in the minister, in the moral state of the church he serves, perhaps in its existence as a separate body; or he must himself *work* and preach. In some cases the Christian church, amidst our modern, artificial civilization, needs to learn the real dignity of labour; and the spectacle of the same man toiling and teaching might read her the lesson. In other cases, the multitudinous small churches of cities and villages need to be merged into one; all parties, and the cause of God especially, would gain by the change.

HOW FUNDS SHOULD BE RAISED; WHAT EACH CHRISTIAN SHOULD GIVE.

62. While the duty of the church collectively is clear, and in its very indefiniteness adapted to foster a conscientious, loving spirit, the rule for individual Christians in regard to the support of the ministry, and of everything else, is both clear and, instructive. In the early church, ministers often continued, as we have seen, their former trades, as was common with the rabbis,' and as was the practice of the Apostle Paul. Many of the fathers, from Irenæus downwards, maintained that Christians should pay

tithes like the Jews, so as not to be behind them in liberality. But, in fact, for six centuries there was no law regulating the amount of Christian contribution to the cause of Christ. Every

man was to give ‘according to his ability,’* ‘as his means allowed,’† as he purposed in his heart,’ ‘as he had prospered in his calling.’‡ This was the rule acted upon by the first churches, and it is formally commended in the Epistles. It applied probably to all efforts for the support and diffusion of the Gospel.

To make this plan the more effective and the more easy, to change extorted gifts into willing offerings, and to mature the *act* of giving into a *habit*, each man was directed—on the first day of the week, the day that commemorated his deliverance and the completion of his Saviour’s work, the day that brought to his hopes the thought of the Crest that remains for the people of God,—to lay aside a part of his earnings as a treasury for the Lord. From this source, replenished week by week from God’s bounty and his own love, each Christian was to distribute from time to time, as a steward for Christ, to the calls of the church and the necessities of the world. Never was machinery more simple or more effective.

HOW FAR THE DUTIES OF THESE OFFICES INTERCHANGEABLE.

63. The duties of the several offices of the primitive church were, it will be noted, to a large extent,

* Acts 11:29.

† 2 Corinthians 8:12.

‡ 1 Corinthians 16:1–2.

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interchangeable. None were *apostles* of Christ but those who had seen the Lord, and could prove their commission by miraculous power. None were *pastors* but those who were set over the churches. But *private Christians* prayed and preached. *Deacons* acted as evangelists. *Paul* was at once *pastor* at Ephesus and at Corinth; *deacon*, to carry the gift of the Corinthian church, at their request, to his own nation at Jerusalem; and everywhere an

evangelist, or preacher of the Gospel, to the Gentiles. As every man had received his gift, he was to exercise it; nor did he need office except when he exercised it for specific work, and in close relation to a particular community.

NO DETAILS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
CHURCH.

64. It has been already remarked that there are no instructions in the New Testament on the mode of ascertaining the piety of members of churches; nor are there (it may now be remarked) instructions on the mode of carrying out the details of that system of government, which is nevertheless clearly recognised in the inspired writings. None can tell, for example, whether the financial concerns of the church are to be managed by the deacons alone, or whether all questions are to be finally settled by the church. All that is clear is, that the church is to exercise constant care in the admission of members, in maintaining discipline, and in doing

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everything for the edification of the body. The church is essentially a spiritual fellowship, formed for spiritual purposes, and business not spiritual may be left in the hands of any that are appointed for that work. Sometimes it will be better to put all secular concerns into the hands of prudent business men, leaving the church to attend only to things that are connected with the preservation of her purity and life. Sometimes it may be better to have everything settled by the church herself, the officers regarding it as their duty to execute her decisions. When this last course is adopted, the officers will consult the judgment of the community, and be guided by it in everything, *except on questions of principle*. Principles are fixed for the entire body, church and officers alike, by Christ the Master himself.

THE CHURCH GOVERNMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT NEITHER A
DEMOCRACY NOR AN OLIGARCHY.

65. From these facts it will be readily seen that the government of the churches of Christ bears but a faint resemblance to any organization of civil society. Churches have been called democracies—oligarchies—and sometimes it has been said that the autocratic element prevails in them. None of these terms, however, fairly represents the case. Christian churches are really theocracies, and are ruled by the will of God. They form the kingdom of Christ. Their constitution is simply the supremacy of divine law, applied and enforced by

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Christian men, and in Christian love. The meaning of the law is substantially agreed upon when the church is formed; and if a diversity of judgment arise on the interpretation of the law, or on questions of fact, the decision is with the pastor, or with the deacons, if the matter is within their provinces, respectively, and with the church if it is beyond it. In every such case it is a question of interpretation or of fact—not of legislation or of authority.

Need it be added how completely this idea of government—the supremacy of law, and that law the law of love—meets the aspirations of some of the noblest and clearest thinkers of our race? It is the perfection of government. Nor need any fear its working or its efficiency, provided only care be taken to admit and to keep in the church godly men. If, through carelessness or apostasy, the church cease to be a community of such, the community will itself dissolve; for it is part of the excellence of this system, that *without life* there is neither cohesion nor strength. Other ecclesiastical systems retain part of their aggressiveness after the life has died out, and seem even to gain power from their corruption. *Christian* churches, when once the spirit is gone, crumble into decay. It is the law of nature and of Scripture that *then* they be buried out of our sight. Their vitality is their spirituality:

when that ceases, they themselves disappear. The 'salt has lost its savour, and is

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forthwith good for nothing but to be trodden under foot of men.' Herein is one proof of their divine origin, and of the superhuman sagacity that created and that rules them.

66. A few words on the advantages of this system, and on some abuses to which it is liable, may fittingly close this discussion.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS SYSTEM.

The Christian church is a theocracy, administered through the consciences and hearts of Christians. This peculiarity is an advantage in an age of democratic tendencies, when men are qualifying to exercise their rights, and are preparing to claim them. Communism and democracy the Gospel repudiates, and yet it recognises the brotherhood of the entire body.

The Christian church is based on the consecrated activity of all its members. The scope it gives to individual development, and the power for good it brings into play, fit it for the great work to which the church is called. It is the business of each generation to give the Gospel to the world—man to man—and in no other way can that business be fulfilled but by the personal devotedness of every member.

The Christian church is founded on the double principle, that all true religion is a personal thing, and that churches of Christ are associations of religious men—of all such, and of none besides. This principle is taught by the very genius of our dispensation,

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and is the only one that harmonizes the doctrines of evangelical truth. Our church polity *is* the Gospel, in palpable form, and in actual life. The members of such communities are prepared to honour piety wherever they find it. Nor do they require for

fellowship anything that Christ does not require for salvation. 'Alliances,' Evangelical or otherwise, are at best faint copies of this holy brotherhood.

Even the *negations* of this system are advantages, if we rightly understand and apply them. In our country and age, Christian churches are largely *Nonconformist*. They hold that forms should be simple and spontaneous, unless Scripture has made them obligatory; that they should grow out of the inner life, and should be moulded by it. Above all, they hold that no forms should be made terms of communion, and that none should claim authority to create and enforce them. This struggle for negations, as it seems, is really a conflict for *liberty*.

Christian churches are in our country largely Dissenting. They object to some of the articles of the Established church, and especially to the practice of making agreement in all these articles ('assent and consent') essential to full Christian fellowship. Such restrictions make the way narrower than Christ made it, are a snare to men's consciences, and divide the church. Dissent, therefore, is a plea for charity and for truth.

Christian churches are largely voluntary. They

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condemn compulsory service and compulsory gifts, not holding, as some think, that men are free to do as they please in Christ's church, but only that every religious act, to be acceptable, must be the willing offering of the heart. Christ's law is our guide, and our love to Him the motive and the measure of our obedience. Herein Christian churches are not so much a protest against necessity and compulsion, as a plea for willinghood and *love*.

Once admit these views, and mould ecclesiastical systems according to them, and we get rid of most of the scandals that have for ages disgraced and impeded the progress of religious truth. If compulsion is allowed in enforcing religious duty; if truths on which, as Scripture teaches, really Christian men may differ, are made essential to fellowship; if forms are made binding upon the conscience,—a great wrong is inflicted on Christian

men, and on the Christian church. The wrong done to Christian men may be lessened, as it is their own faith, and the forms which seem to them most becoming, that are enforced; but the wrong to Christian truth and love remains. Church history is largely the record of struggles to shift the former of these wrongs from one to another—to ease one man's conscience at the expense of his neighbour's. The thing for which we plead is to ease them all, and to end the struggle, by maintaining the *freedom*, and *charity*, and *willinghood* which the Master enjoined.

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These are among the advantages of the Scriptural system.

ABUSES.

67. But, on the other side, the system is liable to abuse; not, indeed, from any inherent tendency of its own, but from the misconceptions and the weakness of the *human nature* that works it. The wisest plans are often impaired by human infirmity; and the divine theory of the Christian church is no exception to this rule.

DIVISIONS.

Christian churches are in danger from minute and fierce divisions. This is the bane of all governments that are partly democratical. With spirituality, the discussions and votes of Christian men will never be widely discordant or much embittered. Till this grace is more largely gained, let there be forbearance, and candour, and self-control.

JEALOUSY.

Christian churches, based on equality, are in danger from jealousy. They are apt to look with envy on all who have been

greatly blessed, and who are therefore largely influential. All such feeling is a loss to the community, a wrong to our brother, and a grief and dishonour to our Lord.

ISOLATION, AND LOSS OF POWER.

Christian churches based on spiritual truth, and avowedly independent of one another, are in *special* danger of isolation and exclusiveness. All religious truth is important, and all error really mischievous: Men of

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clear insight and of earnest nature are apt to feel so strongly, that they cannot cordially act with brethren who deny anything they hold. To stand aloof seems often a protest for truth and conscience. Men and churches, moreover, bring into their fellowship tempers neither 'lovely' nor 'of good report'—tempers that do not make them more welcome. They have grace; but it is grace grafted on the crab, and the fruit tastes too much of the double parentage. Both causes combine with natural disposition, and the dread that some have of all ecclesiastical organization, to discourage Christian communion. Christian men, therefore, seem too often as 'one of a family' and as 'two of a city;' while Christian churches stand each 'alone among the nations.'

To meet these feelings, and to correct the isolation they foster, let the following facts be kept in mind. Among *true Christians* the things wherein they differ are small compared with those wherein they agree. Co-operation in the Gospel is not compromise of differences: it is homage to essential truth, as isolation because of differences is preference of what is subordinate to what is essential. Forbearance and brotherly love are sometimes difficult; and *therefore* we must exercise them. Nor is 'a fugitive,' 'cloistered' virtue, that shuns the struggle, of much worth. Ecclesiastical organizations *have* ended in dominion over men's faith; but the 'idols of the den,' the tyrannies of isolated fancy and temper, are.

as numerous, probably, as the 'idols of the tribe.' And, in truth, our strength rests as much on our *unity* as on our *independency*. Our divisions tend to perpetuate less Scriptural but more compact bodies, and we give to them the honour of presenting to the nations that visible unity which belongs properly to the church. Nor must we forget that, as the world sees and feels that we are one—is not this the import of our Lord's intercessory prayer?—the *world will believe*.

INDIFFERENCE TO TRUTH.

Christian churches are in danger from indifference to truth. For purposes of fellowship, they destroy or ignore the distinctions that divide Christians; and they sometimes go further, and are tempted to ignore the *truths themselves*. The tendency of the age is to hold that whoever believes anything has faith, and that whoever feels anything has the Spirit. A *Christian* church, as opposed to a narrow, sectarian church, *seems* to sanction this tendency, or may be supposed to sanction it. Let it be made clear, therefore, that we plead for liberty in non-essentials, not because all beliefs in relation to them are alike true or alike harmless, but because, if men are *Christians*, they are to be welcomed in spite of their mistakes. The *mistakes* themselves we must disown.

WORLDLY MAXIMS AND SPIRIT.

Christian churches, whose strength is in their purity and in their tenderness,

are apt to forget their spirit, and to copy the world, in its maxims and temper. Occasionally this tendency shows itself in the form of persecution; oftener of angry strife, or of ferocious vituperation. Christian men forget that railing, as certainly as the sword, is

forbidden even to archangels, and that ‘the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men.’ Christ’s kingdom is *not* of this world, in its agency or instruments, *nor yet in its spirit*.

EXPEDIENCY; FORGETFULNESS OF THE SECRET OF THEIR TRUE STRENGTH.

And finally, Christian churches are in special danger of forgetting the secret of their strength. Other associations have elements of power of their own-wealth, social position, organization, respectability, learning. *These* Christian churches may have, and yet, for all saving purposes, be powerless. For their successful working they need piety, spirituality, holiness, the special presence, the recognised and incessant presidency, of their Lord. *Without Him*, the freedom of Christian churches is anarchy; their independency, isolation and weakness; their power, ‘the shadow of a name;’ their union, tyranny or strife; and their usefulness, a delusion and a snare. *With Him*, they are the noblest forms of social life, His loving representatives on earth, and the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.

Congregational Church History.

Bicentenary Prize Essay.

Congregational

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FROM THE REFORMATION TO 1662.

By JOHN WADDINGTON, D.D.

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I

Congregational Church History.

§ I. REFORMERS, 1523–62—*Views of Continental Reformers—Their Influence on English Exiles.*

“The hand of God sows not in vain:
Long sleeps the darkling seed below,
The seasons come, and change, and go,
And all the fields are deep with grain.”—LOWELL.

THE Reformation of the sixteenth century, notwithstanding its immense and lasting benefits, was marked by defects which arrested its progress and entailed evils that are still deeply felt. The errors of the Romish church were exposed in the searching light of Scripture, and the power of the papacy was broken to a great extent; but in the ardour of their conflict

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with the ‘man of sin,’ the continental Reformers overlooked the simple principles of church polity contained in the New Testament. Several causes might be assigned for this serious error. The champions of Protestantism were impatient to call into existence an ecclesiastical organization that should rival or surpass the Romish church in its visible unity, the vastness of its resources, and the extent of its influence. They were anxious, in consequence, to secure the favour of princes, and to consolidate the temporal power of reformed churches as a material bulwark against the encroachments of the papacy. The methods adopted by the leaders of the Reformation to attain this object were widely different from those employed by the first preachers of the Gospel. Instead

of contenting themselves, like the apostles at Jerusalem, with the simple association of Christian believers drawn together by the force of mutual conviction and of kindred sympathy, they attempted, by a combination of preaching and diplomacy, to secure the adherence of nationalities, out of which they might ultimately find the proper elements for the constitution of churches.

The earliest writings of the Reformers contain their clearest views as to the nature of a Christian church. The more they became entangled in secular alliances, the more confused and complicated were their statements on this important subject.

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LUTHER IN 1523.

An essay from the pen of *Luther* appeared in 1523, entitled ‘Causes and Reasons, deduced from the Scriptures, why a Christian Congregation have the right and power to judge over, to call, to appoint, and remove their Teachers,’ in which he asserts the independence of the separate church in terms the most unqualified. Writing to the Calixtins of Bohemia, in the same year, he says, ‘If you have no other means of procuring pastors’ (than to accept vagrant priests), ‘rather do without them, and let each head of a family read the Gospel in his house, and baptize his children, sighing after the sacrament of the altar as the Jews at Babylon did for Jerusalem.’† In giving directions for the choice and appointment of ministers, he says, ‘First seek God by prayer; then being assembled together with all those whose hearts God has touched, choose in the name of the Lord him or them whom you shall have acknowledged to be fitted for this ministry. After that, let the chief men among you lay their hands on them, and recommend them to the people and to the church.’‡

Further, in his ‘Essays on the Keys’ (1530), on the subject of excommunication, Luther writes, ‘If a bishop or an official intends to excommunicate a person, he must go or send to the congregation,

* Schenkel's *Das Wesen des Protestantismus*, p. 208.

† M. D' Aubigné, *Hist. of Ref.*, vol. iv., b. 13, c. 3

‡ Ibid.

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and to the clergyman by whom he is to be excommunicated, and, act towards him according to the words of Christ; a Christian congregation is not the servant of the officials, nor the bishop's constable that he might say to it, "There Mary, there John, excommunicate such a person." In a secular magistrate such a course might be reasonable, but here, where souls are concerned, the congregation must act in the capacity both of servant and judge.* Subsequently the views of the German reformer were greatly modified. He appears to have despaired of the practicability of forming separate associations, and to have satisfied himself with the idea that when the Gospel was preached, and the sacraments were duly administered, the elements of a Christian church would be called into existence, though not distinctly cognisable to human observation. In a letter to the inhabitants of Nuremberg (1532), he expresses the opinion that it might suffice not to administer the Lord's supper to those who indulge in a profligate course. 'If just now,' he says, 'the world is so savage and wild that it cares little for the Lord's supper and the church) so that excommunication is disregarded, let it pass unnoticed if the secular magistrate will publicly suffer the practice of vice.†

The historian of the Huguenots tells us that from

* Schenkel.

† Ibid.

REFORMATION IN FRANCE—1515 TO 1559.

1515 to 1559 was the age of purity and of Christian simplicity. *'The Reformed had entered into no political alliance with any party in the State.* It was a quiet, hidden movement, in the hearts of men thirsting for religious truth for peace of conscience, for purity of heart and life. They sought each other out, and met to help each other on. But it was in small bands, in closets with closed doors, in the murky lanes of the city, in the lonely hut of the wayside, in the gorge of the mountain, in the heart of the forest, that they met to study the Scriptures together, to praise and pray. They did so at the peril of, their lives, and the greatness of the peril guarded the purity of motives.'

'The disciples of the new religion,' says De Felice,* 'had among them signs of recognition; and when they were too numerous to form one assembly, they divided themselves into small bands. The most resolute, or the best informed, undertook to explain the Bible.' When a pastor visited, in passing, these meetings, the rejoicing was very great. He was listened to for hours; the elements of the Lord's supper were received from his hands; the persecutions they had mutually suffered told of those which yet awaited them; and in separating, the adieus spoken were for the scaffold and for heaven.†

* De Felice, Hist. of Protestants, p. 55.

† Ibid. p. 56.

CALVIN, 1554.

CALVIN evinced the deepest sympathy with these simple and devoted Christians. Writing to a company of believers at Poitou,

September 3, 1554, he says, 'Do not deprive yourselves of the privilege of calling upon God, and hearing useful discourses and admonitions as a congregation. For although everyone may, and ought to pray to God for himself in secret, and may read the Scriptures at home, it is yet well pleasing to God to behold us assembled together in order to present to Him our solemn supplications, and the offering of our souls and bodies. When the wickedness of men prevents our doing this openly, we ought, at least, according to the word of Scripture, to praise Him with His people, and to assemble here and there in little parties, till all the members of the church are united in the kingdom of heaven. I know that you can only assemble with great danger, and that you are watched by the enemy; but the fear of persecution must not deter us from seeking the living pastures, and following our Good Shepherd. Commend yourselves to Him, and be of good courage. He will then show that He cares for His poor lambs, and that it is His peculiar office to save them from the wolf.'* Yet, strange to add, Calvin, with all his interest in these witnessing Christian communities, could not consent to

* Lettres de Jean Calvin, Bibl. de Geneve, vol. cvii., Bonnet, tome prem., 431.

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their organization as distinct churches. He framed a system of ecclesiastical polity, which left the nomination of pastors to a consistory, and gave a controlling power to the civil authorities. Though he was not prepared to recognise in a congregation of confessors and martyrs a true church of Christ, he says (Inst., lib. iv., sec. 9), 'Where a Christian prince is who maintaineth the Gospel, and the whole land, not resisting his commandment, reverenceth the word and sacraments, these, the whole multitude of such a land or state, are, without doubt, to be esteemed and judged a true church.' Geneva, with its intolerant neological pastors and irreligious population, is the monument of this ecclesiastical system.

