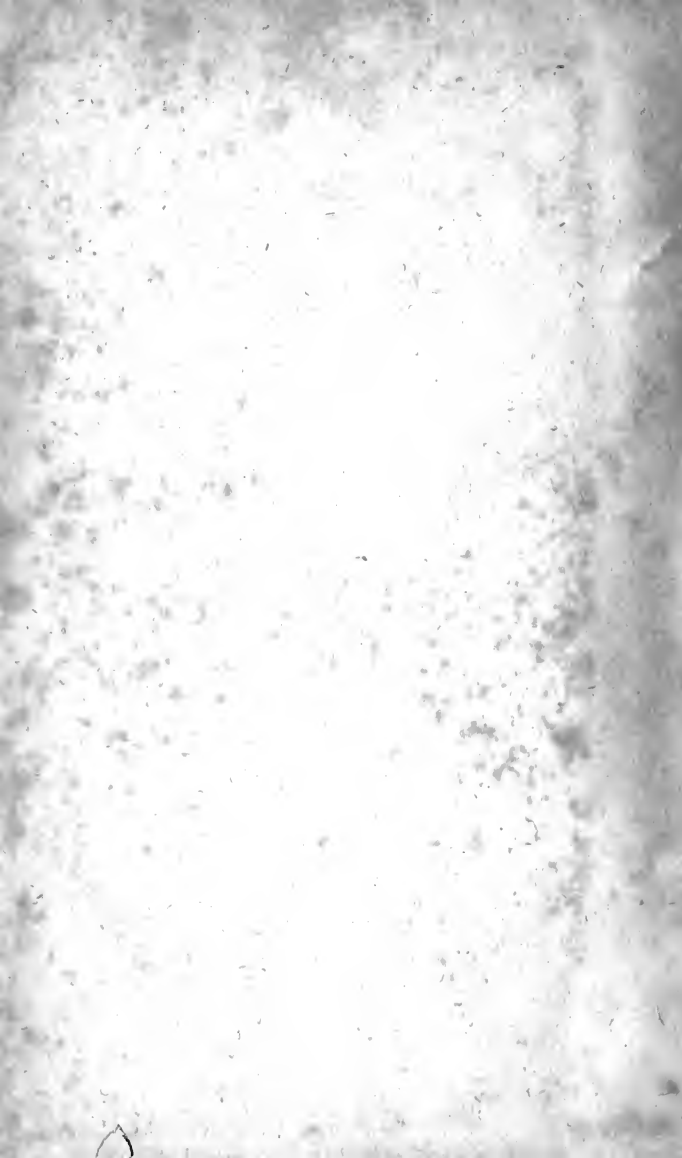


CONGREGATIONALISM
&
CHURCH ACTION.



BX 7240 .K436 1845
Keep, John, 1781-1870.
Congregationalism





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library



CONGREGATIONALISM,

AND

CHURCH-ACTION:

WITH THE

Principles of Christian Union, etc.

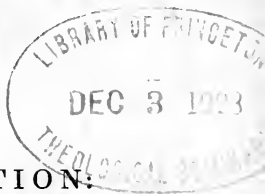
✓
BY JOHN KEEP,

PASTOR OF A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN HARTFORD,
TRUMBULL CO., OHIO.

~~~~~  
NEW YORK:

S. W. BENEDICT & CO.

1845.



~~~~~  
S. W. BENEDICT & CO., PRINTERS,
16 Spruce Street, N. Y.

CONTENTS.

Notice to the Reader,	4
Principles, -	5
Positions defined, -	20
Congregationalism, -	24
Church-membership, -	25
Who ordains, -	30
Councils, -	37
Plan of Union, -	44
Church property, -	49
Schism, -	52
Christian Union, -	54
Christian character, -	58
Never entire agreement, -	59
Schismatics, -	64
Oberlin views, -	67
Light sought, -	70
Facts and expostulation, -	71
Oberlin no intrusion, -	75
Extraordinary position, -	76
Many have the spirit and aims of Oberlin, -	77
Divisions deprecated, -	79
Holy living, -	82
Attitude of Presbyteries, &c., -	83
Rev. H. Belden restored, -	84
Why piety is low, -	104
The Church has light, -	106
Duty neglected, -	108
Church and the State, -	112
False positions, -	114
Religious bodies and Slavery, -	117
Mutual confidence, -	121
Complaint answered, -	123
Benefits of Congregationalism, -	127
Asleep over danger, -	137
We are not a free people, -	140
Civilians neglect duty, -	141
Cling to the Constitution, -	142
Teach liberty to the young, -	143

TO THE READER.

I. Will this book be read ?

1. It is short, and suited to the present period.

2. It presents principles which are the life of civil and religious liberty, the knowledge of which, in the community, is sadly deficient:—fundamental thoughts which must become *paramount*, at this juncture, for the prosperity of the Church and country; and *facts*, showing the true position of men and things.

3. It is intended to be a word in season, in reference to the present exigencies of the Church and Nation;—encouragement to those who would see the Church and the State just and mighty, each in its own destined sphere, and both on the rock of *New Testament TRUTH*: of counsel to those who sustain ecclesiastical domination in any form, sacrifice principle to party, and smother freedom of speech.

II. This book is a *compilation* rather than a systematic treatise,—a book of *statements* rather than of discussion. The language of others is often used, and occasionally a paragraph;—this admission is their credit, instead of the usual marks of quotation.

The Ministry and the Church are in a transition state. Philanthropy and Benevolence plead that the new state may be what Christ shall approve—and what the world needs.

III. What is said of Oberlin is designed to bespeak for truth a hearing; and for its advocates common justice and courtesy.

CHAPTER I.

PRINCIPLES TO BE STUDIED.

SEC. I.—MORALS.

1. WHAT ought to be done, can be done.
2. Demand only what is right: and in duty to God, submit to nothing which is wrong.
3. A generation of boasters is never a generation of thinkers, still less of doers.
4. Moral Reform always begins with those least needing it.
5. Whatever goes to deny moral obligation and to confound moral distinctions, is of fatal bearing upon character, and proves an effectual check upon the reformation.
6. To reform in the real and just sense is to restore original order,—to bring man back to his primitive model,—to induce him to become what his Maker intended him to be, and to act in conformity with the great principles or laws upon which his moral constitution was framed: and that the reform may be genuine, and the Reformer retain his hold on the public mind, he must admit of no compromise: and discard the plea that the least of two evils is to be chosen, and that the end sanctifies the means.
7. Reformations *live* only by aggressive and onward movements.
8. A say and do-nothing philanthropy has too long deceived the hopes and mocked the miseries of men.
9. Men will not *always* stultify themselves by pretending to believe and disbelieve the same thing in the same breath.
10. To hold the doctrine of human rights, or the fundamental principles of justice in the abstract, and not to carry them out in practice, is, in fact, to apostatize from them.

11. We are not permitted to seek the good even of the Universe at the expense of any right of any being in it. Rather than do this, even Jehovah would take down the framework of the Kingdoms he has created, and retire as incompetent to the station he occupies.

12. Take away a man's right to worship, *where*, and under what religious teaching he thinks proper, and you take away his right to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

13. To deny human rights from considerations of State policy, and to enforce this denial by the bayonet, is but one step higher in the scale of despotism, than when such denial is enforced by Church censure, founded on supposed but mistaken principles of Church organization.

14. Whatever is in accordance with and demanded by the nature and relations of moral beings is obligatory on them—is moral law, and no power in the universe can set it aside.

15. Every human right is indestructible: you may infringe it, you may bruise and mangle it, but there it *is*, in frowns or in smiles, weeping tears of joy or sorrow, a deathless witness against the wrong-doer.

16. To *do right* is the highest possible expediency.

17. That which is contrary to reason and natural justice never was and never can be law; and no enactment whatever, which does not declare and apply the law of God, is morally obligatory.

18. To will right, to do right, for its own sake, is benevolence, is religion, is Christianity.

19. No Christian community which tolerates flagrant crimes can maintain a high moral standard.

20. Conscience is that power of the mind that affirms and enforces moral obligation: as a judge, it smiles upon obedience, and frowns upon disobedience.

21. All human events move in revolving circles, each successive age but reproducing aspects of the past; and that age which best sustains inalienable rights, and best evolves the changeless principles of morality, bears most of the image of Divinity.

22. But revolving cycles, though similar, are not identical. Each has, in itself, some characteristics of a peculiar

nature, and to *that* extent part of its characteristics may terminate in its own period, part may revive and expand into the new revolving movement.

23. When the light shines upon any moral question, to plead ignorance of your duty is to proclaim your purpose to do wrong.

24. The gospel demands that we be not partakers of others' sins—that we abstain from the appearance of evil—that the thoughts and desires be pure—the total abstinence from all that is wrong, and is therefore a system of the most absolute and perfect reformation, and the Saviour Himself was a Reformer without even the semblance of compromise.

SEC. II.—RELIGION.

25. He that would work for man, must also work for God, in his strength, and in use of the means he has appointed.

26. The invasion of human rights is an assault upon human salvation. The oppressor is a destroyer: and a conversion which leaves men at variance with the fundamental principles of a sound morality, leaves them unsaved.

27. To divorce the positive from the moral in religion is to destroy both.

28. Hearts dead to the claims of man, cannot be alive to the commands of God: and religion cannot flourish on the ground where humanity withers.

29. What God determines to accomplish, He will see that in some form, and at some time, and by somebody, it shall be done—all reformations from evil are of his instigation and those who engage in them are on the Lord's side.

30. The religion of Christ assumes as an essential element the doctrine of individual responsibility, and inalienable rights, upon which the whole framework of moral law and human accountability is erected.

31. *Really* to admit the claims of religion anywhere, is to admit them everywhere.

32. The practical Christianity of Christendom is most deplorably below the Bible standard, inasmuch as the current

religion even of the Protestant and dissenting sects is, to a great extent, a religion of outward observances, of constitutional arrangements—of *idolized rituals*.

33. The commands of God to his people cover the whole ground of their civil and political duties, and clearly teach, that to set up the workers of iniquity and elevate oppressors to places of power, is the climax of apostasy and rebellion.

34. Religion and morality are inseparable, and the attempt to dissever them in any reformatory movements, is to err fatally in the start, and to ensure defeat in the result.

35. A revival of religion is no farther genuine than it extends its influence to overcome the *sins* of the community.

36. Christianity requires mankind to unite in one common brotherhood, under one common Lord; impresses the comprehensive fact of man's equality with man, and teaches him his own equality with his own mother's children.

37. The religion we propagate abroad cannot be expected to be more pure than that which is maintained at home.

38. Better that a corrupt Christianity were buried out of sight, than that it should continue to stalk abroad, and utter meaningless incantations and idle bravados, as it always does, after the vital principle is extinct; and when, in the midst of its vain formalities, it confesses its own want of courage to look gigantic crimes in the face.

39. The religion of no people can rise higher than the theology upon which it is founded. A false philosophy cannot fail to produce a false theology. A dead-letter theology always involves a low standard of ethics, and the corruption of the public morals is a matter of course.

40. The continuance of civil liberty depends upon the maintenance of pure religion. Both civil liberty and religion involve human rights: therefore *human rights* should be made a test question in religion.

SEC. III.—THE CHURCH.

41. The people of God in all ages, and especially those composing the *Church* of the New Covenant, are appointed of God to be a *perpetual band of Reformers*, to contend without compromise against sin in all its forms, to begin the work, and always to move in the advance.

42. It is absurd to claim a higher degree of purity in the State, than we claim in the Church—to expect that public men in civil life will cease from crime when they find countenance among professed Christians, and their known sins go unrebuked.

43. Reforms linger from the want of purity in those engaged in them, rather than from the want of numbers.

44. When heretics begin to teach orthodoxy, it is not the time for the orthodox to deride their own faith by refusing to follow the *right teaching*, although coming from those deemed unsound in the faith.

45. Every Church is anti-christian whose *practice* denies the fundamental principles of justice, and is not conformed to the known example of Christ, and defends sentiments which encourage men in sin. To support an anti-christian Church is to support the most effective enemy of God and his law—of Christ and his gospel.

46. The question which divides those who oppose and those who countenance oppression, is a fundamental question of morality, and the church which practically stands on the wrong side of such a question is, in this respect, an anti-christian church.

47. A sound morality is an essential ingredient in the character of a Christian. The man who is guilty of theft, robbery, kidnapping, concubinage, and the withholding from the hireling his wages, lacks this ingredient; and by these tests it may be ascertained how far the ministry and the church are or are not anti-christian.

48. To steal—to justify theft in others—to apologise for it—to keep silence in view of it, through fear of endangering other great interests, or through fear of making disturbance in the church or the neighborhood—are all acknowledged sins, and mark a man as unworthy the confidence of the community, or membership in a Christian church, or good standing in the Christian ministry. In the same category, yet vastly more guilty, are reckoned, by the common sense of mankind, the stealers of men, women, and children,—their defenders, apologists, and silent supporters.

49. A true church of Christ is subject to *His* rules, and not to mere human compacts: to membership in it, evidence

of Christian character is necessary, and the loss of this evidence is the only forfeiture of church privileges.

50. Our blindness will not prevent unscriptural church organizations from falling, nor our supineness shelter us from being buried under their ruins.

51. We cannot carry the legislation of the country to a higher degree in morals than what is indicated by the *practice* of the church; and so far as this practice connives at injustice, the CHURCH lies directly across the pathway of all attempts to reform the legislation of the country.

52. In the great work of doing good, or which is the same, in building up the true church of Christ, or which is still the same, in the work of a genuine reform, those whose principles and aims are coincident, who cherish the same temper and breathe the same spirit, should be united in their labors, and never be prevented from a sweet and efficient co-operation, by preferences for any outward forms or modes, or discrepancies on points in mental philosophy; and this on the principle that you should never raise the formalities of religion to a level with the spiritualities of religion; a principle on which a union of Christians universally might be secured.

53. There are certain indications in the churches, which the world never misunderstands, and by which they are never misled. One class of them is seen when churches and professed Christians are sticklers for orthodoxy and at the same time defenders of oppression; when they connect their skill in hunting heresy with their ingenuity in evading the force of moral truth, and denounce as the worst of heresies the vindication of human rights; when, to ward off the appeals of Christian reformers, they contradict in detail all the fundamental doctrines of their own creed. Such indications destroy confidence in the religious integrity of such churches, and beget disgust with the system of doctrines they hold and teach; and many wakeful and discerning minds in our country are thus induced to regard and to treat evangelical doctrine with contempt. But it is a hasty conclusion, that the leading tenets of a church are worthless or false because error and corruption are found in it.

54. The vices are a sisterhood: the blow which falls

effectually upon any one, seriously affects the whole. And while a division of labor among reformers is needful, the true philosophy of reform, as confirmed by facts, teaches that every department must be sustained, and that no one can be carried to a triumph while the others are permitted to lag.

55. When new things are proposed, there should be a just discrimination. Churches may be reformed without being disorganized, and innovations are not, of course, reforms.

56. In the professing Church there is a large class who have never been born again, who have no spiritual discernment, whose sympathies are with the world and not with Christ and his cause. Hence, what is meat to one is poison to another. Most, if not all the local churches are heart-divided, and present the repellent interests of converted and unconverted minds. A preacher, a lecturer, or a reformer, is not therefore to be rejected because his *doctrines* produce divisions in such churches. But the legitimate and only correct inference is, that his labors are needed to bring kindred spirits to cluster together according to the opposite attractions of godliness and impiety: the truly spiritual to unite their energies, and those who sympathize with the world to go to their own; that thus the Church may be purified.

57. When God rises to judgment, the churches that keep back the truth must drink a double portion, and drain the cup of trembling to the last dregs.

58. Blame incurred by the criminal acts of a *Society*, rests upon the individual who continues to give it his support. Christians do not lose their individual responsibility by being associated in churches; and the question whether a man shall be made a chattel, need not perplex a Christian church many weeks.

59. Before a church can become a champion for the freedom of the world, she must herself learn to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ maketh His people free.

60. When Christians come to rely less on outward observances, and more upon Christian *character*—less on sacrifices, and more on mercy—less on rituals, and more on

integrity and doing the will of God, they will turn with loathing from many things now said and done in the churches.

61. Christian or church union, is the union of all with each, and each with Christ. It is the fellowship of congenial souls united of choice and of necessity, by the fellowship of all and of each with the TRUE and the *right*, with the ever truthful and righteous ONE. The proper cognomen of this union is, the union of *Christians*.

62. Satan seldom sets up a church of his own where Christians will allow him a place in the Church of Christ: he seldom sets up an heretical church, so long as he can govern the nominally orthodox; and the ominous cry of Church and State union will be hushed, when he can shut Christ and his poor from most of the so-called Evangelical pulpits in the land.

63. The churches in this country are in a signally critical condition. They must inevitably experience great changes. They cannot always compromise. Correct and noble in their principle they generally are, and, as churches, sadly recreant in practice. They will be compelled to come out and act up to their faith, or to abjure it. The encroachments of the enemy will drive them from their conservatism, or their fancied neutral ground. If they do not in fact sympathize with the oppressed against the wrong-doer, they must give up all pretensions of an honest, consistent regard for the distinguishing tenets of an evangelical faith.

64. To the extent in which churches are pure and spiritual will they be able to agree in labor and in practice. Where this purity does not exist, and Christians raise the formalities above the spiritualities of religion, any agreement among churches will be a deceitful *truce*, or an armed armistice.

65. Agitation is unavoidable; the certain process, and the only means of a reform. Nehemiah resorted to this. By enlightening the masses, he formed a correct public sentiment against the nobles and the rulers and the priesthood, in their oppressions, and they were obliged to yield to the reformation carried to its triumph by the popular voice. And all true Christian churches, in the midst of agitations, and to allay their fears, should take for their motto and

watchword, "Trust not in princes, nor in the sons of men," and the divine counterpart, "Trust in the Lord, and stay yourselves upon your God."

SEC. IV.—THE MINISTRY.

66. The Ministry is an appointed agency of God for the good of man: the Ministers of the Gospel are Christ's messengers to teach men their high duties to Him and to each other, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captive, and to use the ordinances of the Gospel as the appointed modes of expressing and affirming our fealty to our common Father, and our fraternal regards for all his children.

67. The Church, to be spiritually revived, and that she may evangelize the world, must have a spiritually-baptized ministry, who can and who will unfold the connection between Christian Theology and Christian Ethics, and give us their creeds in their lives, and who will fearlessly take the Bible position that Christians can have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

68. Religious Teachers in the Church should occupy the foreground in all moral reformations.

69. To separate the active energies of the Church and of the Ministry from moral and religious reforms, is a conservatism which betrays religion with a kiss; and when, in the progress of reform, its advocates melt away and retreat, it augurs ill respecting the position occupied by the *leading influences* in the Church.

70. It is in vain to look for stable and steady efforts for a reformation in public morals, from a feverish, remittant, periodical religion; or under the influence of a ministry trained in a school of worldly expediency, whose disciples will not serve God unless they can decypher on the interest board what good it will do.

71. The elevation of the poor and the oppressed is a prime and blessed feature of the gospel of Jesus Christ—Himself the friend of man, the tender sympathizer with human wo, lifting his voice in tones of the kindest compassion amid the sighs and plaints and groans of the multitude: and the

day hastens in which the claims of a Church and ministry that do not plead openly the cause of these poor, enslaved, will be rejected.

72. Twelve years faithful and extended discussion of the doctrine of human rights, and the fundamental principles of morality and religion, have failed to induce the leading Theological Seminaries in the United States to take open ground in opposition to the system of American slavery; and on these points they seem to be receding farther into darkness. Let this excite the thinking to exclaim, if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness; and certain prominent influences to understand that, as in the days of Luther, an under current may effect a change in public sentiment of which men who are at the helm are not apprised.

73. When in Conventions of ministers, the strongest feelings are enlisted against what they regard as some form of heresy, and their deepest emotions excited at the prospect of denominational extension, while in fellowship with gross practical enormities, the times are ominous, especially in connection with the facts that there are two hundred thousand communicants to whom the Churches cannot give the Bible; that they dare not petition the civil government, to which they give character; for permission to teach their own crushed members to read the gospel, nor even remonstrate against the chattelizing of members of their own body; that they may not proclaim the seventh commandment, nor explain the eighth; that they cannot prevent ministers and laity from robbing, buying and selling their own Christian brethren, nor practically carry out their avowed creed from fear of popular odium: in view of all which, the verdict is unavoidable, that ecclesiastical organizations are imbecile and losing their influence over the community; a verdict which must be heard and felt.

74. Let none be surprised at strange combinations and incongruous connections among ecclesiastics. When apparent antipodes, both in politics and in professed theological sentiments, find it necessary to combine their forces in order to resist the searching application of Divine truth, the fact shows that Satan is preparing to fight his last battles,

75. The sentiment that ministers should not meddle with politics, and that to plead for the oppressed is to interfere with politics, if permitted to guide and control, would put it beyond their power to rebuke any sin which has the sanction of the State, and would release them from their responsibilities to teach the people their high and solemn duties in the choice of their rulers.

76. A tyrannical government, and all oppression under the forms of law, are invariably connected with a corrupt religion; or the perversion of the true religion by the faithless co-operation and betrayal of its professed friends and teachers.

77. Adhesion to an ungodly ministry inevitably drags down to its own level the flock: and it has become a question of ineffable interest, whether the people of this land have virtue enough to separate themselves from all religious teachers, who do not honestly and continuously enlist in the cause of universal freedom.

78. When a minister finds that the praying and most spiritual portion of his Church are in advance of him in the divine life, he should promptly come up and *lead* them on or cease to be their teacher.

79. In no country, nor among any people, can either liberty or despotism prevail without the co-operation of the religious teachers.

SEC. V.—GOVERNMENT.

80. The Lord Jesus Christ has either instituted church government, or he has not: if he has not, it can be shown; if he has, we can ascertain with precision *what it is*, and we have no right to substitute the inventions of men for his institutions.

81. Authority in the Church is given for edification and not for destruction—not to sustain a system of policy which shall minister to the pride of any class of men, nor to form a body with separate interests from the laity, but for the purity, instruction and happiness of the whole body.

82. There must be freedom in the Church, before there can be freedom in the State, for the whole question of human

liberty, political and religious, is involved in the question of *Church government*. No people enjoy a greater degree of *religious* liberty than is permitted by their church polity : and civil and political liberty springs only from pure Christianity. No people will long maintain a higher or a purer liberty in the State than exists in the Church-arrangements of their current religion.

83. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom anywhere and everywhere. Anti-republican church government is a dangerous element in a Republican civil government.

84. All church authority, according to the 18th of Matthew, exists and resides with the assembled brotherhood in the local church ; and if her powers are transferred to a select few, the members can have very little influence in church affairs.

85. When things not deemed essential to Christian character are made essential to church membership, Christian liberty as well as Christian unity is violated.

86. In a Republican government, it is the business and the duty of the *people* at the ballot-box, to make it conform to its own fundamental principles.

SEC. VI.—RELIGION AND POLITICS.

87. Christians are under religious bonds to sustain civil governments on the great principles of *moral law* ; and their only correct and consistent course on this subject is to think right, to pray right, to preach right, and to VOTE right, in support of equal and exact justice to all classes and conditions of men, irrespective of color or caste, discarding the legislation which raises questions of policy above questions of *right*, and carrying the pure strict principles of morality into all their political actions.

88. Moral questions have to a great extent a political bearing, and all political questions have a moral bearing.

89. Political relations are subject to the same moral tests with other relations. The religion of every nation gives shape and character to its political institutions, and they become what its current religion makes them ; and to maintain that religion has nothing to do with politics, is vir-

tually to declare that integrity has nothing to do with your own character.

90. A large portion of the Bible is occupied with politics, and the religious character of a people is tested by their political acts ; and when you say that politics have nothing to do with religion, you aver that a political man is not bound to do right, and that integrity has nothing to do with legislation.

91. Your politics are wrong, of course, if the faithful presentation of the principles of righteousness cross your political path ; and to refuse in this case to change your course, is the practical avowal that you place expediency above right.

92. The Divine Law requires love ; and nothing is *Law*, either human or divine, that is inconsistent with universal benevolence. And the man who breathes the true Christian spirit, will feel a deep interest in the affairs of human governments, and to a greater or less extent bear a part in them : not, indeed, from mere selfish or party purposes, but to promote the public welfare, and to fulfil the political duties required of every good man, at the ballot-box, and in every other relation where his acts and opinions will further the choice of good rulers, and secure for the country a righteous legislation.

93. In the first ages of Christianity the relation and the attitude of the civil government and the Church were that of the persecutor and the persecuted.

The next stage was that in which persecution ceased, and the friendly relation of granting and receiving *protection* existed between the State and the Church.

In the next stage Christianity became anti-christian, raised a supreme head, aimed to control the civil magistrate even in civil matters, and the struggle resulted in the establishment of a complete spiritual and civil despotism.

The overthrow of this revolting despotism was commenced by the Reformation, but the work was not perfected.

In the succeeding ages, men have been slow to receive the truth on the subject of civil and religious liberty ; and so late as the middle of the 19th century, the alphabet on this subject is yet to be studied by leading influences in Christen-

dom, and a vigilance that sleeps not is needed to keep back the triumphs of both civil and ecclesiastical domination.

The true and just theory is, that the Civil Government, uncontrolled, manage the civil concerns of the State ; but in accordance with the inalienable rights of man and the changeless principles of morality, securing to *all classes* under it personal protection, the rights of conscience, and the right of private judgment : the Church uncontrolled regulating her own concerns in accordance with the same principles, asking nothing of the State but *protection*, and demanding nothing of the State but that its legislation shall accord with the principles of righteousness. This leaves Religion untrammelled : the Church confined to her own sphere, and the State acting only within its own limits.

The Ministers of State, or civil rulers, will, on this theory, carefully and conscientiously apply the principles of the Divine government to the civil and political interests of human society ; and the Ministers of Religion will present Bible counsel respecting the civil and political duties of the people, and act as the faithful reprovers of iniquity and evil doers.

94. Political action, political preaching and praying, and political voting, would never have come into bad odor if Christians and Ministers of the Gospel had not joined with the wicked in putting vile men into civil office, and sustained oppressive legislation ; and for them to refrain from political action because politics are corrupt, is to hand over the administration of the affairs of State to the devil,—instead of which, their duty is to reform, to proclaim Bible truth, and to sustain the legislation which the Bible approves.

SEC. VII.—SECTARIANISM.

95. There is nothing so high or so holy which the touch of sectarianism will not taint and transmute into its own debased image.

96. It is the peculiarity of sectarianism to substitute the profession for the practice : hence it falls, when the Church insists upon practice, or a fair Christian character, as a test of membership ; for such a test would eventually unite all

Christians in one harmonious co-operation, and throw off to the world those who are moved by worldly affinities.

97. Conservatives of all sects have stronger affinities with each other than they have with the *reformers* of their own sect.

SEC. VIII.—SLAVERY.

98. To find access to the mercy seat, men must duly regard the claims of the poor and needy, and take part with the weak against the strong—with the oppressed against the oppressor.

99. The liberties of a people can be preserved only by the conviction that they are the gift of God, and not to be violated but with his wrath: a conviction which is the only adequate safeguard of freedom, and the destroyer of despotism.

100. All who refuse active succor to the poor, will be rejected by the Saviour, who regards the neglect of such as the neglect of himself.

101. Human policy never fixes one end of a chain around the ankle of a slave, but Divine Justice rivets the other end around the neck of his tyrant.

102. The Churches in the United States could not have been seduced into so close an alliance with Slavery, had they known no ecclesiastical connection but the local church.

103. Men who will elevate property above humanity—matter above Spirit—will sacrifice human life on the altar of property.

104. The doctrines of modern abolition are the commonly received doctrines of orthodox Christianity brought to bear upon the specific sin of slave-holding.

105. There is a war of extermination now going on between American Slavery and American Christianity, and one or the other must eventually fall.

106. At the present period, and especially in this country among professed Christians, the most conspicuous and searching test question is connected with the sin of despotism, civil and ecclesiastical, the denial of human rights, and particularly the support of the chattel principle.

107. The overthrow of civil and ecclesiastical despotisms is undoubtedly the grand characteristic enterprise of the present and the next coming age. The enterprise will succeed; and those now in active life should go in advance of the past.

