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HISTORY OF ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM

BY
R. W. DALE, D.D., LL.D.

COMPLETED AND EDITED BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

NOT very long before his death, my father spoke to me of the work that he was leaving unfinished, and said that he wished his *History of English Congregationalism* to be published, if it could be done.

How the book was first planned, and how the plan was altered, has been told elsewhere, and there is no need to repeat the story. The book began as a manual; but it grew in size and scope—as books are apt to grow; and it would not be compressed into a couple of hundred pages. It was to have been written for the Congregational Union; but the author preferred to speak for himself, free from all responsibility to others.

During the later years of his life he gave to the task what strength and leisure were left him. Much of the ground to be traversed was already familiar. Church history, and the history of the Congregational Churches in particular, had been his lifelong study. The earliest of his public utterances to attract attention had dealt with the Ejection of 1662. And in the years that followed—the period of energy and strength—he had set himself to revive and to enforce the theory of the Church on which the Congregational polity is built. Still later, turning aside from other work, with the pen and on the platform, he had dealt with the history of Congregationalism,

with the men who had helped to make it, and with the place that it has held in the religious life of the nation. He had gathered great stores of material, and after his withdrawal from public service he enlarged them by steady and persistent research. The *History* must have reached the stage at which he left it some time in 1894; and he had brought it down to the year 1885. He himself believed, as he said in a letter to Mr. Charles Miall, that only one chapter was left to write; and that the task could be finished in a day. But his manuscript, when it came into my hands, was incomplete in many places. Parts of it had not been finally revised; most of it had not been revised at all. Notes, indicated in the text, were not to be found. And the references to sources and authorities, which he meant to be full, were meagre or missing.

The book could not be published as it was left. But how to deal with the manuscript, and what amount of freedom an editor had a right to exercise, and within what limits he might expand, cancel, or amend, were questions not to be lightly settled.

The editor's function in such a case, so it seemed to me, was to make the book, so far as he could, what the author would have made it, had he lived to finish it; to fill up gaps, to cut out repetitions, to complete the references, to verify statements and conclusions by the aid of original authorities. And although free use has been made, with due acknowledgment, of the works of other historians, the rule has been to go back, wherever possible, to the quarries from which they took their materials.

This is the method that has been followed almost throughout. But the last two chapters have been added. The

chapter dealing with the institutions and enterprises of Congregationalism my father had asked me to write—why, he did not explain—at a time when he still hoped to finish the book himself. After writing it I felt that the history should not close with a bald catalogue, and that the International Council of 1891 was a real land-mark in the history of Congregationalism, and that it would make a natural and fitting close. Elsewhere, it is not possible to state what has been added to the original. But except in the first two books, there are but few chapters in which some paragraphs have not been inserted. The appendix of authorities is mine, and so is a large part of the notes. Of one thing, however, the reader may be sure, that where opinions are expressed, they are the opinions of the author.

The work has not been done in haste; nor has it been done at leisure. Its difficulties, great in any case, have been increased by distance from the libraries in which alone much of the literature indispensable for the task is to be found. Easier access to the British Museum would have saved many a wasted hour, and would have retrieved many a blunder.

But help has been generously given wherever it was sought. Many of my obligations must remain without individual acknowledgment. But to the Librarians of the Archbishop's Library at Lambeth and of Dr. Williams's Library in Gordon Square; to Mr. G. T. Shaw, the Master of the Liverpool Athenæum, and to Mr. Cunningham, his assistant, a special debt of gratitude is due; nor would it be right to leave unrecorded the services of the Rev. T. G. Crippen, the Librarian of the Congregational Library at the Memorial Hall; of Mr. Sydney Robjohns; of my own colleagues, Mr. John Sampson

and Mr. T. H. Graham, of the University Library, Liverpool ;
and of my secretary, Miss Phoebe Byles, who has saved me
from the risk of finding myself in that corner of Purgatory
which is reserved for those who publish books without an
index.

LIVERPOOL,

28th December, 1906.