MORELLI, 1562.

Jean Baptiste Morelli published a treatise on the discipline and government of the Christian church, in which he advocates congregational principles. The book was condemned by the synod held at Orleans in 1562, and at the instance of Calvin, the author was banished from Geneva, not to return to the city on pain of death.* JOHN KNOX, in the early part of his career in connexion with JOHN ROUGH, appears to have acted in church matters with scriptural simplicity.† An analysis of the variable sentiments of other continental Reformers would give a similar result.

* Dr Alexander on the Swiss Churches, p. 321.

† See Appendix.

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It was natural that the exiled English Reformers should adopt the views of the great leaders of the movement in Germany and Switzerland, amongst whom they had found an asylum and pleasant hospitality during the Marian persecution. Wickliffe and Tyndale were greatly in advance of them in many points. Even in their place of banishment, some of them evinced their dominant spirit, and the 'Troubles of Frankfort'* foreshadowed the intolerance that would be practised in the event of restoration to episcopal power in their native land. The abettors of prelacy contended against the advocates of further reformation, when both parties were indebted to strangers for permission to meet for worship in any form. They waited for the death of Mary to dislodge the Romish hierarchy from the national establishment, and then to try their relative strength, and thus to determine whether the Anglican church should continue to be episcopal in its order, or be formed on the presbyterian model of Geneva.

* History of the Troubles at Frankfort, 1554.

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§ II. PURITANS *and* SEPARATISTS, 1558–90; *Point of Divergence.*

“A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,
Which grasping without question, he is led
Where there is work that he must do for God.
The trial still is the strength’s complement,
And the uncertain, dizzy path that scales
The sheer heights of supremest purposes
Is steeper to the angel than the child.”—LOWELL.

ELIZABETH, 1558.

THE accession of Elizabeth to the throne, on the 17th of November, 1558, raised the hopes of the Protestants after their deep depression in the previous reign. The people soon found, however, that whatever freedom they might be permitted to enjoy under the new *regime*, was to be regulated by Act of Parliament. On the 27th of December, the Queen issued a proclamation forbidding any change in the form of religion, until it should be determined according to law. The Protestant congregation that met secretly in the reign of Mary, was suffered to assemble in private houses without molestation; but, as a general rule,

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the mass of the people had to wait for the royal commands to determine the doctrines they should believe, and the mode of service they should adopt.

ACT OF UNIFORMITY, 1559.

CONVOCATION, 1562.

Until this vital question was settled, all parties were left in suspense, and a comparatively quiet but active agitation was kept up to influence its final decision. The Roman Catholic party had the advantage of being on the spot. The Protestant exiles hastened back to their native land, but in those times the means of locomotion were few and very uncertain. Travelling, in winter especially, was difficult, and often extremely tedious. Some months passed away before the friends of the Reformation could meet in tolerable force, and to the disappointment of many they found, on their return from the Continent, that compromise, rather than progress, was the order of the day. From their correspondence, still preserved,* we learn that this time of transition was uncommonly trying. The Act of Supremacy, passed in 1559, and the Act of Uniformity, which followed with severe penalties, foreshadowed the arbitrary and intolerant policy that would be pursued. Still there was a lingering hope, that in the Convocation to be convened of the clergy in the sees of Canterbury and York, the cause of reformation might be advanced. The 31st of January, 1562,

* Zurich Letters.

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was the day appointed for the grand muster. Old St Paul's, with its tower blackened by the fire which had destroyed the wooden steeple, was the centre of extraordinary interest on that occasion. The Convocation was held in the Chapter House, and for more than a week the conflict between the episcopal party and the advocates of further reformation was maintained with growing fervour on both sides. At the close of the ninth day, the Puritans lost their cause by a single vote. The articles of the church of

England, with their anomalies and flagrant contradictions, were finally adopted, and all the ministers of the Establishment were brought under the yoke.

This arrangement did not satisfy the people who had listened to the earnest preaching of the Puritan clergy. They expected their ministerial leaders to act consistently. William White, writing to Edward Deering, said, 'I, with my brethren, do earnestly desire of you, and most earnestly pray to God for you, that you may faithfully, with the sword of God's word, cut up all antichrist's remnants, and man's inventions, that the Gospel, being rightly planted, may take an everlasting root among us and our posterity, to the glory of God.'* Nothing would satisfy these straightforward and simpleminded people but religious services marked by the

* Historical Papers, First Series, p. 3.

RICHARD FITZ.

simplicity which characterized the assemblies of the primitive Christians.. They met in ships at anchor in the river, and in various obscure places in London. A company of them were taken by surprise whilst at worship in Plumbers' Hall, and were committed to the Bridewell prison on the 20th of June, 1567.* Here they had leisure to examine for themselves the teachings of the New Testament: As they read and prayed together in the prison cell, the light of truth broke upon their minds, and 'they received it in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost.' They formed themselves into a Christian church, choosing RICHARD FITZ as their pastor, and THOMAS ROWLAND deacon. It is little that we know of their movements.† Richard Fitz, Thomas Rowland, and Partridge died in prison. Though deprived of their leaders, the brethren continued to meet in private houses after their liberation from prison. In the Register of the Privy Council, a record is

made of a letter of thanks sent to the Bishop of London for his zeal in discovering their 'conventicles,' in 1574 Mr Sparrowe

* A Parte of a Register, 23–17.

† In an original manuscript we find the signatures or the following members:— Harry Sparrowe, John King, James Aubyn, John Leonard, George Harris, John Thomas, Ann Evans, Elizabeth Leonard, James Ireland, Elizabeth Clark, Mary Race, Helen Stokes, Constance Fox, Jasper Woston, Martin Colman, John Davy, Ody Lowrie, Elizabeth Hill, Joan Haverick, Mary Weaver, Abraham Fox, Mary Meyer, Elizabeth Rumney, Ann Hall, Elizabeth Balforth, Joan Abraham.—S.P.O., Uncaledared Paper in Miscell. Fascic.

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is spoken of at that time as a prisoner in the Marshalsea. A 'person of learning and discretion' was appointed 'to confer with him on religion,' and if 'thought good,' to take bond of him that he might depart the realm.

BROWNE AND HARRISON.

Notwithstanding this severity, the principles of the Separatists* spread silently and extensively. ROBERT BROWNE, the son of a gentleman of fortune, and a relative of Lord Burleigh, wrote with considerable ability in their defence.† In conjunction with ROBERT HARRISON, he visited various parts of the country, forming churches, and urging the people to further reformation. He excited much attention by his diligence and the frequent imprisonments he suffered, but he was wanting in stability. Partly from fear, and partly from the persuasion of friends, he deserted the cause, and after a term of humiliating silence as a schoolmaster in St Olave's, Southwark,‡ he accepted a living in Northamptonshire, and closed his career without respect, leaving his name as a warning to those who would escape loss or suffering in the cause of truth by unworthy compromise.

It is a curious circumstance that the eccentricities of Browne should have so long cast into the shade

* So called because they contended for the separation of the church from the world.

† Lansd. MSS., xxxiii. art. 13,20.

‡ Minute Book of St Olave's School.

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the modest worth of ROBERT HARRISON, his colleague, a man perhaps of inferior talents, but of remarkable constancy. Fidelity in a time of defection, and in the midst of violent opposition, will not, however, ultimately be forgotten; and we venture to predict, that when the hidden things shall be brought to light, the equable and self-denying zeal of Harrison will command the admiration to which men of far greater prominence are not entitled.

Nothing can be imagined more disheartening to a company of people, solemnly committed to a cause involving continual sacrifice, incessant labour, and the greatest peril, than their heartless and sudden abandonment by one to whom they looked with the confidence warranted by previous activity and willing endurance. This was the experience of the Separatists at the time of Browne's desertion. But the standard vilely thrown away by the unfaithful leader was taken up and firmly grasped by Harrison, who had occupied a subordinate position. He was in feeble health, and closely watched, but he remained in England to avail himself of any opportunity that might arise to serve his brethren, until he found that to continue would only be to subject himself either to ignominious silence or to a violent death, without the means of giving the testimony to the principles he desired above everything on earth besides to make known. He retired, in consequence,

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to Middleburg, in Zealand, and became the pastor of an English church in that city. Personal affliction for a long time prevented

him from writing the treatise he intended; but, in a simple address on the first two verses of the 122nd Psalm, he gave free utterance to his deep convictions on the necessity of completing, in the use of scriptural means, the great work of Reformation.*

Evidently in allusion to the Demas-like conduct of his former coadjutor, he says: 'If, of two men crossing a river, one should fall and be carried away by the stream, the other may be strongly tempted to return, but that in the sacred work to which they were devoted, no man should draw back. Let us not be offended,' he adds, 'and stumble at the sin of any man to give over our zeal and love unto the Lord's cause and truth His word hath confirmed to us. But rather let us search out where the iniquity is, and let the offender bear his shame and rebuke, how excellent a personage soever he have been, for turning the truth of God into a lie; and let the Lord have His glory, who is always found true where every man is found a liar.'

'The Lord will evermore make His cause to stand, though they which handle it amiss shall fall before it in the way. And as for men of great

* "A Little Treatise upon the 1st verse of the 122nd Psalm, stirring up unto a careful, desiring, I and dutiful labouring for the true Church Government." 16^{mo.}, 1583. By R.H. In the Brit. Museum.

credit and estimation, the Lord oftentimes will make their weakness and vanity to appear, that no glory might be transferred from Himself to mortal man.'

In reply to the objections of those who asked, 'Where shall we find pastors in such a time of difficulty and of danger?' 'How shall we stand against the violence of the bishops?' Harrison, with great Christian wisdom, said: 'Let us, in the midst of our straits and impossibilities, take in hand our enterprise in the Lord with humbleness, wisdom, and simple-heartedness, not only in those things which we can foresee and hope for, but also many things

unlooked for of us shall be prospered into our bosom.’* Strengthened and encouraged by such counsels, the Christian Separatists passed from hand to hand the little volumes they had personally read with the greatest profit. For this simple act they were, when discovered, cast into prison. According to an Act passed in the 23rd of Elizabeth (1582), it was made *treason* to meet for worship, except according to the forms of the Church of England. Nevertheless, the Separatists in Norfolk and Suffolk continued to convene together in the name of the Lord Jesus. It was difficult for their persecutors to reach them. Dr Freke, the Bishop of Norwich, complained that their meetings were held in ‘such close and secret manner,’ that he found

* Harrison’s Treatise on True Church Government, &c., quoted in S. P.

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COPPING AND THACKER, 1576.

WILLIAM DENNIS.

it to be impossible to suppress them.* He sent JOHN COPPING and ELIAS THACKER to the gaol at Bury St Edmund’s, in 1576, and kept them there for years, expecting to discover their associates by the visits of sympathy they might receive. These heroic men maintained their steadfastness, and others waxed confident by their bonds. Disappointed by their fidelity, and mortified by the silent influence they exerted, the bishop anxiously sought a pretext for putting them to death. With the help of the chaplain and turnkeys of the prison, very meagre evidence was obtained on which to indict them at the assizes. The legal advisers of the Crown, finding it to be insufficient, charged them with a capital offence in circulating religious books written by Robert Browne. Sir Christopher Wray, Lord Chief Justice, wrote (July 6, 1583)

from the bench to the Lord Treasurer, that they were condemned to die, and were to be executed immediately, not waiting for the possibility of a reprieve.† The martyrs died acknowledging the supremacy of the Queen as civil magistrate, but maintaining that in spiritual matters their allegiance was due to Christ alone. For a similar alleged offence, William Dennis, a c godly man,' was executed in Norfolk. In his report of these proceedings, the

* Lansdowne MSS., xxxiii., art. 13.

† Ibid., xxx viii., art. 64.

GREENWOOD AND BARROWE.

Lord Chief Justice says: 'Many men persons will not come to the church to service, unless there be a sermon, and so there are divers presumptions that there remain of Copping and Elias' opinions, but I trust the example of these assizes will do much among them, and that our trouble shall be less at the next than it was now.'* The feeble light was not, however, extinguished, 'The church,' says Leighton, 'hath sometimes been brought to so obscure and Iowa point, that if you can follow her in history, it is by the track of her blood.' It is so here. Two earnest men, fellow-students at Cambridge, were raised up in Providence to maintain the principles for which the martyrs of Bury St Edmund's had sacrificed their lives. JOHN GREENWOOD and HENRY BARROWE identified themselves with the Separatists when at the lowest point. Greenwood had been associated as domestic chaplain with Robert Wright at Rochford Hall,† but one Sabbath morning, in 1586, he was surprised whilst reading the Scriptures at the house of Henry Martin, in the parish of St Andrew-in-the- Wardrobe, London. This was not the first time that he had been so occupied. On the evidence of informers, he and his friend Barrowe had both been accused of the offence, and warrants were issued for

their apprehension. The names of the persons present at this meeting of Bible readers

* Lansdowne MSS., xxxviii., art. 64, p. 163.

† Ibid., cix., art. 3.

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were taken down It is interesting to observe that two of their number (Nicolas Crane and Robert Lacey), if not more, were from the diocese of Norfolk. All were sent to prison.*

On Sabbath morning, the 19th of November, 1586, Barrowe presented himself at the gate of the Clink (a prison in the park of the Bishop of Winchester, Southwark), and asked to see his friend Greenwood and the other Christian brethren. For half-an-hour he was permitted to have the conversation he desired, and then the keeper arrested him, ordered a boat, and rowed with him to Lambeth, to receive an order from the archbishop for his final commitment.† During their long imprisonment, Barrowe and Greenwood wrote in defence and in confirmation of the truth which they felt they had received as a trust from God. It is marvellous how they found the opportunity, and that they had such mental energy under the circumstances in which they were placed. They were surrounded by men of the vilest character. The loathsomeness of their dungeon cannot be described. The pestilential air and the sickening stench rendered

* The following names are given:—George Snells, Edward Boyce, Ann Jackson, George Collier, Katherine Unwin, Thomas Freeman, Edith Bury, Edmund Pryce, Margaret Maynard, Alice Roe, Agnes Wyman, Robert English, John Chandler, Edward Thompson, Robert Redburne, Thomas Russell, Peter Alley, and Widow Barrowe.—*S. P. Domestic*.

† Harleian Miscel., orig. edit., 4to., vol. iv., p. 326.

it fatal to many, and injurious to all who were compelled to suffer its horrors. It was poorly lighted, and the Christian prisoners were closely watched, to prevent the communication of their sentiments to those without. Yet, by some means, Barrowe and Greenwood wrote by piecemeal, and on small scraps of paper, treatises that were sent to be printed in Holland, and then secretly conveyed to their Separatist brethren, who still continued to meet in London and in the suburbs.* Feeble and oppressed as they were, these noble Christian confessors controverted the learned divines of the Anglican church, both from the press and in personal discussion; they brought their principles before the attention of Parliament, and they prepared a memorial to Queen Elizabeth, which twelve of their brethren had the courage to present in person.† For six years in succession they made this invincible stand against all opponents, and amidst all the privations and hardships to which they were subjected. The effect of their example and of their teaching it is impossible to estimate. It is said of Wellington, that when asked who most distinguished himself by personal bravery in the field of Waterloo, he replied, 'No one can answer such an inquiry with certainty; but the man who, by main force, held the door of the burning chateau of Hougomont

* Egerton Papers, Camden Society.

† Historical Papers, p. 85.

against the superior numbers of the enemy, exhibited courage and fortitude that could scarcely be exceeded.' Barrowe and Greenwood held the pass of Thermopylæ in relation to religious liberty for a longer time, and under greater disadvantages than any others we can call to mind. Their resolution inspired corresponding ardour in the Christian bands of Separatists without. When the great Puritan party, so strong in the Convocation of

1562, was utterly broken down, the despised, Barrowists,' as they were called in reproach, 'waxed valiant in the fight;' their numbers increased; they met for worship during the summer months in the fields arid in the woods; in autumn and winter they opened their houses for the meetings of the brethren, according to a preconcerted signal. Every Sabbath they dined together, and made a collection to defray the expense of the common repast, and to furnish a supply of food to those of their society who were 'sick and in prison.' Even in the gaol, where, because of their number, it was found impossible to assign to them separate cells, they sang praises together, preached the word, and received into their fellowship those who sought to be located with them.* Barrowe and Greenwood never flinched for an hour from the ground they had taken. Their example emboldened others,

* Harleian MSS., 7042, pp. 16, 59, 107, 375.

JOHNSON AND PENRY,

and from various parts of the country converts to their views visited them in prison to acknowledge their obligations for the instruction they had received. Still the organization of the church in London was incomplete, and there was no apparent prospect of finding pastors who would have personal freedom to accept the oversight of the flock. The brethren in prison were passing slowly but certainly to the grave, smitten down in turn by pestilential fever. But just at this point of weakness and depression, the Separatists were cheered by the accession to their broken ranks of FRANCIS JOHNSON and JOHN PENRY, two young ministers educated at the Universities, who had risen greatly in the estimation of the Puritan party. Johnson, after suffering imprisonment for his fidelity as a preacher at Cambridge, was expelled from the University for the same cause, and became minister to a congregation

of English merchants at Middleburg. Whilst occupied in their service he discovered, at the office of a printer in Holland, the edition of a book written by Barrowe and Greenwood prepared for publication. He reported the circumstance without delay to the English ambassador, and was authorized by him to destroy the work. He seized the books and burnt them openly; but to satisfy his own curiosity, and to show their character to the ambassador, he reserved two copies. Eager to ascertain the contents

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of the volume he began to read it with care, and, contrary to his expectation, he was convinced by the scriptural reasoning of the imprisoned authors. In obedience to the truth he had thus embraced, he left Holland and came directly to London to confer with Barrowe and Greenwood as to his future course.* Almost at the same time Penry made his way to the metropolis of Scotland with similar views and determinations. He had laboured earnestly for years to introduce the Gospel amongst his countrymen in Wales. He was among the first to translate a portion of the Holy Scriptures into their language, and to preach in the mountains the glorious Gospel. Disappointed in his aim to move Parliament to undertake the work of evangelisation, he was led to examine the causes which hindered the progress of the truth; and with the honesty and fervidness of his nature, expressed in strong terms his indignation at the evils he found in the working of the episcopal system. At the instance of Whitgift a warrant was issued for his apprehension, and to avoid the pursuivants he fled with his wife and four infant children into Scotland. There, for a time, he was protected by the ministers of the Kirk, and allowed to preach. This gave offence to Queen Elizabeth. She wrote an autograph letter to King James, insisting that he should be

* Young's Chronicles, pp. 424-425.

CHURCH IN SOUTHWARK, 1592.

seized and given up to the officers of justice. Proclamation was issued in Scotland (August 6, 1590) that Penry should be apprehended, and threatening death to any person who should afford him either shelter or food.* With a price upon his head, and exposed to danger at every step, the intrepid evangelist travelled from Scotland to London, to cast in his lot among the Separatists.† At this interesting juncture Greenwood was suffered to leave the gaol, and was committed to the custody of a private citizen. He was the more free by this change to act in conjunction with the brethren in preparation for the ordination service the church had long desired. A day was appointed in which pastors and deacons might be set apart to the work assigned to them. Meetings for this purpose were held at the house of ROGER RIPPON,‡ in Southwark, and in Nicholas-lane on the opposite side of the Thames. In these lowly 'conventicles' Greenwood was elected teacher, Johnson pastor, and Daniel Studley with George Knyveton deacons or elders. The ordinance of baptism was administered to children, and the members of the church sat at a table, covered with a white cloth, and received the bread and wine of the Lord's supper. Imagination lingers over the scene of primitive simplicity, and of holy solemnity.