108. A Constitution which guarantees to all the States under it a Republican form of government cannot, without self-immolation, be tortured into an oligarchical, slaveholding despotism.

109. A State authorizing one portion of the people to own, or to hold as slaves another portion of the people, is, both in theory and practice, destitute of all claim to a Republican form of government.

110. To say that Slavery does or can derive power from the United States Constitution, to encroach on the inalienable rights of any person, under any circumstances, is to impeach the integrity of the framers of it—to accuse them of practising the deepest hypocrisy in the definition they gave, of the doctrine of human rights, and of a republican form of government, and to say that the Constitution itself is a burlesque upon liberty, and a gross imposition upon mankind.

111. Civil liberty and religious toleration are citadels, not of course impregnable, but not easily to be reduced. All who value them should unite in their defence; for the loss of them to one class of citizens, or to one church, tends to the loss of them to all.

112. The general aspect of the world indicates universal preparation for great events: and the rising energies of the thinking portions of Christendom, seem to *wait* for the abolition of slavery in this Republic.

113. The revolution of the present age is prominently one of thought, of opinion, of sentiment; a revolution in which existing systems and usages are either wholly supplanted, or are made to assume entirely new forms. The secret and the cause of all these movements are the action of great fundamental principles, the ideas of the right, the true, and the good, that are heaving the elements of society with the power of an earthquake, and in the language of inspiration, figuratively applied, shaking not the earth only, but also heaven.

CHAPTER II.

POSITIONS DEFINED.

THE government of God is the application and enforcement of the principles of justice, or of moral law, to the circumstances and necessities of all the moral beings under it. It is perfect, since it accords everywhere and at all points with existing moral relations, and sustains the personal rights of all, the just claims of the most degraded slave as those of an angel.

All legitimate human governments are a part of the moral government of God; and consist in the application and enforcement of the principles of the Divine government, or of moral law, to the wants and necessities of mankind, or to the exigencies of human society. Their legitimacy is tested by the question, is the legislation in accordance with the principles of natural justice, securing the individual rights of all and every portion of citizens under it. An affirmative answer shows the obligation of all persons holding any connection with them to be quiet and obedient. A negative answer renders it the duty of every subject of such governments, to use all lawful and proper means for such a change as shall effect a righteous legislation.

Religion and morality are constituent elements in all governments. A perfect government has a perfect morality for its basis. An imperfect government is based upon an imperfect morality. As human governments are the arrangements of men, their religious views and sentiments will be found in the texture of their laws, and religion and government everywhere, are inseparable.

The same class of moral principles is to be applied to governments of every name and kind, designed for moral beings. Men associated for State purposes, have no right to leave out these principles in their arrangements, or to contravene them in their politics. When men associate for

religious purposes, these same principles must be interwoven with all their conventional and associated regulations, or they assume the attitude of enemies both of God and man.

Religious men and political men; men in the civil department and men in the church, the *State and the Church*, are equally bound, and on the same common basis which supports the throne of God, to seek and to secure the highest and the best good of the whole community, and of every individual in it.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given no laws for the government of his Church, differing from the laws for the government of the State. All the power of church government lies in the public sentiment of the brotherhood properly expressed. Of course all *legitimate* church government is in favor of justice and universal liberty, and the efficient handmaid of all righteous civil governments, and asks no more of the State than simply protection in personal rights, and in the quiet expression of opinions.

A Church is an association or company of professed believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ, united for the worship of God, and the enjoyment of Christian ordinances.

It is the generally received opinion that no particular form of church government is prescribed in the New Testament. But the principle and the fact are both given in the 18th of Matthew, and in the 5th chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, viz.:—the assembled brotherhood are the authorized and competent triers of such offenders as exist in the Church.

Thinking men should THINK before they quietly acquiesce in a departure from the positive injunctions of Christ and Paul: and before they consent to the introduction of an element into ecclesiastical government which, in the civil government, would be hostile to liberty.

As a matter of fact, mankind have professed to *assume* forms of government, both in the Church and in the State in accordance with the degrees of virtue and intelligence among the people. But this fact does not prove that God has given these different forms, although he has permitted them to exist. It ever has been the duty of the people, in every age and in every stage of society, to adopt a government, both religious and political, which shall apply and

enforce the given principles of moral law to the exigencies of the community.

The form of government which perfectly accords with the principles of law which God proclaims, he approves; and this is the only form which he has given: all others so far as they deviate from his revealed will, are usurpation.

Deeply fraught with evils is the sentiment that there is one class of rules for the State, and another class for the Church, one for the politician, and another for the Christian; that when a man goes to the ballot-box, or puts on the robes of office, he is released from that *strict* moral responsibility which he is bound to regard when he goes to the house of God for worship, or joins in the communion services at the Lord's table.

You may know whether any particular form of church government is given of God when you know that it accords with, or violates the inalienable rights of those connected with it.

Authority delegated to an agent for a specific object, who is holden strictly amenable to the brotherhood, is one thing: and quite another thing is it when the Church commits the whole power of discipline or Church action into the hands of agents over whom they have no control.

Regarding the directions of Christ and Paul as positive and prohibitory, no Christian has *their* permission to become a member of any Church in which these principles are contravened.

God has not given one code of laws for an imperfect state of society, and another for a state of society which is perfect. He has but one moral law, and this demands that moral beings, under all circumstances, and in every grade of capacity and intelligence, love *Him* with all their heart and their neighbors as themselves. Holy angels and unholy angels are under this law. The most debased men on earth, and saints and angels in heaven, will be judged by the same rule. This holy law of God demands that all moral, intelligent beings understand and apply its simple, but sublime principles to all their spiritual and secular concerns. There seems to be no place for a doubt that a spiritual democracy is oth, the matter and the form of government best suited to a society of believers—to the Christian Church.

CHAPTER III.

CONGREGATIONALISM.

SEC. I.—DEFINITION.

CONGREGATIONALISM is a system of ecclesiastical organization, in which the Scriptures are recognized as the only infallible guide, respecting church order and discipline; and maintains that the church should act authoritatively upon all business appertaining to her welfare, and conduct such business to its full and final issue, independent of any person, office, power, or judicatory above it, and that Christ and his apostles adopted and taught a model of government for the preservation of the church in its native purity, and provided for the transferring of this model to all succeeding ages; a model which needs no improvements from the wisdom of man.

As all church power is vested in the members, assembled in the name and by the authority of Christ, to regard a church session, or a board of elders, or a committee, as constructively the Church, is inadmissible.

The birth-right of all men to govern themselves under God, is the broad basis of the ecclesiastical constitution of Congregationalism, which regards this right as infringed when men appoint others to govern them.

The mutual interests and relations between churches require that they watch over each other in the spirit of fraternal counsel and admonition.

The parochial or congregational church is the only organized, visibly professing association of believers, mentioned by any accredited writer for the space of two hundred years after Christ.

Associated believers should agree in fundamental points

of doctrine, but no church has the right to force the conscience, or in the least degree to infringe the right of private judgment.

As a matter of fact, though not a part of its polity, in the early period of Congregationalism in this country, two ministers were required in each church, one under the name of teacher, the other that of pastor: the pastor to administer the word of wisdom; the teacher to attend to doctrine, and thereby administer the word of knowledge.

SEC. II.—WHO COMPOSE THE CHURCH ?

All who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and bear his image, have a right to church-fellowship, and may claim the privileges connected with it. Assent to the organization and religious sentiments of any particular local church, and a Christian character entitles a person to be received as a member. The rule is, to admit to membership such as the Scriptures intended, and to exclude none of this character. To reject such, is to offend Christ's little ones.

It is the right and the duty of the Church to examine applicants for admission that the members may become satisfied in regard to the Christian character of all who are received; never knowingly violating the rule—that all are to be admitted who give proof that Christ has received them. It is not a denial of this right when a church holds the applicants on trial for a season. Yet the exercise of this discretionary power becomes a sin when it keeps back from the ordinances, or excludes those qualified.

The inherent right of the members to judge of the qualifications of applicants for church privileges, does not justify the guarding of the portals of the church so as to admit none who will not pronounce distinctly the shibboleths of a sect; nor authorize the position which regards assent to a creed as a better qualification than known and unquestioned Christian character. The right to examine is not the right to deny or to annihilate the claims of the applicant. When the applicant is, in fact, a true believer, he may claim the

benefits of church fellowship: and if he give evidence of this in a sound Christian character, to shut the door against him, infringes upon the right of private judgment, violates a fundamental principle of church fellowship, and mars the order of the Christian confederacy.

The institution of the Church is but the instrument for the accomplishing the high, holy, spiritual and moral ends of the Divine Founder of the Christian faith. From these ends, the Church derives its value.

It is in the light only of these holy purposes that we can correctly ascertain and understand the machinery of church organization, or ecclesiastical arrangements. No mode or arrangement can be scriptural which does not happily subserve these designs, which must be prominent before the Church on the examination and admission of members.

Neither in their labors for the conversion of sinners, nor in the admission of members, have Christians the right to act with a special view to the prerogatives of the Pope, or the Episcopacy, or the Presbytery, or of any other ecclesiastical body, or of any *sect*, but always, and only, to the spirit and the objects of a pure and benevolent Christianity.

The Church should be composed of men of God—persons of holy endeavor, of prayer. Hence, Christian character as defined in the Bible, and nothing else, is the proper scriptural qualification of church membership. To find this qualification is the only lawful object of an examination. Without it no man can have any right to a place in a Christian Church.

The doctrinal sentiments of the applicant are to be regarded; the only test which accords with the right of Christian fellowship is the cordial reception of the fundamental truths of the Christian religion—truths that present and sustain the rights of God and the rights of man.

The right of examination extends to persons coming from other churches. This right is not always exercised, and persons are more generally received on the credit of their certificate of regular and good standing in the church they have left. This practice promotes confidence and harmony between churches.

In all voluntary associations and deliberative assemblies, the majority governs: the decision of the majority is the voice of the body. The majority are not always correct in their decisions; still the ruling power is with them, and must be with them. On no other principle can associations exist. This is well understood in all church organizations.

Should any one claim that his own particular views, or what he may deem his own particular rights, shall be sustained, in opposition to what are the views and the claims of the majority, he would prove himself disqualified to be continued as a member.

He has, indeed, the right of private judgment, and may present and defend his views; but if he cannot be gratified but by the submission of the majority, he has no right to demand this, and the church cannot grant it. In this case, his redress is to withdraw; and if his Christian character be good, he has the right to a certificate as a member in confidence.

A member has the right to withdraw his connection with the Church. No church covenant should trespass upon inalienable rights.

A member whose moral character is good, but who is conscious that he is not a Christian, or one ostensibly a real believer, may deem it his duty to withdraw. In this case, the brethren will labor to convince him of what *they* deem his proper course: if they fail, the Church may consent to his departure on his own responsibility.

In regard to this, however, there is no prescribed and binding rule.

An arbitrary course will defeat the designs of the Church, which may take any action a sound discretion dictates, in the treatment of the members, not contravening the *principles* of the Gospel.

The Saybrook Platform provides that a church member, not otherwise scandalous, who shall fully withdraw and divide himself from the communion of the particular church to which he belongs, the church may justly esteem and declare itself discharged of any further inspection over him.

SEC. III.—OFFICERS.

Ministers and Deacons are the *only* officers in the Church of Christ, according to the settled principles of Congregationalism.

Ruling Elders are recognized in the Cambridge Platform; but the office has never been regarded by Congregationalists as divinely appointed. As early as 1702, Cotton Mather says, our churches *now* are nearly destitute of *such* helps.

The office of Deacon is one of great interest and importance. The Deacon is the Pastor's assistant; and although in a subordinate office, he is expected to perform duties of a high religious nature, and not to be *confined* to the temporalities of the Church. Many things in the detail must be done, both temporal and spiritual, in every Christian congregation, or the Church essentially suffers. The Deacon's office includes these; and when filled by a faithful, efficient man, it is not of course certain that he is less useful than the Pastor. Office necessarily increases the influence of the incumbent for good or for evil; and when a man of a bad spirit is in office among Christian brethren, the cause of piety suffers deeply. Doctor Bellamy, a shrewd observer of men, and very frequently called to act in ecclesiastical councils, once remarked, "I find that most of the difficulties among the churches are occasioned by the conduct of some wicked Deacon."

His office is distinct from that of the Pastor or Teacher, and it is a mistake when churches permit the Deacon to supersede the Minister.

The church which attempts to do without a Pastor, falls inevitably into a decline. A brother eminently useful as a Deacon has often materially diminished his usefulness by assuming the office of a Pastor. The primitive Deacons, Stephen and Philip, preached, and Stephen administered baptism. It is probable that the brethren scattered abroad from the Church in Jerusalem did the same. Under similar circumstances, the same things may be done in any age.

Deacons are ordained or set apart to their office work by prayer, the laying on of hands (a *symbol* merely of their

need of Divine influence), and by an appropriate address or charge.

The *office* of the Deacon is permanent; but the period in which the incumbent shall serve in the office may be limited by the vote of the Church—allowing him, at the expiration of his term of service, to be regarded with others as a candidate for the place. This arrangement gives the Church the opportunity to bring other gifts into this important office, and allows the incumbent to retire without revulsion of feeling.

A *perpetual* Minister, a perpetual Elder, a perpetual Deacon, irrespective of qualifications and usefulness and the consent of the Church, is a dire calamity; and as those who have the poorest qualifications are sure to be the most sensitive of neglect, and the most tenacious of the office, it is wise for a church to leave a door pleasantly open through which they may lead out an unacceptable Deacon, and preserve him harmless.

SEC. V.—STANDING AND AUTHORITY OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

Minister, Elder, Pastor, Teacher, Overseer, Bishop, are different Scripture titles of the same office. The other officer is the Deacon.

A Church includes *all* who are associated for the maintenance of religious worship; and, on Congregational principles, is complete in her organization to do all that appertains to her discipline, and is not permitted to delegate any portion of her powers or church authority to others. The members are a brotherhood of acknowledged equals, joining hands for a common object. These are required to watch over each other in love. They need a presiding officer, but this officer cannot be clad with the power of the body. They may need a committee, but ~~this~~ committee cannot be invested with the full power of the Church. *This* responsibility is not transferable. The Churches of the Apostolic age were independent, and the bishops pastors of local congregations.

Among Ministers there is an entire ecclesiastical equality. The Minister has no power in the Church except what arises from his single vote, and from his weight of character.

Equality is the order of Christ's Church : authority is shared equally.

Congregational *principles* do not justify the distinction between Clergy and Laity as having distinct claims and separate interests, or grades of power.

All the early disciples considered themselves authorized to preach, and, if necessity required, to baptize, and in all probability to administer the Lord's Supper. This state of thing continued down to the opening of the third century.

The marked veneration for Ministers, under the title, the Clergy, which formerly existed in this country, has very much subsided. Powers and privileges claimed by the Clergy, and by the Ruling Elders, where they are regarded as church officers, have turned public sentiment to the other extreme, and contributed much to lessen esteem for the ministry and churches. Clerical usurpations have created a deep and extended disgust in very many minds.

By long usage, the licensing of preachers, public teaching, and the administration of the ordinances, have been considered as appertaining to the office of the Ministry. But the right and the power to direct and regulate these matters are inherent in the churches. In several respects, the usages among Congregationalists are a marked departure from strict, genuine, and pure Congregationalism as practised in the Apostolic period, and in the early days of New England.

Sound Congregational principles and doctrines subject every Pastor to the watch and discipline of his church ; amenable, like any other member, to the church, the Court of triers—the ultimate appeal in all cases of difficulty, and possessed of the undoubted right to perform all necessary acts of discipline. In his *official* station *only* is the Pastor a superior, and even this office makes him but the *chief among equals*.

The Cambridge Platform says, as the church had the power to call the Minister to office, so they have the power to remove him from office : the church that could receive him to fellowship can also cast him out.

Mather says, when a Pastor has fallen into scandal, the brethren that are acquainted with it proceed as they would with another brother in such cases ; only with more special

terms of respect and repetition of addresses, as the relation of a father may call for.

Intellectual gifts, qualifications, an inward call, and the voice of the people, inviting a person to exercise these qualifications in their behalf, with his consent, constitute a Gospel Minister. Ordination is merely the public recognition of the person thus called as an accredited minister of Christ. There is something absurd in the supposition that ordained Ministers have the sole right of ordaining others. When Ministers do ordain, it is because they are invited and appointed by the church to do it.

The fathers of New England, says Cotton Mather, did not reckon *ordination* to be essential unto the *vocation* of a Minister, any more than *coronation* to the being of a king: it is but a convenient *adjunct* of his *vocation*, and a solemn acknowledgment of it, with an useful and proper benediction of *him* in it.

The Cambridge Platform states, this ordination we accounted nothing else but the solemn putting of a man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had a right before by election, being like the installing of a magistrate.

Samuel Mather says, it is entirely just and reasonable that particular churches should have this power: for they are ecclesiastical societies confederate; that is to say, they are churches before they have officers, and even without them; having the nature and essence of a church, they may act as such, for the Church of Christ is doubtless furnished with sufficient power for its own preservation. Therefore if the Elder (Minister) of a particular church be guilty of maladministration, the church ought to depose him, if he do not repent and give satisfaction.

They who have a right to put into office have the right to put out of office. The church either puts their Ministers into office, or delegates power to neighboring Ministers to do it for them, which is the same thing as doing it themselves. Therefore as neighboring Ministers could not place a Pastor over them without their consent; so they cannot put away or dismiss their Pastor without their consent. The voice of the church must be had in every act of discipline. And a church may dismiss their Minister *without* the advice, or even

32 CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLES DISTRUSTED.

contrary to the advice of a council, if they think he has forfeited his ministerial character.

SEC. V.—CLASS LEGISLATION AND CLASS ADMINISTRATION

Are the stepping-stones of an odious aristocracy in the state, and can receive no sanction whatever in the church among Christian brethren; the whole spirit of pure congregationalism turns from the thought with loathing.

But it is both, when the *Minister* objects to the church as a court to try him, by the appeal, that a man should be tried by his *peers*. Who are his peers? and by whom shall the Deacon be tried? by whom shall the merchant, the judge, the lawyer, the general, the rich, the scholar, and the poor be tried? If the Minister can claim exemption from the jurisdiction of the church, that he may be tried by a jury of Ministers, so may others plead exemption on the same principle, and you have distinct tribunals for the different grades in the same church.

Our civil government admits no such distinction. An accused person, whatever his station, has his trial before the constituted courts of his country, and the effort to pack a jury of the same profession, grade, or occupation, with himself is not countenanced.

This jury trial is a basis principle in the Temple of Civil Liberty. Jury trials, under civil government, is Congregationalism. All legitimate ecclesiastical courts are a trial by the Jury of the PEOPLE.

Strict Congregationalism is not fully maintained by all nominal Congregational churches of the present day. But its genuineness should be known—its principles understood, and the positive injunction of Christ, and the direction of Paul, 1 Cor. v., should be studied and solemnly regarded.

Congregationalism, in its *purity*, will bear inspection. Its centre and circumference are included in the second table of the Divine Law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

SEC. VI.—CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLES DISTRUSTED.

The full practice of strict Congregational principles, at the

present day, would be regarded as the introduction of dangerous innovations.

In certain quarters much is said of the conditions upon which the administration of the word and ordinances are valid.

When intelligent and spiritually-minded laymen have risen up to their Christian work, and gone out in earnest labor, fears have been expressed that they were getting out of their place, and that encroachments would be made upon the clerical office-work, and the dignity of the Ministry be lowered.

The churches need to inquire whether it is best for them to act up to their principles, or permit them to be reduced to abstractions. The public mind is waking up to the belief that Christ has instituted church government and both *described and defined it*.

The tendency of things needs to be watched everywhere.

Civil and political liberty ebbs and flows, is much, or little or nothing, according to the standard of freedom erected and maintained by the Christian church.

All the Liberties of the Churches were purchased for them by the precious blood of Christ, and, therefore, neither may the churches give them away, nor may many churches take them out of the hands of one.

“There can be,” says the Christian Investigator, “no free discussion in the churches, if there be a monopoly of religious teaching. And such a monopoly enters into the very idea of a clerical caste. We will only notice here a few modern specimens of this anti-christian innovation upon the primitive usages of the Church of God.

“In Trumbull’s History of Connecticut are recorded abundant exemplifications of this claim, on the part of the clergy, one of whom defined the relative position of clergy and laity thus: ‘A speaking aristocracy in the presence of a silent democracy.’ The General Association of the Congregational Ministers, in Connecticut, adopted resolutions by which Whitefield and Davenport were excluded from their pulpits—that is, forbidden to preach to the people, and the people virtually forbidden to hear them. The whole territory of the State being cut into Congregational parishes, and the sect being the recognized ‘standing order,’ the resolutions

of the clergy were enforced by the civil authorities. The Evangelists were banished, and lay preachers were imprisoned. But neither resolutions nor statutes, Pastors nor prisons, could wholly suppress 'the disorders of lay preaching,' until the 'great awakening' had ceased, and the religious feeling had subsided. Quiet times were then enjoyed by the monopolists of religious teaching, till the irruption of Baptists, Methodists, and other sects, when the same clerical power was again exerted, and was partly successful for a time. The Congregational clergy of New England, like their Presbyterian brethren in the other States, as a body, have commonly watched jealously, and repressed cautiously and perseveringly, the often rising tendencies towards free speech by the laity in the churches. Conference and prayer meetings have, at times, disputed their prerogatives, and encroached upon their monopoly. Intelligent and pious laymen, including Deacons, have noticed, with pain, for the last half century, a constant though quiet effort, on the part of a majority of the Pastors, to occupy the time themselves, even at meetings appointed originally for social conference and prayer, so as to leave as little opportunity as possible for lay speaking: designating by name the persons whom they might choose to fill up the remainder—thus keeping the meeting entirely under their control. With the Congregational clergy, this precaution was doubtless thought particularly necessary, because the form of church government gave the people so much control over ecclesiastical affairs. A free scope in devotional exercises and social worship would seem to them upon too frightful an equality with their Pastors. With the founders of the Methodist Episcopacy, on the other hand, an opposite policy, in this respect, might be safely and advantageously pursued. Having secured to themselves the control of the church government, the clergy could afford to give the popular feeling full vent, in the way of vocal prayer and exhortation, in devotional meetings. This attracted many to their standard who were under restraint in the assemblies of other sects. The absence of power in the management of church matters was scarcely missed by the Methodist laity, and they congratulated themselves upon the enjoyment of a freedom in social and public worship un-

known to their Congregational brethren. Among Baptists, the exercise of church government, and the participation in the exercises of religious worship, for a time, went hand in hand. But in both respects the laity are now in process of coming, more than formerly, under clerical control, or supervision.

“In this state of the American churches it was that the reformatory efforts of the laity, first in the cause of temperance, and then in the cause of the enslaved, began to agitate the community and the churches. Nothing could be more natural than that the voluntary associations, with their popular discussions, their free open conventions, and their itinerating lay lecturers, should throw the clergy, with the views they held, into an attitude of self-defence. The temperance cause, to a great extent, had been impeded, or held back, both by clerical opposition and by clerical supervision. The laity had become impatient and restive. The vindicators of the rights of others began to assert and to exercise their own. The exclusive right of moral and religious teaching, on the part of the clergy, was in evident jeopardy. A portion of them felt and acted with the laity, and have been foremost in the struggle. But the majority, and those in high station, have set themselves resolutely against the people’s rights. The particulars we all know. The same General Association of Ministers in Connecticut that had shut Whitefield out of the churches, a hundred years before, attempted to shut out the anti-slavery lecturers in the same way. A similar association in Massachusetts attempted the same thing. This was in 1836. Within a few months past, two Presbyteries, if not more, in the State of New York, have, indirectly and informally, yet in reality, made similar efforts. Meeting-houses have been extensively closed against the discussion and the lecture. Churches, through pastoral influence, have refused to examine the subject in church meetings. The particular topic, and the dread of its agitation, on political and ecclesiastical grounds, was, indeed, among the chief causes of the opposition. Ministers have extensively refused, on these accounts, to speak on the subject themselves. Yet no small part of the difficulty, with clergymen, has been, from the first, that they do not wish to encourage the

discussion of moral and religious topics in open assemblies of laymen, and by the people at large. This unwillingness has been often and openly avowed, and sometimes in print, sometimes in pastoral letters, &c., of clerical bodies.

“The suppression of free discussion, therefore, on the subject of human rights, so far as it has been suppressed in this country, we have good reason to charge, in a great measure, to the prevalent prejudices of the clergy against ‘lay preaching,’ or lay agitation of moral and ethical subjects. *That* department they consider *exclusively their own*; and whether they wish to cultivate the field or not, they do not wish to see it cultivated by others.

“Nothing, therefore, short of a restoration of *free discussion in the churches* by such a return to *primitive usages* as shall put to rest, for ever, the clerical monopoly of religious teaching, that manifest ‘innovation’ of the anti-christian apostasy—will ever give to the American people that *right of free discussion* which was first crushed in the CHURCH, and then smothered in the NATIONAL COUNCILS. There must be freedom in the CHURCH before there can be freedom in the STATE.

“We do not build up the true church of Christ, unless our *acts* show that we regard the spirit of Christianity as the spirit of equality,—of equity, of meekness,—of benevolence,—of patient duty-doing;—the greatest among Christians as the servant of all:—unless our acts show that we believe Christians are forbidden to exercise authority over each other, as do the lords of the Gentiles:—that they are all a royal priesthood;—and that while there are official *stations*, there can be no distinctions among them as Christians, between honorable and degrading avocations:—that Christianity recognizes no distinctions but in *character*, and requires each to find himself in his neighbor.”

Public sentiment in every station of social life, is powerful. Churches feel its power, while it is one portion of their great work to form a correct public sentiment, and skilfully, but righteously, to direct it. A *Communion* of churches is indispensable, and to be sought with meek and earnest prayer. It is only as this communion is scriptural and complete, that the Church really proves a blessing to the world.

It is no part of the designs of Congregationalism that Churches shall be free from responsibility to each other, not indeed as a court of review and control, but on the simple principle of brotherly love, ready at all times, to give and to receive advice, and to express condolence.

SEC. VII.—COUNCILS.

Councils are to be composed of Ministers and lay members of the Churches. The Pastor is as truly a delegate from the Church which sends him; as the lay-brother who accompanies him, and both have equal authority.

Ecclesiastical Councils, among Congregationalists, have no authoritative or compulsory power, but merely give *advice*. But the Church calling a council may obligate themselves to make its decision final. The principle is, that the responsibility rests with the Church, and they are to act in the case and decide it, making such use of the advice of Council as they best can.

The right of calling a Council lies in the whole Church, and any portion of it aggrieved. The advice of a mutual Council, as it is the decision of the highest and ultimate ecclesiastical tribunal, cannot be disregarded and rejected without grief and injury to the whole body of Christians in fellowship, and a rejection should never occur, but on the most serious and conscientious grounds.

An *ex-parte* Council is an ecclesiastical tribunal assembled, by one or more aggrieved individuals, to sit as judges in their own case, and is an admitted appendage in the Congregational arrangement. But as a mutual Council is the regular tribunal, it is only when such Council is refused by the Church, that the aggrieved are justified in resorting to the *ex-parte* council: and the Churches sent to are bound seriously to inquire, whether there is good ground for the call. The General Association of Massachusetts in 1823, recommended to the Churches in their connection, not to attend *ex-parte* Councils without much deliberation and obvious and urgent necessity.

Congregationalism would preserve every individual, whatever his standing, in full possession of all his religious rights;

and in such cases in which he is refused a mutual Council, or when sinister motives have swayed the decision, the ex-parte Council comes in as a keystone to the system, to check the violent proceedings of a dominant party. All persons under discipline, may compel a respect for their just rights; and churches, in their treatment of Ministers and brethren, proceed with the full knowledge that their doings are liable to be re-considered by a mutual, and may be by an ex-parte council.

Councils are, to the present day, the only Ecclesiastical tribunals acknowledged in the churches of Massachusetts.

SEC. VIII.—CHURCHES DISCIPLINED.

It is an established principle that Churches may discipline each other. The only basis of this is the great law of Church communion. It is maintained by admonition and exhortation, and enforced in case of necessity by signifying a withdrawal from fellowship.

SEC. IX.—CONSOCIATIONS.