A. W. W. DALE

CONTENTS

BOOK I

CHURCH POLITY IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE, AND AFTER ATTEMPTS TO RECOVER THE LOST IDEAL OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE POLITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES	3
II. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD: MISTAKEN AND UN- SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO ASSERT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE APOSTOLIC POLITY.	14
III. THE SURVIVAL OF THE TRADITION OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.	24
IV. THE REFORMATION AND CHURCH POLITY	34

BOOK II

ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER ELIZABETH

I. ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER ELIZABETH, 1558-1603	47
II. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH UNDER ELIZABETH	66

CHAP.	PAGE
III. THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ENGLAND	83
IV. ATTEMPTS AT REFORMATION WITHIN THE CHURCH .	101
V. "REFORMATION WITHOUT TARRYING FOR ANY" . .	120
VI. MARTYRS	138
VII. EXILES	165

BOOK III

ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM FROM THE DEATH OF ELIZABETH TO THE RESTORATION

I. APPARENT DEFEAT OF PURITANISM	177
II. THE PILGRIM FATHERS	191
III. REVIVAL OF CONGREGATIONALISM IN ENGLAND . .	210
IV. THE BISHOPS' WAR	222
V. FROM THE MEETING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CIVIL WAR	234
VI. CONGREGATIONALISTS IN THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY	257
VII. PARLIAMENT AND THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY . .	290
VIII. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE PARLIA- MENT, THE COMMONWEALTH, AND THE PROTECTORATE	305
IX. THE EJECTMENT OF THE EPISCOPALIAN CLERGY, 1640- 1658	332
X. PRESBYTERIANISM RE-ESTABLISHED	344
XI. THE FALL OF THE COMMONWEALTH	352
XII. GENERAL REVIEW OF CONGREGATIONALISM FROM THE MEETING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT (1640) TO THE RESTORATION (1660)	360

BOOK IV

FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE REVOLUTION

CHAP.	PAGE
I. NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMPREHENSION AND TOLERATION	393
II. THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY	407
III. THE EJECTION OF THE NONCONFORMIST CLERGY .	418
IV. PERSECUTION AND THE FIRST INDULGENCE	423
V. JAMES II.	445

BOOK V

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE DEATH OF GEORGE III

I. THE TOLERATION ACT AND THE COMPREHENSION BILL .	461
II. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESBYTERIANS AND THE INDEPENDENTS	474
III. THE OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY ACT	485
IV. THE DISSENTING ACADEMIES AND THE SCHISM BILL .	499
V. ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM AT THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE	507
VI. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UNDER GEORGE I. AND GEORGE II. .	515
VII. THE SALTERS' HALL CONTROVERSY	528
VIII. ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER GEORGE I. AND GEORGE II.	540
IX. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UNDER GEORGE III.	563
X. ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER GEORGE III. .	580

BOOK VI

FROM THE DEATH OF GEORGE III. TO THE PRESENT
TIME

CHAP.	PAGE
I. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FROM 1820 TO 1891	609
II. CONGREGATIONALISTS AND NATIONAL EDUCATION	646
III. THE FORMATION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGREGA- TIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES	686
IV. THE DECLARATION OF FAITH AND ORDER	699
V. THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES	710
VI. INSTITUTIONS AND ENTERPRISES OF MODERN CONGRE- GATIONALISM	727
VII. THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL, 1891	745
APPENDIX OF AUTHORS	751
INDEX	769

BOOK I

*CHURCH POLITY IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE, AND
AFTER ATTEMPTS TO RECOVER THE LOST
IDEAL OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS*

CHAPTER I

THE POLITY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES

POLITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE: APOSTOLIC CHURCHES, CONGREGATIONAL AND INDEPENDENT CHURCHES—CHURCH AT CORINTH, A.D. 95—EARLY CHURCH ORGANISATION—TWO ORDERS: EVIDENCE OF CLEMENT, POLYCARP, “DOCTRINE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES”—DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH ORGANISATION IN THE SECOND CENTURY—THREE ORDERS—BISHOPS AND PRESBYTERS DISTINCT IN ASIA MINOR—BISHOP NOT A DIOCESAN OFFICIAL—BISHOP, THE SECURITY AGAINST SCHISM (IGNATIUS); AGAINST HERESY (IRENÆUS); THE ABSOLUTE VICE-GERENT OF CHRIST (CYPRIAN)—CHANGE OF ORGANISATION DUE TO CHANGE IN THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH—CHRISTIAN COMMONALTY, DISREGARDING THEIR DUTIES, LOSE THEIR POWERS.