* Life of Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr.

† S. P. Scotland.

‡ Harleian MSS. 6848, art. 3.

§ III. *Martyrs and Exiles, 1592–1597,*

“The man is thought a knave or fool, or bigot, plotting crime,
 Who, for the advancement of his kind, is wiser than his time.
 For him the hemlock shall distil; for him the axe be bared;
 For him the gibbet shall be built; for him the stake prepared.
 Him shall the scorn and wrath of man pursue with deadly aim,
 And malice, envy, spite and lies shall desecrate his name.
 But TRUTH shall conquer at the last, for round and round we
 run,
 And ever the right comes uppermost, and ever is justice
 done.”

MACKAY.

SECRET as were the proceedings connected with the organization of the church, they had not escaped the notice of spies, who lost no time in conveying intelligence respecting them to the bishops. Bancroft intercepted letters from which he ascertained that it was intended to form a second church, and enraged by the discovery he urged the necessity of adopting measures for repressing the Separatists more decisive than even the ordinary course of the High Commission would allow.* It was resolved to act on his suggestion.

In anticipation of such a course, the Bishop of

* Bancroft's Survey

PURITAN INQUISITION.

London had employed the city clergy of Puritan tendencies to visit Barrowe and Greenwood with other Separatist prisoners once every month, and to note down anything that might escape them in conversation to which, in the event of a trial, these clerical inquisitors might be sworn. The evidence so collected (though nothing more than a simple declaration of Congregational principles) was deemed to be sufficient for the object to be accomplished.*

1592.

TRIAL OF BARROWE, &C.

John Greenwood with Francis Johnson were surprised (5th Dec. 1592) at the house of Mr Boyes on Ludgate-hill in the dead of the night, and taken to prison.† Thomas Settle and Daniel Studley were taken shortly after at a meeting on the Sabbath in Nicholas-lane. Against these violent and unjust proceedings they protested earnestly, but in vain. Barrowe, Greenwood, Bellott, Studley, and Bowk were indicted at the Old Bailey, on the 21st of March 1592-3, for writing books 'to cry down the church of England, and to lessen the Queen's prerogative in matters spiritual.' The counsel for the Crown in the course of his speech said: 'Here you behold their course; they can neither prevail by learning nor by petition with those that are in authority, but they turn to the common people.' 'They

* Historical Papers, chap. vii.

† Lansdowne MSS., cix., art. 12, p. 34.

tell them that none ought to intermeddle with the government and causes of the church but the pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons among themselves.’

The prisoners were, on the 23rd March, condemned to die; but the attorney-general followed them to their cells, and earnestly entreated them to renounce their opinions and save their lives.* They remained steadfast, though they expressed a desire for impartial conference, and promised that, if fairly convinced, they would yield. Early in the morning of the next day, orders were given to prepare them for execution. They were brought out of prison, their irons were smitten off, and they stood ready to be bound to the cart, when a royal reprieve came in time to stop further proceedings. They were led back to the dungeon, only to be subjected to the continuous importunity of messengers sent from the bishops, urging them to recant. After the suspense of a week, they were taken very early and secretly to the place of execution, where, their necks being tied to the tree, they were suffered to speak to the people. Just as they were closing their loyal and temperate address, a second reprieve reached them, and, amidst ‘the exceeding rejoicing and applause of all the people, both at the place of execution and in the ways, streets, and houses,’

* Harleian MSS., 6849, art. 35.

they returned to the gaol at Newgate. It was understood that this interposition for their rescue arose from an appeal of Lord Burleigh to the Queen. Indulging the hope that their lives might be spared, Barrowe wrote a powerful and thrilling letter to ‘a certain countess of his kindred,’ entreating her personally to represent their case to her Majesty. It was too late, however, to intercede. The partial failure of the bishops to carry a stringent measure through Parliament so incensed them, that, in spite of the remonstrance of the Lord Treasurer, they insisted that Barrowe

and Greenwood should be executed without further delay. Orders were given, accordingly, to convey them to Tyburn. They were taken secretly and early to the gallows, and put to death, on the 6th of April, 1593. Penry was apprehended and thrown into prison on the same day.

MEETING AT ISLINGTON.

Fifty-six of the congregation were surprised by the pursuivants whilst assembled for worship, at Islington, on the preceding Sabbath, April 3, 1593, and were brought up for separate examination before the magistrates, with a view to elicit something that might implicate their leaders in a charge of treason. Their depositions still remain in existence, and contain very interesting particulars.* A few of their number succumbed

* Harleian MSS., 6849.

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under the fear of continued imprisonment, and promised to go to the parish church on the following Sabbath; but none were found who had a word to say in impeachment of the loyalty of their former Christian associates.

MARTYRDOM OF PENRY.

Shortly after this examination, Penry was subjected to the same inquisitorial ordeal, and then brought up for trial. A private diary, written by him in Scotland, was found upon him, and on some expressions contained in it, notwithstanding the proof of his devoted loyalty given in the same document, he was condemned to die for imputed treason. His case was deeply affecting. His comparative youth, the tender affection for his wife and infant children, and the deep sympathy with the persecuted church, breathed in his prison letters, combine to invest his martyrdom

with the most touching interest. To prevent the excitement that might be caused at the time of his execution, if known to the people, he was taken suddenly from the prison in Southwark, and hung privately at St Thomas-a-Watering, in the Old Kent Road, in the evening of the 29th May, 1593.

Great obscurity rests on the course of the martyr church in London after the death of Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry. According to the Act of 35 Eliz., cap. i., if any persons above the age of sixteen attended any meeting under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion, they were liable to

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imprisonment until they should 'conform and yield themselves to come to church,' and make a declaration of conformity according to the prescribed form. They had to say, 'I, A. B., do humbly confess and acknowledge that I have grievously offended God in contemning her Majesty's godly and lawful government and authority, by absenting myself from church, and from hearing divine service;' and then they were commanded 'to promise and protest, without any dissimulation or colour of dispensation,' that henceforth they would not only attend the services of the church, but also to the utmost 'endeavour to maintain and defend the same.'

BANISHMENT.

Failing to make this declaration within three months, they were to 'abjure the realm, and to go into perpetual banishment.' If they did not depart within the time limited by the authorities, or if they should return without the Queen's license, the Act provided that 'they shall suffer death, without benefit of clergy.' They forfeited all their worldly possessions, and were denied an asylum, however temporary, in the abode of their friends. Within a certain time they were ordered to go to one of the English ports indicated by the justices of the peace, and from that place to quit

their native land for ever, unless they should conform to the church by law established.*

* Statutes of Elizabeth.

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England at that time had no colonies. During a few months in the year fishing vessels were stationed on the coasts of Newfoundland, but there was no permanent English settlement. Banishment at that period, therefore, meant expulsion beyond the limits of civilization, in the most defenceless condition.

It was to meet this trying alternative that Penry, in his last letter, urged the church to gird themselves. 'My good brethren,' he says, 'seeing banishment, with loss of goods, is likely to betide you all, prepare yourselves for this hard entreaty, and rejoice that you are made worthy for Christ's cause to suffer and bear all these things; and I beseech you, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, that none of you in this case look upon his particular estate, but regard the general estate of the church of God, that the same may go and be kept together whithersoever it shall please God to send you.'

The brethren acted in accordance with this counsel. Francis Johnson was left in the Clink prison for two or three years, uncertain as to what would be his fate. The memorial of his father and his own letters to Lord Burleigh are still preserved, and reveal the state of things in a most affecting light.* During this interval of protracted imprisonment, Francis Johnson entered into a

* Lansdowne MSS. lxxv., art. 25; lxxvii., art. 26.

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FRANCIS JOHNSON AND HENRY JACOB.

full discussion with Henry Jacob, at that time a clergyman in Kent, on all the points of the great controversy between the

Separatists and the church of England.* Matthew Slade† (who was associated at one time with Francis Johnson) tells us that, on his liberation from prison, he went first to Newfoundland. The particulars of this migration, so far as he is personally concerned, are not known to us. But papers recently discovered give us, at least, a glimpse of the proceedings of the church in reference to the movement.

In a memorial dated ‘Mon. 6, 12, 1593,’ Francis Johnson, on the behalf of the church, says to Lord Burleigh, ‘I beseech your lordship that this our petition may be delivered to her Highness’s hands, that we finding favour in her Majesty’s eyes, through the blessing of God, this heavy chain laid upon our loins may be removed; that we be not still forced to go into fire and water, as hitherto we have been (and that only for our obedience to the commandments of Christ); but that we may be suffered together with peace, either to live under her Majesty’s government, in obedience to the Gospel, in any place of her dominions which we most desire, or else depart to whithersoever it shall please God to bring us, and to give us a resting-

* Johnson’s Answer to Maister H. Jacob, 1600.

† Holland S. P.

place for the service of His name, and in peace and tranquillity.’* No opportunity seems to have been afforded for migration to the shores of the New World until 1597. In the meantime, those who had the prospect of obtaining a livelihood in Holland found their way to that country, and settled chiefly in Amsterdam.

PETITION IN 1597

A petition was presented to the Privy Council by the ‘Brownists, falsely so called,’ in which they say: ‘Whereas we, her Majesty’s natural-born subjects, true and loyal, now lying many of us in

other countries, as men exiled her Highness's dominions, and the rest which remain within her Grace's land greatly distressed through imprisonment and other great troubles sustained only for some matters of conscience, in which our most lamentable estate we cannot in that measure perform the duty of subjects as we desire. And whereas means are now offered for our being in a foreign and far country, which lieth to the west from hence, in the province of Canada, where by the providence of the Almighty, and her Majesty's gracious favour, we may not only worship God as we are in conscience persuaded by His Word, but also do unto her Majesty and our country great good service ... Our most humble suit is, that it may please your honours to be a means unto her

* Harleian MSS., 6849, 143.

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CHANCEWELL AND HOPE-WELL.

CHURCH IN AMSTERDAM.

excellent Majesty, that with her most gracious favour and protection we may peaceably depart thither, and there remaining to be accounted her Majesty's faithful and loving subjects, to whom we owe all duty and obedience in the Lord. Promising hereby, and taking God to record—who searcheth the hearts of all people—that wheresoever we become, we will, by the grace of God, live and die faithful to her Highness and this land of our nativity.* From the register of the Privy Council, we learn that permission was given, under restrictions, that the petitioners might go out to the island of Ranea, in two ships called the *Chancewell* and the *Hopewell*. The voyage proved disastrous, and the poor Christian emigrants were not even suffered to land on

the island.† Some who went to Newfoundland also suffered great injury and disappointment. They returned to Europe, and, denied a home in the land of their nativity, they joined their brethren in Amsterdam.‡ A church was formed in that city, having Francis Johnson as pastor, and Henry Ainsworth, a man of great learning and worth, as teacher. Daniel Studley (who was sentenced to death with Barrowe and Greenwood), on being reprieved, was suffered to join them. Here they met with Christian refugees from various

* S. P., Domestic Series.

† Hakluyt.

‡ Bradford's Dialogues in Young's Chronicles.

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parts of the Continent, but by all they were regarded with suspicion, and received from them no cordial welcome. Their exile was, under all the circumstances, deemed rather as an occasion for reproach than for sympathy. They prepared, therefore, a clear and able confession of faith, with a vindication of their principles. The treatise was translated into Latin, and sent to the learned professors of the different universities throughout France, Germany, and Switzerland.* The church which, in weakness, suffering, and bitter contempt, had borne its testimony in the Court and in the Parliament of Elizabeth, went for a time into a land of strangers, to make known its principles through the countries of the Lutheran Reformation.

* "The confession of fayth of certayn English people living in exile in the Low Countreyes, 1598." Dedicated to the "Students of holy Scriptures in the Christian universities of Leyden, in Holland, of Sana Andrewes in Scotland, of Heidelbergh, Geneva, and the other like famous scholes of learning in the Low Countreyes, Scotland, Germany, and France."

§ IV. PILGRIM FATHERS, 1602–20.

“We want no aid of barricade
 To show a front to wrong;
 We have a citadel of truth,
 More durable and strong,
Calm words, great thoughts, unflinching faith,
 Have never striven in vain;
 They’ve won our battles many a time,
 And so they shall again,”—MACKAY.

THE ‘Brethren of the Second Separation,’ who came into notice at the close of Elizabeth’s reign, had not the dauntless spirit of Barrowe and his companions; and it may be doubted whether they would have had the fortitude and courage to meet the crushing persecution endured by the martyr church of 1592.

The vehemence of the first witnesses was no longer required. There was a brief respite from persecution, and, in the comparative calm, leaders appeared to gather the sheep scattered in the cloudy and dark day, and to enclose them within the peaceful fold of the Christian church.

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CHURCH IN GAINSBORO’, 1602.

JOHN SMYTH, Fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge, and a pupil of Francis Johnson, identified himself more fully with the movement at this time. He had suffered imprisonment, but was liberated in a state of feeble health, For nine months he hesitated as to the course of duty, and had conference with Mr Dod and

Mr Hildersham, two eminent Puritan ministers; but having once arrived at settled conviction, he devoted himself to the cause he had espoused.* He organized a voluntary church at Gainsborough in 1602, Francis Johnson, in the discussion with Henry Jacob, to which we have referred in a former chapter, said: 'There may be sundry things wherein the brethren of the same church may differ in judgment among themselves, and yet, notwithstanding, walk together in the same faith, and testimony, and fellowship, wherein God hath united their minds, none of them being contentious to disquiet the churches or the members thereof, and all being ready to receive the truth which God, by His word, shall further make known, whatever it be.' Acting in accordance with this sentiment, the members of the church at Gainsborough entered into a 'covenant of the Lord, to walk in all His ways made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them.'

* "Paralleles, Censures, Observations," by John Smyth, 1603.

The church increased under the pastoral care of Smyth, and became two bands. A second Christian society of the same faith and order was formed at Scrooby,* which for a time was under the care of RICHARD CLYFTON,† a minister who, in loyalty to conscience, had relinquished his 'living' at Worksop. The correspondence of Smyth with Christian brethren who were anxiously inquiring after the truth at this period, breathes the spirit of kindness combined with decision. Writing to a friend with whom he had been acquainted at the University, he says: 'I pray you be persuaded that that which we do, we do it not rashly, nor upon discontentment, nor in pride, nor upon any sinister respect. No; we call God to record to our souls that the evidence of the truth working upon our consciences, through the Lord's unspeakable mercy, even contrary to our rebellious nature, hath mightily convinced and violently carried us to this

truth we profess and practise. Hear our grounds, and then give sentence; weigh all things indifferently—cast prejudice into neither balance; examine what I say by the Word, and lean not to any man's opinion; and I dare adventure my credit that then the light of this truth will shine in your heart, and then I pray you put it not away.'‡

* A village in Nottinghamshire, a mile and a half south of Bawtry.

† Hunter's Founders' of New Plymouth, p. 40.

‡ Smyth's Paralleles.

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CHURCH AT SCROOBY.

John Smyth is spoken of by Hall as the 'ringleader' of JOHN ROBINSON, M.A., who held the pastoral charge of the church in the Manor-house of Scrooby, on the retirement of Clyfton to Holland. It is probable that at the time of his transition from the Puritan party to the ranks of the Separatists, this eminent and excellent man may have been influenced by Smyth in some degree—just as, at a critical period in their spiritual history, persons of higher gifts and greater mental stamina have received an impulse from some earnest Christian of inferior endowments. Many circumstances contributed, under the plastic influence of the grace of God, to the formation of the symmetrical and elevated character of the future pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers. He was indebted to the teachings of WILLIAM PERKINS, his tutor at the University. Both pupil and teacher possessed, in an uncommon degree, the 'meekness of wisdom.' For a long time, Robinson tells us, he was held back from yielding to his deepening convictions, in respect for what he deemed the superior judgment of his Puritan brethren. 'I do confess,' he says, 'to the glory of God, and mine own shame, that a long time before I entered this way, I took some taste of the truth in it by some treatises published in

justification of it, which, the Lord knoweth, were sweet as honey unto my mouth; and the very principal thing which for the time quenched all

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further appetite in me, was the over-valuation which I made of the learning and holiness of these, and the like persons, blushing in myself to have a thought of pressing one hair's breadth before them in this thing, behind whom I knew myself to come so many miles in all other things; yea, and even of late times, when I had entered into a more serious consideration of these things, and according to the measure of grace received, searched the Scriptures whether they were so or no, and by searching found much light of truth; yet was the same so dimmed and overclouded with the contradictions of these men, and other of like note, that had not the truth been in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones (Jeremiah 20:9), I had never broken these bonds of flesh and blood, wherein I was so straitly tied, but had suffered the light of God to have been put out in mine own unthankful heart by other men's darkness.*

1603.

Soon after the formation of the church at Gainsborough, James I. acceded to the throne as the successor of Elizabeth (March 24, 1603). His arrival in London in the following May awakened the dormant interest, and revived their hopes. HENRY JACOB, who, after his discussion with Francis Johnson, retired to Middleburg, now published a treatise, in which he avowed the

* Robinson's Works, vol. ii., pp. 51-52.

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advanced sentiments to which he had been led, on mature reflection and careful examination of the Word of God.

Innocently confiding in the assurances of the King, before leaving Scotland, that all things in the national church should be conformed to a scriptural standard, Henry Jacob indulged the most sanguine expectation that the long-desired Reformation would now be effected. 'We have had it from your Majesty very oft,' he said, 'that whatsoever things in our churches we can show to be contrary to God's Word, shall be by your gracious means removed; and whatsoever (yet out of use with us) may appear by God's Word to be necessary, shall be established. We crave—we desire nothing more.'*

Henry Jacob, buoyed up by the hope of royal favour, took a prominent part in preparing the Millenary Petition—a document so called from the number of signatures. The original draft of the circular sent by him to ministers, requesting their adhesion, is still in existence.—The petitioners stated several articles relating to the ceremonies and service-book of the church of England which they deemed objectionable. 'These things,' they add, 'we are able to show not to be agreeable to the Word of God, if it shall please your Majesty to hear us, or by writing to be informed, or by conference

* Reasons, &c., pref. p. 2.

HAMPTON COURT CONFERENCE, 1604.

among the learned to be resolved.' It is well known that in the conference held in the drawing-room within the Privy Chamber at Hampton, on the 14th of January, 1603-4, the promoters of reformation met with a severe repulse. The Puritans were treated with great indignity by the King, and the bishops were in proportion flattered and confirmed in their power. 'I will have none of this arguing,' said the pedantic and intolerant monarch; 'therefore let them conform, and that quickly, too, or they shall hear of it. The

bishops will give them some time; but if any are of an obstinate and turbulent spirit, I will have them enforced to conformity.’ The Separatist exiles also prepared a petition to the King and his first Parliament, which was entrusted to Francis Johnson to present in person. In this characteristic document they say, ‘Though well-affected subjects, we are many of us constrained to live in exile out of our native country,—others detained in prison,—all of us in some affliction, which the prelates and the clergy of this land have inflicted upon us for our faith in God, and obedience to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have never to this day been convinced (convicted) of heresy, error, or crime, for which we should sustain the great calamities we have endured ... Our only desire is to serve God as that we may please Him, with

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reverence and fear, abstaining and keeping our souls and bodies from all remnants of the Roman religion, idolatry, superstition, and vain will-worship of what sort soever. We witness against the unlawful, pompous hierarchy and priesthood of this nation, as utterly disagreeing from the Testament of Christ, and ministry there appointed, and against the confused, profane, and irreligious multitude of all sorts of vicious lives, baptized into and retained in the body of the church of England, without voluntary profession of and holy walking in the faith of the Gospel ... *Our humble request is, that, notwithstanding these differences, we may be suffered to return to our native country, here to live in peace, practising the faith of Christ which we profess, and have long since set forth to the view of the world in our public confession, wherein none hitherto have showed us any error. Although we cannot but witness the truth of God against the corruptions remaining, yet we hold it in no wise lawful for ourselves, or any subjects, to attempt the reforming or abolishing of the like abuses, for God hath committed the sword unto your Majesty’s hand alone.’**

No allusion to the result of this petition is made by our ecclesiastical historians; but Matthew Slade

* Barrowe's "Platform," &c.