In the State of Connecticut mutual Councils have been superseded by Consociations, which are bodies composed of Pastors and Churches within given districts, and derive their authority from the Saybrook Platform. All the congregational Churches in this State, except fifteen, are consociated.

The authority for Consociation lies in the position that all the Churches ought to maintain Christian fellowship and church communion with each other. The degree of power is defined by each particular Consociation, and a diversity of practice, in some respects, exists between different Consociations; each and all, however, are regarded as permanent bodies, for the adjustment of all cases brought before them, and their decision on it is final, not subject to any review or control. The church concerned in the trial is to give effect to the decision of the body by accepting it, and by submitting to it. According to the Saybrook plan, individuals and churches who do not submit to the decision of Consociation, expose themselves to the highest moral punishment, that of excommunication.

At the same time it is stated that the churches consociated are still Congregational, and do not part with any of the rights, powers and duties which belong to them by the institution of Christ.

There is not among them a strict uniformity of practice. The general rule is—no appeal from the decision of the body, although it may call in the aid of a neighboring consociation. In 1822 the General Association of Connecticut voted that the Consociation is the Supreme tribunal, and that its decisions cannot be questioned and subverted by any other tribunal.

The consociation system has not been extended beyond Connecticut and Rhode Island.

This system of church government is an obvious departure from original, strict Congregationalism, and while its admirers state that the churches are still Congregational, and in possession of all their rights, it is certain that they are not complete in themselves, exercising uncontrolled all the powers of discipline.

The Connecticut churches have happily flourished under it. It is not, however, clear that the Congregational churches in Massachusetts and elsewhere, without the plan, have flourished less.

Standing Councils to adjust church difficulties, are a sort of standing invitation to churches not to adjust their own difficulties, as their Divine Lord commanded them.

Sleepless vigilance is the price of liberty. It is better to stand immoveable upon first principles, and to endure the defects of occasional Councils, than to encounter the dangers and certain hazards of those that are *permanent*.

It was one of the common-sense, discerning, household sayings of Dr. Emmons—Associationism leads to Consociationism, Consociationism leads to Presbyterianism, Presbyterianism leads to Episcopacy, Episcopacy leads to Roman Catholicism, and Roman Catholicism is an ultimate fact.

The ill effects of a departure from the simple institution of Christ, are becoming painfully prominent among the several sects in this country. We are tending to Rome, is a motto that would not be inappropriate for some things among us. Not a few of the leading Ministers and others among

Congregational churches have long shown a hankering after Presbyterianism. And among Presbyterians are irrepressible longings for the embraces of Episcopacy. And among the fashionable Quakers and aspiring Independents of England it is becoming very easy to slide into the Established Church; while there and here, the adherents of Episcopacy find a charm drawing them along the pathway of Puseyism towards St. Peter. *Tendencies* should not be overlooked.

SEC. X.—CONFERENCES OF CHURCHES

Are permanent bodies, united under a constitution, and formed solely for religious purposes—are composed of lay delegates and ministers—exercise no acts of authority or discipline, and disclaim expressly all interference with the rights and authority of particular churches. The specific objects are, union in prayer, extension of Christian intercourse and acquaintance, mutual instruction, aiding feeble churches, and to give strength and vigor to individuals in the Christian life, thus co-operating with the Spirit of God in the faithful improvement of the gifts Christ has bestowed.

The York Conference, in Maine, was formed in October, 1823.

The system was adopted in other Counties and States, and has become extensively regarded as the ornament, completion and stability of Congregational church government and order, and thus the seed planted by Cotton, 200 years ago, is beginning to bear its fruits.

Each Conference is an independent body, forming its own rules, which forbid the exercise of any authority or control over the churches. There is no evidence that the churches were joined together by association, confederation, or any bonds but those of charity and a mutual interchange of kind offices, till the middle of the second century.

SEC. XI.—PASTORAL ASSOCIATIONS

Are a part of the Congregational polity. They are stated meetings of Ministers, for the purpose of mutual counsel and intellectual and spiritual improvement, and in Connecticut and Massachusetts meet annually. In Vermont. this annual

assembly is called the General Convention. Neither the primary nor the general associations profess any desire to restrict the liberty of the churches. The General Association of Massachusetts aver, that their body is founded on the pure principles of Congregationalism, and is designed to cherish, strengthen, and to transmit these principles, disclaiming all ecclesiastical power over the churches, or the opinions of individuals.

Since 1834 there has been a General Association in the state of New York, composed of ministers and laymen from minor associations : its meetings are for consultation and advice, and not for the exercise of any legislative or judicial power.

At the same time this body requires, as a condition of membership, that the minor associations of which it is composed, exclude from their fellowship and irrespective Christian character any who may believe in the actual attainment of perfection in any case ; or that it is *attainable* in this life, in this sense, and may be made an object of *rational pursuit*.

Latium tendimus, "we are going to Rome," should be written on the vestibule of their temple. Such movements are not solitary among churches and ecclesiastical bodies professing great liberality, and cannot fail to impress the *thinking* part of the community.

Public sentiment, among Congregationalists, has from the beginning been in favor of an able, well-educated, pious and faithful ministry. For many years from the first settlement of this country, the churches permitted brethren to preach who had passed through some approved system of education, and presented testimonials of church membership. In 1705 it was recommended to the churches to require of their preachers some testimonial from under the hand of an association of ministers ; and down to the present day the pastoral association is regarded as the body from which the preacher is to receive his licence.

On strict Congregational principles, however, the church is competent to examine and license the preacher. But by usage this matter has been under the direction of the meeting of Ministers, and the churches have called upon them to lead in the ordination of their Pastors.

A noticeable fact. Quite recently, and in the midst of Congregational influences, and in the wake of the jealous, liberty-loving Puritans, meetings of Ministers decide, that an ordination is not valid when a layman's hand is on the head of the candidate at the time of his consecration.

TENDENCIES.

The General Assembly of 1843, had a long and spirited discussion on the rights of Ruling Elders to impose hands at ordinations. Of these church officers, Doctor Miller, p. 208 of his work, says: "Whether, therefore, we refer to the early usage, or to strict philological import, Ruling Elders are as truly entitled to the name of *Clergy*, in the only legitimate sense of that term, that is, they are as truly ecclesiastical officers as those who labor in word and doctrine." Thus he reduces the Clergy to a level with the lay Elders, and effectually breaks the charm which invests the Ministry with dignities, immunities and powers exclusively their own.

But the General Assembly give their own version. On one side it was argued that ruling Elders had the right to impose hands, on the ground that they were members of the Presbytery. On the other side it was contended, that they had no such authority, inasmuch as Ministerial acts could be performed only by Ministers. Ministers are the representatives of the *HEAD* of the Church, the Elders represent the *body*. The Ministers are *Christ's* representatives, the Elders the Church's representatives. Here are two elements of office—election of the Minister by the Elders, who represent the people—and the ordination by the Ministers who represent Christ. The church gives to the Ruling Elder *his* power—and what is it?—not the power to ordain, for the church, aside from the ministry, does not possess this power—but the power to deliberate, advise, and decide, but *not to impose hands*. This significant act, viz. the *laying on of hands*, is an emblem of the transfer of *Ministerial* power. But the *Church* is not the depository of *this* power, and therefore she cannot delegate it to her representatives. The final vote on this question stood, in support of the right of

Ruling Elders to impose hands in ordination, eight, against it, 134. Although according to Doctor Miller they are as truly ecclesiastical officers as the Ministers.—*Latium Tendimus.*

This scrap of history is too valuable to remain buried. The very height of the Pope's claim is the power to *confer* spiritual and ecclesiastical authority.

SEC. XII.—COUNSEL ON TRIALS.

The Presbyterian form of government forbids the employment of any professional counsel to plead before ecclesiastical courts.

No person is allowed to appear as counsel for another, before any *Consociation*, who is not a member of a Congregational Church, and in good standing.

In the Consociation of New Haven West, no person practising as an attorney at law in the civil courts is allowed to appear as counsel.

In New Haven East Consociation, no person who has made pleading law his business, is admitted as an advocate, unless he be a member of a church belonging to the Consociation.

In the Consociation of New London, no person is permitted to appear as counsel for any party: nevertheless, the Consociation, when, in its judgment, the fair and full investigation of any cause requires aid, may designate one of its own members to present and examine witnesses in favor of one or both parties.

Councils and Churches, as they are independent bodies, will decide this question at their discretion. The usage is, not to admit professional counsel.

The preceding thoughts and facts furnish the answer to the question full of interest to a Congregationalist amidst opposite influences, What is good, old, New England Congregationalism? Had emigrants from New England better understood this question, and been less yielding on fundamental points of Church polity, pure, deep pious feeling would not have been so extensively smothered and outraged.

SEC. XIII.—CONGREGATIONALISM IN THE WEST.

A very large portion of the first settlers in Western New

York and Northern Ohio, were New England Congregationalists, mingling with emigrants from all portions of Christendom, and all with their respective partialities in reference to religious doctrine and practice. To enable Presbyterians and Congregationalists embracing substantially the same doctrinal sentiments and views, to co-operate, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, on one part, and the General Association of Connecticut on the other part, in 1801, proposed, through their Missionaries, to the inhabitants in the new settlements, the following

SEC. XIV.—PLAN OF UNION.

A plan of union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the new settlements, adopted in 1801.

“ 1st. It is strictly enjoined on all their Missionaries to the new settlements, to endeavor, by all proper means, to promote mutual forbearance and accommodation, between those inhabitants of the new settlements who hold the Presbyterian and those who hold the Congregational form of Church government.

“ 2d. If in the new settlements, any church of the Congregational order shall settle a Minister of the Presbyterian order, that Church may, if they choose, still conduct their discipline according to Congregational principles, settling their difficulties among themselves, or by a council mutually agreed upon for that purpose. But if any difficulty shall exist between the Minister and the Church, or any member of it, it shall be referred to the Presbytery to which the Minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; if not, to a council consisting of an equal number of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, agreed upon by both parties.

“ 3d. If a Presbyterian church shall settle a minister of Congregational principles, that church may still conduct their discipline according to Presbyterian principles; excepting that if a difficulty arise between him and his church, or any member of it, the cause shall be tried by the Association, to which the said Minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; otherwise by a council, one half Congregationalists and the other half Presbyterians, mutually agreed on by the parties.

“ 4th. If any congregation consist partly of those who hold the Congregational form of discipline, and partly of those who hold the Presbyterian form ; we recommend to both parties that this be no obstruction to their uniting in one Church and settling a Minister; and that, in this case, the Church choose a standing committee from the communicants of said church, whose business it shall be to call to account every member of the church, who shall conduct himself inconsistently with the laws of Christianity, and to give judgment on such conduct: and if the person condemned by their judgment be a Presbyterian, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Presbytery : if a Congregationalist, he shall have liberty to appeal to the body of the male communicants of the church : in the former case, the determination of Presbytery shall be final, unless the church consent to a further appeal to the Synod, or to the General Assembly : and in the latter case, if the party condemned shall wish for a trial by a mutual council, the cause shall be referred to such council. And provided the said standing committee of any church, shall depute one of themselves to attend the Presbytery, he may have the same right to sit and act in the Presbytery, as a Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian church.”

This was the original compact between the parties acting as *Missionary Societies*. The general stipulation is, that their Missionaries shall not conflict in attempts to build up each his own sect, but shall endeavor to promote forbearance and accommodation between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, that, while in this incipient state, and before members were sufficient to justify church organization in accordance with educational preferences, they should maintain worship together.

All that the original parties in this plan did, or could do, was to give advice suited to the circumstances of the people. This is all that the plan contains. When in any location there was strength enough to sustain public worship, under either the Presbyterian or Congregational form of government, this plan was not to be followed. It was only when it became necessary to unite Presbyterians and Congregationalists in a joint effort to support religious worship that it could apply. Compliance is the voluntary act of the Min-

ister and the people concerned, and to be continued or not at their discretion.

The churches which have acted upon this plan have been Congregational both in their preferences and their organization.

The greater portion of these churches have become connected with Presbytery, and submitted their doings to its review and control.

This union to Presbytery has been a severe trial to the members of the Congregational Churches, who very cheerfully assented to receive Presbyterians into their number and to allow *them* a trial by a standing Committee, and from this an appeal to Presbytery, but were very reluctantly induced to yield to it, the control of the Church.

This general connection of the churches with Presbytery has been effected by the Ministers, who have formed Presbyteries and urged the Churches to go with them.

A church, consisting of members on the plan of union, is not Presbyterian, as its business is not done by a *session*, nor strictly Congregational, as the business may be done by a standing committee.

A vote of the church is needed, expressive of the wish to come under the control of the Presbytery, and a vote of the Presbytery to decide whether a church, that is not Presbyterian in its organization, thus mongrel in its elements, can become a constituent member of the body.

When the church votes to apply for admission, it is not that she may become a Presbyterian church, but, having given up one of her fundamental elements, that she may allow to Presbyterians a benefit, and receive a benefit from them, she knocks at the door of Presbytery that, in this *mongrel* state, in which she dare not assume the honored name either of Presbyterian or Congregational, she may be *accommodated*, by receiving the aid and advice of the body, till there shall be strength enough gained to enable her to lay aside her nondescript, mongrel componentcy, and become truly Presbyterian or Congregational. This is the simple *fact* in the case, and should not be concealed.

It is this accommodation *only* that the church asks, and this *accommodation* is all which, in the nature of the case,

Presbytery can give; and to this effect, a voluntary compact is formed between the parties, and to be dissolved by either at pleasure.

It would be extraordinary indeed, that a Congregational church, in placing herself under the wing of a Presbytery for shade and refreshment, should, by this act, lose her power or liberty to remove from under the shelter; or that, by such a move, she would lose her identity, or forfeit her inherent and original claims.

By vote of the church the accommodation was obtained; and, when the church no longer feels the need of such accommodation, she withdraws from it by her own vote, and thus drops one of her anti-congregational appendages; nor has the Presbytery, the other party in the contract, the right to object, or to exercise any control whatever over the church, or any of its members.

Churches, like other voluntary associations, are governed on the majority principle. In all cases the voice of the majority is the voice of the church, and decides every question.

When a church, acting on the accommodation plan, withdraws from Presbytery, the *rights* of the minority, should there be one, are not infringed, although their *preferences* may not be gratified. They voluntarily joined a church without a session, with a knowledge that, in all churches, the majority principle, and in a Congregational church the right to do their own business, are essential elements. This right is partially waved for the time being, while the *accommodation* is accepted, but the right is not relinquished.

In presbyterial and synodical reports such churches as are without a session, are recognized as *Congregational churches*; which is an admission, by presbytery, that they have the right to govern themselves, and withdraw and to govern their own members.

The plan of union has been in operation nearly half a century. In the estimation of some, its influence is regarded as happy. By others this influence is deemed disastrous.

After the trial of this plan for thirty-six years, the General Assembly, one of the original parties to the agreement, decided that the effects were such as to warrant the excising from their venerable and orthodox body the synods of

Geneva, Genesee, Western Reserve, and Utica, which has resulted in the existence of two general assemblies, under the sectarian cognomen—Old and New School.

Under the influence of the plan of union, Presbyterianism of a certain stamp, spurious indeed, in the judgment of the Old School Assembly, has greatly increased; elements in genuine Congregationalism have been annihilated; the rights of congregational Churches have been crushed; and a large number of Ministers, fresh and warm from New England, and Congregational in all their training, have undergone rapid and ominous changes in the Presbyterian crucible, painfully illustrative of the *tendencies of things*.

Under this plan of union, the practical import of *accommodation* has been *abandonment* in reference to Congregationalists.

When complaints in respect to the churches and presbyteries affected by this plan, have been uttered on the floor of the General Assembly, Ministers have warmly and confidently admonished the body to hold on in patience, for *we* are fast bringing the western Congregational Churches over to Presbyterianism.

And during all this process Ministers have strongly remonstrated with unquiet brethren, averring that, by the plan of union, all the rights of Congregationalists are secured to them.

The course pursued by Ministers, Congregational in all their training, in going so fully into Presbyterianism, has been like a permanent system of dragooning the Congregational brethren for forty years.

The standing reason for this somerset of Congregational ministers into Presbyterianism is, that in the new and western churches there is not sufficient intelligence among the people to qualify the churches for self-government. Congregationalism will do for New England, but at the west the churches must have a more rigid government.

But a people who can skilfully direct business enterprise, who are shrewd enough to value and to apply democratic principles in their civil concerns, and who rapidly throw up around them the institutions and embellishments of the arts, commerce and literature, must possess the elements of self-control in concerns ecclesiastical.

A Congregational Church connected with Presbytery does not, by a withdrawal, lose any of its essential elements. The only change effected by it is simply this, the church ceases to be under the control of Presbytery. The Standing Committee and the liberty of such as desire to appeal to Presbytery may still remain: the identity of the church, her name, her title, her place, and forms of worship, and her connection with the congregation, all remain as before, unless reached by some other action of the church.

Presbyterianism is a term used to designate the Congregational Churches of New England from its first settlement; not that these churches were presbyterial in their organization, but because they adopted, in general, as their religious creed, the confession of faith, prepared by the Westminster Assembly; the appellation Presbyterian does not, therefore, definitely mark the form of government, or the ecclesiastical connection of the church, to which it is applied.

The title of a church to property is not vitiated, unless the conditions, upon which the property was given, are violated.

If no *conditions are expressed* by the testator, his design in the case must be learned by the general designation accompanying the bequest.

The church designated, continuing the same in its general features, as when the bequest was made, retains its title unimpaired.

The question of title to property goes for decision before the civil courts, which has no jurisdiction over churches.

The material point of inquiry by the court will be, is the *church now* the same church continued, which is designated by the testator? What were the essential elements at the time the *will* was signed? What are the essential elements of the church now?

The ground on which church claims to property have been settled, is that the majority governs. Where the majority goes the title goes. Property remains where the majority of the legal voters in the body remain. Property, of right, goes with the body social, religious or corporate, to which it was given, unless there be a condition, appended by the donor, with which the body has not complied

Churches having become corporations, either by legislative enactment or by common law, may maintain a perpetual succession, and possess certain rights, which they can legally defend in their united or corporate capacity.

It is not known that civil courts have contravened the majority principle on any question involving church property.

The minority have their rights, and must find their redress, if wronged, in a rightful way.

When a Presbytery declares those members of a Congregational church, who are in the minority on the question of dissolving its connection with the body, *the church*, and receives from that minority a delegate to act as a regularly accredited member, it is in every sense extra-judicial, an act violative of the principles of Christian communion, subversive of order in the church, and conducive to the destruction of all confidence in church courts.

Fundamental principles should, in all cases, be paramount, clearly announced, and fully understood; above all, and especially, should they be understood by the governed; and the conviction deep and ineffaceable that these principles are immutable.

Let these principles be freely discussed and correctly understood by the people, and there will not occur among Christians that diversity in applying them which will occasion disastrous dissensions, or needlessly multiply churches.

Christian benevolence and good common sense will teach churches, and the non-communicants connected with them in the Congregation, that if the kernel be in a healthful, germinating state, there will be no call for contest about the shell:—or if true Christian character be promoted; if real converts to Christ be multiplied; if Christian principle be triumphant in the general and uniform practice of the members, they can live and labor together, and lull their conflicting preferences asleep, amidst the common and deeply flowing sympathies of the Brotherhood.

The object of Church Government is to promote the religious and spiritual interests of all concerned, in which are involved their highest and sweetest temporal enjoyments. Its pure principles discard all monopoly, and turn with loathing from all *class* legislation. Its objects can never be

gained by the mere exercise of power. Its energies lie in persuasion. The ban of a correct public sentiment is its rod of correction. Success arises from the maintenance of a sacred, vivid, ever-present, and ever fresh regard and respect for all the rights of each and of all concerned, and *Christians* must be vastly deficient in a right spirit and good sense if, while they make paramount these blessed and heaven-derived fundamentals, they allow themselves to split into parties, in the maintenance of a mode.

The beauty, the energy, the practical utility of church government lie in its simplicity; and it is a fatal mistake to take the ground that the body of the church, or the assembled brotherhood, whom our Divine Lord made its depositaries, cannot understand it, nor be safely entrusted with it. Admit that Christians are competent to govern in their own religious and spiritual concerns, and let them become practised in their duty, under a sense of their responsibility, and good men can put up with many concessions to each other for the general good.

CHAPTER IV.

SCHISM.

SEC. I.—DEFINITION.

SCHISM in a Church is a rent, a division, a separation. Hence to answer the questions, What is schism? and, Who is schismatic? we must know what is unity among Christians, or the oneness of the Church. The fact is this. All holy beings, whether on earth or in heaven, are one with God—in their sentiments, principles, affections, desires, aims, efforts, interests, expectations, hopes, prospects, destiny. Who shall separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord? And who, without doing *this*, can separate them from each other? To be alienated, from each other, is to be in the same measure alienated from God, or from Christ. When this alienation exists, Brethren in Christ are separated, and there is a schism in the true fold of Christ, inflicting a deep wound upon genuine religion. Peace and unity among the holy, that they may efficiently co-operate, confer the richest blessings upon human Society. †This is just the influence a wicked world needs from the Church, and which she is bound to bestow. It is in this sense, and only in this sense, that the Church becomes the body of Christ, and the fullness of him who filleth all in all. All who have been born of the Spirit, are living, acting members of this body, and they should abide in the fact that among *them* there is no place for a rent. To divide *them* is to cleave in twain the body of Christ. The attempt to separate *them*, is rebellion against their common Head.

So long as any local church maintains the spirit of Christ, performing the work of her Lord, in acts of benevolence to the poor, exemplifying the principles of righteousness toward all classes, and has no fellowship with known sins, there is no just cause for disaffection on the part of its members. To

break in upon the unity of such a church, would be schism in the Body of Christ.

But let the spirit of the local Church be that of the *world*,—let her fail to sympathize with Christ in the doing of *his* work, and in the midst of her splendid acts of benevolence oppress the poor, or countenance this oppression,—let her be unrighteous and partial, fellowship members who sustain and practise iniquity, and refuse to come out as a thorough reformatory body and put away all sinful customs and deeds,—and she is not a true Christian Church; and to protest against her course, and even to withdraw from her, is not to create schism in the *Body of Christ*: it is rather a discharge of a positive duty—the performance of an act essential to the preservation of true church union, and even of the Church itself.

A professed Church, not bearing the marks of a true and faithful witness, may embrace a minority who breathe the spirit of Christ, and who long to be unshackled in doing his will; and when these members (at the proper time, and in the right spirit and manner) withdraw, they separate themselves from a body of sin and death,—they cut loose from an association which is in fact a schism from Christ and his *real people*, and they cannot be justly charged with creating a schism in the Body of Christ.

SEC. II.—SCHISM A CRIME.

A schism in the Body of Christ, and a schism in an association merely human, are essentially different. The former is a crime: the latter is often an imperious, though a self-denying duty. To separate the carnal from the spiritual, the real disciples of Christ from the followers of Belial, can never create a schism among *Christians*, nor rend the seamless garment of Christ, because this was never designed to cover the wolf in sheep's clothing. But the crime of schism is committed by arrangements which separate *Christians* from *Christians*. Such measures do rend the seamless garment of Christ, produce disunion and corruption, and force the truly pious into church connection with mere worldlings, and subject them to the ecclesiastical control and example of bad men.

The founders of a *sect* are often the most guilty among men.

Church arrangements are extensively sustained, which drive and keep asunder the real friends of Christ, and hold up *Christians* before the world as antagonists; and all this on account of a nonconformity in matters known and acknowledged not to be essential to sound Christian character, and even deep-toned piety.

All arrangements which make it a condition of Church communion that the members speak the dialect of a particular school or party in theology, are feculent nurseries of schism.

It is the province of the Church to expound and to apply the principles and directions of the Gospel, in reference to membership and Christian fellowship, as before stated, but not to legislate about them; for each true believer has from God rights, in these respects, not to be questioned or denied by men.

Outward compacts, agreements, conventional arrangements, constitutions, confessions of faith, digests of discipline, and church creeds, may have their benefits, but cannot beget Christian character, nor secure Christian union. Nay, they are subversive of both, when they prescribe as an essential to Church membership, that which is not essential to a sound Christian character; and when the benefits of the institutions of Christ are denied to those who cannot conscientiously submit to the institutions of men.

SEC. III.—CHRISTIAN UNION.

Christian union does not consist in submission to church authority; but is a vital principle, lying deep in the spiritual life—it is the affectionate, confiding co-operation of the holy among men; and the holy in heaven are grieved, and the unholy are made glad, when this co-operation is interrupted by sectarian jealousies and *dictation*.

Andrew Fuller, at the head of English Baptists in his day, admitted, that if the barrier to close communion and restrictive membership was removed, the Baptist church^d would cease to exist as a distinct body. Presbyterians, Methodists and other sectarianists, would readily receive to membership,

in their respective churches, persons holding different views on minor points, but for their bigoted attachment to the false position they take in making tests which do not involve Christian character.

The movements of Theological Seminaries, Missionary and Education Societies, and indeed *all* ecclesiastical bodies, hold a fearfully ominous connection with schisms. Those who direct the education of young men preparing for the ministry should be jealously, though charitably watched. The power of self-organized clerical bodies has often been a withering monopoly.

Ecclesiastical bodies have not the liberty to create false tests, or make any movement which shall embarrass free discussion, or smother the free spirit of Christianity. They are bound to pursue a course which shall promote the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, and strictly and assiduously cherish and strengthen mutual confidence among Christian brethren. So far as their movements fail to do this they sow discord among brethren and create schism.

The discussions of the present age have thrown much light upon the subject of *Christian Union*, and we now look to the church to take the correct position. Leading minds should manfully cast off the entanglements of sect and the trammels of party, and in the pure magnanimity of Christian benevolence, mark out for the churches the broad highway of true Christian fellowship and communion. If the Evangelical Protestant sects would thus unite and do this, Roman Catholicism would speedily wither and die under the process, and by no other method can we hope to suppress it. Sectarian altercations among Protestants minister life to this heresy.

It is a happy omen, amidst the appalling evils which distract the church and slander the religion she professes, that the public mind is fast approaching the position, that *known Christian character is the basis of Christian union*; and

That it is the duty of all Christians to receive and recognize, in their church relations, all who give scriptural evidence of being Christians, and none but such.

This position is at once liberal and strict; liberal where Christ is liberal, and strict where Christ is strict. It is scriptural, philosophical, and in accordance with the common

sense of mankind. And its practical development would convince an unbelieving world, that Christianity is in fact adapted to the wants and exigencies of human society; the only and the very argument needed to render the religion of the Gospel triumphant among men.

What the world *needs*, is a union of *Christians*—not a truce among the *sects*. The former is practicable. The latter, if gained, is a very different thing from Christian confidence among brethren.

The union of *Christians*, and their unembarrassed co-operation, which would be effected, but for the pride of heart in reading men in the church, will result in the richest and most extensive benefits to mankind; while the union of *sects* merely would leave unsubdued the spirit of selfishness, the very ailment of all sectarianism, and multiply barriers to the progress of truth and holiness.

The union of SECTS might, for a season, create a splendid exterior—but the hidden man of the heart, the essential elements of a sound morality, the spiritual energies of the church, will all be dwarfish under it, and present the index of approaching dissolution. Even the Bible Society, embracing the single object of the distribution of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment, and which, at its formation and incipient movements, held out the charm of union of *sects*, so beautiful and imposing, soon failed on this point; and a secession, accompanied by a public controversy, has proclaimed to perishing men, that even the Bible must sustain the views of a SECT, or a large portion of *Christians* cannot *unite* with the mass of their acknowledged Christian brethren in its distribution.

It has been strongly hoped, that the efforts of Christian benevolence, which have so deeply and extensively occupied the attention and the energies of the religious public for the last thirty years, would result in a substantial and abiding union among the churches. Why has this hope failed in its fulfilment? Because cherished and unyielding attachment to *sect* has controlled the ministry, and through them the churches. Preferences for what is not essential to Christian character have been exalted above what is essential.

Christian benevolence will not make any material pro-

gress in the reform and renovation of the world till this love of sect, this thirst for building up a party, this selfish, base ambition to consolidate and enlarge *my church*, be merged in the quenchless love for the *Union of Christians*.

The object to be magnified is *Christianity itself*: Christ and him crucified—the common object of love and glory with all the truly pious.