I

THE converts to the Christian Faith in the apostolic age were gathered into religious societies to which the New Testament attributes an extraordinary dignity and sanctity. To the apostles every society of Christians was a society of “saints,” “a temple of God,” “the body of Christ.”¹

It is certain, indeed, that many of those who bore the Christian name even in those early times had very little of the spirit and temper of Christ. They were contentious, arrogant, unforgiving, vain, and ambitious. It was necessary to warn them against lying, theft, and gross sensual sins. Their knowledge of Christian truth was imperfect, and they sometimes drifted into heresies which were inconsistent with the central facts of the Christian Gospel. But that in every actual Christian society there were some who were not Christians at all, and some whose loyalty to Christ was maintaining a

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 27.

very doubtful struggle with passions and habits which the law of Christ condemns, was not regarded as a sufficient reason for suppressing the responsibilities and powers which belong to those who are one with Christ and have received the eternal life which God has given to the world in Him. The Christian Church was organised, not for unbelievers, but for Christians. It was meant to consist of those who are regenerate of the Holy Ghost ; who are one with Christ, as the branch is one with the vine ; who have received eternal life—the very life of God. This glorious ideal determined the polity of the Church. By its very organisation all Christian men were reminded of the divine wisdom and strength which were their inheritance in Christ.

Their functions varied, but they had common rights because they had common duties. They were all alike the brethren of Christ ; and the honour and joy of receiving into the Christian household those to whom Christ had given “ the right to become children of God ”² belonged to them all. They were all responsible for maintaining the authority of Christ ; and if any member of the Church wilfully and persistently disobeyed Christ’s commandments, they were under a common obligation to censure the offender, and, if he did not amend, to remove him from the Christian community. They were all taught of God, and had all been entrusted with the defence of “ the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints ”³ ; and it was the duty of the commonalty of the Church, as well of its officers, to “ try the spirits,” to “ prove all things,” and to “ hold fast that which is good.”⁴ The qualifications for official service in the Church were given by the Spirit of God, but the whole Church determined on whom these qualifications had been conferred, and elected them to office ; and as the whole Church had power to elect, it also had power to depose. The elders, bishops, pastors, leaders of the Christian community could instruct, warn, admonish, rebuke : they had a large though undefined authority ; but their authority was effective only as it secured the consent and support of their unofficial brethren. They did not even form a separate “ order,” with powers co-ordinate with those of the Christian commonalty. The whole congregation of the faithful was responsible for the whole life of the Church—for

² John i. 12.

³ Jude 3.

⁴ 1 John iv. 1 ; 1 Thess. v. 21.

its faith, its worship, and its discipline. The Churches of the apostolic age were *Congregational* Churches.

And because they were Congregational, they were *Independent*. Each Christian assembly stood in the immediate presence of Christ, and was directly responsible to Him. It was the body, the organ of His will. When its members were gathered together in His name to worship, His presence made the prayers of the assembly His own. When they were gathered together in His name to determine questions affecting the organisation and government of the Church, His presence gave an august sanction to their decisions : what was bound on earth was bound in heaven ; what was loosed on earth was loosed in heaven. The acts of an assembly in which Christ was present could not be subjected to the revision, did not require the ratification, of any external authority.

II

About the fortunes of the Church between A.D. 70 and A.D. 110 we know very little ; but as late as A.D. 95 the responsibilities and corresponding powers of the Christian commonalty in the two great Churches of Corinth and Rome were unimpaired. At Corinth the people had deposed some of their elders—men who apparently had been appointed to office by the apostles themselves ; and Clement, writing to the Corinthian Christians in the name of the Roman Church, does not tell them that they had gone beyond the limits of their authority. The power of a Christian congregation to depose its bishops is unchallenged, though he thinks that in this particular instance the power has been exercised unjustly.