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tells us that 'Francis Johnson went into England in the beginning of his Majesty's reign (James I.), to sue for liberty of exercising their religion, where he obtained access to his Majesty's speech, but no permission save to return whence he came.'*

HENRY JACOB IN THE CLINK.

Henry Jacob, for the part he had taken, was sent to the Clink prison, In his appeal to the bishop, he complains that he had been punished without just cause, The King, he says, had invited all to examine the ecclesiastical questions by the light of Scripture, and, encouraged by his Majesty's call to this investigation, the book for the publication of which he was now imprisoned had been written. As to the style and spirit of the treatise, Henry Jacob reminds his lordship that there was nothing offensive. 'I use not therein any detractation,' to quote his own expressions, (or reproach any way. I do but argue and reason the matter.' It would appear, from the closing sentence of the letter, that the bishop had taken advantage of a supposed friendly visit to make him prisoner. 'As I came to your lordship freely, without commandment, when only my servant told me from your messenger that your lordship would speak with me, so, I beseech you, deal kindly with me. I beseech you restore me to my poor wife

* S. P. Holland MSS.

1605.

and four small children, who without my enlargement are in much distress.’ From some loose papers connected with this interesting document, we learn the date of his imprisonment—April 4, 1605.*

The shadows began to descend thickly upon the path of all conscientious men who desired simplicity of worship or purity of communion.

1604.

Bancroft was nominated to the primacy on the death of Whitgift, Oct. 9, 1604, and his conduct at the Hampton Court Conference justified the worst fears of the Puritans. He was resolved to apply the tests of the Establishment in their most stringent form.

1606.

Another attempt was made by the friends of reformation to gain a hearing. A treatise was printed secretly in 1606, at great risk, entitled, ‘A Christian and Modest Offer of a most Indifferent (impartial) Conference or Disputation about the main and principal Controversies betwixt the Prelates and the silenced and deprived Ministers in England, tendered by some of the said Ministers to the Archbishops and Bishops, and all their adherents.’ They complain to the King that ‘*three hundred, or thereabouts, have, in one year and a little more, been turned out of Christ’s service*

* Lambeth MSS.

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only for refusing such ceremonies as have their life, breath, and being from Popery; and such a subscription as the like, for aught we know, hath never been urged upon any church of Christ, in any age, under a Christian magistrate.'

The convocation at which Bancroft presided in 1604 had decided that excommunication should be added to the penalties of nonconformity—a sentence that deprived the subject of civil rights, rendered him liable to imprisonment until he had satisfied the church, and deprived him, at death, of Christian burial. The judges sanctioned the severest measures of the primate, and intimated that to petition for reformation in large numbers was an 'offence very near to treason and felony in punishment'.

1605

'Our Puritans,' says Mr Chamberlain, in a letter dated Feb. 26, 1605, 'go down on all sides; and though our new bishop of London proceeds but slowly, yet, at last, he hath deprived, silenced, or suspended all that continue disobedient.' Sir Dudley Carleton, in a letter dated Feb. 20, 1605, refers to the same subject. 'The poor ministers,' he says, 'have been ferretted out in all corners, and some of them suspended, others deprived of their livings. Certain lecturers are silenced.' *

* Winwood Memorials, ii. 48–49.

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The humble gathering in the house of WILLIAM BREWSTER, at Scrooby, to which we must now turn, did not escape the 'ferrets' of the persecuting prelates.

ESCAPE OF THE PILGRIMS TO HOLLAND.

With such facts before us, illustrative of the arbitrary proceedings of Bancroft, we can better understand the description of Bradford in relation to the trials of the church in the quiet and sequestered hamlet, in which it might have been supposed they would have been sheltered in their obscurity. 'Some were taken,' he tells us, 'and clapped up in prisons; others had their houses beset night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to fly, and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood. ... Seeing themselves thus molested, and that there was no hope of their continuance there, by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low Countries, where they heard was freedom of religion for all men, as also how sundry from London and other parts of the land, that had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause, were gone thither, and lived in Amsterdam, and in other places of the land.'

The difficulties that arose in conducting the retreat of these victims of oppression from their native land to a temporary asylum on a foreign shore, were for a long time insuperable, It took a year to effect their complete removal. No persons

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were permitted to leave the country without a special license, stating their object. This, in the case of the Pilgrim Separatists, could not be obtained. If they would not conform, their ecclesiastical oppressors were resolved to detain them for the purpose of making them feel their tormenting power. Every arrangement for the intended voyage and the transport of their goods had to be made secretly. The shipowners knew their predicament, and were too ready to take advantage of their weakness. The master of a vessel engaged to convey them to Holland, and received the sum agreed upon for their passage. The day was appointed for embarkation. To raise the means for their support in the first months of their friendless exile, they had parted with all the household effects

that they could spare. Quietly they had visited their few tried friends in the hamlets around them, to bid them farewell; and then, in small companies, journeying, probably, by night, they reached Boston, the port from which they intended to sail. They found the captain had not arrived. The ship was in the river; but they were compelled to wait, to their cost and inconvenience, in the town, for an opportunity to go on board. At length the captain made his appearance, but only to betray them.

As soon as it was dark they began to remove their goods to the vessel, and succeeded, as they

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supposed, in securing all their property and the opportunity to escape, when they were surprised by the searchers and officers to whom the treacherous captain had made known their intentions. They were turned out into the open boats, deprived of their goods, indecently stripped, and then taken before the magistrates, and put into prison. Information was sent to the Privy Council of their seizure, and they were detained until the pleasure of the authorities should be known. It was not until after a month's imprisonment that the principal part of their company were sent back, pillaged and disheartened, to be exposed to the jeers of their heartless opponents in their native place. Seven of the principal men, as ringleaders, were still kept in prison, and bound over to the assizes.

A year after this distressing failure they renewed their attempt to get away, exercising greater caution as to the means and place of escape. At Hull they met with a Dutch skipper, having a ship of his own, and entered into a bargain with him, hoping 'to find more faithfulness in him than in the former of their own nation.' To avoid the risks of a large seaport, they arranged with him to take them on board at a low part of the coast, formed by a lonely common, between Grimsby and Hull.

Once more the exiles for conscience sake left their homes, and made their way, by different

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tracks, to the place of rendezvous. The men crossed the desolate heath, and the women and children were conveyed thither in a slender bark. As before, they were disappointed. The ship had not come up, and, as the sea was rough, the women and children suffered extremely from sickness.

They unwisely entered a small creek for shelter, and there remained in anxious suspense till the next day, when the ship hove in sight. The boat, stranded in low water upon the mud, could not be got off to the ship, and so delay was caused in removing the passengers. Several of the men were on board, making the necessary preparations for the voyage, when they saw in the distance an armed mob hurrying toward the shore to arrest the fugitives. The Dutch captain, alarmed for his personal safety, uttered an awful imprecation, and determined at once to put to sea, regardless of the entreaties of the men on board, or the distress of their wives and families, who were left on shore, exposed to the fury of the rabble who had come to seize them. 'The women,' says Bradford, 'being thus apprehended, were hurried from one place to another, and from one justice to another, until, in the end, they knew not what to do with them; for to imprison so many women and innocent children, for no other cause than that they would go with their husbands, seemed to be unreasonable, and all would cry out at them; and to send them home

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was as difficult, for they alleged (as the truth was) that they had no homes to go to, for they had sold or otherwise disposed of their lands and livings.' The event proved that the detention of the poor women and children saved them from the miseries of a protracted voyage, in which their husbands were in the constant peril of shipwreck. The rage of their persecutors spent itself so far, that in small parties they were allowed to emigrate. 'By these public troubles,' we are told, 'their cause became famous, and occasioned many to look into the same; and their godly courage

and Christian behaviour were such as left a deep impression on the minds of many. And though some few shrank at these first conflicts and sharp beginnings (as it was no marvel), yet many more came on with fresh courage, and greatly animated others; and in the end, notwithstanding all these storms of opposition, they all got over at length, some at one time and some at another, and met together again, according to their desires, with no small rejoicing.'

'As soon as Mr Robinson, Mr Brewster, and other principal members were come over (for they were of the last, and stayed to help the weakest over before them), such things were thought on as were necessary for their best settling and ordering of the church affairs.'

Their new and untried position in a foreign land was attended with peculiar difficulties. 'They

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heard a strange and uncouth language, and beheld the different manners and customs of the people, with their strange fashions and attires; all so far differing from that of their plain country villages, wherein they were bred and had so long lived, as it seemed they were come into a new world. But these were not the things they much looked on, or long took up their thoughts. For they had other work in hand, and another kind of war to wage and maintain; for ... it was not long before they saw the grim and grisly face of poverty come on them like an armed man, with whom they must buckle and encounter, and from whom they could not fly.' Their first thought was to join the London congregation at Amsterdam, or that which had been formed by their former neighbours from Gainsborough; but after spending a year in the Dutch capital, they concluded that it would be best to settle as a distinct church at Leyden.

They 'fell to such trades and employments as they best could, valuing peace and their spiritual comfort above any other riches whatsoever; and at length they came to raise a competent and

comfortable living, but with hard and continual labour ... Enjoying much sweet and delightful society and spiritual comfort together, ... they grew in knowledge, and other gifts and graces of the 'Spirit of God, and lived together in peace and holiness. And many came unto them from divers

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parts of England, so as they grew a great congregation.'

Robinson's house, overlooked by the library of St Peter's Church, contained a large room, in which the members of the Pilgrim church often met to receive the counsels and admonitions of their faithful pastor. Elder Brewster, in 1609, resided in a narrow street or alley called Steucksteeg, but subsequently removed to the Choorsteeg, an alley extending from the Broadway to the choir of St Peter's Church. William Brewer, their friend and patron, owned a house in the Kloksteeg, and in the garret of that house Brewster was occupied in printing books for English Nonconformists.* The training of the pilgrims during the twelve years they spent in Holland was providentially adapted for the service to which they were destined as the pioneer Christian settlement of America. They were instructed in mechanical arts, from the necessities of their position. The growth of piety brought them, as a society, into closer fellowship, and the varied religious and moral instruction they received from Robinson prepared them to fulfil their mutual and relative obligations in the most exemplary manner. Separated from the people around them by difference of language and the unpopularity of their ecclesiastical views, they

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cultivated the fraternal sympathies, the value of which they afterwards proved in seasons of peril and of affliction, when on the margin of an unknown and desolate shore, and severed from their native land by three thousand miles of a wintry sea.

WRITINGS OF HENRY JACOB.

For a short time Henry Jacob, with his own circle of Christian friends, stayed at Leyden, and cultivated friendship with Robinson, Brewster, William Bradford, and the rest of the pilgrim company.* They discussed freely together the important questions in which they felt a common interest, and the more frequent their conferences, the closer became their agreement. The thoughts of HENRY JACOB were constantly turned to the persecuted remnant still left in London. It was evident, from the books written by him at this period, that he acted on a systematic plan. A treatise, attributed to his pen, entitled, 'An humble supplication for Toleration, and liberty to enjoy and observe the Ordinances of Jesus Christ in the administration of His church, in lieu of human constitutions,' was dedicated to King James in 1609. The author reminds his Majesty that the experience of his reign and that of Queen Elizabeth had shown to the world that conformity was no cure for division; 'and as the Lord Jesus Christ,' he says, 'hath given to each particular

* Bradford's Dialogues, in Young's Chronicles.

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church or ordinary congregation this right and privilege, namely, to elect, ordain, and deprive her own ministers, and to exercise all the other parts of lawful jurisdiction under Him,' the prayer of the petition is, 'that each particular church shall be allowed to partake in the benefit of the said toleration.' This publication was followed by others, designed to prepare the way for the formation of free churches in England. In 1610 he printed at Leyden a treatise entitled 'The Divine Beginning and Institution of Christ's true and visible Church. Also, the Unchangeableness of the 'same by Men in its essential constitution.' 'Christ,' he maintains, 'is the only author, institutor, and framer of His visible or ministerial church; touching the constitution, essence, nature, and form thereof, everywhere and for ever; and in this respect,'

he adds, 'we likewise affirm, that He is the only King and Lawgiver of the same.' He defines a true church to be '*a number of faithful people, formed by their willing consent in a spiritual outward society, or body politic, ordinarily coming together in one place; instituted by Christ in His New Testament, and having power to exercise ecclesiastical government, and all God's other spiritual ordinances—the means of salvation—in and for itself, immediately from Jesus Christ.*' 'This popular government, limited within the bounds of one particular 'congregation,' Jacob contends,

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1611.

1612,

'neither is, nor ever hath been, nor can be, in the least sort dangerous to any civil state whatsoever.' In a letter to a friend, dated 'Middleborough, the 4th Sept., 1611,' he gave a further explanation of his views, and in the following year he confirmed the propositions he had maintained by citing quotations from learned divines to prove that 'church government ought to be always with the people's free consent.' He was prepared to admit that Christian societies might accidentally exist in the church of England. 'My meaning is,' he says, 'that as these particular congregations have in them godly and holy Christians, associated together to serve God, so far as they see, agreeable to His Word, so they are in right from Christ essentially true churches of God, and as such to be acknowledged by us, and in public not to be separated from. But in respect as those congregations are parts of proper diocesan and provincial churches, so they are true churches of Christ accidentally. For proper diocesan and provincial churches being not in the New Testament, have in them by *accident* the true essential form of Christ's visible churches.'

‘Diocesan and provincial churches have never been admitted, nor do admit, the people’s free consent in their ordinary government, neither indeed can they admit it ordinarily; it would be in them troublesome, confused, and impossible. Yea, where

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each congregation giveth their free consent in their own government, there certainly *each congregation is an entire and independent* body politic, and, indeed, with power immediately under and from Christ, as every proper church is and ought to be.’

Henry Jacob, at this interesting period, kept up correspondence with his friends in London. ‘The great and long afflictions,’ he says, ‘which it hath pleased God to call me unto, only for testifying His heavenly truth against the grievous corruptions of the church in our land, are well known unto you all, my most dear and loving friends. In the midst of which my troubles, what comfort I have received from you, though I publish not, yet both a most thankful remembrance thereof remaineth in my heart, and with God a most precious remembrance is laid up for you at the last day.’

SEPARATIST CHURCH IN SOUTHWARK, 1616.

In 1616 we find this judicious but faithful leader in the midst of his brethren in Southwark. After consulting with his Puritan friends, many of whom were suffering at this time fine and imprisonment, he convened a meeting of brethren willing to enter into Christian fellowship. Amongst them we find the names of ‘Staresmore, Browne, Prior, Almey, Troughton, Gilbert, Farre, and Goodal. These, with others, having observed a day of solemn fasting and prayer for a blessing upon their undertaking, towards the close of the solemnity each of them made open confession of

their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and then, standing together, they joined hands, and solemnly covenanted with each other, in the presence of Almighty God, to walk together in all God's ways and ordinances, according as He had already revealed, or should further make known to them. Mr Jacob was then chosen pastor by the suffrage of the brotherhood, and others were appointed to the office of deacons, with fasting, and prayer, and imposition of hands.* Obscure as was the place of their meeting, the report of their proceedings soon gained currency, and they found it necessary to vindicate themselves against misrepresentation. They issued, in the same year, a publication entitled 'A Confession and Protestation of certain Christians in England, holding it necessary to observe and keep Christ's true substantial Ordinances for His Church visible and political,' containing a clear exposition of their principles. We observe that they adopted the plan of weekly offerings. To this 'Confession and Protestation' they appended 'An humble Petition to the King,' in which they speak of the 'most grievous dangers and heavy perplexities' into which they are thrown, 'ready every hour to be drawn into most miserable distresses and calamities for their conscience and obedience to God's Word.' They entreat that 'peaceably and

* Neal's History of the Puritans.

quietly they may worship God and serve the King in their native land, being convinced that the contrary way of the lord bishops and their followers is such as giveth great and most apparent advantage to the papacy and church of Rome, and which leadeth many in this land directly thither back again.'

To meet for worship in 'the public places with peace and protection would,' they add, 'be in this world the greatest blessing and benefit which our hearts desire, or which could come unto us. But we dare not expect, neither do we ask so great a favour

at your Majesty's hands; only that in private, peaceably, we might serve God with clear and quiet consciences. We, in all holiness, crave but toleration; this duty we cannot in any safety of conscience relinquish or neglect.'

PROPOSAL OF THE PILGRIMS TO EMIGRATE, 1617.

In 1617 the Pilgrim church at Leyden began to entertain thoughts of emigration to some part of the world in which their children might retain their native language, and preserve amongst them Christian ordinances. They counted the cost, and held many meetings to discuss the subject freely amongst themselves, and came to the conclusion that they would make an overture to the Virginia Company to go out under proper sanction to the country under their jurisdiction. Amongst other reasons assigned by them for this important step, they

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state that they had 'a great hope and inward zeal of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto for the propagating and advancement of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world, yea, although they should be but as stepping-stones unto others for the performance of so great a work.'* More than two years were spent in anxious negotiations to obtain the permission of the English authorities, and to make practicable terms with the Merchant Adventurers. Whilst Brewster and his companions were occupied privately in securing terms with the Council and the Virginia Company, the most active measures were being employed to apprehend him for printing books at Leyden, and he had a narrow escape of imprisonment for an indefinite term. It was from no favour to them as Separatists that permission was given them to depart, for at the time Mr Staesmore, a member of the church in Southwark, was thrown into Wood-street Counter for uniting with them in prayer. The advice of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, though a man

determinedly opposed to their principles, seems to have turned the scale in the nicely balanced parties. 'They were forced, through the great charge they had been at, to hearken to any propositions that might give ease and furtherance to

* Bradford's History, p. 24.

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so hopeful a business. To that purpose, it was referred to their consideration how *necessary it was that means might be used to draw into those enterprises some of those families that had retired themselves into Holland for scruples of conscience.*'*

Amidst all the weariness, disappointment, and positive injury they suffered in connection with their secular affairs, the Pilgrims were not unmindful of their spiritual duties in anticipation of this serious undertaking. A meeting of the brethren was held to ask counsel of the Lord. Mr Robinson preached from 1 Samuel 23:4: 'Strengthening them against their fears, and encouraging them in their resolutions.' As many were 'willing who could not get ready quickly,' it was agreed that their pastor should stay with them, and that 'Mr Brewster should go with the other.' Those who went first to be an absolute church of themselves as well as those that remained.

DEPARTURE OF THE PILGRIMS.

In anticipation of their departure they 'had a day of solemn humiliation,' when Mr Robinson preached from Ezra 8:21, spending a good part of the day very profitably. 'He charged them before God and His blessed angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to them by any other instrument of His, to

* Gorge's Briefe Narration in Mass. History, Coll. xxvi. 73.