The absorbing question before the churches should be, *What is Christianity?—what is Christian character?*

The scriptural answer to these questions will show us what is Christian union—that *this union* is practicable, and the great, grand, glorious object now to be sought—the one point to be pushed in Christendom. The fact was never before so prominent, that the world is in waiting for this movement on the part of the church.

Christianity presents the only BOND of UNION—the only central power—the only attractive rallying point in our world.

Christian union involves a union of views respecting the fundamentals of Christianity, the objects of worship, the essential duties to be performed, the principal end to be pursued.

To gain this, we must understand what is a purified and living Christianity, and cordially embrace it; and Christian union, therefore, can exist only among intelligent, consistent, self-denying Christians.

The universal church union of the New Testament demands that Christians unite in the *substance of true religion*, and thus walk together, waving all differences of views in respect to forms, or ceremonies, and doubtful disputations. If your religion consist in supreme love to God, and impartial love to your brother, it is like the religion of all other *Christians*, and the duty is clear that you walk in love and fellowship with all Christians.

No man can be understandingly a friend to Christian union who does not cheerfully relinquish his preferences to what is obviously the outward forms, the incidentals of his religion, and constitutional arrangements, when they prevent his co-operation with those with whom he is agreed in the substantial of religion.

A Christian is one who truly loves God and man, who *does justly*, loves mercy and walks humbly with God, whose doctrines and practice accord with the Bible. The common sense of mankind sustains the test of the Saviour, "by their fruits shall ye know them," and it is shocked when persons are received and retained in the churches, as thousands are, whom the community cannot and ought not to regard as honest men.

The following is a specimen of the Bible description of Christian character. The righteous considereth the cause of the poor, but the wicked regardeth not to know it. Be not deceived (i. e. with appearances and professions), he that *doeth* righteous is righteous. Inasmuch as ye did unto one of the least of those, ye did it unto me. He that is of Christ, heareth Christ's words. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the *doctrine* of God, hath not God. He that abideth in the *doctrine* of Christ, he hath the Father and the Son. Beware of false prophets: take heed and beware of men. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Come out from her, lest ye partake of her sins and receive of her plagues.

Christian unity and sectarian schism should be studied. The dearest interests of men are connected with the issue. The world's hope is wrapped up in Christian unity. Its good and glory culminate, only as sectarian schism wanes.

THE UNION OF CHRISTIANS is the great blessing which the church should not withhold from perishing men another moment; a union cemented by the due recognition of Christian character as its warrant; a union which will fellowship Christian character, and disfellowship false professors; a union which will elevate and honor the Bible standard of Christian character—a character defined and marked by an obedient reception of *Christian doctrines* as the nutriment and the law of spiritual life, the directory and incentive to the Christian practices which alone constitute true godliness.

The church is bound to hold up the divine standard, by which the character of men is to be tested, and she becomes the light of the world only as she extends or withholds

church fellowship in strict conformity with this standard, which is to make Christian character the condition of church membership, and the forfeiture of this character the sole warrant for the act of excommunication. This is the divine rule.

The first Christian churches included those only who were acknowledged to be Christians. The Christian brotherhood was not then divided into sects. The creation of parties and calling them by different names, after the names of eminent teachers—Paul, Apollos, Cephas—was forbidden.

That there should be a diversity of sentiment and views is a matter of course. But this diversity should never produce alienation of feeling and recrimination among *Christians*.

SEC. IV.—ENTIRE AGREEMENT AMONG CHRISTIANS NOT TO BE FOUND.

The sects and churches are refusing Christian fellowship, denouncing and excommunicating each other, and all under the plea of purifying the body; at the same time, these very sects and churches embrace diversities of sentiment and views, and differences of a wider and more serious character than those, on account of which they refuse fellowship, excise and excommunicate each other.

The church or religious association is yet to be named, in which all the members perfectly agree in all their views of doctrine and practice.

Members of the same sect and the same church in all Christendom, *differ from each other* on points more material far, than those on which the *sects* are now divided. Even should Christians be perfect in holiness, their imperfection in judgment and knowledge would occasion diversities in views. A union in the fundamentals is what should be sought—this can be had—and this, when gained, should quiet individuals and quiet the body; and what censure too severe for the men who sow discord among brethren thus agreed.

All sorts of theological sentiments are found in the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches in Christendom. The authorized creed of the sectarian churches does not accurately express the sentiments of

all the members. Signing a creed does not make men think alike, nor prove that they do think alike, any further than on the basis of general principles. Nor should the conscience be bound by virtue of any inherent authority in papers and parchments of mere human origin.

The attempt to procure a perfect uniformity through the medium of the Westminster Assembly is instructive on this subject, both on account of its success and its failure. It was an Assembly of learned and godly divines of Great Britain, to consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the church, convened by Act of Parliament passed June 12, 1643, and consisted of ten lords, twenty commoners as lay assessors, and one hundred and twenty-one divines—one hundred and fifty-one in all. In forming the Confession of Faith and the Rules of Practice, this body held 1163 sessions, occupying a period of 5 years, 6 months and 22 days; and amidst prayers and fasting, and indefatigable investigations and discussions, they advanced no further towards an entire or perfect union than an agreement in fundamentals, and in general views of doctrine and practice. Even this was a great achievement.

The great leading churches in Christendom, at the present day, do not present anything like a perfect, or even particular agreement, though connected externally by a common bond or creed. Nor are those who are received into these connections required, or even expected, to assent to the creed in every particular, but to declare their belief in its correctness as a general system.

Who that is not committed to a party, or to a *system*, can believe that the points in controversy between Calvinists and Armenians, Old School and New School, Pede-baptists and Baptists, involve any fundamental principle of morality and justice, or that the following out in practice the views of either, will prove the forfeiture of Christian character; or that any divine law or precept demands that Christians, thus differing, should lose confidence in each other, and refuse to walk in Christian and church fellowship?

Uniformity in sentiment and views is not yet attained even in churches which are founded on speculative theology and ritual observances. Presbyterian and Congregational com-

munions, with their Calvinistic creed, tolerate ministers and laymen who are decidedly Armenian in their views. The great schism in the General Assembly was based on supposed errors in doctrine. But in how many of the local churches of the Old School, who perpetrated the excising act, is the position *then* taken strictly maintained?

The Episcopal Church tolerates everything in theology, from Socinianism to Calvinism, provided you will read prayers and reverence the bishop. Baptists find little difficulty with Armenians or Calvinists, provided they have been duly immersed. And the Pedo-Baptist sects, without any change in their *creeds*, which intimates a relaxation of their *principles*, get along in *practice* with those who will warmly sustain their church or their meeting, although they do not accord with them in the distinctive points which make them a sect, and even set at naught the fundamental principles of justice and common humanity.

It was recently inquired, through the columns of the Baptist Register, printed in Utica, N. Y., "Which has been productive of the greatest evils, American slavery, or infant sprinkling?" The reply given was "infant sprinkling:" that is, infant *stealing*, inseparable from the system of slavery, is a less evil or sin than infant sprinkling.

At a large Ecclesiastical Convention held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1844, in the discussion to adhere firmly to the Assembly's Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, it was admitted that the two great schools in the church had never agreed in respect to the *meaning* of these standards; yet the resolution passed to adhere to them. And the *points* on which they could not agree are nothing less than Liberty and Necessity, Ability, Imputation of Adam's Sin, the Nature of Sin, Reformation, Atonement, &c., &c.

Who does not perceive the inferences and the instruction connected with such facts? And who, in view of them, can be surprised that our common Christianity is robbed of much of its beauty, and shorn of much of its strength? The common brotherhood of the pious should not permit aspiring men and leading influences to draw off their attention and their purposes from the essentials in their common faith, and

from what truly constitutes Christian character, and to chop them up into parties refusing fellowship and co-operation.

Real Christians might retain their distinctive principles and yet be on terms of the most cordial fellowship and communion amidst all their other differences. This is what constitutes the true unity of the church—a union, not in forms and ceremonies, nor in points of unessential doctrine and practice, but in kindness and love and harmonious assent to the fundamental truths of the Gospel, and in harmonious co-operation for the spread of this Gospel. This is the only union worth striving for; and all who break this unity, by setting up outward forms as terms of communion, should be regarded as those who *cause* divisions, and as violators of the peace of the Church.

Robert Hall, a Baptist minister of great worth and distinction, and the advocate of free communion, says, “Nothing more abhorrent from the principles and maxims of the sacred oracles can be conceived, than the idea of a plurality of true churches, neither in actual communion with each other, nor in a capacity for such communion. This rending of the seamless garment of our Saviour, this schism in the members of his mystical body, is by far the greatest calamity which has befallen the Christian interest. The evils which result from this state of division are incalculable: it supplies Infidels with their most plausible topics of invective; it hardens the consciences of the impenitent, weakens the hands of the good, impedes the efficacy of prayer, and is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world.”

Ecclesiastical powers have always been assumed by the few over the many, without any distinct proposal of the matter to the people, and even without asking them whether they would prefer such arrangements. In most cases they have been so gradually and stealthily introduced, that they have grown into precedent before the people were distinctly aware of their existence. In this way, Episcopal and Presbyterian usages have been introduced and perpetuated. One generation after another has been subjected to the domination to which their *fathers* had been induced to submit, for precedent soon becomes law, and such forms of policy never con-

tain any provisions for their own subversion by the people. They always speak authoritatively against innovation and change. All attempt to reform or to annul the church polity is met with the charge of disorganization or schism.

On the subject of church polity, there can be but two sets of principles. The first and the only scriptural legitimate class of principles is composed of individual responsibility, human equality, inalienable rights. Opposite to all these we find in the second class of principles—that of caste—the many subjected to the few, the people controlled by their superiors, or the laity by the clergy, the body of the church transferring its *duties* to a select few.

Professor Schmucker, in his Fraternal Appeal, proposes to form all the different fundamentally orthodox denominations into a progressive union, by requiring a mutual recognition of each other as fellow members of the one body of Christ—that they shall actually co-operate in voluntary associations for the promotion of all those objects of Christian benevolence which require a concentration of labor—that the bonds of sectarianism shall be at once relaxed—that there shall be no discipline by one church for differences of opinion in a member of another church—that they shall agree in sacramental, ecclesiastical and ministerial communion—that they shall assent to a common creed, containing only tenets in which they all agree—thus giving prominence before the world to their substantial unity of faith—the Bible to be the text book in all departments of Christian and theological education—each branch of the church free to adopt any and every measure of its own reform it might be prepared to embrace.

The whole work of Mr. Schmucker on Christian union has been highly approved, and warmly commended to the public by the leading editors of the whole religious press in our country; by Theological Seminaries and their teachers, and by a long array of names of learned Ministers and laymen from most of the denominations in the land.

But what have these men, so ready to commend this plan for union, actually done towards the attainment of the object? We look in vain to the high ecclesiastical authorities of the different sects to move efficiently on any plan for union.

Anything requiring self-sacrifice, or involving innovation, finds little favor in any age, with the majority of those who stand at the head of the existing order of things.

The plan of Mr. Schmucker expects too much from the union of the *existing sects*. But to propose the union of Christians, acting as local independent Churches—allowing of the interference of no ecclesiastical body above the assembled brotherhood, presents to the mind what at once appears practicable—what will meet the demand, and what promises to be permanent. It is an appeal to the PEOPLE, where, on Christian principles, is the seat of power, of all human authority—an appeal for the Union of *Christians*, not the union of *Sects*.

SEC. V.—WHO ARE THE SCHISMATICS ?

The Congregational Church in —, withdraws its connection with Presbytery—a small minority dissent—this minority the Presbytery declares to be the regular Church in —, and invites them to send up their delegates, and thus two Churches exist on the ground, when the whole were too feeble to support preaching, and the majority principle is sacrificed.

In —, a large majority of a Congregational Church request the Presbytery with which they are connected to dissolve the connection between them and their Pastor. Presbytery refuses to comply; and the Home Missionary Society advances 100 dollars to sustain this Minister, in defiance of the expressed vote of the Church. In the progress of the discussion it is stated that one conversion under Presbytery is worth one hundred under other influences.

One Presbytery has recently decided, that the ordination of a Minister is not valid when a lay element is mingled with the ordaining act; a position at war with the fundamental principles of Congregationalism, and which, if carried out, will require Presbyterians to deny the validity of all Congregational ordinations.

Who are the schismatics ?

In —, at a meeting legally called, the Church voted that they would not sustain the Minister for the succeeding

year. At the close of the meeting, when a portion of the members had left for home, the question was again called up—a minority voted to sustain the Minister, and the Home Missionary Society advanced 100 dollars, and for two years, at this rate, kept him on the ground contrary to the expressed will of the majority.

Congregational Churches, on the accommodation plan, if they employ a Minister who has not the *permission* of Presbytery to labor within its bounds, are censured for disorder, thus demanding of Congregationalists the sacrifices of one of their fundamental principles.

A Congregational Church unanimously invite a Minister who is himself a member of Presbytery to become their Pastor; and unanimously concur with him in choosing for the Preacher, at the Ordination, a man in their confidence, a personal friend of the pastor elect, and of known Christian character.

A bar to the ordination is thrown in, on the ground that the Brother invited to *preach* is ecclesiastically connected with a body not in correspondence with the Presbytery. In the discussion it is alleged—better an avowed atheist should preach the sermon—and the final vote to proceed, after the congregation had been kept in waiting two hours from the time appointed for the services, is passed by a bare majority, under the positive statement that if Presbytery do not proceed to ordain *with the preacher selected*, they will lose the church. The members of Presbytery who opposed the ordination, generally refused to attend the public exercises.

If this course is Presbyterial usage, it does not savor of accommodation—and adds significancy to the inquiry, Who are the schismatics? and should induce the inquiry, Where are Congregational rights?

For nearly a half century, the Congregationalists who have settled west of the Mohawk river, have, with few exceptions, desired to enjoy their own church organization. But during all this period, most of the Ministers have assiduously labored to induce them to abandon even the remnant of Congregationalism left standing by the plan of union, and to come fully under the government of a session.

The General Association of the State of New York ad-

monish the Genesee Conference in their connection, that unless they reclaim or remove such members of their body as hold views on the doctrine of sanctification, which Association deem unscriptural, they cannot be permitted to retain their connection with it: thus demanding the highest ecclesiastical censure, excommunication, against members of sound Christian character, and unquestionable piety.

The Synod of New York and New Jersey, directed the North River Presbytery to *depose from the ministry* two of their members of acknowledged piety and usefulness, and of an unquestioned Christian character, on the ground of what Synod deemed an incorrect view of the doctrine of sanctification. The order was obeyed.

The Presbytery of ———, very recently refused to license a young brother to preach the gospel, on the ground that he was an abolitionist. His trial exercises, and examination, gave evidence of a high order of talent; his piety was not questioned, all were well sustained, when he was asked if he would publicly advocate Abolition, and vote to exclude slaveholders from communion? He replied affirmatively. Upon this they voted not to give him license.

The *Oberlin Institute* is a Literary and Theological establishment in Northern Ohio, furnished with an able Faculty, comprising nearly five hundred students, and extensively in favor with the public. The religious and theological sentiments embraced and taught here, are the same substantially, which constitute the religious creed of New England Congregationalists, and New School Presbyterians.

On the subject of Sanctification, their sentiments and views are, in their printed document, thus expressed,

“ I. What we understand to be points of agreement between the ministers and members of a great portion of the Christian church.

1. That entire obedience to the moral law constitutes entire sanctification or obedience to God.

2. That all moral agents are able to render this obedience, and,

3. That therefore they are bound to do so, and,

4. That therefore a state of entire sanctification is attainable in this life: 1. On the ground of ability. 2. On the ground of the provisions and proffered grace of the gospel,

3. That sufficient grace for the actual attainment of this state is abundantly promised in the gospel, and that nothing prevents any Christian from making this attainment in this life, but a neglect to avail himself of the proffered grace of Christ.

5. We agree that all are bound to aim at it, and pray for this attainment in this life, and that aiming at this state is indispensable to Christian character.

II. In what we differ.

1. The advocates of this doctrine affirm, that obedience to the moral law, or a state of entire consecration to God in this life, is, in such a sense attainable, as to be an object of rational pursuit, *with the expectation of attaining it.*

2. The opposers of this doctrine affirm, 1. That this state may be attained in this life. 2. That therefore it ought to be attained. 3. That we are bound to aim at, and pray for this attainment in this life. 4. That this state is not attainable in this life in such a sense as to make its attainment an object of rational pursuit *with the expectation of attaining it.* 5. That it is fatal not to aim at and pray for this attainment in this life. 6. But that it is a dangerous error to believe or to expect that we shall make this attainment.

III. What the believers in the doctrine of entire consecration to God in this life do not believe.

1. We do not believe that the moral law is or can be repealed, or so modified in its claims, as to demand anything less of any moral agent than the entire, universal and constant devotion of his whole being to God.

2. Nor that any such state is attainable in this or in any other life, as to preclude the possibility and necessity of constant growth in holiness.

3. Nor that any state is attainable in this life that will put the soul beyond a state of warfare with temptation.

4. Nor that any such state is attainable in this life as will preclude the necessity of constant dependence upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the agency and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

5. Nor that any such state is attainable as to preclude the necessity of much watchfulness and prayer, with the diligent use of the ordinances of God's house, and of all the appointed means of grace, to perpetuate holiness of heart.

6. We do not believe in any system of quietism, anti-nomianism, or inaction in religion.

7. We do not regard the true question at issue between us to be, whether a state of entire sanctification has ever been attained in this life : but the true question is that which has been stated above, to wit : *Is this state attainable in such a sense as to render its pursuit, with the expectation of attaining it, rational ?*

8. Those of us who have affirmed that this state has been attained, have ever regarded the fact of its attainment only in the light of an argument in proof of its attainability, *in the sense above explained.*

9. We have never regarded the proof of actual attainment either as the great question at issue, or as an argument at all indispensable to the support of the proposition in question. 1. Because we consider the Bible proof as conclusive in support of the doctrine without touching the question of actual attainment, and, 2. If it should be admitted that such a state has never been attained, still we believe the Bible warrants and demands the belief that the Church is destined to make vastly higher attainments on earth than have ever yet been made : and, 3. That if the fact (should it be admitted) that no one has ever attained this state, proves that no one ever will attain it ; the fact that the world has never been converted, proves equally that it never will be converted.

10. We therefore waive an expression of opinion on the question, whether this state has been hitherto attained, lest it should afford an occasion, as it has hitherto done, to divert attention from the great and only fundamental point in debate."

The precise position of these brethren on the subject of sanctification is here accurately and clearly defined. The reader can see at a glance in what respects they differ from the views generally entertained in the churches. That the Oberlin Brethren possess a fair Christian character is not questioned.

But the Presbyteries refuse to extend to them Christian and ministerial fellowship on the plea that they are a new and distinct sect, and teach error.

Who, then, are the schismatics ?

Some years since, a large Presbytery deemed it their duty to counteract what they regarded as the Oberlin Heresy. They felt the need of other light upon the subject than they could get from the Oberlin Evangelist. President Mahan then in the vicinity and apprised of their inquiry, proposed, through a friend, that, with their consent, he would appear before them, and present his views on the subject. Presbytery declined the proffer, and applied to a brother who had utterly and strongly opposed the Oberlin views. In the result they sent out a warning to the churches, against the Oberlin Evangelist.

In a large Ecclesiastical Convention, composed chiefly of ministers, held in Cleveland in 1844, the *avowed* object of which was to promote the prosperity of religion, Professor Finney and his associates were excluded, and the Convention permitted these men and their views to be defamed, without suffering them to be heard in reply.

The Church, by a vote nearly unanimous, join with their Pastor in a request to Presbytery that he may be dismissed.

Before Presbytery he stated that he wished to remain; but that he could not endure to be Pastor of a church containing members who hold the doctrine of perfection.

Presbytery asked: Do you think that the church would sustain you, if these members were out?

The Pastor replied: I think I could stay in peace if they were away.

At an adjourned meeting Presbytery called before them the members holding the views deemed by their Pastor to be objectionable.

These arraigned members inquired—Are we on trial before this body? The reply was in the negative; and they were assured that Presbytery intended no such thing.

Upon this assurance these members frankly and freely gave to the body their views on the subject of Christian perfection, and the subject was referred to a *Committee* whose report was adopted, viz.: that ten of those holding the doctrine of entire sanctification were no longer members of the church in ——— but that they might have a letter of regular standing, with the notice that Presbytery deemed their sentiments heretical.

Against these measures these members remonstrated—and were informed that they were not excommunicated, but *legislated* out.

The next Sabbath the Pastor, at the communion table, invited those excluded persons to partake of the ordinance.

Who are the schismatics ?

SEC. VI.—LIGHT ON SANCTIFICATION EAGERLY AND EXTENSIVELY SOUGHT.

There is an irrepressible desire in the churches for Bible instruction on the doctrine of holiness, and holy living. In some way God will gratify these desires. According to present arrangements many of them are shut out from hearing Preachers who give the just presentation of the doctrine.

If the Ministers now under ecclesiastical pledges to treat the doctrine as heresy, would renounce these pledges, and extend to its advocates Christian and ministerial fellowship, Christians now deprived of the spiritual food on this subject which they crave, would be gratified, and the grounds of inquietude would be diminished.

The attempts to brand the doctrine of entire conformity to the will of God as heresy, and thus put down its Preachers and stop the spread of divine truth, must fail.

Christians have their discernment on this subject, and their prayers will be answered.

Should the necessity to break away from their present connections be created by the persecuting spirit and measures of churches, and ecclesiastical bodies, who are the schismatics ?

Those who preach the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life as an object of rational pursuit, do not present themselves as a new sect, neither do they wish to divide the churches. They would feed the sheep and the lambs of the fold, and be at peace among the brethren.

If they are thrust out as heretics, if the pulpits of their ministerial brethren are shut against them, who is answerable for subsequent defections—and who are the schismatics ?

In the present attitude of ecclesiastical bodies, divisions in the churches are inevitable. The Oberlin brethren are not

powerless ; their moral power is pre-eminently in sympathy with Christ, and so long as they keep God with them they cannot be crushed. Let them be received as Christian brethren. If they are not thus received, and divisions occur, who bears the responsibility.

SEC. VII.—FACTS AND EXPOSTULATION.

If the *establishment* of the Oberlin Institute does not constitute an era in the history of the church in this country, the *treatment* which its faculty and friends receive from Ecclesiastical bodies will do it. The *facts* are too marked and characteristic not to be preserved on a permanent record.

1. It is not denied, that the Oberlin Brethren are among those whom Christ has received.

2. They have been shut out, or excluded from Presbyteries, Conventions, Pulpits, and Churches, by the extended action of ecclesiastical judicatories, and denied the ordinary civilities rendered to Christian brethren.

3. By this general declaration of non-intercourse, these Brethren have been represented as a distinct and a new sect, heretical in their opinions, and working deep and extensive mischief.

4. Discipline is commenced, and some are cast out of the ministry, and others out of the church.

5. Pastoral letters and appeals are issued, urging those who hold Oberlin views to leave Presbyteries and churches, threatening them with excommunication and deposition if they do not comply.

6. When Ministers, churches, and portions of churches do withdraw, the cry is raised, that Oberlinism is dividing and distracting the churches, and the charge of schism is reiterated against them.

7. Thus a division is made by the violent *exclusion* of the Oberlin Brethren, and then the excluders cry out against the excluded as the *cause* of the divisions : whereas there are very few cases, if any, in which such a separation has not occurred under the influence of measures pushed forward by the opposition.

The doctrine of perfection, as held by the Antinomian perfectionists, the Oberlin Brethren discard. They do not

believe and maintain that no one is truly converted, or a real Christian, who is not constantly and habitually free from all sin:—but a person *being truly converted*, or a real Christian, is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ only as his obedience is entire.

In what then consists the heresy which makes it necessary to excommunicate brethren of acknowledged Christian character?

This question must be answered definitely, to satisfy the public mind. A course so extraordinary, so absolutely violent, so revoltingly schismatic as that pursued by ecclesiastical bodies towards these brethren, cannot long be tolerated by the Christian public.

The basis of action against them is alleged heresy, in holding the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life. It was the holding and countenancing in their body this heresy, that the General Association of New York excommunicated the Genesee Consociation. But it is an unquestionable fact, that the offence in the eye of the Association is not the offence justly charged upon the Consociation condemned. The excommunicated Consociation give a printed statement of their own views on the subject of perfection, in the following language, viz.: “We do hold the attainability of perfection. We speak not of disposition, but of ability—not of practice, but of what might be practised. So far as Christians are imperfect it is their fault, and their fault only, because of the practicability of the higher degrees of holiness.”

“We have some within our bounds who hold the views of Dr. Emmons. Adopting his philosophy respecting the simplicity or perfection of moral exercises, they believe with him, that the imperfections of Christians consist in the inconstancy of their holy affections—their perfection consists in the constancy of their holy affections. If they should constantly and uninterruptedly exercise holy affections, they would be absolutely perfect in holiness, and entirely free from sin. These were once the views of Doctor Woods, and have been tolerated in the New England churches for at least the past half century. We have those in our body who hold these views; this is the amount of our heresy. We have tolerated them; this is the sum of our offending.”

Yet, with this exposition before the body, the State Association proceeded to the act of excommunication.

There has been a general failure, in these charges of false doctrine, to make out the proof, that the *heresy* is in fact holden by the accused. Yet their views on perfection have been constantly presented, and in language too plain to be doubted. The sentiments *charged* upon the accused are as abhorrent to *them* as they can be to the accusers, the former holding the doctrine of sinless perfection in no such sense as is imputed to them.

Brethren Belden and Hill were deposed from the ministry by the North River Presbytery, acting under an injunction from the Synod of New York and New Jersey, on a charge of rejecting the doctrine of sanctification as taught in the Confession of Faith. But their views on this point did not differ from the Confession of Faith more widely, than do the views of a majority of their triers from the same Confession, on points of doctrine equally important. This essential fact, Mr. Hill proposed to substantiate in his defence before the Synod, but he was barred the privilege, and they were deposed, though well known to these bodies as brethren of unquestioned Christian character, of deep Christian experience, and of uncommon devotion to their Master's work.

The fundamental and broad distinction between the doctrine of sinless perfection as held and taught by Antinomian Perfectionists, and the doctrine of Christian Perfection as held and taught at Oberlin, seems to be overlooked.

What are regarded as the *consequences* of the Oberlin views of sanctification are seized upon and magnified and brought forward, in many instances, as the doctrine itself.

Misapprehension, and misrepresentation, on this subject, are working deep, extensive mischief.

If error or heresy is preached and spread, let this error be met fairly and fully on the field of free discussion, and be exposed and put down. There are champions on the field of discussion among the Theologians who have concurred in condemning. Let them take up the pen of criticism and investigation, and prove by *argument* instead of denunciation and ecclesiastical proscription that the charge is sus-

tained. This course, the only fair and proper one, the Christian public have the right to demand.

The Reviews by Dr. Woods, by the Troy Presbytery, and by the Geneva Presbytery, have been grave and labored notices of the Oberlin doctrine, and were extensively circulated in the religious periodicals of the day. To each of them a reply has been published; but the publishers of the Reviews have denied their pages to the reply, and thus the public mind, to a wide extent, is kept in the dark respecting the real sentiments of a numerous class of Christian brethren who are denounced as heretics.

The religious press deals out no such measures of injustice toward any other class of Christians.

Romanism, Antinomian perfectionism, and other errors, are readily investigated. The sentiment held is correctly stated, and the arguments on which its advocates rely published, examined, and refuted. Both the heresy and the argument are studied. The reader can know them both accurately, and form his opinion.

Why not pursue a similar course in respect to the Oberlin views of sanctification? These views are pronounced to be a heresy, for which its advocates deserve and receive excommunication. And the world sees that the excluded possess a fair Christian character, and that many of them, to say the least, stand high in public estimation as brethren of marked piety and eminent success in their labors.

Most clearly, then, should their error be accurately defined, and the *argument* of its advocates be sifted. The first question is, what is the *sentiment itself*? Then, by what *reasoning* is it sustained?

Both these questions are answered with great clearness and power by President Mahan, in his reply to Dr. Woods: and by Professor Finney, in his reply to the article from the Troy Presbytery: and more recently by Professor Cochran, in his reply to the article from the Geneva Presbytery. Have these replies been *answered*? No. While the Religious press has rung the changes through the land, to give prominence to what has been uttered *against* the Oberlin views, as settling the question, the articles in reply have been unread and unanswered, and the policy is, to treat the whole affair with abiding neglect.