Nor does he suggest that there was any authority outside the Corinthian Church itself which had the right to receive an appeal from the bishops who had suffered injustice and to restore them to office. In the name of the Roman Church he remonstrates with his Christian brethren at Corinth and condemns them in terms of unmeasured severity. But he claims no authority, either for himself or the Church of Rome, to revise and reverse their decision ; nor is there any intimation that the Churches in the immediate neighbourhood of Corinth could reopen the case and redress the wrong. The Church

at Corinth was still an Independent Church, because it was still a Congregational Church.⁵

Clement's Epistle also shows that as late as A.D. 95 he—a leading bishop of the great Church at Rome—knew nothing of “the threefold ministry” of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. To him “bishop” and “presbyter” are different names for the same office. He himself does not claim to be a bishop at Rome in any other guise than that in which all the other Roman presbyters were bishops. He recognises no bishop as having supremacy over the other presbyters at Corinth. He says that the apostles appointed bishops and deacons; of any third and intermediate order he knows nothing.

The organisation of the Church of Philippi early in the second century appears to have been the same as when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Philippians forty or fifty years before. Paul speaks of “the bishops and deacons” of the Church at Philippi. Polycarp speaks of its “elders and deacons”; the elders were bishops under another name.⁶

A remarkable document, *The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, published by Bryennius, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, and assigned to the last years of the first century or the early years of the second, contains additional proof—though additional proof is unnecessary—that towards the end of the obscure period between A.D. 70 and A.D. 100, there were Churches in which episcopacy was as yet undeveloped. The only church officers mentioned in this ancient fragment of Christian literature are bishops and deacons.⁷

It is very possible, indeed, that it had been customary in Rome, in Corinth, and in Philippi, long before the close of the first century, for one of the “elders” or “bishops” to preside regularly in the assemblies of the Church and in the meetings of the church officers. But the presiding elder was only an elder; or, if he was called a bishop, he had colleagues who were also bishops.

⁵ Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers (Part 1)*, *S. Clement of Rome*, i. 82–83, 378–381; and ii. 131 foll.

⁶ Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers (Part 2)*, *S. Ignatius*, *S. Polycarp*, i. 427–428, and ii., section 2, 897 foll, and 914–918.

⁷ *Didache* (Bryennius), 51, and *Introduction*, lxi.

III

But in the course of the second century the president of a Church received a distinctive title, and came to be regarded as holding a higher rank than that of his fellow presbyters. He was the bishop : his colleagues were described as elders or presbyters, and their original equality with their president was gradually lost. Instead of the two classes of officers which existed in the apostolic Churches—bishops and deacons, or presbyters and deacons—there were three—bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

It seems probable that this innovation began in the Church at Antioch ; it may have been suggested by the unique position of James, the brother of our Lord, among the elders of the neighbouring Church in Jerusalem. From the epistles of Ignatius it appears that the distinction between bishop and presbyter was recognised—perhaps as early as A.D. 107, certainly as early as A.D. 117—not only in the Church of Antioch but in the Churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Magnesia, Tralles, and Philadelphia. These five Churches, however, were all situated in one small district in Asia Minor ; and there is no contemporary evidence—no trustworthy evidence of any kind—that at this early date any distinction between bishop and presbyter was acknowledged in other parts of the world. There is decisive evidence that ten or twenty years before these epistles were written the distinction was unknown in Rome, Corinth, and Philippi.⁸

And the bishop of the Ignatian letters is not a diocesan bishop : he is the president of a single congregation. No authority over the presbyters is attributed to him corresponding to that of a modern bishop over his clergy ; but the Ignatian bishop and the Ignatian presbyter share between them the government of the Church, and the powers of the Christian commonalty are altogether suppressed. If the language of the Ignatian letters is to be taken seriously, if no allowance is to be made for mystical and rhetorical exaggeration, the authority claimed for church rulers is enormous, not to say blasphemous. And though this authority

⁸ For a brief discussion of the origin of episcopacy see R. W. Dale, *Manual of Congregational Principles* : Appendix, Art. III.

is shared by all the presbyters, it is concentrated in the bishop, who, to use Dr. Lightfoot's felicitous phrase, is the "visible centre of unity in the congregation."⁹ To separate from the bishop is, therefore, to separate from the communion of saints, and to separate from the communion of saints is to separate from Christ.