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be as ready to receive it as ever they were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word.' He said, 'I should be glad if some godly minister would go over with you before my coming, for there will be no difference between the unconformable ministers and you, when they come to the practice of the ordinances out of the kingdom.' 'The rest of the time was spent in pouring out prayers to the Lord with great fervency, mixed with abundance of tears; and the time being come that they must depart, they were accompanied with most of their brethren out of the city, unto a town sundry miles off, called Delft Haven, where the ship lay ready to receive them. So they left that goodly and pleasant city which had been their resting-place near twelve years, but *they knew they were pilgrims* (Hebrews 11.), and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits. When they came to the place they found the ship and all things ready, and such of their friends as could not come with them followed after them, and sundry also came from Amsterdam to see them shipped and to take leave of them. That night was spent with little sleep by the most, but with friendly entertainment and Christian discourse and other real expressions of true Christian love. The next day, the wind being

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fair, they went aboard, and their friends with them, where truly doleful was the sight of that sad and mournful parting; to see what sighs and sobs and prayers did sound amongst them; what tears did gush from every eye, and pithy speeches pierced each heart, that sundry of the Dutch strangers that stood on the quay as spectators could not refrain from tears. Yet comfortable and sweet it was to see such lively and true expressions of dear and unfeigned love. But the tide (which stays for no man) calling them away that were thus loath to depart, their reverend pastor,

falling down on his knees and they all with him, with watery cheeks commended them with most fervent prayers to the Lord and His blessing; and then with mutual embraces and many tears they took their leaves one of another, which proved to be the last leave to many of them.

‘Thus hoisting sail with a prosperous wind they came in short time to Southampton, where they found the bigger ship (the *Mayflower*) come from London, lying ready with all the rest of their company.’* It is beyond our present object to trace the subsequent course of the Pilgrim Fathers, and in connection with it the remarkable history of Congregationalism in America. It seems to have been the design of Providence that the Pilgrims should

* Bradford’s History, pp. 59–60.

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be left to the very extremity of weakness, to exhibit the more distinctly the power and glory of the truth for which they suffered ‘the loss of all things.’ The scene that opened upon them in the western world had nothing in it of Arcadian beauty. ‘No awful and cloud-covered mountain, luminous with perpetual snows, glittered upon their enchanted vision; no meadows spread before their eyes, enamelled with amaranthine flowers; no rivers, clearer and purer than the bountiful bosom of mother earth ordinarily vouchsafes, sparkled between emerald banks and over golden sands; nor could they promise themselves to wander amidst consecrated groves, resonant with the intermingled harmonies of every airy melody, and loaded with the lingering odours of myriad fragrant beds of spontaneous bloom beneath. But they saw before them the low swell of the yellow sand-heap, and the dreariness of winter settling down in browner shadows upon the more distant hills; instead of the lustrous gleam that rolls with the undercurrent river, blending its blue with gold, only the new-formed ice that glittered upon the margin of every standing pool;

for meads embroidered with luxuriant flowers of every softest tint or deeper dye, nothing but the level of the desolate marsh stretching far away, crested only with its unsightly patches of ragged sedge; and for the lulling music of Arcadian woods no song but the solemn requiem of long

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departed summer, breathed by the rising winds in no gentle tones to the responsive sighings of the November pines.’[★]

No scene on the face of the globe surely could be more dreary than that which surrounded the adventurous MAYFLOWER, as she made her way amidst so many perils to the lonely harbour of New Plymouth. No condition could be more cheerless than that of the Pilgrims, when they landed on that poor, solitary rock. There was no earthly prospect before them but that of want, sickness, and hourly peril. In a few words Bradford tells their tale of sorrow as no poet or historian could tell it now. ‘In two or three months’ time,’ he says, ‘half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts.’ ‘There died sometimes two or three of a day.’ ‘In the time of most distress, there were but six or seven sound persons.

These heroes of faith had no thought of fame, and in their situation it was impossible that they could be greeted with applause. In modern times, when the traveller returns from long, perilous, and successful exploration, he is received with enthusiastic welcome, and laden with civic honours. Men who render important services to their

★ George Lunt.

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country and their race are held up to the admiration of their contemporaries, and their names are enrolled as an incentive for posterity. But no naval chronicle of England mentions the name

of the *Mayflower*. The Pilgrim Fathers planted the first successful English colony, and laid the cornerstone of a mighty nation. They put in train principles, the operation of which has secured the highest blessings of religious freedom to millions, but in the midst of their struggle they were heartlessly deserted, their names were cast out as evil, and after the lapse of more than two centuries we find writers, who in their ignorance and bigotry say, that to revere their memory is 'bad taste.'*

But in the exercise of their simple fidelity they had a deep and inward satisfaction, in comparison with which all worldly possessions and distinctions are poor and mean. They met for worship in a log cabin. For a long time their settlement consisted only of a single row of simple huts. They wore the coarsest garments, and to meet with honour their commercial engagements they had to toil day and night, content with the meanest fare; but even then they continued to study with in tensest interest the truth revealed to them in Scripture, and to keep alive the flame of devotion and of zeal though deprived of the preaching of their pastor,

* See Appendix,

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kept back from them in meanness and jealousy by their adversaries in England. We have remarkable evidence of the interest they continued to cherish in their principles, in the manuscript of a dialogue by Bradford on Popery, Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, which closes with an impressive admonition to the 'young men.'

'Maintain,' he says, 'those principles which not men, but the Lord Jesus, the King of the Church, hath purchased. You see how they were lost in the former ages, both what evil and what misery followed thereupon, and how long, and with what difficulty it was before they could in any purity be recovered again. They were lost by sloth and security in the people, and by pride and ambition in the bishops and elders. But it hath cost much blood

and sweat in the recovery, and will need no less care and pains in the keeping of them. It will require much prayer, zeal, holiness, humility, vigilancy, and love and peace, with a spirit of meekness, that liberty be not abused, and by pride and faction turned into licentiousness. "Stand fast in the liberty," saith the Apostle, "wherein Christ hath made us free." Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

* Bradford's original and unpublished MS.

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1624.

Persecution in England continued to furnish reinforcements to the feeble settlement at New Plymouth. Several members of the church under the care of Henry Jacob joined the exiles in their distant home. The pastor himself followed in 1624. Nevertheless, though diminished in numbers and standing in jeopardy every hour, the witnessing community in Southwark continued steadfast.

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§ V. *Presbyterians and Independents, 1625–1638.*

"Endurance is the crowning quality,
 And patience all the passion of great hearts;
 These are their stay, and when the leaden world
 Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,
 And brute strength, like a scornful conqueror,
 Clangs his huge mace down in the other scale,
 The inspired soul but flings his patience in,
 And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe,—

One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
One soul against the flesh of all mankind."—LOWELL.

ON the 23rd of April, 1625, James I. closed his inglorious reign, and the Puritan ministers who had crept into the shade began to move. 'In England,' said Roger White, 'we have a new king, of whom there is great hope.'* It is well known, however, that the change of rulers brought no improvement. Under the influence of Laud, Charles I. sought rather to assimilate the Anglican church

* Bradford's History, p. 206.

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to the church of Rome. The leading Puritans were greatly perplexed, and many of them suffered severely. From the unpublished correspondence that passed between them and their patrons, we see the process of trial and of mental conflict by which they were severed from the Establishment, to which they clung with great tenacity. Some of them became tutors or private chaplains, and retired with their aristocratic friends to the Continent. Others tried to avoid subscription, or the use of the liturgy, by engaging themselves simply as lecturers, but with all their care and caution the bishops harassed them exceedingly. THOMAS SHEPARD, describing his interview with Laud, says: 'As soon as I came in the morning, about eight of the clock, falling into a fit of rage, he asked me what degree I had taken in the university? I answered him that I was Master of Arts. He asked me of what college? I answered, of Emanuel. He asked me how long I had been in his diocese? I answered, three years and upward. He asked me who maintained me all this while, charging me to deal plainly with him, adding withal, that he had been more cheated and equivocated with by some of my malignant faction, than ever man was by

Jesuit? At the speaking of which words he looked as though blood would have gushed out of his face, and did shake as if he had been haunted with an ague fit, to my apprehension, by reason of his extreme malice and secret venom. I

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desired him to excuse me. He fell then to threaten me, and withal to bitter railing, calling me all to naught, saying, You prating coxcomb, do you think all the learning is in your brain? He then pronounced his sentence thus: "I charge you that you neither preach, read, marry, bury, or exercise any ministerial function in any part of my diocese; for if you do, and I hear of it, I'll be upon your back, and follow you wherever you go, in any part of the kingdom, and so everlastingly disenable you." I besought him not to deal so in regard of a poor town. And here he stopped me in what I was going on to say. "A poor town! You have made a company of seditious factions and bedlams, and what do you prate to me of a poor town?" I prayed him to suffer me to catechise on the Sabbath days, in the afternoon. He replied: "Spare your breath; I'll have no such fellows prate in my diocese. Get you gone, and now make your complaint to whom you will." So away I went; and blessed be God that I may go to Him.*

PURITAN EMIGRATION IN 1630.

It was by severities like these that for a time the Puritan party were again virtually broken, as in 1592. Encouraged by the success of the Plymouth settlement, they sent out six ships, in 1630, to found the Massachusetts colony; but JOHN WHITE, the promoter of the

* Albro's Life of Shepard.

enterprise, earnestly disclaimed all sympathy with the views of the Separatists. Laud adopted measures to deprive them, if possible, of their refuge in New England. Ships were detained in the ports until each passenger took the oath prescribed, and it was the purpose of the intolerant primate to bring the colonies into his complete control:★ We might illustrate his persecuting policy from the experience of the following ministers, who were driven in succession to America:—Francis Higginson, John Warham, John Wilson, George Phillips, John Eliot, Thomas Wilde, John Cotton, Samuel Stone, Nathanael Ward, Thomas Parker, James Noyes, John Sherman, Zachariah Symmes, John Lothrop, Peter Bulkly, John Norton, Thomas Shepard, Peter Hobart, Hugh Peters, Richard Mather, Samuel Whiting, John Wheelwright, Nathanael Rogers, Ralph Partridge, John Higginson, John Davenport, and others; but the subject is beyond our present limits.

BOOK OF SPORTS.

The reproduction and reinforcement of the ‘Book of Sports,’ in 1633, greatly increased the number of the Nonconformists. Henry Burton says: ‘In two whole counties, Norfolk and Suffolk, in a very short space of time, they have made the foulest havoc of good ministers and their flocks, now left desolate, and exposed to the wolves,

★ Orders in the Privy Council Register.

as sheep without shepherd, as our eyes have never seen; for there are already threescore ministers in that one diocese’ suspended, and between three and fourscore more that have time given them, now till Christide, by which time either they must bid their good conscience farewell, or else their precious ministry and necessary

means. Neither, I think, can it be showed that, in all Queen Mary's time, there was so great havoc made in so short a time of the faithful ministers of God in any part of, yea, or in the whole land.'

1637.

THOMAS BREWER AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

The fact should be distinctly stated, that just when the more distinguished Puritan divines were beaten from the field, the Separatists stood their ground, prepared to suffer the loss of all things, or even if need be, to die for the principles they still maintained with unwavering fidelity. Laud himself was baffled with their firmness. 'I must give your Majesty to understand,' he reports to the King in 1637, 'that at and about Ashford, in Kent, the Separatists continue to hold their meetings, notwithstanding the excommunication of so many of them as have been discovered. Two or three of their principal ringleaders (Thomas) Brewer, Fenner, and Turner, have long been in prison, and it was once thought fit to proceed against them by statute of abjuration. Not long since Brewer slipped out of prison, and went to Rochester and other parts of Kent, and held

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conventicles, and put a great many people into great distempers against the church. He is taken again, and was called before the High Commission, where he stood silent, but in such a scornful manner as I scarcely ever saw the like. So in prison he remains.'★ Mr Brewer was the gentleman of property who supplied William Brewster with printing materials at Leyden, and supported several preachers in Kent. He suffered imprisonment fourteen years. John Turner, one of the ministers, was supplied by him with pecuniary means. He was imprisoned seven times, for the term in the whole

of nearly fourteen years, 'for affirming that Christ Jesus hath left in His written Word sufficient direction to order His church and children in their worship.' Whilst a prisoner in Westminster, he wrote a scriptural catechism, in which he maintains clearly and without reserve the true doctrine of religious liberty.†

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EMIGRATION OF NONCONFORMISTS.

Laud continued his repressive measures. On the 30th of April, 1638, a proclamation was issued, to the following effect:—'The King being informed that great numbers of his subjects are yearly transported into New England, with their families and whole estates, that they might be out of the reach of ecclesiastical authority, his Majesty therefore commands that his officers of the several ports should suffer none to

* Wharton's *Troubles of Laud*, vol. i., pp. 535–546.

† Turner's *Heavenly Conferences*, 1645.

1638.

NONCONFORMISTS IN BERMUDA.

pass without license from the Commissioners of the Plantations, and a testimonial of their conformity to the order and discipline of their church.' This was followed by a similar decree, May 1, 1638:—'Whereas it is observed that such ministers as are not conformable to the discipline and ceremonies of the church do frequently transport themselves to the plantations, where they take liberty to nourish their factious and schismatical humours, to the hinderance of the good conformity and unity of the church: we, therefore, expressly command you, in his Majesty's name,

to suffer no clergyman to transport himself without a testimonial from the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London.' A letter was sent by the Privy Council to the Earl of Dorset, governor of the Company of the Summer Islands (Bermuda), to the following effect:—'Whereas it is observed that such ministers who are unconformable to the discipline and ceremonies of the church here, have and do frequently transport themselves unto the Summer Islands, and other his Majesty's plantations abroad, where they take liberty to nourish their factious and schismatical humours, to the seducing and abusing of his Majesty's subjects, and the hinderance of that good conformity and unity in the church which his Majesty is careful and desirous to establish through his dominions: we are therefore, in his Majesty's name, and by his express

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commands, hereby to pray and require your lordship to take a present and strict order that no clergyman be from henceforth suffered to go over into the Summer Islands, but such only as have approbation in that behalf from our very good Lords, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his grace, and the Lord Bishop of London. And that for all such of them as are already gone thither without such approbation, that you cause them forthwith to be remanded back hither; and expecting a good account thereof from your lordship, we bid you very heartily farewell.

LORD ARCHB. OF CANT.

LORD KEEPER.

LORD TREASURER.

EARL OF ARUNDEL

EARL OF HOLLAND.

EARL OF MORTON.

LORD COTTRINGTON.

MR COMPTROLLER.

MR SEC. COKE.

MR SEC. WINDERBANKE.'

Compression had reached its utmost limit, and was followed by a terrible re-action.

* Privy Council Register. See a Poem by Andrew Marvel, on "Bermuda," &c., in the "Lays of the Pilgrims."

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§ VI. *Men if the Commonwealth—Conflict of Principles, 1640–1646.*

"For what contend the wise? For nothing less
Than that the soul, freed from the bon as of sense,
And to her God restored by evidence
Of things not seen—drawn from their recess,
Root there, and not in forms, her holiness;
For faith, which to the patriarchs did dispense
Sure guidance, ere a ceremonial fence
Was needful round men thirsting to transgress;
For faith, more perfect still, with which the Lord
Of all, Himself a Spirit, in the youth
Of Christian aspiration, deigned to fill
The temples of their hearts, who, *with His Word
Informed, were resolute to do His will,
And worship Him in Spirit and in truth.*"—WORDSWORTH.

MEETING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT, 1640.

THE necessities of the King compelled him to call the famous Parliament which met November 3, 1640. Originally it breathed no spirit of hostility to the Anglican Establishment, but adopted the following as one of its orders:—"That none shall sit

in this house but such as receive the communion according to the

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WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY, 1643.

usage of the church of England.' Gradually, the patriotic members came into collision with the intolerant hierarchy and the misguided monarch. The conflict deepened, and it became eventually, on both sides, a struggle for existence. The Puritan party gained complete ascendancy. The courts of Star Chamber and of High Commission were abolished, March 10, 1641. Nearly two thousand English clergymen, in the same year, signed a petition for the total abolition of Episcopacy. Fifteen thousand citizens of London signed a similar petition, presented by two aldermen. In the following year, Feb. 14, 1641-2, the bishops were excluded from Parliament. An ordinance was passed, April 9, 1642, 'abolishing the Episcopal government and liturgy of the church.' The Draconian laws of Elizabeth were repealed; yet, with few exceptions, the members of the Long Parliament failed to recognise in their practical application the principles of religious liberty. The two houses determined, on the 12th of June, 1643, to call an 'assembly of learned and godly divines,' to consult with them' for the settling of the government and liturgy of the church of England, and for vindicating and clearing the doctrine of the said church from false aspersions and interpretations, as shall be most agreeable to the Word of God.' In explanation of these acts they said, 'We do here declare, that it is far from

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our purpose or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the church, to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of divine service they please; for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole

realm a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin, according to the Word of God.’*

A circular was issued from the Westminster Assembly, dated Dec. 23, 1643, signed by William Twisse, Thomas Goodwin, John White, Oliver Bowles, Stephen Marshall, Philip Nye, Charles Herle, Anthony Tuckney, Jo. Arrowsmith, William Bridge, Thomas Young, William Carter, Herbert Palmer, and Sidrach Simpson, in which they say, ‘All ministers and people are earnestly entreated to forbear, for a convenient time, the joining of themselves unto church societies of any kind whatsoever, until they see whether the right rule will not be commended to them in this orderly way.’

Our limits will not allow us to narrate at length the proceedings of Parliament in relation to the various religious parties represented in the Westminster Assembly, or excluded from that remarkable ecclesiastical convocation. Great deference was shown to the Presbyterians of Scotland. Both

* Parliamentary Hist., vol. ii., pp. 961–962.

LEAGUE AND COVENANT, 1643.

houses adopted the Solemn League and Covenant, on the 21st of September, 1643, to preserve the reformed religion in the church of Scotland, and to reform the churches of England and Ireland. The difficulty of securing a common basis for a national church polity was found to be insuperable. The Westminster Assembly failed to give satisfaction to Parliament in the work committed to its care. Much time was spent in polemical discussions amongst its members, and it was continually assailed from without. The representative Independents in the conclave were numerically in a feeble minority, but, from their ability and persistent zeal, they were felt to be a power extremely difficult to subdue. Five

of them were known as the ‘dissenting brethren’—William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, and Sidrach Simpson. They strenuously resisted the intolerant proposals of the Presbyterian party.

Baillie, writing to Mr Buchanan, at Paris, says, ‘The Independents profess to regard nothing at all what the Reformed, or all the world say, if their sayings be not backed with convincing Scriptures or reason. All human testimonies they disclaim against as a popish argument. So far as yet we perceive, they will separate from all the Reformed, and will essay, by all they can either do or suffer, to have their new way advanced. The sooner all

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the reformed churches declare against them, it will be the better.’★

The ‘Reformed,’ so instructed, felt it to be necessary to act for themselves. In the Acts of the National Synod of the reformed churches of France, assembled, by permission of the King, at Charenton, Dec. 26, 1644–5, we find the following:—‘Upon what has been reported by some deputies from the maritime provinces, that many from foreign countries, and who call themselves “Independents,” because they teach that each particular church ought to be governed by its own laws, without any dependence on persons and matters ecclesiastical, and without obligation to recognise the authority of conferences and synods for its government and conduct; fixing their abode in the kingdom, and who might hereafter cause great inconveniences, if there were not in good time care taken: the Assembly—fearing that the *contagion* of this venom, increasing insensibly, will spread confusion and disorder among us, and judging the said sect of the Independents not only prejudicial to the church of God, insomuch that it endeavours to introduce confusion, opening the door to all sorts of singularities and extravagancies, and removing all means of providing the remedy for it, but so very dangerous to the State, that, if it should have room, it could not

* Letter 91, p. 85.