Such a course can be regarded as nothing less than unchristian, discourteous, and a palpable dereliction from duty on the part of opposers, and will unavoidably be considered as a practical confession that a fair and full discussion would result in their defeat: a tacit intimation that they dare not trust the *Churches* with the argument in support of the views condemned. Hence it has become very extensively the fact, and noticed with astonishment and regret, that Ministers say less than formerly, upon the subject of sanctification, and urge upon the Church, with diminished ardor, their duty to come up to a devoutly holy life. They even express their fears that if they say much about *holiness*, the people will run to perfection.

This is a subject in which the churches and the world have the deepest interests.

It is especially the duty of religious teachers, to give to their congregations the truth in this matter. And when they come out against any class of men, let their sentiments, and the argument in their support, be given to the people. To get up a false position and make a false issue on the question of obedience to God, is treason to Him and treason to his people.

Would that religious teachers did but understand that, while they are passing by what they denominate the Oberlin heresy in a disrespectful, not to say contemptuous silence, disdain to answer the arguments in its support, the blessed views on sanctification which the Oberlin Brethren do in fact hold and inculcate, are, with certainty, making their way among Christians in this and other lands; and that the refutation, if it ought to be given (and if it ought, it can), should not be delayed.

A coming age, it is believed, will look upon the attitude respecting Christian perfection, now taken by leading Theologians of this country, with the mingled emotions of astonishment and grief.

SEC. VIII.—OBERLIN BRETHERN NOT INTRUDERS.

The Oberlin brethren are represented as *intruders*, both in respect to their Educational establishment, and their religious sentiments. The Presbyteries not only profess to regard

them as a new and distinct sect, but as foreigners, and at the same time deny them the rights and privileges which they freely concede to every foreign evangelical body.

The Oberlin brethren are Congregationalists. Most of the Churches on the Reserve were originally organized as Congregationalists, composed chiefly of settlers from New England, and cherishing strong attachment to the Church polity of their father land. From the beginning these Churches have had the promise from their pastors, of pure congregationalism, having no dependant connection with Presbyterian bodies. By the earnest solicitation of some of the oldest churches on the Reserve was the Congregational Association organized. Hence so far as church polity is respected, if there be any intrusion, it lies with the *Presbyterians*. They have encroached upon Congregationalism, and have failed to fulfil oft repeated promises, to give the churches the pure Congregationalism which they desired. And now these Presbyterians gravely accuse the Congregationalists of preaching within their bounds, and bringing in a new *sect* to split the churches!!—a flagrant breach indeed, of ministerial courtesies and rights, for Congregationalists to preach at all within the bounds of a Presbyterian church—a church whose *bounds* spread over the whole territory in the middle and western States. Such a charge amounts to a demand that they should not preach at all, but actually quit the whole field.

SEC. IX.—AN EXTRAORDINARY POSITION.

This is an extraordinary position for Christian ministers and Churches to occupy—a position which the Oberlin brethren have neither sought, nor taken. They love peace, and will yield much to prevent divisions. But they must preach Christ as he has revealed himself to them. And no inconsiderable portion of the members in all the Congregational churches, as also other churches on the western Reserve, and in other sections of the land, agree with them. Occupying the same ground, harmony of feeling, and co-operation with Christians in other connections, is of great moment. The Faculty of the Oberlin Institute have, previous to their union with it, acted ecclesiastically with Pres-

byterian and Congregational bodies. Nor can there be a rational doubt, when the literary character and moral worth of this Faculty, and the number of the students, and the facilities for a thorough and extended education, and the great and increasing influence which is put forth by the Institution, are all candidly and duly considered, that there should exist some proper form of ecclesiastical connection between them, and the Congregational, and New School Presbyterian bodies in the country.

Why should not such a connection exist? Who will assume the responsibility of preventing it? Why should not the Associations and the Presbyteries recognize each other as Christian ministers, and share in each other's counsel, and bless the Churches by a hallowed and peaceful influence.

The peace of Zion, the dearest interests of education and religion demand,—the cries of the poor and of humanity, the wants of the teeming population of the West, the honor of our common country and our common brotherhood, decency and good sense, all, all demand—that the Oberlin brethren be no longer regarded as ecclesiastical outlaws. It is for Zion's sake—for truth's sake, that this appeal is made. Ecclesiastical bodies, who have declared war of extermination against them, should count the cost. It is not a question between two rival institutions, nor between rival religious sects, nor one to be gauged by local partialities and interests; but one which deeply, extensively and permanently affects Christian character in the ministry and in the churches. Shall a class of men, eminent for their moral and religious worth, intellectual endowments and literary acquirements, for their Christian character and enterprise, and self-denial in the cause of humanity, and Christian education, be denied Christian and ministerial fellowship, by the ecclesiastical and organized religious bodies of the country?

SEC. X.—THE SPIRIT AND AIMS OF OBERLIN NOT CONFINED
TO ONE PLACE.

Who does not see that this war of extermination cannot succeed? The Oberlin Institute was not commenced, nor has it hitherto been sustained, by ecclesiastical patronage.

It has lived thus far, and spread itself on the smiles of God, in answer to the prayers and the sympathies of warm and bleeding hearts, widely scattered, who love Zion, and are ready to toil for the truth. The Oberlin brethren, as individuals, might consent, as it respects ecclesiastical connections, for the sake of peace, to be annihilated. But this would not satisfy the public mind, nor meet its wants, nor quench the thirsting of very many souls for the waters of life; nor quell the deep and swelling solicitude for a better order of things. These devoted men are not their own. They are the Lord's, and feel bound to go forward in the accomplishment of the great work to which they are called. Even should they give up their commissions as the messengers of the Lord of Hosts,—dismiss their students,—sell their buildings and lands,—and cease all further labor to train young men and women for the service of Christ in the world's redemption, the Oberlin spirit would not be quenched; the work there begun would be resumed at some other point, and by other hands; the great object at which they have thus far, with so much singleness of purpose, and with such commendable zeal, prosecuted, would still be sought with a deathless faith, and an indomitable courage.

Let them still continue to seek peace with their neighbors by every rational and scriptural means,—if the ecclesiastical bodies persist in the refusal to recognize them as brethren, and to extend to them the comity and fellowship extended to all other Congregational bodies, and which it has ever been their boast and their glory to maintain, and thus practically deny the doctrine on which they have stood for forty years, and which has given them their gigantic growth, they do it on their own responsibility; and the distractions which must inevitably follow, will, by a discerning public, be ascribed to the proper source. But who can count the cost to bleeding Zion, suffering humanity, Christian character and fellowship?

It is often stated that we have not at the West and in Ohio the Congregationalism of New England. So far as the plan of union has been adopted, this is a fact, the practical operation of which has been to place the Congregational Churches under the dictation of a higher body, and they are

not strictly, or purely Congregational. But the Churches in connection with the Western Reserve Association are entirely, purely and strictly Congregational, after the purest form of the Puritan Fathers.

It is said that the Oberlin Institute introduces its own students into the ministry, and in this respect differs from other theological seminaries. The students here are licensed by the association of which a portion of the Faculty are members, or by other ecclesiastical bodies as convenience and preference may direct.

These remarks respecting Oberlin have been here introduced in connection with Christian union on account of the charge preferred against it as schismatic, and from a consciousness that the public are not correctly informed of its position and operations. It is of great moment that the churches should be united in the love and in the practice of the truth. Nor is it proper that those who in fact are the cause of divisions, should escape censure by charging the offence upon the innocent.

SEC. XI.—ALL ARE INTERESTED IN THE PREVENTION OF DIVISIONS.

It is the injunction of Paul, *mark* those who cause divisions and offences *contrary* to the doctrine which ye have learned, that is, which I have taught you. By divisions he means dissensions, parties, factions. By offences he means scandals; or that which gives just occasion for others to fall into sin.

The difficulty in following this counsel lies in the purpose of each that his own opinions are the standard, and he infers of course that those who differ from him cause divisions.

Under these circumstances, the correct course is to hold yourself open to conviction under the power and progress of free investigation. This will lead all Christians to unite in the essentials of Christian doctrine and practice; and for the residue, strange indeed if they cannot bear with one another in love.

In the present case, and in these times, when the alarm cry is division, division, schism, schism, heresy, heresy; and non-intercourse and excommunication are proclaimed and

enforced among Christians; surely there is a demand for the calm inquiry the spirit of meekness, before any man, or class of men in charged with the guilt of having troubled Israel, of having sought and caused divisions. Uninspired men are not infallible. Teachers, however learned and good; Theological Seminaries, however well endowed and officered: Ecclesiastical bodies, how venerable soever, and though having long occupied the ground as umpire, have no authority, human or divine, when their opinions are questioned and their course scanned, and both brought out and canvassed in the light of truth and fact, to complain, to censure, and much less to *denounce* and to excise. In an age of free inquiry, free inquiry will be had. And the very fact that you shrink from it and attempt to sustain yourself chiefly by human authority, is strong presumptive evidence that you are on the wrong side. Your covenants, compacts or standards are neither a shield nor authority, for yourself, nor for any one, except so far as they correspond with the principles of the Gospel, and are adapted to the exigencies of the people for whose benefit they are designed. And they are all open to a strict but fair scrutiny.

Shall it then be said that to enter upon this examination is schismatic?—that to express views differing somewhat from those put forth in the Standards, and generally received by the Churches, is to seek division, and to rend the body of Christ? May not men think for themselves upon religious truth? Is there no room for improvement in the views and practices of the Church? When it is proposed in a large ecclesiastical convention that the Confession of Faith and the form of Government of the Presbyterian Church be approved, as a system in which the Convention has entire and full confidence, and the lay members of the body object, on the ground that a large number of the Churches represented in it, take material exceptions against this Confession, is it just and fair to represent *these men* as schismatics, seeking divisions, and distracting the Churches? Surely it is time for men to think, and to fall back upon first principles, and to cling to the Gospel, and to that Christian liberty which this Gospel guarantees to all.

The slander so industriously circulated that the people out

of New England, or at the West, do not know enough to govern themselves in church matters, has not yet induced them to relinquish the right of private judgment, and to think only as others think, to speak only as others speak, and to move only as they are moved. The present organized religious bodies have their rights. Many of them have deservedly a strong hold on the affections and on the confidence of the public. They are accomplishing much good, and neither wisdom nor benevolence demands that they should be assailed with the view to their subversion, nor to counteract or diminish their usefulness. Neither should *they* assume that wisdom is theirs and will die with them; that their opinions and measures are above scrutiny; and, as if occupying the seat of Judgment, assail others for *their* extinction.

The land is not exclusively theirs. Their members may indeed be found in every part of it, and in this sense their ecclesiastical *bounds* may include the whole of it. But they have no authority to regard others, on the same field, as intruders, and to represent them as disorganizers, sowing discord, splitting the Churches, because they do not coincide with them in all their views, nor co-operate with them in all their measures. Neither can they refuse fellowship to those whom Christ has received without a flagrant violation of their solemn vows to *Him*. In other words, *Christian Brethren have no right to take up arms against each other*. Nor has any ecclesiastical body, or any individual however talented and learned and pious, though the idol of his followers, and an oracle for wisdom, the right to propose any *test*, which shall separate from each other, the real children of God—which shall make a breach between real Christians—which shall throw the Churches in such an attitude that they will not hear a Preacher unless he bears a particular designation or is from a particular *school* in theology, thus giving themselves up to the control of prejudice, and consenting to wear the collar of a religious party.

CHAPTER V.

HOLY LIVING.

SEC. I.—THE ACHAN.

THE recent attitude of Ecclesiastical bodies and Churches towards those who have embraced the sentiment that it is their privilege as well as duty to live in a state of mind wholly conformed to God, is truly among the wonderful things of the present century, and demands examination. There is the right and the wrong in this matter. There is great guilt connected with it, and there should be deep grief and great searchings of heart.

Beyond question Israel will be troubled till the Achan be searched out, and be put away.

SEC. II.—ATTITUDE OF CHURCHES.

Look at the Churches in reference to their Covenants. They all engage and promise to love and serve God with all their heart, to commit themselves in a cheerful surrender of soul and body, person and estate, to be the Lord's, and to walk towards one another and towards all who are without, as the Gospel directs. No Christian Church would be willing to place their standard lower than this. It is the correct standard.

They require of all whom they receive to take the same religious oath, and to come under the same bonds.

How do the Pastors and the leading members treat this Covenant?

1. The Pastor in his sermons, and in his other communications, takes the ground that it is not *expected* that Christians will live in a state of entire and perfect obedience—that they will all go on through life, groaning under the body of

sin and death. And when he quotes or teaches the Catechism of the Westminster Assembly he says, "No man is able either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the Commandments of God; but doth *daily* break them in thought, *word* and *deed*."

2. The Brethren in the Conference and in the prayer-meeting, echo the same sentiment and views, and say to the freshly admitted members—We expect that your obedience will be fitful—that you will to a greater or less extent backslide. Even Paul found a law in his *members* warring against the law of his mind, so that when he *would* do good, evil was present with him; all of which is confirmed in their prayers; and they assure the new convert that he but deceives himself if he expects anything different.

3. Members professing to live up to their covenant, and expressing their joy in the Holy Ghost, and their peace in believing, are censured and sometimes cut off by the church, and this without any charge or proof against them of immorality—censured and excommunicated for declaring their own consciousness that they do what the church requires them to do.

4. Churches refuse to receive applicants for membership, if they declare it to be their privilege, and what, by Divine aid, they expect to do, to walk before God in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.

5. These churches will not hear and sustain a minister who urges upon the members the entire fulfilment of their covenant vows; that they not only ought to do as God requires of them, but that it is their *privilege* to do this; that they may be complete in Christ and in the full enjoyment of his love; that they may seek to do the whole will of God in the expectation of success in the labor.

Such is the attitude of the great mass of the churches in reference to the doctrine of *holy living*.

SEC. III.—POSITION OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

1. Presbyteries, associations and synods, refuse to have any ecclesiastical connection whatever with brethren who hold that perfection in holy living in this life may be sought, with the rational expectation of attaining it.

2. They instruct the Churches in their connection to do the same.

3. They depose from the ministry, and excise from their bodies, members who hold and sustain the above views.

The following are among the cases :

The Rochester Presbytery expelled from their body the Rev. Mr. Sedgewick, whose ministerial labors have been greatly blessed, and whose Christian character is deservedly high.

The whole Faculty of the Oberlin Institute.

The General Association of the Western Reserve and the minor bodies which compose it.

The Genesee Consociation.

The Rev. Henry Belden and the Rev. Wm. Hill, members of the North River Presbytery. Mr. Belden was subsequently received as a member of the Lorain Association.

The following document gives a concise view of the matter, with the opinions and reasons of the Association in support of their course, and a fair presentation of Christian duty and practice in such cases :—

In discharging the duty devolved upon us, we would first state the principle on which the act of the Association was based. It is this. Every Church Judiciary, in all authorized acts, echoes the revealed and known will of Christ. As the acknowledged exponents of his will only are they authoritative upon the Church. Whenever any ecclesiastical body introduces an individual into the ministry in conformity to the revealed will of Christ, such body cannot depose such individual from the sacred office, except for reasons which Christ himself has revealed as ground of deposition. What God hath joined together man cannot put asunder. Consequently, when an act of deposition has been passed upon an individual for reasons which Christ has not revealed as ground of deposition, and especially for reasons which he has prohibited, as such ground, such act is null and void. The individual subject to it is not deposed. He is the subject of an unauthorized persecution, and every Church Judiciary, together with the entire Church, is under the most solemn obligation, to receive and treat him as a minister of Jesus Christ. Upon this principle the entire Protestant reformation is based. With it that great movement must stand or fall.

The entire Protestant Christendom, with all their churches and ministers, are excommunicated from the church of Rome. If that church has authority for her acts of excommunication and deposition, Protestants have no authority to act as churches and ministers of Jesus Christ. The ground taken by Luther and the fathers of the Reformation, in respect to the bulls of excommunication and deposition which were thundered against them from the Vatican was this: Such acts are for reasons which Christ has not revealed as ground of excommunication and deposition, but for reasons which he has prohibited as such ground. Therefore we are not deposed and excommunicated. We are still churches and ministers of Jesus Christ. The validity of this principle we must acknowledge as universally binding, or cease to be Protestants. Now the ground assumed by the Association in the case of Brother Belden is this. The act of deposition to which he was subjected, was for reasons which Christ has not revealed as ground of deposition, but for reasons prohibited by him as such ground. Therefore he is not deposed. He is still a minister of Christ. As such we are sacredly bound to receive, and do receive him.

That the public may be able to give a correct judgment in the case, as to where the wrong lies, whether at the door of Presbytery or of the Association, we will next give a concise history of the transactions which led to the case of deposition, and then give the reasons for the decision of the Association.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

At the meeting of the Synod of New York and New Jersey, held in the city of New York, in Oct., 1841, the committee on Bills and Overtures presented some resolutions on the subject of "Perfectionism," in which there appeared to be an attempt to confound the doctrine of Sanctification with Antinomian Perfectionism. Brs. Hill and Belden entered their protest against them. Whereupon Synod "resolved that the Presbytery of North River be directed to take order concerning error within their bounds."

At the next stated meeting of Presbytery, held at Poughkeepsie, in April, 1842, a committee was appointed to confer with Brs. Hill and Belden. The committee met with them, and stated that they did not wish to have any discussion with them, but merely desired that they should give them written

answers to certain questions which they then handed them in writing.

The following is a copy of the questions with their answers appended to each one.

“ The Committee appointed by Presbytery to confer with Brother Belden and Brother Hill, would kindly request their candid and prayerful answers to the following questions.

Question 1st.—Do you believe that a state of entire sanctification or sinless perfection, is attainable in this life ?

Answer.—We believe that a state of entire sanctification, such as is consistent with growth in grace, with imperfection in knowledge, and consequent liability to error in judgment and practice, is attainable in this life. We understand entire sanctification to be nothing short of a full compliance with the claims of the Moral Law, which requires us to love God with all our powers—that is, to love him as much as we can. To ask, therefore, whether entire sanctification is attainable, is the same as to ask whether we can love God as much as we can, which we certainly believe. But then we place its attainability not only on man’s natural ability to do all his duty, but *chiefly* on Gospel provisions.

Question 2d.—Do you believe that the sacred Scriptures furnish to the Christian any just grounds to say that he has a rational expectation of attaining to a state of sinless perfection in this life ?

Answer.—We do not know that the Scriptures furnish to the Christian any grounds to say what expectations he has on any subject. But we believe they as fully authorize us to expect to be cleansed from all unrighteousness as to be forgiven. “ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” It is not only our privilege to pray that God would “ sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” but also to indulge the expectation that He who is faithful, and hath called us “ will do it.”

Question 3d.—Have you ever taught from the pulpit, that Entire Sanctification is attainable in this life, in such a sense as to warrant the expectation that any ever will attain this state ?

Answer.—We have endeavored to encourage Christians to look to Christ to be sanctified wholly in the present life. We have exhorted them to pray in faith for this blessing. “ For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” And expectation, we regard as one element of the prayer of faith. In fact, we know

of no other way to make Christians feel their obligation to be "holy as God is holy," or to induce them to strive to "walk before God and be perfect," than to urge upon them the practicability of obeying these commands. In no other way can we hope to secure their sincere and determined efforts after these attainments; so long as there are these two acknowledged principles in the philosophy of the human mind, which have been well expressed by another.

1st. We never can feel under moral obligation to do a thing which we believe impossible to be done.

2d. No person, such is the relation between will and belief, can put forth a volition to do a thing, which at the same time he believes impossible to be done.

Question 4th.—Do you believe that the standards of our church teach the doctrine that Entire Sanctification is attainable in this life?

Answer.—The Confession of Faith, Chap. 5, Sec. 5, says "This corruption of nature during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin." And the Larger Catechism, ques. 149, says: "No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God." We understand these as denying the attainability of Entire Sanctification in the present life. But the Bible, which is the ultimate standard of the Church, we believe, teaches it.

Question 5th.—Do you feel still, conscientiously bound publicly to teach and defend the position that Christians actually do, in this life, attain to sinless perfection, contrary to the Confession of Faith, and views of your brethren?

Answer.—We believe that Moses while in the mount was not continually sinning against God, neither was Paul while caught up to the third heaven, and probably not through much of his Christian life. In several passages we understand him to assert his Entire Sanctification, and nowhere to deny it. And if a Christian should now say to us he had the witness of the Spirit "that he was righteous—that God had cleansed him from all unrighteousness," and that having a "conscience void of offence," he lived in the constant exercise of perfect love, which is the fulfilling of the Moral Law, we have no right to question his testimony, and declare him self-deceived or pharisaical, but would be bound to magnify

the grace of God, on his behalf, until we see something in his character or conduct, to invalidate his testimony.

But if an individual should absolutely and unqualifiedly assert, I have not sinned for so many weeks, months, or years, we should think him presumptuous. God may have seen in him exercises which did not arrest his attention, and the most he is warranted to say, is, "My heart does not condemn me." We feel it our duty to preach in accordance with these views.

Question 6th.—Do you believe that justification is in different degrees—in other words, that a person is no farther justified than he is sanctified?

Answer.—We believe that when a person exercises genuine repentance for all his past sins, they are all forgiven and his justification is complete. But it does not appear to us that justification can be prospective, or that sins can be pardoned before they are committed or repented of—for this would imply the virtual abrogation of moral law with reference to the Christian. When a child of God sins, he falls under his Father's displeasure, and remains there until he repents, though he does not fall back into the condition of an unregenerate sinner.

Question 7th.—"If a Christian once attains entire sanctification, and as a consequence, entire justification, do you believe he may become sinful again, and thus fall from a state of entire sanctification and also of justification?"

Answer.—We believe that by entire sanctification a Christian's moral agency is not in the least impaired. He is just as capable of sinning as he was before.

The above answers are respectfully submitted to the Committee.

HENRY BELDEN.
WILLIAM HILL.

The Committee immediately reported the questions and answers to Presbytery. The Presbytery then referred the whole case to Synod for adjudication.

In October following, the case came before Synod by reference. Synod refused to take action on it, and referred it back to Presbytery, for them to take such action as they might deem proper.

At the next stated meeting of Presbytery the whole matter was indefinitely postponed, with the understanding that nothing more should be done about it.

About two months after, there was a small meetin of

Presbytery, at which it was resolved to cite these brethren to appear and answer to charges. They accordingly appeared before their brethren, and the following charges were tabled :

“ *Whereas*, The Rev. Henry Belden, and the Rev. Wm. Hill, members of this Presbytery, are charged by public fame with having embraced and publicly advocated the doctrine that believers may, and that some actually do, attain to sinless perfection or to entire sanctification in this life—Therefore,

Resolved, That they be, and hereby are, charged,

1st. With rejecting the doctrine of Sanctification as taught in the Confession of Faith, chapter 13, section 2.

Proof.—Answers to questions proposed by Presbytery.

2d. With a violation of their ordination vows in continuing to retain their connection, as Ministers, with the Presbyterian Church, after having rejected an article of our faith so prominent and so important as that on the subject of Sanctification.”

A true copy.

S. MANDEVILLE.

Stated Clerk.

When these charges were presented, Br. B. stated that he believed the doctrine of Sanctification, and rejected the article of the Confession of Faith referred to in the charge, and that he could establish his belief from the Bible. Immediately Rev. B. F. W— arose and said with vehemence—“ We have nothing to do with the Bible in this case. It is with the Confession of Faith that we have to do.”

This sentiment, as expressed by Mr. W., prevailed, and was insisted on both by the Presbytery and the Synod through the whole trial, to have been true. This is shown in the letter of Br. Ludlow, given below.

The Presbytery held a meeting in August to try the accused. In answer to the first charge, they both replied that they did reject the article of the Confession of Faith referred to, because they regarded it as contrary to the Word of God. To the second charge they pleaded not guilty. The Presbytery then decided that they were guilty of the first charge on their own confession, and of the second by a vote of nine to six.

From this decision in respect to the second charge, “ a violation of ordination vows,” the first being allowed, they appealed to Synod. The appeal, by a small majority, was not sustained, and the case referred back to Presbytery, with or-

ders to take issue upon it ; that is, to execute the sentence of deposition. On this decision we would simply remark, that there is nothing in the vows taken by a Presbyterian Minister at his ordination, which either directly or indirectly binds him to leave that church, when, in the study of the Bible, he "rejects any article of the Confession of Faith." We may safely challenge the world to show that this affirmation is false.

THE FINAL ISSUE.

This will be seen by the following extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery of North River, held at Milton, Ulster Co., N. Y., April 17th, 1844.

"Resolved, That the case of Messrs. Belden and Hill be taken up, and they be called upon to say whether they have re-considered their views on the subject of Sanctification, and renounced their errors.

In pursuance of this resolution, they both stated their adherence to their former views.

The Moderator then charged the Presbytery, &c.

Presbytery then united in prayer with Brethren Ludlow and Silliman for Divine direction, and after the members were heard, adopted the following preamble and resolution :

"Whereas, Synod, at the last meeting, sent back the matter of reference in the case of Messrs. Belden and Hill to this Presbytery, for final adjudication, it is therefore moved that we proceed to issue the case. And whereas, Synod enjoined upon Messrs. Belden and Hill that without delay they solemnly and prayerfully re-consider their views on the subject of Sanctification and renounce their errors: And whereas, Messrs. Belden and Hill have given no evidence to Presbytery that their views on the subject of Sanctification have materially changed since the action of Presbytery in the case: And whereas, Synod, at their last meeting, wished it to be distinctly understood that they consider the doctrine of Sinless Perfection, or Entire Sanctification, to be subversive of the purity as well as peace of the Church, and that the preaching of said doctrine cannot be tolerated on the part of any Minister in their connection: And whereas, Presbytery are fully convinced that any further delay in coming to an ultimate decision will not result in a change of sentiment on their part:

"Therefore, Resolved, That Brethren Belden and Hill be and they are hereby deposed from the Gospel Ministry."

Seven Ministers and four Elders voted 'for, and five Elders against, the above resolution.

In the light of the above facts and statements, the public will perceive the positive reasons for the act of deposition to which these brethren were subjected. We cite the following testimony to show what was their Ministerial and Christian character in other respects.

In the Synod in New York, in October, 1842, Br. Ludlow stated that Brs. Hill and Belden had been *baptized of the Holy Ghost*, and that if the Saviour should say to our Presbytery, "Which of you shall betray me?" there was not one of the brethren but would apply it to himself sooner than to either of them.

In the Synod in 1843, at Newark, the same brother remarked that they were devoted and self-denying men.

In the same meeting, Rev. B. C. Magie, of Dover, New Jersey, stated that he was very intimately acquainted with Br. B., and had been for years. He was not particularly acquainted with Br. H. He said that it was evident to all Br. B.'s friends, that he was in a much higher state of spirituality than when he entered the ministry—that his friends rejoiced in it; but when they asked him what he called the state, they were grieved at the terms he used. He spoke of Br. B.'s labors as being more abundant since the change in him, and referred to his custom of preaching on board of steamboats—seeking out the poor and degraded in the jail, the poor-house, &c.

Special attention is now invited to the following letter from the Rev. H. G. Ludlow, of Poughkeepsie, the brother who is said to have drafted the resolution of deposition. It was written a short time before the deed was perpetrated, and in view of such a dreaded consummation. We have italicized a few sentences, to which reference will be had hereafter.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Feb. 1, 1844.

My Dear Brother Belden will, I know, believe me, when I say that I love him, and sincerely desire his best welfare. Through all your trials in Presbytery, I have stood by your side, and interposed myself between you and an ultimate excision. And it was not, as you know, because I harmonized with you in the sentiment that you or any other man in the world was sinless—but because I hoped that second sober thought, mature reflection and a ripe experience, would lead you to adopt the views which are generally maintained by

your brethren in the Presbytery, and I may say the church at large.

The position in which I am now placed by the decision of the Synod, is one of painful interest, and leaves to your Presbytery no other alternative, in case you persist in avowing your opposition to the Confession of Faith on the subject of sanctification, but your deposition. My heart bleeds while it anticipates such a possibility, and shrinks from the infliction of the last excising blow. But still it must fall, unless you retract.