IV

In the writings of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 177), there is another representation of the idea of the episcopate. "If you wish," he argues, "to ascertain the doctrine of the apostles, apply to the Church of the apostles. In the succession of bishops tracing their descent from the primitive age and appointed by the apostles themselves, you have a guarantee for the transmission of the pure faith, which no isolated, upstart, self-constituted teacher can furnish. There is the Church of Rome, for instance, whose episcopal pedigree is perfect in all its links and whose earliest bishops, Linus and Clement, associated with the apostles themselves: there is the Church of Smyrna again, whose bishop, Polycarp, the disciple of John, died only the other day."¹⁰

To Ignatius the supremacy of the bishop was the great protection of the Church against *schism*: it was by the recognition of episcopal authority that each individual congregation was to be held together, and that divisions originating in personal wilfulness and ambition were to be prevented. To Irenæus the supremacy of the bishop was the great protection of the Church against *heresy*: the episcopate was regarded by him "not so much as the centre of ecclesiastical unity, but rather as the depositary of apostolic tradition."¹¹

⁹ Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 233; *Dissertations*, 198-199.

¹⁰ But we have seen (pp. 5-6) that Clement himself did not claim that he was a bishop in any sense in which his colleagues in the eldership were not bishops. And Polycarp, too, was unaware, when he wrote to the Philippians, that a bishop was anything more than a presbyter. The translation of the passage from Irenæus is in Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 237; and also in *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, 203-204.

¹¹ Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 237-238; *Dissertations*, 204.

IV

A third conception of the episcopal office is illustrated in the writings of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (A.D. 248): "The bishop is the indispensable channel of divine grace, the indispensable bond of Christian brotherhood. The episcopate is not so much the roof as the foundation-stone of the ecclesiastical edifice; not so much the legitimate development as the primary condition of a Church. The bishop is appointed directly by God, is responsible directly to God, is inspired directly from God. This last point deserves especial notice. Though in words he frequently defers to the established usage of consulting the presbyters, and even the laity, in the appointment of officers, and in other matters affecting the well-being of the community, yet he only makes the concession to nullify it immediately. He pleads a direct official inspiration, which enables him to dispense with ecclesiastical custom and to act on his own responsibility. Though the presbyters may still have retained the shadow of a controlling power over the acts of the bishop, though the courtesy of language by which they were recognised as fellow presbyters was not laid aside, yet for all practical ends the independent supremacy of the episcopate was completely established by the principles and the measures of Cyprian."¹²

And further, the sacerdotal assumptions of the Christian ministry, which began to appear in Tertullian, forty years before, were put forward by Cyprian "without relief and without disguise . . . and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language."¹³ With Cyprian the bishop is "the absolute vicegerent of Christ in things spiritual."¹⁴

V

To suppose that the only cause of the rapid disappearance of the responsibilities and corresponding powers of the commonalty of the Church is to be found in the ambition of the

¹² Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 241-242, and *Dissertations*, 208-209.

¹³ Idem, *Philippians*, 257; *Dissertations*, 226.

¹⁴ Idem, *Philippians*, 238; *Dissertations*, 204.

rulers of the Church would be a grave error. That the passion for authority was strong in many of the bishops—and in some of the noblest of them—is indeed certain; but if the Christian people had retained the vigorous personal faith and the spiritual earnestness of the first generation of converts, they would not have surrendered their freedom; for their freedom was necessary for the discharge of their duties.

But a great change had passed upon the members of the Church, and this affected its polity. Towards the end of the first century it is probable that a very considerable proportion of those who bore the Christian name were men and women whose parents were Christians before them. If of Jewish blood, they had been taught from their childhood that the authority of the institutions of Judaism had passed away, and that the supreme hope of their race had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. If Gentiles, they had inherited a scorn of idolatry; they could never worship in the temples of paganism; the only religion possible to them was the religion of Christ; if they ceased to be Christians, they could only become atheists. Whether Jews or Gentiles, their faith was practically in very many cases a tradition and nothing more. But it was not easy for them to renounce it. They had grown up among Christians; had formed Christian habits of life and Christian associations: by apostasy they would lose their friends and gain no new ones; and they had been disciplined to regard apostasy as a shameful crime. They remained in the Church simply because they had been living among Christians from their childhood. It is probable, too, that as the Christian societies grew in strength, they drew into membership large numbers of heathen men whose religious life was hardly touched by the revelation of the infinite righteousness and love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Church the lonely and desolate found a home, the sorrowful sympathy, the poor generous relief; and it gave to all whose lives were dreary and monotonous the interest and excitement of an animated society. It was a "club," as well as a "school" and a "temple." Speculative men were attracted by new and unfamiliar forms of religious thought; those of a noble moral temper by the beauty and dignity of the new Christian morality. These men had never seen the glory of Christ, and they knew nothing of the blessed-