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but produce as many religions as there are parishes or particular congregations—enjoins every province, and especially the maritime, to *take care that the evil do not take hold in churches of this kingdom*, in order that peace and uniformity, as well in religion as in discipline, should be inviolably preserved, and that nothing be introduced among us which can alter in any way the service due to God and the King.* At a subsequent period, the General Assembly passed an Act, Aug. 31, 1647, ‘to inhibit and discharge all members of the kirk and kingdom’ to converse with persons tainted with the errors of Independency, and to abstain from books sent on the subject from their ‘neighbour kingdom of England.’ Unable to cope with the Independents in the Assembly by fair scriptural argument, the Presbyterians sought to isolate their opponents. ‘I have conferred with Mr Henderson,’ Baillie writes to Buchanan.† ‘We are both in opinion that you, in your way, the best you can, would essay to get your friends so informed, that they, in forenamed points, would write *according to the mind of our church*, or, if this cannot be obtained, with all thankfulness to themselves for their hearty affection to our cause, you will so guide it that *they may be silent* till they see what it may be the will of God to do with these poor distressed churches.’

* Hanbury, ii. 459.

† Baillie’s Letters, 90, p. 84.

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‘I conceive it very expedient; he says in another letter, ‘that you write to some of the ministers of Paris, Geneva, and Bern, the true state of our affairs, how that *a mighty faction is arisen, to prefer liberty of conscience for all sects*—at least a freedom for Morellius’ popular government of the church; that the Scots, and most of

the Synod and Parliament, are for the establishing the Government by synods and classes. It would encourage them much if the divines of Geneva and Switzerland would, in their answer to the Synod's letter, as the divines of Zealand in their letter, and the divines of Hesse also, exhort the Synod at some length, and in earnest, to beware of that pernicious liberty of all sects, in particular those who are enemies to the discipline of all the Reformed. There is a golden occasion in hand, if improved, to get England conformed, in worship and government, to the rest of the Reformed. If nothing dare be written in public by the French, see if they will write their mind, for our encouragement, to any private friend here, or in Holland. You would write, for the same purpose, to Moulin in Sedan, and Spanheim in Leyden. It were good, if they write, that their letters were conceived in the greatest names they can procure. The (Faculty) of Theology of Bern would get a letter from the Switzerland church; those of Geneva from their whole ecclesiastical classes; Moulin from the University of Sedan;

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and Spanheim from the University of Leyden. It were not ill that in all their letters they congratulated the abolition of Episcopacy and Popish ceremonies, and exhorted to set up quickly the government of Christ—that so long an anarchy as has been here is the mother of heresies and schisms, and many more evils.*

THE DIRECTORY, 1645

This external pressure had no effect on the dissenting brethren in the Assembly. They resisted the Presbyterian schemes of ecclesiastical restraint at every turn. The Episcopal order of worship and discipline was set aside twelve months before any other form was appointed. In 1644 an association of ministers was appointed to ordain candidates for the sacred office. A Directory for public worship was issued in January 1644–5. But these measures did not meet with universal approval. Parliament, apparently scandalized

by the contentions of the brethren, ordered the Assembly to find a basis of union between the Presbyterians and Independents, and to indicate some way 'how far tender consciences, which cannot in all things submit to the same rule, may be borne with, according to the Word of God, and consistent with the public peace.' The Grand Committee of Accommodation was appointed, with no very satisfactory result. At the meeting of the committee,

* Letter 56.

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held Feb. 2, 1645–6, the Independents, on the point of uniformity, insisted that 'it was not necessary to the peace of the churches, and ought not to extend beyond the people's light.' The committee met for the last time on March 9, when a subcommittee of Presbyterian divines answered, 'That whereas their brethren say that uniformity ought to be urged no further than is agreeable to all men's consciences, and to their edification, *it seems to them as if their brethren not only desired liberty of conscience for themselves, but for all men*, and would have us think that we are bound by our Covenant to bring the churches in the three kingdoms to no nearer a conjunction than is consistent with the liberty of all men's conscience. Whether it be the sense of the Covenant, we leave with the honourable committee.'

JEREMIAH BURROUGHES declared, in the name of the Independents, that 'if their congregations might not be exempted from that coercive power of the classes—if they might not have liberty to govern themselves in their own way, as long as they behaved peaceably towards the civil magistrate—they were resolved to suffer, or to go to some other place of the world where they might enjoy liberty. But while men think there is no way of peace but by forcing all to be of the same mind; while they think the civil sword is an ordinance of God to determine all controversies of

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divinity, and that it must be attended with fines and imprisonment to the disobedient; while they apprehend there is no medium between a strict uniformity and a general confusion of all things; while these sentiments prevail, there must be a base subjection of men's consciences to slavery, a suppression of much truth, and great disturbance in the Christian world.'*

* Neal, vol. iii., chap. vi., p. 309.

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**§ VII. Parties before the Restoration—Development of
Congregationalism, 1644–1661.**

“Yet much remains
To conquer still. Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war; new foes arise
Threat'ning to bind our souls with secular chains:
Help us to *save* free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.”

MILTON TO CROMWELL.

THE five dissenting brethren in the Assembly, with their coadjutors, William Greenhill and William Carter, were not the most decided and advanced in their views as Independents.

Baillie, in his letters, directs his keenest glances to the leaders of the people who were not compromised by taking part in the Ecclesiastical Council, or by receiving State support. ‘The Independents,’ he says, ‘have set up a number of private congregations in the city. We will have much to do with them.’* ‘Blessed be God, all the ministers of London are for us. Burton and Goodwin, the only

* Letter 63, p. 26.

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two that were Independents, are, by the Parliament, removed from their places. Seven or eight preachers, that are against our way, are only lecturers in the city, but not ministers. We hope shortly to get the Independents put to it, to declare themselves either to be for the rest of the Sectaries, or against them. If they declare against them, they will be but a small, inconsiderable company; if for them, all honest men will cry upon them for separating from all the reformed churches, to join with Anabaptists and Libertines.’*

VIEWS OF JOHN GOODWIN.

JOHN GOODWIN, minister of Coleman-street, to whom Baillie refers, boldly disputed the right of the Westminster Assembly to sit in conclave to fix the standard of doctrine, and to frame a system of ecclesiastical polity for the churches of the country.

He said, a Reformation according to the Word of God would not be determined by majorities, to the depression of the weak and the few, but would recognise the right of all churches, however poor and small. ‘It must give leave to the wind to blow where it listeth, and give liberty to the Spirit of God to do with His own what He pleaseth, and not confine Him to His market, or compel Him to traffic only with councils and synods for His heavenly commodities.’

* Let. 109, p. 142.

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‘It is certain that no body (much less any politic or civil body) or community of people hath any authority or power from God, either by law of nature or otherwise, to establish any such rule

or law, one or more, amongst them, no, not by or with the universal consent of every individual member of this body, according to which they shall all stand bound to believe every man the same thing with another in all points of Christian religion; or that anyone man's judgment, or the judgment of any number of men amongst them, shall be the standard unto all the rest, who shall conform their judgment in matters of faith or worship, or else incur some civil punishment. The reason is, because *God never gives a power unto any man, or any number of men, to enslave or subject the consciences of men in matters appertaining unto Himself, either unto themselves and their judgment, or unto any others; or to inflict any civil mulct or punishment upon any man for thinking that they are mistaken in some of their tenets concerning God and Christ, and consequently that he ought to dissent from them. God reserves the legislative power over the consciences unto Himself alone; therefore, in case any people should confer, or do what lies in them to confer such a power as this upon their sovereign magistrate or ruler, this magistrate or ruler should have no right at all either to own or exercise this power, notwithstanding the intended collation of it upon them by his people.*

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‘The Gospel stands in no need of any commission or constitution of human device or contrivance, to promote or carry on the interest of it in the world. The fervent and constant prayers of the saints, with their proper fruits and effects, through the gracious audience and condescension of God vouchsafed unto them, are sufficient to render the state and condition of the Gospel flourishing and prosperous on the earth, at least in conjunction with such other orders and directions as the Lord Christ hath plainly and in perspicuous terms left us in the Gospel, in order hereunto.’

He distinctly predicted the evils that would flow from setting up one religious party against another, and with great sagacity pointed out the evils that arise from the plotting of the enemies of truth and freedom, when driven into seclusion, rather than suffered to express freely their opinions.

Six tracts were written by John Goodwin on universal freedom of conscience, from which we might cite passages of remarkable clearness and vigour, but we must content ourselves with a single extract from his reply to Dr Adam Stewart, published in 1644. 'The grand pillar of this coercive power in magistrates,' he says, 'is this angry argument, "What, would you have all religious sects and schisms tolerated in Christian churches? Should Jews, Turks, and Papists, be suffered in their religions? What confusion must this needs breed

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both in Church and State!" I answer, If, by a toleration, the argument means either an approbation, or such a connivance which takes no knowledge of, or no way opposeth such religions, sects, or schisms as are unwarrantable, they are not to be tolerated; but orthodox and able ministers ought, in a grave, sober, and inoffensive manner, soundly from the Scripture to evince the folly, vanity, and falsehood of all such ways. Others also, that have an anointing of light and knowledge from God, are bound to contribute occasionally the best of their endeavours towards the same end. In case the minister be negligent or forgetful of his duty, the magistrate may and ought to admonish him that he fulfil his ministry. If a person, one or more, being members of a particular church, be infected with any heretical or dangerous opinion, and after two or three admonitions, with means of conviction used to regain him, shall continue obstinate, he ought to be cast out from amongst them by that church. If it be a whole church that is so corrupted, the neighbour churches, in case it hath any, ought to admonish it, and to endeavour the reclaiming of it. If it be refractory, after competent admonition, and means used for the reducing of it, they may and ought to renounce communion with it, and set a mark or brand of heresy upon the forehead of it.

'If, by a toleration, the argument means a non-

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suppression of such religions, sects, and schisms, by fining, imprisoning, disfranchising, banishment, death, or the like, my answer is: That they ought to be tolerated; only upon this supposition, that the professors of them be otherwise peaceable in the State, and every way subject to the laws and lawful power of the magistrate.'

COMMITTEE OF TRIERS.

The Independents who became the recipients of State support, as ministers in the parish churches, were fettered in action. Usually they formed separate religious societies, of which they were chosen pastors. But their position was anomalous, and when Cromwell gained supremacy, they were, to a certain extent, responsible for measures quite incompatible with consistent regard for the simple principles of Congregationalism. The Committee of Triers, in which some Independents took part, has been censured for the severity of its proceedings, in the removal of clergymen from their livings. We offer no apology for their acts, for we regard them as foreign to the work of the Christian pastor. At the same time, a government *de facto*, if in possession of sufficient power, must be expected to remove from public offices men who are disaffected or unworthy of their trust. Churches independent of State support are not justly liable to the same interference. Richard Baxter had no cordial sympathy with Cromwell, and often speaks of him as an usurper. His testimony,

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on that account, may be deemed impartial, as it is certain that his opportunity for observation rendered him a competent witness. 'This Assembly of Triers,' he says, 'examined, themselves, all that were able to come up to London; but if any were unable, or were of doubtful qualifications, being worthy and unworthy, they used to refer them to some ministers in the country where they lived,

and to approve them if they approved them. And because this Assembly of “Triers” is most heavily accused and reproached by some men, I shall speak the truth of them; and I suppose my word will be rather taken, because most of them took me for *one of their boldest adversaries as to their opinions, and because I was known to disown their power*, insomuch that I refused to try any upon their reference, except very few whose importunity and necessity moved me, they being such as for their episcopal judgment, or some such cause, the Triers were like to have rejected. The truth is, that though their authority was null, and though some few over-busy and over-rigid Independents among them were too severe against all that were Arminians, and too particular in inquiring after evidences of sanctification in those whom they examined, and somewhat too lax in their admission of unlearned and erroneous men that favoured antinomianism, or anabaptism, yet, to give them their due, *they did abundance of good to the church*. They saved many a congregation

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from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers; that sort of men that intended no more in the ministry than to say a sermon as readers say their common-prayers, and so patch up a few good words together to talk the people asleep with on Sunday, and all the rest of the week go with them to the alehouse, and harden them in their sin; and that sort of ministers that either preached against a holy life, or preached as men that never were acquainted with it; all those who used the ministry but as a common trade to live by, and were never likely to convert a soul, all these they usually rejected; and in their stead admitted of any that were able, serious preachers, and lived a godly life, of what tolerable opinion soever they were. So that, though there were many of them somewhat partial for the Independents, Separatists, Fifth Monarchy men, and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, yet so great was the benefit above the hurt which they brought to the church, that many thousands blessed God for the faithful ministers

whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterward cast them out.’* The testimony of Thomas Fuller, the Church of England historian, is much to the same purpose. John Goodwin earnestly protested against the appointment of the ‘Triers.’ ‘From the first day that I heard of these commissions,’ he

* Life and Times, by Matthew Sylvester, 1696, lib. 1, pt. 1, p. 72.

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says, ‘and understood, though but in general, the purport of them, my heart was troubled within me, and began secretly to presage the many and great evils which, through the administration and execution of them, they were like to bring upon the Gospel in the ministry of it, and upon many godly, worthy, and well-deserving men.’ The general influence of what we may term the political Independents was, however, in favour of religious liberty.

Testimonies to this effect abound. ‘Liberty of conscience,’ said Clarendon, of Cromwell’s army, ‘is now become the great charter.’ Baxter says, ‘they were all agreed that the civil magistrate had nothing to do in matters of religion, further than to keep the peace and protect the church’s liberties.’*

When the Corporation of London petitioned (May 26, 1648) that all separate congregations might be suppressed, and that all Separatists who did not conform to the public discipline might be declared against, the Independents sent a counter-petition not to suffer the free-born people of England to be enslaved on any pretence whatever, nor to suffer any set of people to prescribe to them in matters of government or conscience. In the numerous tracts of the time, the charge is frequently made against the Independents that they practised general toleration. ‘This way,’ says one of the writers,

* Neal, vol. iii., chap. 7, p. 370.

‘and the separation of Independents from the parish churches, is an encouragement to all the Separatists, Brownists, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Socinians, and Libertines, that are in and about the City, for they shelter themselves under their name; and when they are taken by some of the public officers and enforced to answer for themselves, they affirm to be Independents to cover their heresies—it being an ordinary thing among the wicked to disguise themselves under the name of such that are reputed to be more sincere than themselves; for although the Independents gather congregations as the Sectaries do, yet they are for the great part sound in doctrine, and dissent from us only in discipline.’* The writings of Milton and of Owen exerted a powerful influence on the side of freedom.

GUIZOT’S ESTIMATE.

We are indebted to M. Guizot for a sober estimate of the Independents, and of their influence in the Commonwealth, worth consideration. ‘The party of the Independents,’ he tells us, ‘arose far less numerous, far less deeply rooted in the national soil, than that of the Presbyterians, but already possessed of that ascendancy ever achieved by a systematic and definite principle, always ready to give an account of itself, and to bear without flinching all consequences. England was then in one of those glorious and formidable

* An Antidote to the Contagious Air of Independency.

crises, in which man, forgetting his weakness, remembering only his dignity, has at once the sublime ambition of obeying pure truth alone, and the insane pride of attributing to his own opinions all the rights of truth. Politicians or Sectaries, Presbyterians or Independents, no party would have dared to think itself above

the obligation of having right on its side, and being able to prove it. Now, the Presbyterians were not equal to this test, for their wisdom was founded on the authority of traditions and laws, not upon principles, and they could not repel by mere reason the arguments of their rivals. The Independents alone professed a simple doctrine, strict in appearance, which sanctioned all their acts, sufficed for all the wants of their situation, relieved the strong-minded from inconsistency, the sincere from hypocrisy. They alone also began to pronounce some of those potent words which, well or ill understood, arouse, in the name of its noblest hopes, the most energetic passions of the human heart—equality of rights, the just distribution of social property, the destruction of all abuses. There was no contradiction between their religious and political systems, no secret struggle between the leaders and their men, no exclusive creed, no rigorous test rendered access to the party difficult; *like the sect from which they had taken their name, they held liberty of conscience a fundamental maxim.**

* Hist. of Eng Revolution, 1640, trans. by W. Hazlitt, Bogue's edit., p. 216.

CHURCH IS SOUTHWARK

It will be observed that Guizot recognises a difference between the political party called the Independents and the religious denomination of that name, and the distinction is just. Ecclesiastical writers have too much overlooked the fact, that besides the prominent divines of the Commonwealth holding Congregational principles, there was a humbler order of men, overshadowed by their brethren in power, who, though of inferior intellect, with far greater disinterestedness and courage contended for the truth at every disadvantage. U never the opprobrious designation of Sectaries, they are almost concealed from our view, but further and more careful research may yet reveal to us their real principles

and character. The church in Southwark, formed in 1616 by Henry Jacob, was of this order, and we must briefly revert to its course during the struggles of the time. JOHN LOTHROP, the successor of Henry Jacob in the pastorate, after an imprisonment of two years, went with a portion of his flock to New England in 1634, and formed a church at Scituate. HENRY JESSEY, who followed him as pastor of the church in Southwark, was sent by his congregation, in November, 1639, into Wales, 'to assist old Mr Wroth, Mr Cradock, and others, in their gathering and constituting the church in Llanvaches, in South Wales, which was afterwards, like Antioch, the mother-church in that Gentile country, being

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very famous for her officers, members, order, and gifts.'*

Soon after the formation of the church at Llanvaches, a second was formed at Mynddislwyn, in the same county. Mr Henry Walter 'was the instrument to call most or all the original members thereof.' This church, as well as that at Llanvaches, became very numerous, and several of its members eminent for their gifts and zeal in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel throughout the country round.†

Neal tells us, that on the death of Mr Samuel How, Mr STEPHEN MORE, a citizen of London, of considerable property, who had been deacon for some years, accepted the pastoral office of the church in Southwark, 'to the apparent hazard of his estate and liberty. But the face of affairs beginning now to change, this poor congregation, which had subsisted, almost by a miracle, for above twenty-four years, shifting from place to place to avoid the notice of the public, ventured to open their doors in Deadman's Place, in St Saviour's, Southwark, Jan. 18, 1640-1.'

Having escaped the perils by which they were surrounded in the reign of James I., this little church had to stand its ground against the threatenings of the Long Parliament.

* Rees's History of Nonconformity in Wales, p. 68.

† Ibid.

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The Lord Privy Seal, by command of the King, reported to the House of Lords, on the 13th of January, 1640–1, 'that Edm. Chillendon, Nic. Tyne, John Webb, Richard Sturges, Thomas Gunn, and Jo. Ellis, with at least sixty people more, had all been taken on the preceding Sunday in the afternoon, in the time of Divine service, by the constables and churchwardens of St Saviour's, in the house of Richard Sturges, where they said they met to teach and edify one another in Christ.' It was further stated to their lordships, that when examined by Sir John Lenthall, and asked why they would not resort to the parish church, according to the law of the 35th of Elizabeth, they answered, 'That the 35th Elizabeth was not a true law, for that it was made by bishops, and that they would not obey it; that they would not go to their parish churches; that those churches were not true churches; and that there was no true church but where the faithful met.' The House directed that an order should be publicly read in all the churches, that Divine service be performed as it is appointed by Acts of Parliament.* The 'Sectaries' of the church were brought up before the House, on Monday morning, Jan. 18, to receive an admonition, and 'to be told that, if hereafter they do not observe these commands, they shall be severely

* Lords' Journal, Crosby, vol. i., pp. 162–163.

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punished according to law.' Some of the House, nevertheless, inquired where the place of meeting was, and intimated that they would come and hear them. And accordingly three or four of the peers did go on the Lord's-day following, to the great surprise and wonder of many. The people went on in their usual method, having two sermons, in both of which Stephen More treated of

those principles for which they had been accused, grounding his discourses on the words of our Saviour, '*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*' After this they received the Lord's Supper, and then made a collection for the poor, to which the lords contributed liberally with them, and at their departure signified their satisfaction in what they had seen and heard.* The Assembly of Divines, in 1644, adopted a resolution to prevent the preaching of laymen: 'If any person do publicly preach, or otherwise exercise any ministerial office, that shall not be ordained, or thereunto allowed by seven of the said ministers, their 'names shall be returned to both Houses of Parliament, to be dealt with as they in their wisdoms shall think fit.' Parliament fully adopted this stringent rule, April 26, 1645.