I have lately seen a letter from Br. Mahan, in reference to this matter, which I fear may tend to confirm you in the opinion that the Synod did wrong in ordering the Presbytery to proceed even to excision, *because you were condemned, not for an offence against the Bible, but against the Confession of Faith.* But, dear Brother, would you, were a member of your church to adopt Universalist or Unitarian views, contrary, of course, to the Confession of Faith adopted by the church, and to which he had subscribed, feel yourself bound to argue the matter with him at his trial, on the ground of its unscripturality—or would you say at once, after taking the prescribed steps, you must be excommunicated unless you repent? *The fact is, our standard is, unless the Presbyterian Church alter their views of truth as really in their opinion the word of God as the Bible is.* Suppose I assert the doctrine of the Trinity as a doctrine of the Bible, and write it down in a creed, is it not as really the word of God as the Bible itself, provided it be taught in the Scriptures? It is true the Bible is the only infallible rule; but if a truth be copied from that book into a system of faith, it does not cease to be Bible because transferred. The Synod condemned you, therefore, because they believed you had rejected a Bible doctrine, and did not enter into a discussion, as you would not with a Socinian or a Universalist who denied two of the prominent articles of his creed. Now whether they err or not as to the truth, they do not certainly err in treating you as they have done, provided they believe that the system which they hold, or rather, the article, is Bible truth, and you deny it. They may also err in the degree of censure they inflict, but you must not say that they have done so in refusing to discuss the matter when they feel as they do, that there ought to be no doubt on the subject.

Having tried to remove any unfavorable opinion you may have formed in reference to the proceedings of the Synod, I

now would say a word, my precious brother, on the subject of your future course. It is very obvious that there are but three ways you can take. 1. Unite with some other body. 2. Confess and forsake your present views. 3. Be deposed.

1. If you do not like either of the last two, why not, my dear brother, take your dismissal, and connect yourself with the body to which Br. Underwood belongs, the majority of which particular association harmonize, I understand, with you. Rather than proceed to extremities, I presume our Presbytery would dismiss you even in this stage of the proceedings. And why will you compel those who love you to do the painful work of exposition?

2. I would, of course, prefer that you would so modify your views as to render any separation unnecessary. And ought you not, my precious brother, to be jealous of yourself now, lest in trying to stand perpendicular, you lean backwards? Can it be, dear Henry, that one who is comparatively a child in years, in knowledge, and in experience, may be certain that he is right, when he goes against the voice of the most intelligent and godly men the world ever knew? The more I read the biographies and the productions of such men as Owen, Flavel, Baxter, Leighton, Usher, Edwards, Brainerd, Payson, and I may add, my own heart, the more I am convinced that there is an affirmation wrapped up in that question which settles the imperfection of man. "Who can say I have made my heart clean? I am pure from my sin?" And cannot my dear brother consent to take one step back, and say not "I am without sin," but with the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'For although I am not conscious to myself of sin, yet am I not hereby justified,' &c., &c. Henry, Scott, Bloomfield, Adam Clarke, Barnes, all agree that this is the true translation. Here we all go with you. We believe that a man may live without the upbraidings of conscience for known sin, while we dare not affirm that God sees no sin in us. Cannot you and dear Br. Hill abandon your offensive terms and remain with us? There is not a member of our dear Presbytery that would not rejoice. We love you tenderly. *We have great confidence in your piety, and it would send a wave of joy through every heart.*

■ But, 3, If you adopt neither of these alternatives, you perceive, my brother, that the Presbytery has but one course it can take. May God, in infinite mercy, prevent it! It seems to me that you ought seriously to review your position. I ask you not to sin against your conscience, and make

shipwreck of what you believe to be *the faith*, but modestly, and with child-like humility, to inquire whether there is not room for a doubt that you are right. My best love to your dear wife. If Br. Hill be in Newburgh, or wherever he is, please let him see this.

Most affectionately your brother,
H. G. LUDLOW.

The reader will be interested in the following reply :

Washingtonville, Monday, March 11, 1844.

BELOVED BROTHER—I received your letter more than a month since. I did not think when I received it that it would be so long before I replied. When I first read it, I thought of answering it immediately, but on a little reflection I thought best to wait awhile, and afford time for deliberation.

I have been employed the greater part of the time for the last five or six weeks in a protracted meeting, and I postponed answering some letters on hand till I got a little leisure. I esteem myself honored by your expressions of Christian affection, while I feel myself unworthy of them. But be assured, dear brother, that your feelings are reciprocated. I have seen many things in you which have manifested the Spirit of our blessed Master, and surely I ought to love that Spirit wherever it appears, and I trust that I always shall. You say that you regard yourself and the Presbytery as placed in a position of painful interest by the action of Synod, and that there remains in consequence of that action but one alternative, either a retraction on my part, or my deposition by the Presbytery.

If it be so that the decision of Synod has laid this necessity upon us, then indeed our case is a hard one. As I view the matter (and you will pardon me for stating my view of it), such a necessity requires either me or the Presbytery to do wrong. Either I must deny what I regard as precious Bible truth, or the Presbytery must cast me out of the ministry and out of the visible fold of Christ, for my adherence to this Bible truth. I say, this is the way that I view it, and I hope you will take no offence at my plainness of speech.

But does such a necessity exist? My beloved brother, let us get down at the Saviour's feet and ask Him if it be so. Of course it is for me to decide whether to retract—but on the supposition that I cannot, is it the duty of Presbytery, or is it right for them, to depose me from the ministry, and excommunicate me from the Church? It is right and duty for

them to do so, *if it be the Saviour's will*—and it is *not* right if it is *not his will*. Now what is his will in the case? It seems to me that one or two considerations will throw some light upon that point. If the Saviour blesses me with spiritual gifts and holds communion with my soul, it proves that I am united to Him as a branch to the vine and a sheep of the fold. His manifestations of his love to me make it my duty to confess Him before men and to unite with my brethren in celebrating his dying love. And is it not the duty of all my brethren in Christ to receive me, when they believe that He receives me?

Again, if I have the seals of God's approbation upon my ministry, if He blesses my administrations more and more, both in the conversion and building up of souls, is not this evidence that I am a Minister of Christ "called of God as was Aaron?" And if this be so; if I have the continued proofs of the Saviour's approbation as a Minister, is it right, is it duty in my brethren, to cast me out from the holy office? My brother, the tears start to my eyes while I write. I feel as though I could weep—but let me ask, ought not my brethren to pause ere they do so great a thing? Is it not possible that they may go counter to the Saviour's will?

Even though the Synod be displeased, it is better to abide their displeasure than to offend Christ, and let me add, in the words of our Lord, than to "offend one of Christ's little ones."

I could say many more things on this subject, if I should give free scope to my feelings; but I must close.

My health is poor at present, I think my lungs are somewhat seriously affected. It may be that I am mistaken as to my symptoms, for I have not consulted any physician, but a protracted hoarseness, a cough, a pain in my breast, debility, and some little of night sweats, have led me to think that it would be nothing surprising if I should ere long receive a summons to appear before the great Head of the Church. But blessed be his name, I am enabled to contemplate such an event with calmness. I feel that I am his and not my own. One passage of scripture has run in my mind and been very precious to me of late—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."—1 PET. ii. 24.

Remember me affectionately to your dear wife.

Your brother in the Lord,

HENRY BELDEN.

From the above facts and statements the following conclusions are undeniably evident.

1. The act of deposition under consideration was passed for no *moral delinquency whatever*, delinquency either expressed, implied, or imputed. These brethren are acknowledged even by their deponents to have done nothing, nor to have embraced any sentiments, by which their piety has been marred, their zeal in the cause of Christ lessened, or their communion and fellowship with the Head of the Church in the least interrupted.

2. It is perfectly evident that Presbytery had no difficulty at all with the *spiritual state* of these brethren, and consequently with the spirit which they were aiming to induce in all over whom they should gain an influence. It was only with the *terms* with which they chose to designate that state. If they would only lay aside their "offensive terms," they could still have a standing in the Church and ministry. Thus it is perfectly evident, that they were "made offenders for a word," and for nothing else. Has Christ authorized deposition for such a reason? Shall the Church sanction deposition for such reasons? Discipline is rendered universally contemptible, when perverted to such unhallowed ends. Such has in fact been the result of this perversion already. Who does not know that ecclesiastical censures, and even excommunication and deposition, do not, to any great extent, subject individuals to disgrace in public estimation?

3. The act of arrest and deposition was executed upon them when, as is acknowledged by their deponents, they were engaged in "labors more abundant" and self-denying in the cause of Christ, and when the Head of the Church was crowning their labors with unwonted success. With the acknowledged "epistles of Christ" in their hands, "epistles known and read of all men," the Presbytery dared to step in and declare, that such men, with such acknowledged epistles, are not the Ministers of Christ. We affirm that Christ has never conferred authority for such acts on any judicatory whatever.

4. The act under consideration was passed upon these brethren simply and exclusively for holding sentiments, in embracing which, and in connection with which, their spirituality and self-denying labors are acknowledged to have been greatly increased, and in connection with which they had been "*baptized of the Holy Ghost*," and each of their deponents had more confidence in their purity and faithfulness

to Christ, than in his own. Unless Christ had authorized his judicatories to depose from the ministry his servants, who are acknowledged to be most dear to his heart, and whom He is most signally favoring with the "unction of the Spirit," the act under consideration is a most unauthorized usurpation.

5. In their defence, both before the Synod and Presbytery, these brethren were denied an appeal to the Word of God, "to the law and to the testimony," in other words, to the Head of the Church Himself. The standards of the Church, man-made standards, were placed between the accused and "God the Judge of all," and they were denied all access or appeal to Him. "In the temple of God," the Confession of Faith was "seated as God," yes "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." In that trial, the Bible and consequently the God of the Bible, were denied a hearing. The Confession of Faith only was permitted to speak. Shall we, shall the Church, acknowledge such acts as the voice of God? Never. When she does it, the Church has unchurched herself, and allied herself to the "man of sin." The "man of sin" has never set up higher claims than these. "The fact is, our standard is, unless the Presbyterian Church alter their views of truth, as really, in their opinion, the Word of God as the Bible is."

6. To place this whole transaction before the public in a proper light, one fact, disclosed in an account given in a former number, of the meeting of Synod, at whose command the act of deposition was passed, needs to be repeated here. This fact shows that these brethren were not only denied an appeal to the Bible, but also all *proper* appeal to the Confession of Faith. The fact is this: In their defence, these brethren offered to show, from the usage of the Church, that the offence charged against them should not be regarded as an offence demanding deposition, or censure, inasmuch as the great mass of the Church had departed from that instrument in particulars equally important. All such appeal was promptly denied them. They were told at once that Synod would not hear the truth of the Confession, nor the fact of their own adherence to it called in question. We may safely challenge the Church and the world to produce an instance of unauthorized usurpation, if the above, taken in all its varied aspects, is not.

Here we might close our remarks, enough having already been said to show that the act of deposition under consideration is without authority from Christ, and consequently null

and void. As principles of such fundamental importance are involved in the present case, however—principles which vitally concern the dearest interests and most sacred responsibilities of the Church, we now proceed to state the ground of the action of the Association. We wish it to be distinctly understood, that we regard ecclesiastical judicatories as having authority to exercise discipline within the limits prescribed by the head of the Church, and to depose from the ministry for reasons which he has revealed as ground of deposition. Had Br. B. been deposed for such reasons, it would have been the consummation of wickedness in the Association not to have sanctioned the act of Presbytery by refusing to receive and acknowledge him as a Minister of Christ. Having been subject to an act of deposition for no such reasons, but for reasons which Christ has prohibited as such ground, we should have been equally guilty had we recognized as authoritative, an act of such flagrant usurpation in the house of God. In the fear of God we proclaim it before the world, we charge it upon the consciences of the North River Presbytery, that in that act of deposition they usurped authority which Christ never conferred upon them, or any judicatory on earth. They had no more authority to depose these brethren, than they had to deprive them of life. They had no power against them, only as it had been given them from above. Power to depose them for such reasons had never been given them by the Head of the Church. This we affirm for the following reasons.

1. The act of deposition under consideration was in opposition to the express teachings of inspiration.

The act was passed, it should be borne in mind, for no *moral delinquency* expressed, implied, or imputed. Every reader of the Bible well knows that the sacred volume authorizes discipline for none but moral delinquencies, and for error when the holding of it implies such delinquency.

This act was passed under the charge of heresy. Now the Bible has expressly revealed the ground, and the only ground of deposition under such a charge. "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." The deponents themselves acknowledge that these brethren had embraced no such form of heresy as this. They had embraced no errors which implied either subversion or sin. In the whole matter they are acknowledged to have preserved "consciencs void of offence,"—to have attained and

maintained a degree of spirituality and devotion to the duties of their sacred calling superior to all their brethren. The act of Presbytery, therefore, was in direct opposition to the revealed will of Christ, in respect to the ground of deposition for heresy.

This act was also in opposition to the example of an inspired apostle under similar circumstances. The gift of the Holy Ghost which the deponents themselves acknowledged these brethren had received, while holding the errors imputed to them, was admitted by an inspired apostle as an all-sufficient, all-authoritative reason why individuals, contrary to "the standard," and to universal usage, should be received to a standing in the Church. Should not the same gift then, in connection with the exercise of the functions of the ministry, be an all-authoritative reason why an individual should not be deposed from the sacred office? Ought not the Presbytery, as these brethren stood before them, to have said, "Forasmuch as God hath given to these men the like gift as He has given unto us (letting the Holy Spirit fall upon them, as upon us at the beginning), what are we that we should withstand God?" What are we that we should lay our hands upon the "Lord's anointed?" For ourselves, we would almost as soon vote for the deposition of the Son of God, after the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, as vote for that of an individual upon whom we acknowledge He has poured out the like gift. And shall we, shall the Church, acknowledge as authoritative, acts of deposition passed upon such men? We divorce ourselves from the Word and authority of God when we do it.

2. This act was also in opposition equally direct and open, to the *spirit and fundamental principles* of the Confession of Faith, upon the professed authority of which the deposition was based. Special attention is invited to the following fundamental principles pertaining to discipline as laid down in that instrument.

"Discipline is the exercise of that authority, and the application of that system of laws which the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed in his church.

An offence is anything in the principles or practice of a church member which is contrary to the word of God; or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification.

Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by any judicatory as an offence, or admitted as matter of accusation, which

cannot be proved such from Scripture, or from the regulations and practice of the church, founded on Scripture; and which does not involve those evils which discipline is intended to prevent."

Here the reader will notice that the great principle which we have announced as the basis of the action of the Association is distinctly affirmed: "Discipline is the application of that system of laws which *Christ* has appointed in his Church." Every judicatory of the Presbyterian Church is prohibited, by the Confession of Faith, from disciplining any individual for anything which the revealed laws of Christ do not designate as a subject of discipline. "Nothing, therefore, ought to be considered by *any judicatory* as an offence, or admitted as matter of accusation, which cannot be proved to be such from Scripture," &c. We venture to affirm that there is not a member of this Presbytery who would maintain, that if the appeal was made to the *Bible*, the shadow of authority could be found there for the act of deposition under consideration. That act, therefore, was in direct opposition to the entire spirit and fundamental principles of the Confession of Faith.

Let us now look at the article in respect to heresy.

"Heresy and schism may be of such a nature as to infer deposition; but errors ought to be carefully considered; whether they strike at the vitals of religion, and are industriously spread, or whether they arise from the weakness of the human understanding, and are not likely to do much injury."

In the next paragraph it is added, "For some more dangerous errors, however, suspension may become necessary." Here the reader will notice—

1. That is only in extreme cases, for "some more dangerous errors," such as "strike at the vitals of religion," that suspension is in any case permitted by the Confession of Faith.

2. Errors which do not "strike at the vitals of religion," but "arise from the weakness of the human understanding," are prohibited as ground of deposition.

Now what greater evidence can we have, that an error, if it be an error, does not "strike at the vitals of religion," and that it does "arise from the weakness of the human understanding," than this, that in embracing it, "a conscience void of offence" has been preserved, the baptism of the Holy Ghost received, and a great advance in spirituality made—an advance far beyond those around who hold the opposite senti-

ment? All this, and more, was acknowledged to be true of these brethren, by their deponents themselves. Their act, therefore, was in as direct opposition to the spirit and fundamental principles of their own standard, as to those of the Bible, which they refused to acknowledge as a standard at all in the case.

3. In this act of deposition, the Presbytery stand before the Church and the world, self-condemned. In all their controversies with Papists, Puseyites, and High Churchmen, these brethren, together with the entire Presbyterian Church, and evangelical Christians of every name, have reprobated an appeal to church standards, to human authority of any kind, to any tribunal but the Word of God. In this act, with equal positiveness, they denied and reprobated all appeal to the Bible, to any standard but that of the Church. The case stands thus. In their controversies with Romanists, Puseyites, and High Church exclusives, they have nothing to stand upon but the Bible. Here, therefore, they reprobate an appeal to creeds, confessions of faith, decrees of councils, human traditions, to anything but "the law and the testimony." In their controversy with the advocates of the doctrine of Entire Sanctification, they have nothing to stand upon but the Confession of Faith. Here, therefore, they reprobate an appeal to the Word of God—to anything but the Confession of Faith. Now, which shall we regard as authoritative,—their condemnation of Papists, or of these brethren? If the former, then in the latter case the deponents themselves stand self-condemned, and the deposed are re-instated in their standing as Ministers of Christ.

4. In the act under consideration, the Presbytery have renounced the fundamental principle of Protestantism, and have avowed a principle which even Papists never dared to avow. In their controversies with Papists, the reformers acknowledged they had departed from the doctrines of the church. They appealed from such standards to the Word of God. Their opponents never dared to deny their right to make the appeal. In a case precisely similar—a case in which a departure from the standards of the Church is confessed, and such departure is attempted to be justified by an appeal to the Word of God, the Presbyterian Church steps in, and denies the right to make such an appeal. To deny the right of appeal from the standards of the Church to the Word of God, is to deny the right to appeal from such standards to the Head of the Church himself. It is to deny, even to the

Most High, a hearing in his own judicatories. If the Church sustains her judicatories in such a stand as this, we hesitate not to affirm our solemn conviction, that the time is not distant, when Papacy will be reinstated in all her borders, in all but in name—Papacy in a more exclusive and arbitrary form than she has ever put on. One of the chief reasons which induced us to prepare this communication, is, to lift the warning voice against the tendencies to arbitrary power almost everywhere visible around us in the judicatories of the Church. We believe that the case before us was permitted, in the providence of God, to reveal with distinctness to the public eye these fearful tendencies.

5. The monstrous absurdity, not to say wickedness, of the act under consideration, will appear glaringly evident, when contrasted with the testimony of the members of Presbytery, to the characters of the deposed. Think of the phrases and sentences, "precious brethren," "devoted, and self-denying men," "baptized of the Holy Ghost," "far more spiritual, than when they entered the ministry," "we all have great confidence in your piety," "if Christ should ask us, 'Which of you shall betray me,' there is not a man of Presbytery who would not apply it to himself, sooner than to either of them," &c. Think, we say, of such testimony, and then contrast it with the resolution.

"Therefore, Resolved, That brethren Belden and Hill be, and they are hereby deposed from the Gospel Ministry."

We trust that the brethren who perpetrated this dreadful deed, will "obtain mercy because they did it ignorantly in unbelief." We think, however, that the day is not distant, when the brother especially who penned that resolution, the intimate associate and familiar correspondent of the beloved J. B. Taylor, into whose spirit and sentiments the deposed so fully drank, will call to mind the part which he took in that transaction, with feelings not unlike those of one of old, when he said, "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." When alone with his God and Saviour, he will, we trust, give utterance to sentiments like these, "Thou knowest, Lord, that when 'those precious brethren,' 'those devoted, and self-denying ministers,' those unoffending men of whom I myself bore testimony that 'they had received the Holy Ghost,' and that I myself was far more likely to betray thee than either of them, when the act of deposition was passed upon these

men of God, I, Lord, was the man that conceived and wrote the murderous resolution. At that time, Lord, 'this hand offended, this wicked hand offended.'"

The reasons of this Association for receiving Br. Belden to their fellowship as a Minister of Jesus Christ, are now before the public. To our own consciences we stand fully justified in respect to the action we took in the case. To the Church and the public we would say, "We are made manifest unto God; and we trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

In behalf of the Association,

A. MAHAN,	} Committee of Association.
C. G. FINNEY,	
H. COWLES,	
J. MORGAN,	

Such is the attitude of no inconsiderable portion of the religious public in the United States, in reference to the doctrine of holy living. Such movements produce *results*. Their wake does not, like the wake of a ship, very soon leave a level and smooth surface behind. They put forth a strong influence upon the conscience of the Church, and deeply and permanently affect our common Christianity.

The doctrine of entire sanctification has been, in the Oberlin Evangelist, represented as existing in three forms, viz. :

1. As a state or act of the will, occupying no appreciable time, but in which, for the moment, the whole being is surrendered to God.
2. As a more permanent state of mind, lasting some appreciable time, whether an hour, a day, or a week, a year, or the residue of life.
3. As the state following the baptism of the Spirit, by which the soul is gloriously illuminated, and the whole being exalted to a higher, though not more sinless spiritual life, than is possible or obligatory without that baptism.

SEC. IV.—BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES.

We have made great advances in various benevolent operations: the annual array of the Missionary enterprise in its various departments has become splendidly imposing, and our Religious Anniversaries are great festivals of gladness and joy.

For several of the more recent years, the speakers at the Anniversaries have said, with power and pathos, that the thing *now* most needed among the Churches, and especially in the Ministry, is, a stronger, livelier, and a more permanent, and a vastly higher tone of *PIETY*.

At the late meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Sept., 1844), reported to have been a meeting altogether extraordinary of its kind, the pith and point of their best speeches consisted in the subdued and feeling statement that the piety of the Ministry and the Churches was low ; that increased gifts and money, and advance in the work, could not be expected, unless there was more piety—a great and a permanent elevation of holy living.

A favorite, and a sort of standing figure in the speeches, and surely a good one, was that water will never rise higher than its fountain.

All this should tell powerfully, extensively, and sweetly in a reformation in the Churches, especially in the Ministry.

But shall it all evaporate in rhetoric, and die away in the retreating echo of the public meeting ? How shall the vision be realized ? By what means shall the piety of the Churches be elevated, and increased, and permanently held at the point gained, and rising still higher ?

These Anniversary speeches and appeals, re-moulded and freshly gilded, and all good in their place, and poured upon the immense congregation, and scattered, through the papers, over the whole land,—and all this for years,—have effected little or no apparent change for the better in the spiritual state of those who have delivered them, or in the Churches.

SEC. V.—THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

What is the cause ? is the question which should be correctly answered, and which may be thus answered, and the answer to which is crowded more and more intensely upon the public conscience by the rapid developments of Divine Providence.

During the last few years, the doctrine of holy living has been put forth under *some* new aspects, and with interest and earnestness and intelligent discussion. Great pains have

been taken to give the simple Scriptural view of the subject, so that the hungry and thirsting might find their wants supplied, and that all might see that it is essentially removed from Antinomianism.

Christians widely apart, and connected with different denominations, have been deeply exercised in prayer on the subject, have studied the promises with unwonted interest, and have been greatly strengthened in their faith, quickened and comforted in the spiritual life.

But how have these views been met, and the men who have communicated them to the public been treated? The preceding pages show. As if by general consent, ecclesiastical bodies have pounced upon them as victims for sacrifice. This effort to increase the spirituality of Christians, to revive the piety of the Church, to impart a living reality, vigor, energy and permanency to holy living, and hailed with joy, has been condemned, ridiculed, and scornfully rejected by leading religious influences in the country. The very men who have made speeches at public meetings, are among the most active to scout the doctrine as heresy, and to cast out as evil the names of their Christian brethren.

If perfect holiness in the present life be not an object which we may expect to gain, how will you graduate the scale, and where will you fix the point of attainment?—and wherein lies the power of your motive to urge the duty. If following after *perfect* holiness, with the expectation of attaining it, is the wrong way, is following after imperfect holiness the right way? If you *cannot* attain to perfect sanctification here, are you in *fault* for coming short! And if the Church is not in fault for coming fully and entirely up to the Divine requirement, is she in fault for remaining at the point of her present attainment; or even if she should sink still lower on the scale? And what is the use, and even propriety, of these eloquent and so often repeated anniversary appeals?

A holier ministry and a purer Church are indeed needed to carry higher and onward the world's conversion.

This work can be achieved only by the arm of God. His power comes in to its aid, just so fast and as far as the church, which is the medium of the Divine operation, takes her proper place; which is in sympathy with Christ in

labor to put away all sin from the earth. And her piety will grow only as she honestly follows the convictions of truth.

In giving the reasons, however, why the piety of the Church does not rise higher, it does not become Christians to deal in recrimination. There is a cause: it involves guilt, and guilt which does not adhere exclusively to any one man or set of men. But it does become them to admit the testimony of facts, that the seat of the difficulty may be known, and to admonish the convicted, as also to weep over their guilt.

SEC. VI.—THE PRESENT LIGHT OF THE CHURCH EXCEEDS
THE PAST.

The progress of the Church in theological knowledge and in Christian experience and enterprise, and the condition of the unconverted world, absolutely beckoning to the followers of Christ to come out and possess the land, impart an ineffable interest to the question, Why does not the piety of the Church rise, and her faith wax stronger and stronger? While great things have been achieved for the good of the world by the Church, and Christianity is the glory of all lands in which she has gained a footing, and her achievements in the present century are truly splendid; it is also a fact, that the progress of her efforts is impeded and tardy, considering present facilities for aggressive movements and conquests—and men of shrewdness will and should inquire, *why* are not Christians accomplishing more—more—for God—for our country—for the world? And Christians themselves are bound to press the same question, and honestly and penitently look at the true answer, so often and so properly given at our public religious anniversaries; which is—the faith of Christians is weak—their piety is low and languid; a fact reiterated in peals increasingly solemn and loud, and urging the elementary and primary inquiry, *Why is the piety of the Church thus low?*

The piety of the Church cannot grow, unless she honestly follows the convictions of truth—unless she advance under increasing light.

We walk in a brighter light than that which shone on the path of the *Fathers*. And living and active minds, men of loftier intellectual attainments and purer practice than theirs, *should* be walking in our streets and teaching in our pulpits. The tall ones of the present age who are not *men of progress*, are a race altogether different and inferior to the Protestant Reformers,—destitute of their spirit, maxims, manliness, intrepidity, and moral courage. They do not sympathize with the aims, or the aspirations, or the endeavors of Luther; nor do the work, nor breathe the spirit of his age.

Says Coleridge, “It is a profound question to answer, why it is that, since the middle of the 16th century, the Reformation from Popery has not advanced one step in Europe?” This question is solved by the single fact that *Luther contended for the truth*, and fearlessly acted up to his convictions; but his followers have fought for *Lutherism*: he for *principle*, they for the *sect* formed upon it, in a perpetual course of expediency and compromise.

SEC. VII.—DUTY KNOWN.

In respect to holy living and the works of benevolence, it is the duty of the Church to occupy the position which Christ did, in a perfect imitation, in their sphere, of his example.

Christ was a Reformer: so is the Christian who is worthy the name. Of course every true Christian Church is a reformatory body. Look at basis principles.

1. In respect to the individual Christian. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. This is both a directory and a test of character.

2. The Church.

Each member has equal rights with his fellow members to protection, to instruction, to the ordinances, to watch, care and fellowship, and to entire freedom and security from spiritual despotism. Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof.

3. Ministers.

The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the **LAW** at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the

Lord of Hosts. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet. Show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Thus clearly defined is the duty of each Christian, of the Church as a body, and of those who are Ministers in the Churches.

So far as these instructions are regarded and followed, does the Church stand approved in the sight of God; and disapproved to the extent in which they are not followed, both in the spirit and in the letter.

Obedience is the only reliable proof of individual or of associated piety. And while it is the only certain proof that you possess piety, it is also the only course possible by which your piety can be increased.

SEC. VIII.—DUTY NEGLECTED.

Are the Churches in the land obedient to the command of God? Are they doing the work assigned to them by the Lord Jesus Christ, and faithfully executing his will? Whilst they avow and publish correct principles and doctrines, do they accompany this avowal by a correct Scriptural course of action?

In the pulpit, in their religious meetings, and in their prayers,—in their Conferences, Associations, Presbyteries, Synods, Assemblies, Boards of Trust, and Anniversaries,—the character of the Churches in the United States is spread out, in the detail and in the aggregate, as upon a broad sheet hung midheaven.

Are they practically in deep and living, abiding, active, energetic sympathy with Christ?

1. In opposition to all open known iniquity.
2. In faithfully rebuking sin and the sinner among all classes in the community.
3. In giving counsel and instruction to the people respecting *all* their duties in the relations they sustain—domestic, public, civil, religious, and political,—handling the word of God without deception, and giving to each his portion in due season.
4. In sustaining all needed reforms.

5. In discarding all compromise with sin, on the principle which shone so brilliantly in his own perfect example, viz. : Ye cannot serve two masters : he that is not for me is against me—he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.

6. In preaching the Gospel to the poor, in relieving the oppressed, in defending inalienable rights, and in doing justly.

7. In choosing righteous men for rulers, who will give to the country a righteous legislation, and withholding support from men known to be extortioners and oppressors.

8. In the diffusion of knowledge, correct principles, and the redeeming, converting, holy influence of the Gospel of Salvation.

All these are but the epitome of Christian practice—a schedule of the great and blessed work which it is the duty and the privilege of the Church to accomplish, the doing of which is the proof that she is the true Church of Christ.

By this test, how stand the Churches with their Ministers, Theologians, Seminaries, and Teachers ?

Men of genuine piety, real Christians, when *informed*, sympathize with Christ on all the points above named, and efficiently co-operate with him.

Christians in this land, and especially in this age, have the key and the means of knowledge—the Bible ; and its fundamental principles and precepts are exhibited.

What, the question returns, is their practice ?

In the midst of these churches there are about three millions of slaves—thousands of the members are slaveholders, and traffic in the souls and bodies of men—rear them for the market—and not less than 200,000 of the communicants are themselves slaves.

The system of American slavery involves the breach of every command in the decalogue—covers as deep cruelties and enormities as can be practised among men, marked with unmitigated horrors, and is without a redeeming quality.

But for the aid this system receives from professed Christians, who are slaveholders, by the positive defence of it, and by the neglect to reprove it, in their individual capacity, and as churches, and in other associate actions, it could not stand. Had the noble testimony against it, by Hopkins and

Edwards been faithfully followed up by Ministers, slavery in the United States would have died by a quick consumption.

Are these indications of piety? and can the piety of Christians flourish while sustaining or countenancing such enormities?

At this age, when the subject of human rights has been so fully examined and so faithfully presented, such participation in crime cannot hide under the cover of ignorance. If John Newton could make this plea in excuse a century ago, the Newtons of the present period cannot do it.

Will brethren look at these things before they make their next anniversary speeches?

Added to this, Christians in our land very extensively violate, at the ballot-box, the express command of God, in respect to the choice of legislators and magistrates. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. "Judges and officers shalt thou *make thee* in all thy gates throughout thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment." God states the province of a ruler to be, to execute judgment in the morning, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor. Rulers are a terror to good works, and not to the evil. In the face of all this, a large majority of professed Christians, who vote at all, cast a vote for a slaveholder to be the chief magistrate in this nation. Christians, by their vote, sustain duelling, which, being the intent to kill, is nothing less than murder.

On these subjects the mass of our accomplished and learned men, bearing the Christian name, take the position of prudent conservatives. Living in the midst of the most monstrous abuses that ever demanded reform among any people at any period, wielding their cultivated powers and holding their high station, at a time when the exigencies of the race and the interests of Divine truth demand of them a holier spirit and a purer work than that of the Protestant Reformers, in an age in which greater facilities, both for inquiry and for labor, are provided to their hands—they form the self-complacent conclusion, that their strength is to sit still, to make no direct attack upon certain sins sustained by legislation, and to refrain from collision with fashionable crimes; which is, in effect, to do nothing efficiently towards the permanent purification of public sentiment.

The practice of the Churches in this country, and the position of the *Brethren*, of controlling influence, in reference to known sins—national sins—especially the sin of traffick- ing in the bodies and the souls of men, and all this under the light which culminates in the middle of the nineteenth century; and in a *Republic*; and, moreover, in the midst of unparalleled opportunities for improvement in morals and a pure religion, is absolutely and utterly astounding—an anomaly which exceeds in the marvellous.

The bearing of this testimony, of necessity, is pointed, certain, and tremendous against the Christianity of these churches.

SEC. IX.—INFERENCES OF NON-PROFESSORS.

Who can wonder that men, shrewd and thinking, should lose confidence in these Churches, and even in the Christianity they profess?—that, as Christians thus uphold oppression, and habitually practise known, open abominations, they can no longer be relied upon to defend inalienable rights, and to promote human liberty; that Christianity, if it be what they practise, does not meet the exigencies of man; and therefore resort must be had to other expedients. Hence Fourierism and similar aberrations.

When men, not connected with the Churches, but admiring the fundamental principles of Christianity, warmly espouse them, and urge their application to the actions of men in civil and political, as well as in private life, and strongly advocate their sufficiency at all these points, and call on the community to act in accordance with them, presuming, of course, that *Christians* will unite in carrying out their own avowed principles, find, that they are not sustained, in this advocacy, by the Churches, they will, of course, turn away from them with disgust, and declare such Christians to be recreant to their vows.

In respect to slavery, duelling, and a righteous legislation, the practice of the vast majority of professed Christians in this land, is in direct and positive violation of the fundamental principles and the spirit of the Christianity they profess.

A fact like this speaks plainly and loudly in answer to the question, Why is not the piety of the Churches higher, and why is it not on the increase?

CHAPTER VI.

PROVINCE OF THE CHURCH AND THE PULPIT IN REFERENCE TO THE STATE.

SEC. I.—NOTICE OF THREE FALSE POSITIONS.

IN a discourse recently published it is alleged, that

1. "The Christian minister has no authority to meddle with politics in the Pulpit."

Then he may not read in his pulpit those portions of the Bible which treat of politics. But, as matter of fact the Bible is much occupied with *politics*—with *political history*—political maxims—political institutions—directions for regulating popular elections—for enacting, executing and repealing laws: directions for the ruler—directions for the ruled; political promises, political threatenings, political predictions. Yet, says the sermon, a Christian minister has no authority to meddle with politics in the pulpit. How then can he explain the great Law of Love, the second table of the Decalogue, which contains the doctrine of inalienable rights? It is the sole business of human governments to guard these rights; and they have no authority, in their legislation, to go a step farther than is necessary to secure this guardianship. If the Minister may not preach politics in the pulpit, he must *there* omit all instruction addressed to the people on the relations between the citizens and the government under which they live. Neither may he mention them in his pulpit *prayers*.

Bible religion cannot be taught from the pulpit, without inculcating lessons upon the civil and political relations men sustain, and their duties to the government. The natural rights and duties of all men are not more clearly the foundation of a republican government, than they are of the Christian religion. The two cannot be separated. Even the

solemn practical test given by the Saviour in the 25th of Matthew, if properly exhibited in the pulpit, would cut deep and broad into the sphere of politics.

2. "The Sabbath day is not the day for men acting in any capacity, to discuss political subjects," is another inference in the discourse.

But the Lord Jesus Christ declares, "The Sabbath was made for *man*, and not man for the Sabbath : it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath—how much better is man than a sheep?"

Now with us, not our cattle have fallen into the pit, and will perish if not taken out on the Sabbath, but millions of our fellow-citizens, thousands of our own Christian brethren have fallen among thieves, and are writhing in the pit of slavery, hemmed around with woes, and all their *rights* crushed. These fellow-beings, created free, have been thus robbed and cast into the pit by *unrighteous legislation*. This unrighteous legislation will continue, and the pit continue to be filled with successive generations of our suffering brethren, unless the public mind becomes enlightened on the subject, and rulers elected who will give to the country a righteous legislation. To speak of the wo of these outcasts, the duty of relieving them, and the means by which relief can be obtained, would of course lead to treat of political acts and relations. But no, says the preacher, not on the *Sabbath*. What ! profane the Sabbath to preach of righteousness and of judgment? Profane the Sabbath and pervert the pulpit, to expostulate with men who enact wicked laws and thus oppress the poor.

You see a man on the Sabbath gathering his wheat harvest. You reprove him for a violation of the Divine law.

The next day you pass the plantation of the slaveholder, covered with laborers driven under the lash, like cattle—and like them sold and bought. You hail him as an old acquaintance, but say nothing of his crime.

The next Lord's day, you go into your pulpit with a powerful discourse on the sin of Sabbath desecration.

A friend who saw you at the plantation inquires why do you not come out in a Sabbath discourse against the sin of slaveholding, and the wicked enactments by which it is created and sustained? Ah, you reply, that would b preach-

ing politics, and politics may not be discussed on the Sabbath. No wonder that the loathsome hypocrisy of such a plea should sicken the public mind. Reprove for gathering *wheat* on the Sabbath—but not a word against *stealing men* and robbing and oppressing them.

3. Inference third from the sermon. “The Christian church has no authority, either in her primary assemblies, or in her ecclesiastical judicatories, to array herself against the constitution or laws of any State or Nation.”

Pray what is the correct rule of conduct for men? The Law of God, founded on immutable natural justice—the only legitimate guide for men in all their relations, individual, social, public, religious, civil, political.

The rightful power of all legislation is to declare and enforce only our *natural rights and duties, and take none of them from us*. No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another, and this is *all* from which the law ought to restrain him.

The enactments which create slavery, for they *are not law*, are a violation of natural rights and duties.

Chattel slavery cannot exist but through violence. God never made a slave. His arrangements have rendered it impossible that man should be born a slave. And all enactments which create chattel slavery are contrary to the Law of God, and of course no *Law*. Here is a *fixed fact*; and here it will stand and look out upon you in smiles or in frowns as you sustain or trample upon *justice*. Any and every Constitution which sustains slavery is in opposition to God and his Law. And shall I obey God or man? To please *man*, shall I, who am a Christian, do an act that God has forbidden? If I approve of a constitution which is contrary to the Law of God, if I sustain an unrighteous law of any kind, I positively do that which God has forbidden. And, on the principles of natural justice, and in accordance with the divine Law, I am bound to *resist* every unrighteous constitution and every wicked law.

But is a Christian *Church* bound to do this? She has no authority to do this, says the Preacher. That is, a Christian in the capacity of a Church member may not do that which it is a sin to omit to do in every other capacity. Still worse,

Christians in their *associate* capacity, may not testify against wicked laws, and unrighteous civil compacts. Of course they may not send the gospel to the heathen, for the missionary is the agent of the *Church*:—as a *Church* they may not resolve to sustain the law of God, for this would be an array against all that is opposed to these laws;—nor resolve to bear witness against theft, adultery, murder or any other crime among men, or the desecration of the Sabbath, for this would bring them into certain conflict with human laws:—nor in prayer plead with God for the conversion of men and the reign of righteousness on earth, for this would overturn both constitutions and laws of human devising:—nor mention in preaching national sins, for it is only in her constitution and laws enacted and executed that a Nation sins. The position would silence the voice of the *Church* against vice and in favor of virtue, against sin and in favor of holiness; and make her, as such, in her *Church* capacity, not only a cypher, but an abstraction. In charity to the preacher it seems necessary to assume that his language does not convey correctly the thought in his mind. In every view the position is false and anti-christian.

If the inference is just, only let wickedness of any kind be incorporated into a constitution, or sanctioned by law, and the *Church* has no right to array herself against it: a quiet way truly to give up this world to the Devil!

How different the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, himself the great subverter, commissioning his *Church* to complete the work of Reform he commenced; and of course to subvert all constitutions and laws opposed to God. There are no interests in human society which the influence of Christians, acting as a *Church*, is not designed to reach.

The Christian religion is designed to spread over *all* the interests of human society, and to affect deeply but most happily, all that affects man. To enable Christians to act the most successfully for the diffusion of this influence, they are organized into a *Church*, with its divinely appointed ordinances; and their best and most glorious movements are made *as a Church*. The voice of an individual may be powerful. But the voice of many combined is more powerful.

Individual action, in nameless ramifications, makes up the component parts of public sentiment. But it is when these individuals, acting and acted upon, meet in one body, compare views, and *unite* in results, and proclaim this union as the voice of the *assembly*, or the Convention, that the public become apprised of the heart-stirring fact, that a mighty change is in progress, that a revolution has been achieved; and this *united* testimony, this voice of the *embodied* multitude, strikes deeply upon the public ear and the public conscience, with agitation, agitation, agitation, till all that is wrong in state constitutions and laws is removed.

The climax of individual action is not attained, till the embodied influence of each is proclaimed in the voice of the Church in her ecclesiastical capacity and judicatories. This is common sense—universal experience—Bible tactics—Christian politics—practical benevolence—moral machinery—needful adaptation—the diplomacy of all agencies good and bad—identical with and inseparable from all social liabilities.

Not indeed that the Church, in any capacity whatever, is to legislate, either for the State or for the Nation: nor dictate to civil or political bodies any governmental measures. Never. But in all the capacities in which the Church can speak, or put forth influence, is she bound to lift up her voice, as a known organized body, in favor of justice, and in opposition, stern and inflexible, to injustice: in approbation of righteous legislation, and in condemnation of all *unrighteous* legislation: in testimony strong and unremitted against all constitutions, State and National, which do not sustain inalienable rights, and which of course are contrary to natural justice, and the Law of God.

In such action her movement is moral and religious, wholly within her legitimate sphere: simply testimony; the expression of opinions; the embodiment of moral sense; the voice of conscience: no threats, pains or penalties being annexed.

True, it is designed to bear upon the civil and political action of the community. Not in the tone of menace, nor dictation, nor even prescription. But simply and only to hold up before the public the fundamental principles of justice—and where civil and political enactments contravene these principles, to call the public attention to the fact, and

to inscribe upon the portals of all public influences and action the Bible axiom, Righteousness exalteth a Nation—but SIN is a reproach to any people. If the Church, as such, in her primary assemblies, and in her judicatories, may not do this, the organization has no sort of adaptation to the human mind, or to human action.

SEC. 2.—THE ATTITUDE OF RELIGIOUS BODIES TOWARDS SLAVERY.

This point demands the prayerful attention of Christians, on account of the position taken by religious organizations of the country in reference to Slavery, and to lead us to more just and correct views of the piety of the American Churches, and the causes of its decline, and the means by which it may be increased.

The character of the Religion of this country is made public by the acts of our religious organizations with more certainty than through any other channel. They are sustained by Christians in their individual capacity, and the positions they take are justly regarded as indicating the sentiment, and moral sense of the masses from which they derive their support. These organizations represent the great body of professed Christians in the Nation. So far, therefore, as they are connected with Slavery, they publish to the world the religious sense of the Christians in the Nation on this subject.

The Christianity of the United States lies under the guilt of sustaining *Slavery*, with all its horrors, so far as the religious organizations of the country hold a connection with it.

The connection with Slavery maintained by the American Bible Society, The American Tract Society, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, may be known by their ACTS.

Any sustaining, approving, concurring connection with Slavery, involves deep guilt: it can in no sense be regarded a sin of ignorance, to be winked at; and all who sustain religious organizations in such a connection, are par-

takers in the guilt. Isaiah, lxi. 8.—I, the LORD, love judgment: I hate robbery for burnt-offering.

We have here another cause for the low state of piety—for the diminishing moral power of benevolent enterprise in the American Churches. “Watchman, what of the night?—if ye will inquire, inquire ye:—return, come.”—Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

Many weep over this matter with prayerful solicitude.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions thus define their position: “The Board can sustain no relation to Slavery which implies approbation of the system, and as a Board can have no connection or sympathy with it. Without a change of views, it is quite certain that the Board can do nothing beyond this.”

Facts. This Board publicly solicit and knowingly receive the gains of slaveholding.

They employ a financial agent for Maryland and Delaware as a part of his field.

They have receiving agents at leading points in most of the slaveholding States.

They send Dr. Scudder to the slave States to extend the Missionary spirit, and to increase Missionary contributions.

They, as a Board, wholly refrain from declaring anywhere, or in any direct form, that the system of American Slavery is wrong, and that it is a *sin* for man to hold his fellow-man as property.

There are *slaveholders and slaves in the Choctaw Mission Churches*, which are under the control of the A. B. C. F. M.

These facts furnish the explanation of the import of the *disclaimer* of the Board to which they adhere, as the official expression of their views.

The Board further say: “So far as they are at present informed, they see no reason to charge the Missionaries among the Choctaws, or anywhere else, with either a violation or neglect of duty:” that is, slaveholding as such, is not to be regarded or treated as any bar to full and consistent membership in the Christian Church.

It was in testimony before the Board (Mr. Hotchkins, a Missionary among the Choctaws, the witness), that in one of the Mission Churches, about one-third of the members

are converted negro slaves, some of whose masters are also members of the same.

N. B. The whole number of persons connected with the Missions of the Board, and sustained by its funds, is 494.

The whole number received into the Mission Churches under the patronage of the Board since its Missions commenced, is reckoned to be 32,800.

30,605 of this number have been received to the Churches in the Sandwich Islands, leaving only 2,195 as the aggregate received from the beginning into the Churches at all the other stations.

5,600 are reported as having been received in the year last reported: of these, 5,296 were received at the Sandwich Islands, leaving 304 the number received at all the other Missions.

The Sandwich Island Mission has been, more than any other, an anti-slavery Mission. Its great success directly followed its breach upon the existing system of feudal Slavery.

Rev. Lorrin Andrews, a Missionary there, thus testifies: "The Mission have published a history of the Sandwich Islands, which will probably be republished in the United States. That history will show that the Mission *were obliged to stop in their progress and put down Slavery before they could go any farther.* Though Slavery here was in its mildest form, much like the feudal system of the middle ages, yet so many things were at variance with the principles of the Gospel, that they had to be changed. On this change depended the safety and permanence of the nation. If it had not been effected, the nation would have lost its nationality before now."

Here you have the *test*. "So many things were at variance with the principles of the gospel." That is, we can never do the Lord's work, while we approve or countenance the violation of his law. As Missionaries of the Cross, we cannot expect the smiles of him who was crucified for the Sins of the World, while our hands are in any way defiled by oppression. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. The Christian Church will not be permitted to make progress in the work of mercy to the Heathen, if

they make merchandize of their brethren, knowingly receive into the treasury of the Lord the price of blood, or hold communion with the unfruitful works of darkness.

“The piety of the Church must be elevated.”

But if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall.

Ineffable reproach is brought upon the gospel, and upon the Christian name, by the failure, the habitual and utter failure, of Christians to act up to their holy principles: by their recreant neglect, their covenant-breaking *refusal* to do for the country what it needs, and what it must have from Christian influence, to secure its permanent prosperity in the triumphs of justice, and in the perpetuity of a righteous legislation.

The Church claims to be regarded as the guide of the nation on the subject of morals and religion; and she is very sensitive when her maxims are doubted, her authority questioned, and her teachings dissected and exposed. Pray then let her act worthy her name and the principles she avows. Let the Church guide the PUBLIC *safely*. Let her utter the truth, and the whole truth, and call the Nation to sit down under its shade, and eat freely and continuously its fruit, which shall impart life, vigor and unfading youth to the body politic, civil and ecclesiastical. In this case the Church would be indeed a nursing mother to the community, and in its midst, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners, and a glory among men.

But how is she shorn of her strength and beauty, when she practically denies her own principles; when in her individual members, primary assemblies, judicatories, and various organizations, she ceases to be a reprover of sin—connives at known abominations,—extends fellowship to those who blot out inalienable rights and trade in human flesh: when she thus practically and habitually denies and disregards the fundamental principles of justice, law and reason? Such a Church must herself be reformed before she can go successfully forward in the reformation of others.

Justice and mercy are the essential elements in Christianity. And when the *practice* of those who profess Christianity, is, as a matter of fact, a denial, or even the habitual *neglect* of justice and mercy, it is utterly impossible that men

of sense and reflection should have confidence in those whose profession and practice are so widely and essentially at variance. *Such professors*, both in their individual and Church capacity, must eventually become, in the public estimation, objects, first of distrust—then of dislike—then of abhorrence.

A Church whose practices abrogate the fundamental principles of justice, can *continue* her hold upon the community *only* as she favors and sustains selfish combinations; winks at the vices of designing and aspiring men, and contributes to the strength of political influences which create and enforce unrighteous and oppressive enactments, and make the general good subserve the interests of the few. Such a Church yields to a meretricious connection with the State—and becomes the tool of an odious aristocracy: a position forbidden not only by the spirit, but by every sentiment of a pure Christianity: and a connection in which she betrays her divine Lord for pelf, and panders to tyranny, instead of acting as the friend of the poor, the defender of the *Truth*, and the guardian of human rights.

How far is the professing Church in the United States thus connected?—and will she not, at no distant period, in the course she has long pursued, cease to be acknowledged as the *true* Christian Church?—are the *Questions* of absorbing interest, now before the American public. Is the gold becoming dim? Is the most fine gold changing into alloy?

CHAPTER VII.

FAITHFUL DEALING—TRUE POSITION.

SEC. I.—CHRISTIANS SHOULD HAVE CONFIDENCE IN EACH OTHER—AND THE CONFIDENCE OF THE WORLD.

IN circumstances so peculiarly critical and responsible as those in which Christians in the United States now are, a strong and continuous effort should be made to maintain confidence in each other. That many of our Churches and Religious Bodies, as such, are losing the confidence of non-professors, is an unquestionable fact. The movements of these organizations, their acts and omissions, are well known, and have created very extensively a deep sensation. The good sense of all reflecting men, in the Church, and out of it, cannot but teach them, that the Church of Christ should be known as certainly, always and in all circumstances, approving what Christ approves, and condemning what Christ condemns; and that all their acts should be paternal, kind, conciliatory, and invariably in palpable accordance with truth, justice and mercy.

SEC. II.—A COMPLAINT OF SLANDER ANSWERED.

It is complained that our Churches and Religious Bodies are slandered:—that British Christians misunderstand our peculiar relations—that American Christians are belied when it is said of them that they sustain iniquity.

In regard to this whole matter let *facts* testify.

1. Ministers of the Gospel, and other Church members, give their vote to elevate a Duellist to a civil office.

2. They vote for a Slaveholder.

3. With the means of knowing the crimes, and the guilt, and desolations, involved in and inseparable from the system

of American Slavery, the testimony of the Pulpit and the Churches against the system is faint and feeble, and the majority of them take no decided action against it.

4. Slaveholders are received to fellowship in the pulpit, and at the Lord's Table.

5. The mass of Christians fall in with a corrupt public sentiment, in fostering and supporting war.

Such facts clearly indicate the moral sense of the Churches.

It would be regarded an insufferable outrage if persons who steal *money* were tolerated in the Church—and if Ministers who rob on the highway should be invited into the pulpit to preach. But both theft and robbery are inseparable from Slavery, and under the system they are openly and unceasingly maintained, and at the same time slaveholders are, in the majority of the Churches in the United States, countenanced and employed as preachers, and acknowledged as accredited communicants. It is this fact which astonishes Christians and the philanthropists of Europe, and induces them to ask, can it be that *Christians* and Christian Ministers, at this period of the world, can be slaveholders, or in any way countenance the system? and if they do these things, can they be really pious men?

But with American Christians it is deemed not only abusive but even a crime, to represent the slaveholder as guilty of robbery or theft: and they will turn upon those who do this in great wrath, while they use kind words of affection and fellowship towards the men who actually deprive the slave of his manhood, and withhold from him his dues, and sell him as they sell a brute.

How has it come about among us, that those who sanction the stealing of *men* are held in good repute, while stealers of *money* are discarded, and that theft and robbery cease to be a crime worthy of notice and reprobation if the sufferer be black?

How is it that so much apathy exists in reference to the extraordinary condition of Thompson, Work, Burr, Walker, and Torrey, and others, from the free North, punished under the *form* of law; and at the same time, not one of them, in fact, guilty of any act recognized as an offence or crime under those laws which are superior to the enactments of States,

because they are founded on the fundamental rights of all mankind, and arise from the inherent principles of natural justice? Within the purview of these principles it is not a crime for a person enslaved to gain his liberty—nor a crime to counsel the enslaved to secure his liberty, and to furnish him with the means of doing it. Where are the rights of an American citizen if he is arraigned, put in irons, in the pillory, branded with a hot iron, and doomed to the penitentiary among felons, for an act of *justice* and mercy? A Christian people, tolerating and sustaining enactments opposed to natural justice and the law of God!—sympathising with the oppressor!

It is the revolting wonder in our Republic, that Christians should not only refrain from the most pointed rebuke and condemnation of human chattelship; but that they should defend it, and have fellowship with those who sustain it.

Flagrant injustice, under the garb of Christianity, is beyond the reach of apology. This injustice is seen and known to be attached to Christians and Churches who are sustaining the American slave system; and who can be surprised that a discerning and justice-loving public should turn away from such Churches and Christians with disgust, and that many should regard Christianity itself as a system inadequate to the wants of mankind?

When *Man* is made a *thing*, the injustice is so palpable, so flagrant, that it is seen and felt at the instant that the *fact* is revealed. Every lover of justice will of course raise the cry of condemnation. But thousands of professed Christians commit this very crime: hundreds of Ministers are guilty of it.

Is it then slander to represent the Churches in the United States as unfaithful, and egregiously wicked in their treatment of the American slave system? Is it traitorous to tell them that, in the course they pursue in reference to this and other giant public sins, they must lose the public confidence, and utterly fail to discharge their high and solemn duties to a perishing world?

Verily, if the moral sense of the *ministry* were not stupified, the pulpits of the land would blaze and thunder against the system of American slavery, duelling, licentiousness,

war, and other sins, and their occupants prefer stripes and death in any form, rather than incur the guilt of infidelity, when truth, justice and mercy are victims upon the altar.

If the moral sense of the *Churches* were not stupified, they would pour their joint testimony and rebuke in a continuous burning torrent upon the ear and the conscience of the oppressor.

This, and nothing short of this, is what the philanthropist demands of the Church and her Ministers, and he will not, he cannot, have confidence in them if they fail to give it.

This, and nothing short of this, is demanded by the public sentiment of Christendom, of Christians in the United States, that they call loudly and without ceasing for **JUSTICE, JUSTICE**, in the name of the **God of Justice**; and that they prosecute, with increasing faith and strengthening energy, the proper measures for this end, till the oppressor shall cease from his crime, and the oppressed be released from his bondage.

This is the only course by which Christians in the United States, as a body, can throw off from themselves the heavy but just charge of hypocrisy, and cleanse out from their Christian character the deep stain burned into it by the foul, revolting injustice and cruelties so long practised, either by themselves directly, or by their consent or connivance, upon our colored brethren and fellow-citizens.

There can be but one opinion, except with those who in some way are committed to the wrong, in reference to the attitude which all the religious bodies in the United States should take towards the public sins in this nation—that is, the attitude of frank, open, unqualified, strong, unretracted condemnation; the attitude of utter exemption from even the appearance of holding a connection with them, or giving them countenance.

The American Bible Society nobly resolves to furnish every family, and even every reader, in the land with a copy of the Scriptures, and calls upon the people to enable them to redeem the blessed pledge.

But if their agents be known to give a copy to the slave—a member of the Church, thirsting for the water of life—and to encourage him to read, he is arrested as a criminal!

By civil enactment nearly one-sixth of the whole people are forbidden to read the Bible.

Who will say that the Bible Society is right if she keep silence in reference to *such enactments*?

Are religious bodies soulless, mere abstractions, and with no fear of God before their eyes, because they act in a corporate capacity?

And in respect to the colleges, theological seminaries, female seminaries, public schools, and schools of all kinds in the land, Philanthropy, Reason, Patriotism, Religion, Justice, demand that pupils from all classes shall be admitted, irrespective of color; and if industrious and law-abiding, that they be made welcome, receive full and equal protection, and enjoy, in all points, the same and equal privileges.

If there be any schools of any grade which do not proffer and secure all this, of such it cannot be strictly and truly said that their doors are open for all classes, and that colored persons are freely and cheerfully admitted.

Neither can it in truth be said that our public schools are open for the reception of people of all classes, so long as young women of color are not readily admitted and fully protected in our female seminaries.

To exclude one-sixth of all the females in the United States from educational privileges is alike anti-republican and anti-Christian; and makes all pretensions of a desire to elevate our colored people, and to restore to them their long-denied rights, hollow-hearted and disgusting.