Stephen More, however, continued to preach. 'Ask those,' he said, 'who profess themselves Christ's ministers, who put them into their ministry: the church, or any particular son of men distinct

* Neal's Hist. Purit., vol. ii., ch. 7, p. 393.

from the congregation whose ministers they are? For none but the church—I mean a particular church—can make a man a minister of any of Christ's particular churches, or "golden candlesticks." He counselled his flock to stand fast in the liberty they had received. 'If any profess themselves ministers of the Lord Jesus,' he said, 'and you would know whether they be Christ's or Antichrist's ministers, ask for their genealogy, and let them show their line from Judah, not from Levi—I mean from Christ, and not from men, whether Pope or Presbyter; for our Lord took care of this concern, when He spent forty days with His disciples in settling the things of His kingdom. Consult diligently your charter—the New Testament. Provide for the cross, and be neither afraid nor ashamed of it. If the churches of Christ should not have the power to give the being and ordination to their own

servants and ministers, without dependence on others, then should the power and privileges of Christ's churches be less than civil corporations, or private families, which were absurd to imagine. Not to grant this to every individual and particular church and congregation, were to maintain that Christ's church are in bondage, and not free states or politic bodies, which were derogatory both to Christ and to His church.'*

* Wise Gospel Preacher, by S. M,

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CHURCH AT STEPNEY, 1644.

The course of the intrepid HENRY BURTON is worthy of separate and special study. His name occurs in the minute recording the formation of the church at Stepney in 1644, which is to the following effect: 'This church being constituted by the mutual consent and agreement of Henry Burton and his wife, William Parker, John Adingsell, William Greenhill, and John Pockocke, in the presence of Mr Henry Burton, pastor of a church in London, to walk in all the ways of Christ held out to them in the Gospel, and having the right hand of fellowship given them by the aforementioned, and owned for a true church of Jesus Christ, there were added to them, from time to time, as followeth.'*

1647.

Burton advanced, through a career of extraordinary suffering and conflict, to clear views of church polity, and taught them with uncommon distinctness. Various methods were suggested by John Cotton and others for gradually transforming the parochial congregations into particular churches.† 'Propositions' were submitted, in 1647, to 'both Houses of Parliament, for gathering of churches, in the behalf of many congregations in the city of

London, and other parts of the kingdom, who are honest, godly, well-affected people, and of approved

* Church Book, Stepney.

† Hanb. ii, 577.

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integrity, commonly but falsely called “Independents.”*★

BURTON'S VIEWS.

Burton, in opposition to such a course, took the ground of the Separatists in the time of Elizabeth, and contended that the Gospel should be first preached, and its converts then united in church fellowship. ‘Soft and fair,’ he says, ‘the people are generally ignorant of a right reformation. A right reformation is a setting up of Christ’s spiritual kingdom, first over the hearts and consciences, and then over the several churches. For this the carpenters and masons must be set a-work, godly and able ministers must be sought out—and sought for of the Lord—to fit the crooked timber and rugged stones for the spiritual temple; for England is generally ignorant of the mystery of Christ’s kingdom. The prelates usurped all, suppressed altogether this spiritual kingdom; no ministers durst so much as mutter a word of it. Who durst say that men’s consciences are subject to none but Christ—that Christ is the only lawgiver of His church—that the churches of Christ ought not to be burdened with any human ordinances in God’s worship—that all human rites and ceremonies invented by men, and imposed on men in God’s service, are all will-worship, condemned by the apostle and the like? ... A reformation,

* Hanb. iii. 247.

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therefore, such as God requireth, will necessarily require long time yet, that we may not go blindfold about it.’*★ In another work he met the objections of opponents. He says: ‘Understanding

the Church of England to be none other than a national church, it will be very difficult, if not rather impossible, to constitute it so as is agreeable, in all points, to a true and visible congregation of Christ.' In reply to the objection, 'Would you have other congregations than such as are limited to every parish? How will this stand with a national church? This would make a division and separation:'—he answers, 'We must look, in the first place, at what Christ commandeth. If a state will set up a national church, wherein many things, out of reason of state, are tolerated and prescribed for "order" sake, as they call it; and if there be such a necessity, necessity hath no law! But let not this exclude and bar out the free use of such congregations as whereof the spiritual commonwealth of Israel consisteth, over which Christ, as King, immediately reigneth by His Spirit and Word, in the beauty and purity of His ordinances. *Let not the consciences of God's people be bound, where Christ hath purchased liberty*; and where Christ's congregations are set up, however they are separate from the world in the corruptions thereof, yet they are

* Vindication of Independency.

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not separate from the civil state, but are peaceable members thereof, subject and obedient to all good and just laws thereof.'*

Burton warned the Presbyterian party, in the days of their supremacy, that without religious freedom there could be no sense of social security. To impress this lesson on the men of his times, he re-published the treatise of Leonard Busher on 'Religious Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience,' originally presented to King James in 1614. In a striking preface, addressed to the Presbyterian reader, Burton refers to the changes that had been witnessed in the abolition of prelacy, and says, had the advice of Busher been followed, in 1614, 'much of the blood that hath been shed, and the miseries that have been brought upon us, had in a great measure been prevented. We may learn,' he continues,

‘that what to a people at one time seemed strange and absurd, and in no wise to be admitted of, at another time appears an acceptable truth. The reason is, because we are not masters of our own understandings, but suffer them to be dulled and corrupted, *till misery and the sting of oppression opens our eyes*, so that we embrace truth more ‘out of necessity than choice.’

‘The discourse of Busher,’ he adds, ‘makes it appear, by Scriptures and sound arguments, that the

* Hanb. ii. 73, *et seq.*

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only way to make a nation happy, and preserve the people in love, peace, and tranquillity, is to give liberty to all to serve God according as they are persuaded is most agreeable to His Word, to speak, write, print, peaceably and without molestation, in behalf of their several tenets and ways of worship -wholesome and pertinent laws being made, upon penalties, to restrain all kind of vice or violence, all kinds of reproach, slander, or injury, either by word or deed. And though this advice likewise seems not the best to some-especially to you, my brethren in the Presbyterian way-yet am I well assured that this nation will never be happy, but as hitherto it hath been, *so for the future it will be, distracted with oppression and persecution, and the faces of one sort of men set against another, till liberty of conscience be allowed.* Indeed, a man would think we had been schooled and whipped long enough to it by our calamities, for want whereof this age, and that age, and the other age, and every age, hath been miserable. For want whereof the apostles suffered martyrdom; the saints and godly of all times have been hunted like partridges by birds of prey, and yet, good men, in the esteem of a great part of the world, especially of the rich and powerful, they have suffered as evil-doers, disturbers of the world, heretics, schismatics, seditious persons; and those that put them to death have had the reputation of being maintainers of truth, and

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sound doctrine, so apt in all ages have the people been to mistake good for evil, and evil for good.

‘The plea for liberty of conscience is no new doctrine, as old certainly as the blessed Word of God itself, which gives us this unmoveable foundation thereof, that every man should be fully persuaded of the truth of that way wherein he serves the Lord; and though there have been strugglings in all ages to make good this blessed birthright to all peaceable people, yet, through the potency and subtlety of popes, bishops, and ministers, that preferred the advance of themselves and their usurped and abused function, before the good and welfare of the people, we have been deprived of this blessing, next to the manifestation of God’s love and goodness to us, the most excellent and desirable in this world, for want whereof, and by means of its contrary persecution, this universe, especially the Christian part thereof, hath suffered a *continual agony* and earthquake. Wars and its (their) miseries have overspread all lands; states have been shaken and subverted; love, meekness, gentleness, mercy (the truest badges of Christianity), have been condemned and banished, and in their rooms cruelty, hardheartedness, respect of persons, prisons, tortures, &c., things that our blessed Lord and Master and His apostles never approved, unless upon their own afflicted bodies, have had great sway for these many hundred years. Hence is it that, instead of

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peace, we have frequently had the sword; instead of sweet tranquillity, love, and affection, hatred, contention, disaffection, and the bitter fruits thereof hath reigned amongst us, and in all probability will reign, till God shall put it into the heart of the Parliament to make trial, for prevention thereof, of this Godlike way.

‘I hope, upon the perusal of this treatise (of Leonard Busher), you that are my brethren of the Presbyterian way, will abate much of your misguided eagerness in persecuting your conscientious

brethren ... You see (in the example of Saul) how far mistaken zeal can go. Consider this, I beseech you. I know you are all, especially you that are laymen, zealous as you think for God and His truth, as Paul was. But I hope there will a time come—and I wish it were now present—when, in the midst of your heat and fervency, the glorious and shining brightness of love will appear in your hearts, like the light surrounding Paul going to Damascus; and the scales of ignorance and mistake will fall from your eyes, and then you will lament all the evil, which through weakness you have brought upon your brethren. You will then blame your own zeal and importunity, and apply yourselves more cordially and constantly to observe our Saviour's rule of equity, to do unto others what you would have others do unto you.'

These wise counsels were not sufficiently regarded. The

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intolerance of the Presbyterian party in power was checked and modified by the growing influence of Cromwell and his adherents. The prospects of religious freedom brightened in the time of the Protectorate, but at the close of the civil wars there were signs of exhaustion in the country, and of religious declension in the churches.

Cromwell died on the 2nd of September, 1658. Amidst the howling tempest of that fearful night, he prayed for the church, soon to be exposed to another storm of persecution. 'Lord,' so prayed the dying hero, 'though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with thee through grace; and I may, I will, come to thee for thy people. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. Lord, however thou dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation; and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those

who look too much upon thy instrument to depend more upon thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample on the dust of a poor worm, for they are thy people too; and pardon the folly of this short prayer, even for Jesus Christ's sake,

CROMWELL'S DEATHBED, 1658.

III

and give us a good night, if it be thy pleasure. Amen.'

Meeting at the Savoy, 1658.

On the 29th of September, 1658, the representatives of a hundred and twenty Congregational churches met at the Savoy, to ascertain their agreement in matters of faith, and consider their affairs. They adopted, on the 12th of October, 1658, a 'Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England,' which was subsequently published. They evidently anticipated an era of peace and of security.

'And now, therefore,' they say, 'seeing the Lord, in whose hand is the heart of princes, hath put into the hearts of our governors to tolerate and permit—as they have done many years—persons of each persuasion to enjoy their consciences, though neither come up to the rule established by authority; and that which is more, to give us both protection and the same encouragement that the most devoted Conformists in those former superstitious times enjoyed, yea, and by a public law, to establish the liberty for time to come; and yet further, in the midst of our fears, to set over us a prince that owns this establishment, and cordially resolves to secure our churches in the enjoyment of these liberties, if we abuse them not to the disturbance of the civil peace. This should be a very great encouragement upon the hearts of all, though of different persuasions,

to endeavour our utmost jointly to promote the honour and prosperity of such a government and governors, by whatsoever means which, in our callings as ministers of the Gospel, and as churches of Jesus Christ, “the Prince of Peace,” we are any way able to do; as also to be peaceably disposed one towards another, and with mutual toleration to love as brethren, notwithstanding such differences that are between Presbyterians and Independents, being differences between fellow-servants, and neither of them having authority given from God or man to impose their opinions, one more than the other. That our governors, after so solemn an establishment, should thus bear with us both in our greater differences from their rule; and, after this, for any of us to take a fellow-servant “by the throat” upon the account of a lesser reckoning, and nothing due to him upon it, is to forget, at least not to exercise, that compassion and tenderness we have found where we had less ground to challenge or expect it.’

Such was the moral attitude of the Congregationalists on the eve of the momentous and then unexpected change which followed. The hands of Richard Cromwell were too feeble to hold the reins of power in the trying position he occupied. What had been gained by the sword was lost by the sword. General Monk became master of the situation. The Presbyterians, impatient of restraint,

joined the deputation to Charles II. in Holland. He had previously declared a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man should be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion. The Presbyterian divines, on their arrival at the Hague, signified, in the name of their brethren, their duty and affection to his Majesty, and e they thanked God for his Majesty’s constancy in the Protestant religion, and declared themselves no enemies to moderate episcopacy. They desired that those things might not be pressed upon them in God’s worship,

which in the judgment of those who used them were owned indifferent, while others refused them as altogether unlawful.'

PROCLAMATION OF CHAS. II., 1660.

The King entered the city, on his way to Westminster, amidst public acclamation, on May 29, 1660. As he passed along in the procession, Mr Jackson, a venerable Puritan divine, presented him, in the name of the London ministers, with a richly-adorned copy of the Holy Scriptures. On receiving it, he said, 'It shall be the rule of my government and life.' The illusion of the Presbyterian leaders was soon dispelled, and their dreams of a moderate episcopacy vanished, leaving to them only the bitterness of a cruel disappointment. They were invited to a conference with thirteen prelates at the Savoy, but it was only to be tantalized, and at the close of its

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sittings (July 25, 1661) they were made to feel that all their expectations were blighted.

ALL OF UNIFORMITY, 1662.

Measures of coercion were adopted with alarming rapidity. Petitions for relief and protection were treated with contempt. The Act of Uniformity obtained the royal assent on the 19th of May, 1662, and was to be enforced on the feast of Bartholomew, the 24th of the following August.

EJECTION OR MORAL DEGRADATION.

This severe enactment was planned for the summary ejection or moral degradation of the most devoted ministers in the Establishment. The alternative was submitted to them either to forego their livings and to reduce themselves to a kind of social

annihilation, or openly to prevaricate and forswear themselves on matters of the highest importance. It is well known that two thousand ministers (more or less), after careful inquiry and mature deliberation, at the bidding of conscience, left the Establishment in one day, and accepted the condition of poverty, ministerial silence, and long-continued persecution, set before them as the penalty of consistency.

We are not expected to recount their subsequent trials, or to write their eulogy. It seems that to some it is deemed an offence to commemorate their fidelity. We are not surprised that, at a time when material interests are suffered to outweigh moral considerations, many fail to appreciate the

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sacrifices made for the maintenance of truth. This does not diminish our satisfaction, however, that for the honour of the Christian name, men were found to give, at such a juncture, a stamina of principle to society, and to save our country from the abyss of profligacy and scepticism to which it would have been plunged by an intolerant hierarchy and a licentious court. Our simple object, in the task allotted to us, has been to narrate with brevity the course of the Congregationalists prior to the crisis of 1662. We only regret that the limits assigned to this essay will not suffer us to continue the story, and to exhibit the spirit and conduct of the Congregational leaders subsequent to the time of the ejection, for certainly nothing could be more exemplary.

We have seen how the principles of the Separatists advanced, notwithstanding contempt and opposition, from their 'conventicles' in the time of FITZ, to their extended sway in the days of the Commonwealth. In the retrospect we are often reminded of the sentiment finely expressed by Lowell:

'Careless seems the great Avenger: history's pages but record
 One *death-grapple in the darkness* 'twixt old systems and the Word:
 Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne, Yet

that scaffold sways the Future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His
own.'

During the reign of terror that followed 'Black Bartholomew,'
Congregationalism won some of its noblest moral triumphs.

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The Presbyterians, who had petitioned against the toleration of Independency, were now generously welcomed to the fellowship of Separatist churches. Congregational brethren, who had been denounced as factious, and the fomentors of division, wrote e master pieces 'on the rights of conscience, and on the 'excellence of unity.' Presbyterians and Congregationalists not only met on terms of amity, but for a time agreed to merge their separate denominational distinctions, and were called the 'United Brethren.' The fear that churches would become extinct from the withdrawal of State support was lost in the manifestation of voluntary liberality, that excited even the envy of the parochial clergy.*

EFFECT OF REITERATED TESTIMONY.

This result is very striking, and full of instruction in the present times.† 'Moral and social truth,' says Vinet, 'is like one of those monumental inscriptions over which the whole community pass as they go to their business, and which every day become more and more defaced, until some friendly chisel is applied to deepen the lines in that worn-out stone, so that everyone is forced to perceive, and to read it. That chisel is in the hands of a small number of men, who perseveringly remain prostrate before that ancient inscription, at the risk of being dashed upon the pavement, and trampled under the heedless feet of the passers-by. In

* Macaulay, vol. iv., chap. xi.

† Appendix.

other words, this truth dropped into oblivion, that duty fallen into disuse, finds a witness in the person of some man who has not believed, without any other consideration, than that all the world are right, simply and solely because it is all the world.

‘The strange things which that strange man says, and which some other repeats after him, will not fail to be believed sooner or later, and finally become the universal opinion. And why? Because truth is truth; because it corresponds to every thing, satisfies every thing; because, both in general and in detail, it is better adapted to us than error; because, bound up by the most intimate relations with all the order in the universe, it has in our interests and wants a thousand involuntary advocates; because every thing demands it, every thing cries after it; because error exhausts and degrades itself; because falsehood, which at first appeared to benefit all, has ended by injuring all, so that truth sits down in its place, vacant, as it were, for the want of a suitable heir. Enemies concur with friends, obstacles with means, to the production of that unexpected result. Combinations, of which it is impossible to give account, and of which God only has the secret, secure that victory. But conscience is not a stranger here, for there is within us, whatever we do, a witness to the truth, a witness timid and slow, but which a superior force drags from its retreat, and at last compels to speak. It

is thus that truths the most combated, and at first sustained by organs the most despised, end by becoming, in their turn, popular convictions.’★

EFFECTS OF CONSISTENCY.

The Separatists of the sixteenth century, and their successors in the days of the Commonwealth, were oppressed by all parties. Their chief offence consisted in passing over the bounds prescribed

by what were called 'the best reformed churches.' Where are those churches today? What is the religious condition of the countries in which they exist? Religious freedom in Germany, in Switzerland, and in France, in its true character, is unknown. It is in our island home alone, amongst the nations of Europe, that moral force is found sufficient to effect the beneficial changes proved to be needful in the working of our institutions by the lapse of time. Who can estimate the value of the blessings secured to us by the testimony, the toil, the sacrifice, and the sufferings of our fathers? With religious liberty we find social order, security for capital, freedom of trade, the development of commerce, the progress of science, and the growth of a rich and varied literature. Infinitely more than all this, the institution and constant success of Christian missions. Shall these blessings be perpetuated and multiplied? Freedom lives by its reiterated testimony. That testimony has force in

* *Vital Christianity*, translated by Turnbull, pp. 77–78.

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DUTY OF CONGREGATIONALISTS.

proportion to the sincerity and depth of conviction. What responsibility, then, rests on the Congregationalists, as the hereditary representatives of this sacred cause. They are made debtors to their own country, to the continent, and to the world. Time has been when they were driven into corners and almost cramped out of vitality, and reconciled to a mere nominal existence. But they enter on a new era, and if they understand their mission, they will seek universally the Christian intelligence, the spirituality of mind, the wisdom, the zeal, and the fortitude which will prepare them to transmit to other times, and to distant lands, the blessings they have themselves received.

Appendix.

I.—JOHN ROUGH, AND THE CHURCH AT ISLINGTON.

IT is usual for writers on Congregational history to refer to the Christian society at Islington, under the pastoral care of John Rough and of Cuthbert Sympson, as a Congregational church, and virtually it had this character; but it was only one of many others that, with careful exploration, might be traced even in the dark ages, and that in sequential order. In times of persecution, Christian believers of necessity associate together in the primitive manner. A hierarchy in such a condition cannot be imagined, but Congregational churches may exist in aU ages and under all circumstances. We first meet with John Rough as a student in St Leonard's College, 1521. He entered a monastery at Stirling at seventeen. The reputation he had acquired as a preacher induced the governor to procure a dispensation for him to leave the monastery, and become one of

his chaplains. In the treasurer's accounts, February, 1542-3, he is called 'Maister Johnne Ro, Chaplane to my Lord Governour'—'upon occasion of receavin one gown, doublet, hois and bonet.'

At a subsequent period, Rough was compelled to seek an asylum in the Castle of St Andrew's. John Knox joined the party of Reformers in that fortress in 1547, and occupied himself in tuition. He was urged to become colleague to Rough, but declined,

assigning as a reason, that he had received no call to the sacred office. It was therefore determined that a call should be publicly given him, in the name of the people, to become one of their ministers.

Accordingly, on a given day, Rough preached a sermon on the election of ministers, in which he declared the power which a congregation, however small, had over anyone in whom they perceived gifts suited to the office, and how dangerous it was for such a person to reject the call of those who desired instruction. At the close of his address, Rough turned to Knox, and said: 'Brother, you shall not be offended, although I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are here present, which is this: In the name of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of all that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not this holy vocation, but as you tender the glory of God, the increase of God's kingdom, the edification of your brethren, and the comfort of me, whom you understand well enough to be oppressed by the multitude of labours, that you take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure, and desire that He shall multiply His graces unto you.' Then addressing himself to the congregation, he said,

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'Was not this your charge unto me? and do ye not approve this vocation?' They all responded, 'It was, and we approve it.' Deeply affected by this appeal, Knox was unable to speak, but bursting into tears retired from the assembly, and shut himself up in his chamber. This incident may serve to show the character of Rough, and the spirit in which he pursued his work.

Eventually he left Scotland, and arrived in London, November 10, 1557, 'Where, hearing of the secret society and holy congregation of God's children there assembled, he joined himself unto them; afterward being elected their minister and preacher ... The twelfth day of December, he, with Cuthbert Sympson and others, through

the crafty and traitorous suggestion of a false, hypocritical, and dissembling brother, called Roger Sergeant, a tailor, were apprehended by the Vice-Chamberlain of the Queen's household, at the Saracen's Head, in Islington, where the congregation had then proposed to assemble themselves for their godly and accustomed exercises of prayer and hearing of the Word of God. He was burned, December 22nd, as was the deacon of that godly company and congregation Cuthbert Sympson also, March 28th following, after having been cruelly racked.'

The manuscripts of John Foxe, unused by him in his 'Martyrology,' recently published, afford very interesting light on the Protestant meetings during the Marian persecution. London was the place in which they could best find shelter. In the dark streets and lanes of the city, and in the absence of the police of modern times, they could assemble in some places in large numbers without detection. Edward Underhill says: 'Sume weare presarved styлле in Londone, thatt in all the tyme

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off parsecusyone never bowed ther knes unto Balle, notwithstandinge ther greate spyalle and shearche.'* 'Shortlye after begane the cruelle parsecusyone off the prechers, and earnest professors and followers off the Gospelle, and shearchyng off men's howses for ther bokes. Wherefore I goot olde *Henry Daunce, the brekeleyer off Whytechappele, who used to preche the Gospelle in his gardene every halydaye, where I have sene a thousande people,* he dyde inclose my bokes in a bryke walle by the chemnyes syde, in my chamber, where they weare presarved from moldyng or mice, untylle the fyrste yere off ower moste gracyouse Qyene Elizabeth, notwithstandinge that I removed from thence, and went unto Coventry, and gott me a howse a myle owte of the citie, in a woodsyde.'†

Much as the Christian church is indebted to the learning of the Reformers, and the constancy of the noble army of martyrs, there is reason to believe that it was chiefly by the zeal and fidelity of

the 'common people' that the light of the Gospel was preserved and transmitted. 'These lives,' says Vinet, 'habitually imbued with the spirit of Christianity, of a single and even tenor, of a strict consistency, of a solemn unity, of a sweet serenity, of an indefatigable and tranquil activity, of a zeal which does much and says little,— lives, whose Christian character appears as much more incontestable as enthusiasm takes a place inferior to that of charity, are what accomplish most for the cause of Christ. These constitute the salutary contagion which is perpetually acting in the church, which has kept, through the most disastrous times, so many hearts for the Lord, and, in more favoured epochs, multiplied them abundantly.'

* Narratives of the Days of the Reformation, p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 171.

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A history of the hidden church, so far as it could be traced by evidence which State-church writers have passed by, would afford abundant proofs of the 'power of the feeble.' For example, let the following suggestive statements of Strype be followed out as threads of inquiry, and it will occur at once to the thoughtful reader what a different complexion might be given throughout to the history of the English Reformation. He tells us that, in 1550, 'Sectaries appeared in Essex and Kent, sheltering themselves under the profession of the Gospel, of whom complaint was made to the Council. These were the first that made separation from the reformed Church of England, having gathered congregations of their own.'

Speaking of religious societies in 1558, he says: 'These meetings were at several places, as it was appointed by themselves, for they often changed their places for more privacy and security. Sometimes it was at Blackfriars, at Sir Thomas Cardine's house, who was of the privy chamber to King Henry VIII. Again, sometimes the meeting was somewhere about Aldgate. Sometimes in a clothworker's

loft, near the great conduit in Cheapside. Once or twice in a ship at Billingsgate, belonging to a good man of Lee, in Essex. Other times, at a ship, called Jesus ship, lying between Ratcliff and Rotherhithe—there twice or thrice, till it came to be known. Other times in a cooper's house in Pudding-lane—sometimes in Thames-street—sometimes in Bow Churchyard, and sometimes in Islington, or in the fields thereabout. These meetings were often in the night-times. There would be in these assemblies forty, and sometimes a hundred or more met together, and toward the latter end of the Queen, the number increased, though the malice of

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their enemies decreased not. At these meetings they had collections for Christ's prisoners, and would gather sometimes ten pounds at a night meeting. But they could not be so private, but that now and then they were discovered and taken. To some of these secret assemblies resorted such as were spies, who were sent to serve as informers and witnesses. Such an one once came to take their names, and spy their doings, but while he was among them, he cried them pardon, and was converted to become one of them ... And as in the south parts, so likewise in the north, there were divers that professed the Gospel, and had their preachers and pastors.'

The sources from which Strype derived these particulars probably exist in their original form, and if thoroughly examined, might conduct us much farther in the direction we seek, than many imagine. The unexpected discovery of the Fitz papers and other documents may give us some idea of the results that would reward patient and judicious inquiry.

II.—VINDICATION OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

We cannot congratulate the writers of ecclesiastical history in the Anglican church on their discrimination, candour, or fulness

of information on matters which relate to the Pilgrim Fathers. From the Bishop of Oxford to the Incumbent of Christ Church, Friesland, Yorkshire, there is a lack of discernment and a disregard of original evidence almost unaccountable.

The primary source of error is to be found in the want of a clear distinction between the *Pilgrim* Fathers who were the founders of New Plymouth, and the *Puritan* Fathers who founded Massachusetts. Recent

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writers on nonconformity err in the same direction. Miss Meteyard in the 'Hallowed Spots of London,' and Mr Anderson in his 'Memorable Women of Puritan Times,' may be mentioned as prominent examples. So common, indeed, is the error, that the exceptions of correctness in English writers are rare. Mr Bartlett, in his work on the Pilgrim Fathers, is tolerably clear on the point, and Mr Scott, in the 'Lays of the Pilgrim Fathers,' (page 50), recognises the just and necessary distinction. The strange inadvertence of English authors is made the subject of frequent comment by Transatlantic historians. Mr Palfrey, in his 'History of New England,' (vol. i., p. 299,) says, 'The difference between the Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies has not been understood by English students of our history. Not only is it overlooked by so good and recent a writer as Lord Mahon (History of England, &c.) chap. xliiii.), whose object did not require him to observe it; it appears to be equally unknown to Mr Marsden (History of the Early Puritans, chap. xi.); and Mr Anderson, in his learned and not uncandid 'History of the Church of England in the Colonies (vol. i., p. 362, *et seq.*), charges the treatment of the Brownes to the *Plymouth* people (the Pilgrims), and founds upon this mistake some strictures on an American writer.'

'The Pilgrims,' says Mr Bancroft, 'carried with them to the New World the moderation which they had professed in their dealings with the Court. *There is a marked difference in this respect between the government of the old colony, as that of Plymouth was*

called, and the government of Massachusetts.' 'The Pilgrims were never betrayed into the excesses of religious persecution,' (vol. i., pp. 653–654.) Mr Knowles, the biographer of Roger Williams) bears

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the same testimony. He says, 'Another principle adopted by the church of Plymouth was, that ecclesiastical censures are wholly spiritual, and not to be accompanied with temporal penalties. In this respect, the church of Plymouth (the Pilgrims) were in advance of their brethren in Massachusetts (the Puritans), and the history of the Plymouth colony is honourably distinguished by a tolerant spirit, which contributed not less to her peace and prosperity than to her true fame. The church of the Pilgrim Fathers was formed on the principle of entire independence on all human authority. Its members belonged to that class of the Nonconformists (Separatists) who had separated entirely from the church of England, and adopted a form of church polity which they deemed more consistent with the letter and the spirit of the New Testament. The first settlers at Salem, Boston, and other towns in Massachusetts Bay, belonged, for the most part, to the other class of Nonconformists (Puritans), who did not, while in England, separate wholly from the Established church, though they opposed her corruptions.'* The radical distinction between the two colonies is traceable from their commencement.

Confounding the Pilgrim Fathers with the Puritans of Massachusetts, acts of intolerance and cruelty are imputed to the former in which they had no participation.

In their treatment of the Indians, the Pilgrim Fathers are honourably distinguished above all the primitive settlers in the New World. They won the friendship of the natives by acts of kindness, and inspired their confidence by the honourable fulfilment of their

* Memoir of Roger Williams, p. 39.

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engagements. The influence the Pilgrims acquired was exerted to reconcile tribes that had perpetuated feuds for many generations, and they were the first to convey to them the blessings of Christianity. The statements of Mosheim on this point are just and impartial. He says, 'The cause of Christianity was promoted with more wisdom, and consequently with better success, in those parts of America where the English formed settlements during this century; and though it had the greatest ignorance, stupidity, and indolence to conquer, made, in a little time, a considerable progress. The English Independents who retired to America on account of their dissention from the established religion of their native country, claimed the honour of carrying thither the first rays of divine truth, and beginning a work that has since continued with such pious zeal, and such abundant fruit; and, indeed, their claim is founded in justice. Several families of this sea that had been settled in Holland removed thence into America in the year 1620, in order, as they alleged, to transmit their doctrine undefiled to future ages; there they laid the foundation of a new State. The success that attended this first emigration engaged great numbers of the people called Puritans, who groaned under the oppression of the bishops, and the severity of a Court by which this oppression was authorised, to follow the fortunes of these religious adventurers, and this produced a second emigration in the year 1629. They could make but little progress at first in instructing the Indians, but the new comers, among whom the Puritans Mayhew, Shepard, and Eliot made an eminent figure, had the leisure, courage and tranquillity of mind that were necessary to the execution of such an important and arduous undertaking. All these devout exiles were

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remarkably zealous, laborious and successful in the conversion of the Indians.'

The spirit breathed in an admirable letter of John Robinson was evinced by the Pilgrim Fathers in their distant settlement. Cushman, writing Dec. 1621, says, 'Whoso rightly considereth what manner of entrance, abiding, and proceedings we have had amongst these poor heathens since we came hither, will easily think that God hath some great work to do towards them.

'They were wont to be the most cruel and treacherous people in all these parts, even like lions; but to us they have been like lambs, so kind, so submissive, and trusty, as a man may truly say, many Christians are not so kind and sincere.

'They were much wasted of late, by reason of a great mortality that fell amongst them three years since; which, together with their own civil dissensions and bloody wars, hath so wasted them as I think the twentieth person is scarce left alive; and those that are left have their courage much abated, and their countenance is dejected, and they seem as a people affrighted. And though when we first came into the country we were few, and many of us were sick, and many died by reason of the cold and wet, it being the depth of winter, and we having no houses nor shelter, yet when there was not six able persons among us, and that they came daily to us by hundreds with their sachems or kings, and might in one hour have made a dispatch of us, yet such a fear was upon them as that they never offered us the least injury in word or deed. And by reason of one Tisquanto that lives amongst us, that can speak English, we have daily commerce with their kings, and can know what is done or intended towards us among the savages; also, we can acquaint them with our

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courses and purposes, both human and religious ... The greatest commander of the country, called Massasoit, cometh often to visit us, though he lives fifty miles from us; often sends presents, he having with many other of their governors promised, yea, subscribed obedience to our sovereign lord King James, and for his cause to spend both strength and life; and we, for our parts,

through God's grace, have with that equality, justice and compassion carried ourselves toward them, as that they have received much favour, help and aid from us, but never the least injury or wrong by us ... When any of them are in want, as often they are in the winter when their corn is done, we supply them to our power, and have them in our houses eating and drinking, and warming themselves; which thing, though it be something a trouble to us, yet because they should see and take knowledge of our labours, orders, and diligence, both for this life and a better, we are content to bear it; and we find in many of them, especially of the younger sort, such a tractable disposition, both to religion and humanity, as that if we had means to apparel them, and wholly to retain them with us (as their desire is), they would doubtless in time prove serviceable to God and man; and if ever God send us means we will bring up hundreds of their children both to labour and learning.'*

Edward Winslow, in his account of the acquisition of territory made for England, says: 'Neither hath this been accomplished by threats and blows, or shaking of sword and sound of trumpet; for as our faculty that way is small, and our strength less, so our warring with them is after

* Young's Chronicles, p. 258, *et seq.*

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another manner—namely, by friendly usage, love, peace, honest and just carriages, good counsel, &c.,—that so we and they may not only live in peace in that land, and they yield subjection to an earthly prince, but that, as voluntaries, they may be persuaded at length to embrace the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus, and rest in peace with Him for ever. Psalm 110:3, and 48:3.'*

The Pilgrims visited the Indian chiefs unarmed, and rendered them many offices of personal kindness in the time of sickness or of urgent need. These interesting and friendly relations were disturbed by the recklessness and violence of a rival colony at

Weymouth, founded on different principles and with other objects. The natives, who were deceived by these adventurers, and harshly treated, meditated revenge. Tidings were conveyed to the pilgrims of an intended conspiracy against all English settlers. Massasoit warned the settlers at Plymouth of their danger, and a council was summoned to adopt measures to meet the threatened emergency. The imprudent settlers at Weymouth might have been left to the fate merited by their rashness and violence; but it was resolved that an expedition of eight persons should be sent out, under the command of Myles Standish. The intrepid captain, once committed to the enterprise, acted with daring resolution. He surprised the conspirators. Two of the Indians rushed upon him in the wildest fury. Throwing aside his gun, he grappled with them both, and, following up his advantage, routed the party. The lives of seven natives were lost in the contest, and the settlement was abandoned. Myles Standish was not received by the Pilgrims as a member of the

★ Young's Chronicles, p. 244.

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church when he joined their company, and cannot be considered as the proper representative of their Christian principles. He was a soldier, brave and impetuous, and there can be no doubt that to his courage they were indebted, under Providence, more than once for signal deliverance. But the pastor of the Pilgrims received the tidings of this conflict with deep regret. In a letter dated Leyden, Dec. 19, 1623, Robinson writes: 'Concerning the killing of those poor Indians, of which we heard at first by report, and since by more certain relation, oh! how happy a thing had it been, if you had converted some before you had killed any; besides, when blood is once begun to be shed, it is seldom stanch'd of a long time after. You will say they deserved it. I grant it; but upon what provocations and incitements by those heathenish Christians? (Weston's colony.) Besides, you, being no magistrates over them,

were to consider, not what they deserved, but what you were by necessity constrained to inflict. Necessity of this, especially of killing so many (and many more, it seems, they would, if they could), I see not. Methinks one or two principals should have been full enough, according to that approved rule, the punishment to a few, and the fear to many. Upon this occasion, let me be bold to exhort you seriously to consider the disposition of your captain, whom I love, and am persuaded the Lord, in His great mercy and for much good, hath sent you here, if you use him aright. He is a man humble and meek amongst you, and towards all in ordinary course. But now, if this be merely from a human spirit, there is cause to fear that by occasion, especially of provocation, there may be wanting that tenderness of the life of man (made after God's image) which is meet. It is also a thing more glorious in men's

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eyes than pleasing in God's, or convenient for Christians, to be a terror to poor, barbarous people; and indeed I am afraid lest, by these occasions, others should be drawn to affect a kind of ruffling course in the world. I doubt not but you will take in good part these things which I write, and as there is cause, make use of them.'*

The Pilgrim Fathers were one in spirit with Robinson, and followed his counsels. When Massachusetts entered with Connecticut into war against the Pequots, in 1637, the Pilgrims of Plymouth, though willing to render help in their critical circumstances, objected that the war was commenced without their knowledge, and managed contrary to their advice.† They raised two hundred pounds toward the expense of the war, and furnished forty men for the expedition, who were sent in a single boat.‡ The emergency was, however, so pressing, that the Connecticut commander could not wait for the arrival of the Plymouth contingent. They took no part, therefore, in the conflict.

A careful examination of the facts in reference to Roger Williams, and to the persecution of the Quakers in New England, shows with equal decisiveness the contrast between the *Pilgrim* Fathers and the *Puritan* founders of Massachusetts. It is scarcely needful here to enter into the investigation. It may suffice to say that the Quakers first came to New England in 1656, *nearly thirty-six years after the arrival of the Mayflower*. The leaders of the Pilgrims at that time had entered into their rest. John Carver died in 1621; John Robinson died March 1, 1625; Samuel Fuller died in 1633; Elder

* Bradford's History, pp. 164–165.

† Ibid. p. 353.

‡ Plymouth Colony Records, vol. i., pp. 60–62.

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Brewster died in 1643; Edward Winslow died in 1655; Myles Standish died in 1656; and in the same year, “William Bradford, in the 69th year of his age, closed his honourable career. In the midst of persecutions, provoked to a great degree by the fanatical contempt of magistracy and public order by certain of the Quakers, that people found their best friends and protectors in the Plymouth colony. The entire subject of the history of Congregationalism, embracing its relations with New England, and other early colonies, should be examined in the light of the evidence to be found only in original documents. It is surely a matter that ought to engage the early and practical attention of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, conjointly with the Congregational Union of America. Few persons comparatively are aware what ample sources of information exist, and what clear and convincing light might be thrown on many a question at present very imperfectly understood.

III.—THE RESULTS OF THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY IN THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

This historical essay must be considered only as a fragment, principally intended to draw attention to the period antecedent to the ejection of the two thousand ministers on St Bartholomew's Day in 1662. One of the best fruits of the present commemoration will be the awakening of a profounder and more general interest in Congregational history. Much remains to be done in preliminary research, before a complete historical review can be given of Congregationalism in England, and of its radiation in America and the colonies. We must especially express the earnest hope that attention will be directed

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to the interval between the ejection and the accession of William and Mary—or to the results of the long-protracted struggle for the Act of Toleration. We are of opinion, from a partial glance at the unpublished records from 1672 to 1688, that it can be demonstrated from the clearest and fullest evidence, that the Congregationalists properly represent the men of the Exodus of 1662. The majority at the time of the ejection were State-church Presbyterians; but as the result of their repeated disappointments, severe discipline, and the consistent testimony and course of the Congregational leaders, who sought to advance their principles, rather than to effect a dishonourable compromise, those who survived at the revolution of 1688 identified themselves mainly with the Congregationalists, and so gave strength and consolidation to that body, which have never since been lost.

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