No one course of action by Christians and religious bodies in the United States strikes so broadly and deeply into the elements of our whole character as a people, and so universally affects our essential interests, as that which they have long pursued and now follow towards the colored portion of our fellow-citizens and brethren.

CHAPTER VIII.

INFLUENCE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT ON THE STATE.

SEC. I.—CIVIL FREEDOM THE RESULT OF RELIGIOUS FREE- DOM.

THE subject of Church government is one of great moment, affecting deeply and widely the civil, political and religious rights and interests of mankind. Religion has, in every nation, given the shape and character to its civil and political institutions. The religion of the men who govern the nation is the controlling religion of that nation, and the political character of the government will be like the moral character of this religion. We see all this verified both among heathen and Christian nations.

All the civil governments in Christendom feel a powerful, if not a controlling influence, from the government of the Church within its limits.

Be it marked and remembered that, if the elements in the government of the Church are at variance with the elements of the civil government, public sentiment, ever the creature of the current religion of the country, will (silently, it may be, but surely) carry the influence of the elements ecclesiastical against and over the influence of the elements civil; and the community, in their views of civil liberty, will become permanent at, or will rise no higher than, the point marked by the Church. So long as man is a religious being will this be the case.

Such considerations impart a paramount interest to the subject of Church government. And no people more need to look to this subject with a candid, wakeful, and tireless interest, than the citizens of this Republic.

The spirit of freedom looks out upon us through the *letter*

of our National and State Constitutions ; but it becomes a living reality no farther than this spirit finds a practical development among the Churches in the land. When you see freedom of speech quelled in the legislative assemblies of the country, you will find that this encroachment upon *civil* rights has been *preceded* by the curtailment of freedom of speech in the Churches. Persecution in the State has come up in the wake of persecution in the Church. Political bodies do not trample upon the public interest, till religious bodies have sacrificed inalienable rights in the vestibule of their own temples, and at the altars of their own religion.

Sagacious statesmen and political demagogues are well apprised of these facts, and make their *moves* accordingly ; and never move with a lighter heart and a quicker step, than when they perceive the leading influences in the Church to be more conservative than aggressive in the application of their avowed principles.

SEC. II.—CONGREGATIONALISM SCRIPTURAL.

The position is taken in the preceding pages, that the only mode of Church government prescribed and taught in the New Testament, is Congregational.

This mode, it is believed, happily accords with the spirit, enters into the essence, and accomplishes the designs of Church organization.

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks authoritatively on this point in the 18th of Matthew. Then he adds, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. That is, wherever the smallest number of Christians can be found, *there* I recognize the elements of a true Church. This is *His* act of Church organization. The number is always a matter of contingency, and cannot at all affect the nature or the essence of the organization.

Now what is Church organization on our part ? It is simply this : the public recognition of each other as disciples of Christ, by two or more brethren joining hands in covenant in the name of the Lord, and freely and mutually acknowledging the obligations already resting upon them as disciples. This done, they are to all intents and purposes a Christian Church, and embody all the elements and the es-

sential circumstances of a valid and regular Church organization, in accordance with the views and practice of Peter, Paul, and James: the same so highly valued and contended for by John Bunyan, and the early English Independents and Baptists.

In this organization you have Christian principle, Christian practice, Christian character, Christian resolutions, Christian covenant, Christian labor, and the promised presence of Christ. And what more or else is needed to impart validity and authority to a Christian Church?

What of any possible value can be added by the Pope, or the Bishop, or the Theological Faculty, or the General Conference, or the General Assembly, or the Synod, or the Presbytery, or the Association, or the Council? And it seems idle to attempt to sustain any other mode or system of Church government by a reference to parchments, historical records, the Fathers, and the Apostolic succession.

The *object* of Church organization is, to reform and reclaim a fallen race. *Christians* and all such are to be recognized as co-workers, in covenant vows, in this enterprise. The very nature and essence of this covenant recognition or organization, consist in the natural expression of their mutual confidence in each other as *fellow* laborers, and their solemn and honest and earnest mutual pledges thus to labor. Beyond doubt these are the elements and all the essentials of Church organization; and there seems to be no place for a scruple as to the *order* and *form* of the organization, unless you admit a foreign element, selfishness, to prick up the members in the unholy strife who shall be the greatest.

SEC. III.—EDUCATES THE PEOPLE.

It is the marked excellency of Congregationalism, and true to an extent confessedly unknown under any other form of Church government, that it educates the PEOPLE. It scrupulously and minutely maintains the rights of each and of all in accordance with the fundamental fact that the assembled brotherhood are the only safe depositary of power among Christians, and thus rears the citizens in the abiding attachment to republican and democratic principles.

New England has been the seat and source of Congregationalism in this country ; and its wonderful history furnishes the most incontestible and the richest proof of the blessings the people have themselves enjoyed and conferred upon others under this mode of Church government.

In the first hundred years of its existence, very nearly all the Christians united in Congregational Churches. In 1700 there were in all the New England States then settled 900 Episcopalians, of whom 185 were communicants. There were no Methodists, and with the exception of Rhode Island, very few Baptists : not a single Church of this denomination existed in Connecticut, and but two or three in Massachusetts. At the same time there were 120 Congregational Churches in New England, besides 30 churches composed of Indians. These Churches were the pioneers, who laid the foundation and sketched the course of action for succeeding ages ; and the fact is undeniable that New England is *what she is*, chiefly from the influence of the Congregationalists and Congregational principles.

The Baptists, who have greatly multiplied since and are now spread over the whole land, universally adopt the Congregational form of government.

From their beginning the Congregationalists were assiduous in training their children in the study of the Scriptures. To this end all classes in the Christian communities had the means of a good common education. They wished their children to be well instructed in fundamental truth, because they wished them to be saved.

Congregationalists stand specially prominent among those who have largely and continuously contributed for the endowment of common schools, academies, colleges, and theological seminaries ; and the happy results of this liberality have been felt in every section of the country.

In no community is knowledge so generally diffused as in New England : and none of equal numbers has sent out so many men to bless their country and the world by their talents, their learning and their piety. To the policy of the Congregational Churches, securing a thorough and general education of the PEOPLE, more than to any other instrumentality, is this honorable and marked pre-eminence to be ascribed.

SEC. IV.—CONDUCTIVE TO VITAL GODLINESS.

Pure Congregationalism is the most efficient organization for the promotion and spread of a spiritual religion. Facts, in the long period since its revival, and distinct organization, among the Puritans of England, most impressively confirm the truth of this position; which is here presented, not to the disparagement of other denominations; nor even to intimate that spiritual religion is not promoted under other forms of Church polity, but that it may be recorded and noted to what a marked extent and degree the Divine Saviour has owned and blessed his disciples in the maintenance of that simple Church organization he gave in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

From the first, these Churches have been signalized by frequent and powerful revivals of Religion. Indeed, New England was born in a Revival, and the chastened spirit of holy love which prayed her into being, has at no time forsaken her, but has been cherished and fostered, by effusions of the Holy Ghost, to the present period.

In the benevolent operations of this country since the commencement of the present century, Congregationalists have taken the lead. Deduct from the aggregate of money contributed in the United States for institutions of learning and for missionary and other objects of benevolence and charity, the amount given by those who sustain the Congregational polity of Church government, and the result will tell strongly and loudly. Mark the amount given for these purposes in the single State of Massachusetts, and study well the instructive and significant appeal of arithmetical figures, pointing to the instrumentalities by which the result has been affected.

SEC. V.—FOSTERS FREE INQUIRY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THOUGHT.

Robinson, in his farewell Sermon to the Pilgrims before their departure for America, uttered the following sentiments, which should be engraven on every Christian's heart, and emblazoned through Christendom from age to age. "Brethren, we are now quickly to depart from one another, and whether

I may ever live too see your faces on earth any more, the God of Heaven only knows: but whether the Lord has appointed that or no, I charge you before God, and his blessed Angels, that you follow *me*, no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveal anything to you, by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it, as ever you were to receive any truth, by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident the Lord has *more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word*. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Churches who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw—whatever part of his good will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it; and Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things.

“This is a misery much to be lamented; for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God: and were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light, as that which they first received. I beseech you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God.”

SEC. VI.—LIBERAL.

In 1641 the Plymouth colony passed an ordinance in these words, viz.: No injunction shall be put upon any Church or Church member as to doctrine, worship or discipline, whether for substance or circumstance, beside the command of the Bible.

The old South Church in Boston, formed 1669, has in her covenant the following article, viz.: We do hereby covenant and promise to hold, promote and maintain fellowship and communion with *all the Churches of the saints*, in all those holy ways of order, appointed between them by our Lord Jesus, to the utmost, especially with those among whom the Lord hath sent us, that the Lord may be one, and his name one, in all these Churches, throughout all generations, to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus.

Hume says of them in his history, "It is the true glory of the Independents, that of all Christian sects, it was the first which, during its prosperity, as well as its adversity, always adopted the principle of *toleration*."

Congregationalists in this country have, as a matter of habit, freely contributed money and influence in aid of other denominations, thus honoring their Church *polity*, which is pre-eminently *anti-sectarian*. Under what was originally intended to be the *fostering* wing of the plan of union they have added to the Presbyterians hundreds of Churches and many thousands of communicants; and her children have gone out in scores for many years to swell the numbers of Baptists and Methodists. Indeed, if the pure Congregational polity were followed, both in the spirit and in the letter, if none but those who give evidence of Christian character, were received into the Church, and *all such* were fellowshipped in all Christian duty and practice, the spirit of *sect* would be annihilated, and a *sectarian Church* would find no foothold among the followers of the Lamb of God. It is *only* by a return to the simple principles of this Heaven-derived polity, that the flood-tide of ills and curses which from the fountains of sectarian bigotry has set in upon the souls of men and overwhelmed their dearest earthly interests, can be stayed.

SEC. VII.—FOSTERS THE SPIRIT OF CIVIL LIBERTY.

It is in the organization of a Congregational Church and in that only, that the *perfect* idea of civil and religious liberty has been realized.

The Puritans followed the Apostles in their Church polity, building on the basis of entire independence and perfect equality of rights. In this simple and most efficient organization they saw the germ of perfect civil liberty; and twice they saved the British Constitution from being crushed by the usurpations of the Stuarts. Hume, who hated both their character and the noble principles from which it germinated, is compelled to admit, that what of liberty breathes in that Constitution is to be ascribed to the influence of the Puritans. He says, "So absolute, indeed, was the authority of

the crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the Puritans; and it was to *this sect* whose principles appear so frivolous, and habits so ridiculous, that the English *owe the whole freedom of their Constitution.*" On a subsequent page he further says, "It was only during the next generation that the noble principles of liberty took root and spreading themselves under the shelter of *Puritanical absurdities*, became fashionable among the people."

SEC. VIII.—REPUBLICANISM AND DEMOCRACY—JURY TRIAL.

The Pilgrims, before they landed from the May Flower which bore them across the Atlantic, formed themselves into a civil body politic on the fundamental principle that the majority should govern, and thus made paramount the bold idea of a free elective government.

The trial by jury, a basis principle in the elements of civil liberty, is derived from the appointment of Christ in the 18th of Matthew. The jury trial in civil governments is Congregationalism. All legitimate ecclesiastical courts are a trial by the jury of *the PEOPLE*.

Of the 500,000 inhabitants in New England in 1760, 440,000 were Congregationalists. At the commencement of the revolutionary struggle, this same New England was the seat of liberty principles and liberty measures. The commissioners of King Charles reported of Massachusetts—"their way of government is Commonwealth-like; their way of worship is rude and called Congregational." Lord Clarendon declared that the colonies of New England *were already hardened into republics*. From this form of Church government have been derived the peculiarly free and excellent forms of State Governments in the northern States.

This spirit of Republicanism and Democracy, and from the same source, early showed itself in Virginia. "Several years before the American Revolution, there was, near the house of Thomas Jefferson, in Virginia, a Church which was governed on Congregational principles, and whose monthly meetings he often attended. Being asked how he was pleased with the Church government, he replied that it had struck him with great force, and had interested him very

much; that he had considered it the only form of pure Democracy that then existed in the world; and had concluded that it would be the best plan of government for the American colonies." Thus this apostle of Democracy took elementary lessons on politics from a Congregational Church.

A writer in the London Quarterly Review says, "It soon became apparent, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that the Puritans *tended naturally towards* Republicanism; for certain it is, that *Monarchy and Episcopacy*, the throne and the altar, are much more nearly connected than writers of bad faith or little reflection have sought to persuade mankind. Besides this *insensible but natural inclination towards Democracy, which arises from the principles of a popular Church government*, there was another cause why the current should set in that direction; it was only under commonwealths that the Puritans saw their *beloved discipline flourish*."

No people are fit to manage their *civil affairs*, unless they are intelligent and virtuous. No body of men are qualified to conduct the concerns of the Church who are not intelligent and pious. Throw upon them the responsibility of this management, and you press them with the strongest motive to acquire knowledge. Hence, those who depend upon others to act for them can never become a thinking, reading, independent people.

The fact that the Congregational polity places all Church power in the hands of the brethren of the Church, happily diminishes motives to pride and worldly ambition; withholds the means of lordly usurpation; furnishes the happiest incentives to Ministers to diligence, activity and holy living; contributes powerfully to the promotion of piety among the members, and provides the greatest possible safeguard against the inroads of heresy.

The other forms of Church government, which have extensively prevailed, are Episcopacy—Roman, English and American; and Presbyterianism. The Methodists in the United States have generally adopted the Episcopacy.

Of these forms of Church polity no remark is here made, other than that in their essential elements, and in most, if not all, their modifications, they are anti-Republican and anti-Democratic.

In their civil and political arrangements and polity, the people, in the sovereignties of the respective States, and in the general government, are strictly Republicans; and in the elective franchise approach nearly to a realization of a pure Democracy.

But in their *religious* polity, these same lovers of Republicanism and sticklers for Democracy, turn away from the delightful vision of Liberty and Equality, and practically discard the principle that the sovereign power is lodged with the PEOPLE; and more than half of them settle down, without scruple, as Churches, or in connection with Churches, under an aristocracy and a monarchy.

In the English Episcopacy the Archbishop ranks, in ecclesiastical dignity, next to the King, and is supreme in his province. Each Bishop is sole judge, in his own court, of all ecclesiastical offences.

The nature of our government does not admit of a Supreme Head of the Church, and in this respect American Episcopacy is incomplete. There is a yearly convention of the clergy and laymen of each diocese, and a triennial convention composed of delegates from the several dioceses; but the House of Bishops, who meet by themselves, have the power of a *full veto* upon the proceedings of the other house.

The government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is *strictly episcopal*. The spiritual and temporal business of this Church, is under the general supervision of six Bishops, who have the control and direction of more than two thousand travelling preachers, and numerous local preachers.

No lay delegates are admitted to sit in the yearly or general conference; and yet these bodies, with the Bishops, have the control and government of the entire Methodist Church. With the Bishops, the presiding Elders, and the travelling preachers, lies the power to control everything.

John Wesley said of himself and his Methodist brethren, we are no republicans. Richard Watson, a standard writer among the Methodists, says, a popular form of Church government could only be tolerable in very small, isolated societies, and that in the times of their greatest simplicity

and love. Again, Mr. Wesley says, as long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists.

Among Presbyterians the government is lodged with a bench of Elders, with the right of appeal to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly, each of which is a constituted court of review and control—the final decision, lying in the General Assembly.

By this sketch may be seen the essential elements of church polity in these denominations of Christians, and that it is anti-republican and anti-democratic; and also that between them and Congregationalism, there is a fundamental difference.

SEC. IX.—THE PEOPLE ASLEEP OVER THEIR DANGERS.

This subject requires the candid but critical investigation of the Statesman, the Philanthropist, the Moralist, and the Christian. This world has not yet witnessed the best developments of the fundamental principles of righteousness, and the full results of a pure Christianity. That the gospel is adapted to the wants of men, and a perfect remedy for the ills of *public* as well as private life, is a truth of which its intelligent friends feel assured, and which is yet to be illustrated and confirmed by a most blessed and glorious realization in the domestic circle, in all the departments of business, in the civil and political arrangements of the people, and in the whole economy of religious and Church action and experience. And whether the *State* can permanently enjoy the blessings of a free government, all the rights of all the people being protected and secured, while the polity of the Church is, in theory and practice, at variance with the basis principle of all Republicanism and Democracy, is a problem now in process of solution in this nation; and urged upon its consideration in circumstances fearfully ominous.

In the experiment thus far, *Liberty has been the loser*. Our civil government does not protect the persons and rights of its citizens. Churches under all the forms of government have sustained the most vile, the very worst kind of oppression. Men of solemn and high professions of piety, make merchandise of their brethren. The great portion of Church

members in the land have practically declared, at the ballot-box, their deliberate disregard of the Divine injunction, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And it is with the deepest anxiety that men who *abide* by the right and the true, mark the rapid and the extraordinary developments of character now in progress in this Republic, and wait for the result. As a nation, we are sporting on the crust of a heaving volcano.

In a sense and to an extent not known in any other nation, does it lie with the Churches to put forth a redeeming influence. Not by a non-committal, mere conservative, or compromising policy—a course falsely termed *prudent*: but by a prompt espousal, a wise advocacy, a fearless proclamation, and an inflexible persevering support of the fundamental principles of moral law, righteousness, and Christianity, in a *practice* which shall cover all business operations, civil and political duties, Church action, and personal intercourse; thus creating and maintaining a correct conscience among themselves, and contributing effectually to the formation of a correct public sentiment; the only course which will render the pure principles of the Gospel paramount in the legislation of the nation, and the Republic of the United States permanent in its existence, and a blessing and a glory in the earth.

“I shall count my country lost in the loss of primitive principles, and the primitive practices upon which it was first established,” exclaimed the gifted Cotton, in the early period of New England.

The excellency and the glory of the civil government of this country arise from the great fact, that there is so little of it. Its simple principles, mighty in strength, demand nothing more than a simple legislation; and this simple legislation, moderately ramified and extended, is enough for the people. The crippling, withering defect, and even crime against liberty, in our civil government, has been *excess of legislation*: the folly and faithlessness of our statesmen in office, that they have attempted too much, and distressed the country by its mass of regulations—and what of liberty remains is exposed to death by suffocation.

In the Church the same difficulty exists. Too much legis-

lation, which converts the meetings of Christian brethren into scenes of profitless debate, and often of intrigue—excess of splendor, modes and tests: which smothers the spirit of piety and shuts the poor from the sanctuary.

The remedy for the State must be sought in a thorough radical retrenchment—first, in its legislation; then other things will follow.

The remedy for the Church is to be found in reducing all her ecclesiastical legislation and discipline to the pure Republicanism taught and enjoined by the Lord Jesus Christ, and St. Paul, his inspired servant; the broad Democracy embodied and proclaimed in the second table of the Divine Law—and in faithfully *practising* the doctrines of the Gospel which she professes to honor and to love.

POSTSCRIPT.

NEW YORK, Dec. 10, 1844.

THE INNOCENT IMPRISONED AND PUNISHED.

The arrest and punishment of Thompson, Burr and Work, in Missouri; Lane, in Virginia; Walker, in Florida; Torrey, in Maryland; Fairbanks and Miss Webster, in Kentucky; all, in respect to the grounds of complaint, perfectly guiltless of any *crime* against God or man, are *marked events*, developing still farther the American Slave System, and the extraordinary and alarming apathy of the American people; and cannot but greatly increase the disgust and horror of the philanthropists of Europe. It has now become a recorded fact, emblazoned in the court-room, heralded in our public prints, reported in all lands, that under the Republican Government of the United States of America a free-born citizen who shall counsel and aid the SLAVE to get his *freedom*, is to be branded with a hot iron, consigned to the pillory, and immured in the State Prison—that the malignity of Slavery is permitted by the government, to lay her bloody hands on the friends of men and thrust them into her dungeons, to suppress all action for her overthrow.

ROTTEN TIMBERS IN THE NATIONAL SHIP.

The appalling fact is no longer concealed, that there is an essential, radical defect in our National Government—that the Constitution of the United States, according to the popular construction, annihilates its own noblest principles—that the friction in our political institutions, if not removed, must eventually, and at no distant period, wrap them in a quenchless conflagration! All this is so, if we take the *practical* exposition of the Constitution by our statesmen as correct. Whether this exposition be not, in fact, practical treason against the spirit and designs of the Constitution, is a high and great question, on which the people are happily beginning to open their eyes in solemn and earnest inquiry—an inquiry which receives a new impulse from every fresh encroachment of the Slave power.

Who can doubt, if the above named persons were prisoners in Algiers, that public sympathy would flow in a deep current of accumulating indignation, and promptly demand redress? Miss Webster, arrested and confined in jail at Lexington, Ky., on suspicion of breaking the slave laws of that State, is from a respectable family in Vermont, and a Teacher in a Seminary. How would Green Mountain gallantry, patriotism, and love of liberty, leap and bound and swell, if this young woman were imprisoned by the hand of barbarians?

We are not a free people. Neither the Constitution, nor the administration of the Government under it, has secured to us protection in our personal rights. State laws most essentially conflict with the rights of citizens. The legislative action of the slaveholding States is a positive and progressive encroachment upon liberty within their own limits, and in every other State in the Union. Freedom of speech and of the press in favor of human rights is suppressed, in disregard of their own written Constitutions and the Constitution of the United States. In the midst of all this, there is a reckless indifference, an infatuated concurrence, a stupid neglect, a most selfish and faithless recreancy in civil courts, and with our Statesmen, who are bound by *oath*, as well as considerations of patriotism and integrity, to go deep and

thorough into an accurate exposition of the principles of human liberty, and to march steadily on to the attainment of the glorious ends and aims of our national Constitution: to be the leaders of the people and of the *World* in every department of freedom—the jealous guardians of private and public rights—civil and political architects to carry up the fair temple of Liberty in a beautiful symmetry and sublime proportions. Nothing short of this was the cherished anticipation of the founders of this Republic. Nothing less than this can correspond with the elements in its foundation.

Instead of this, how deep, how overwhelming the disappointment, that as a nation, we have actually come to the question, whether it is practicable to prevent our splendid Federal Government from becoming a splendid wreck, whose fragments shall be tauntingly gathered up by Tyrants to strengthen the conviction they so much delight to magnify, that the people can never be qualified for self-government!

Whereas, if Jurists and Statesmen would but study the Bill of Rights in the State and National Constitutions, all of which express the essential elements of human liberty; if they would honestly maintain that MAN, as man, is, at all times and every where, entitled to his freedom: if they would but see even what is self-evident, that there is no elementary principle of right on which Slavery can repose,—if they would not practically deny the two great maxims which constitute the simple but immoveable foundation of all valid jurisprudence, divine and human, viz. that *authority* is built upon *Right*, and that *Reason* is the soul of *Law*; long ere this, would it have been inscribed upon the portals of our State and National legislation, and of our Courts of Justice,—“*A Slave cannot breathe on the soil of the United States.*”

As a matter of fact, the practical, and to a great extent, the avowed exposition of the Constitution has been against liberty and in favor of Slavery. The question of liberty has been compromised, and its overthrow guaranteed. Our sublime theories of human rights are steeped in the innocent blood of our citizens. Nor can we deceive the Nations by our lofty abstractions on the equality of man and his right to liberty and life, while our prisons groan with crimeless vic

tims : and, even the power of our government employed, on sea and land, to crush millions of its native-born citizens.

Our government is based on the principle of human equality, and the Statesman who will not study, understand and practise the principles of liberty, should be repudiated.

The prevailing spirit of the age in which our Constitution was formed, was an anti-slavery spirit. This spirit was manifest in the leading minds by which the Constitution was projected, formed and adopted, not one of which entertained the expectation that Slavery would increase ; and a compromise in favor of Slavery would have been repelled as absurd.

The object of the anti-slavery movement is to throw light upon every part of this subject. Much has been already achieved. Statesmen, in the progress of events, will be compelled to examine this subject and to understand it. The People are, to a good extent, aroused, and acquiring light under the teachings of Divine Providence.

Let the people cling to the Constitution ; give it the strict construction which shall make its provisions sustain its avowed and noble designs : amend it where it halts or is equivocal, in support of freedom.

All correct and just expositions of this instrument, must fully and clearly accord with its designs, and the well-known spirit of its founders, and speak out intelligibly and strongly its inherent principles ; and under its broad shield it is the duty of the *Community*, the *People* in their primary assemblies, the *Citizen* in his high investiture at the BALLOT BOX, to demand that the personal rights, all the rights, of each member of the community be unfringed and respected.

Let the fundamental principles of JUSTICE, REASON, LAW, and LIBERTY, the freedom which reigns and blesses in *practice*, while it dazzles and attracts in theory, be thoroughly canvassed in our Colleges ; taught in our primary schools ; breathed in the nursery ; inculcated in the church ; spread out and enforced in the teachings of the pulpit, as an integral portion of the Gospel of Salvation, and the common right of the human family.

It is a false attitude, and a perversion not to be countenanced, to say that the doctrine of human rights, the princi-

ples of liberty, and the essential elements of politics cannot safely and profitably be studied by the American youth, in the course of their education. The alphabet of freedom is never thoroughly understood when it is not learned in early life.

Love of country is taught, ardently cherished, and lauded, as a high qualification in the youth. And when the fire of patriotism glows in their swelling hearts, they are regarded with delight as the hope of the country. Surely, then, should they understand the elements of civil liberty, who are entitled to it; what are encroachments upon it, the means of defending it, and their deathless obligation to confer it upon all the inhabitants of the land. Their education is essentially defective if this training be omitted. And among the dark symptoms that are upon us, is the fact, that this training is so extensively omitted in the Colleges and other Seminaries in the land.

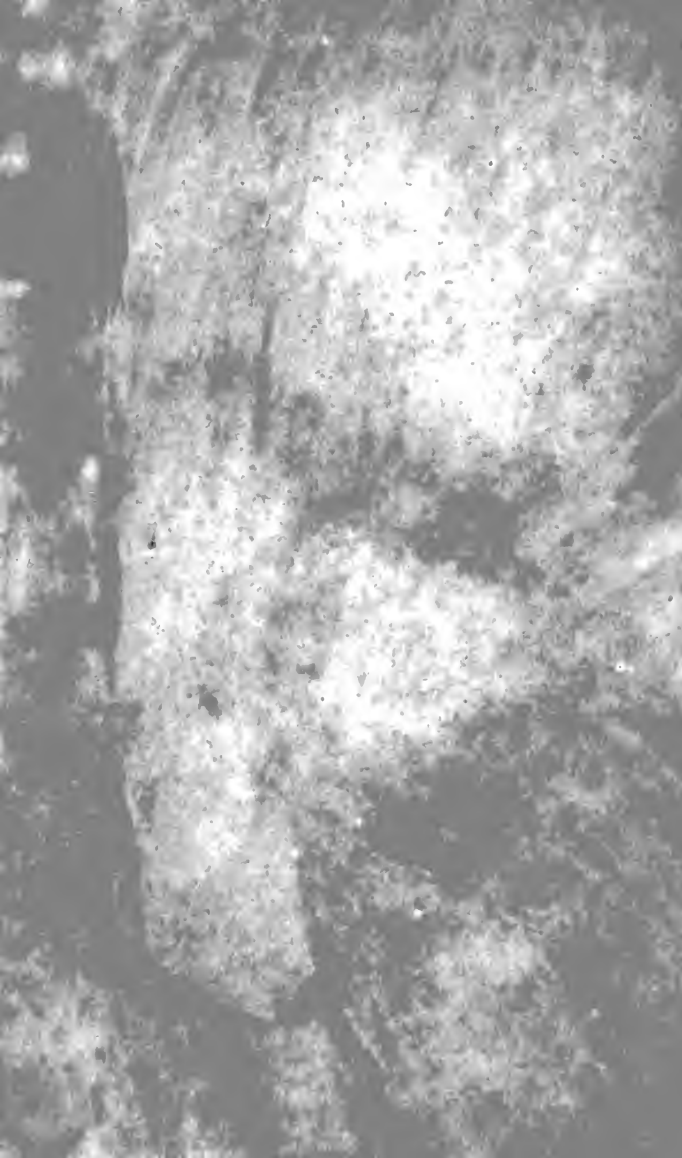












Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01029 9842