ness of the Christian redemption. They were, therefore, unconscious of any personal and direct responsibility to Christ for the manner in which the Church was governed, for its worship, for its faith. They were eager enough to take part in its business when questions arose which excited passion and provoked conflict ; and when a bishop was to be elected, it is probable that Churches were often agitated with fierce dissensions. But they were indifferent to the grave responsibilities which had been imposed on the Christian commonalty by the apostolic polity, and were incapable of discharging them. The corresponding powers were therefore surrendered almost without a struggle. The people lost their rights because they had lost both the capacity and the disposition to perform their duties.¹⁵

In these circumstances to increase the authority of the officers of the Church, and to restrict within narrower limits the power of the people, was a policy likely to commend itself to the judgment of the wisest and most devout members of the community. It must have seemed not only expedient, but necessary. It appeared to be the only policy that could restrain popular turbulence, secure peace, hold the Churches together, and prevent them from breaking up into rival factions. The true and ideal unity of every Christian community was to be found in the union of all its members in Christ ; but when there were large numbers of persons in the Church who were not "in Christ," the only method of securing unity—or the appearance of it—was to strengthen the authority of the church rulers. There was a conflict for ascendancy among the church rulers themselves ; one faction in a Church supported the pretensions of one presbyter, and a rival faction supported the pretensions of another. The obvious remedy for these miserable and ruinous conflicts was to invest one of them with a definite supremacy over the rest, and to make the bishop the very centre and foundation of the whole life of the community.¹⁶

If the great conception of the Church which was illustrated in the apostolic polity, and which had its roots in the substance of the Christian Gospel, had been vividly present to the devout men of those early times, they would have seen that the policy which seemed so expedient and so necessary

¹⁵ See Note A, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶ See Note B, p. 13.

was full of peril. But it was by very slow processes that the Church appropriated even the principal contents of the Christian revelation ; and the real nature of the Church itself lay very remote from the thought of the men who had to meet the dangers by which the new faith was confronted in the generation which immediately followed the apostolic age. They took the course to which they thought they were driven by the necessities of their times, and they were unable to foresee the immeasurable evils which they were entailing on future centuries. The fair ideal of the Church as a Christian brotherhood was lost, and was replaced by an institution in which the authority of church rulers became an object of ambition and an instrument of tyranny. The fair ideal of the Church as a society of saints, illuminated by the Holy Ghost, was lost ; the tradition of apostolic teaching was henceforth to be in the keeping of the bishops ; the defence and maintenance of the Christian faith were entrusted to official hands ; and it was forgotten that according to the original Gospel the Christian commonalty are "taught of God."¹⁷ The fair ideal of the Church as a community of men sharing the life and power and glory of Christ, and having immediate access to the Father because of their union with the Eternal Son, was lost ; and henceforth a human priesthood was to be the channel of all divine grace. At first the Church was believed to be so perfectly one with Christ, that the prayers of the Christian assembly were the prayers of Christ, and its decisions the decisions of Christ ; but in the course of the third century the bishop came to stand between the Church and God.

NOTE A

Spiritual Indifference and Clerical Supremacy

" Clerical despotism will be able to prevail only when the doors of the Church have been forced by a mixed multitude. These, being themselves indifferent to the true interests of the Christian life, are incapable of sharing the government of a religious body ; they will, therefore, gladly free themselves from a burdensome responsibility by casting it on their leaders. The hierarchy gains

¹⁷ John vi. 45.

strength in proportion as living piety declines. On the other hand, a Church composed of earnest, active Christians, well instructed in divine things, is a self-governing Church; it does not surrender to any the conduct of its highest interests, which it regards as no less than sacred obligations; its rights and its duties go hand in hand, and the former are forfeited only as the latter are neglected."—E. de Pressensé, *The Early Years of Christianity: Christian Life and Practice in the Early Church*, iv. 7-8.

NOTE B

Jerome on Presbyters and Bishops

Commenting on Titus i. 5, Jerome says: "A presbyter, therefore, is the same as a bishop, and before factions were introduced into religion by the promptings of the devil, and it was said among the people, 'I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,' churches were governed by the common council of their elders. But as soon as each man began to consider those whom he had baptized to belong to himself and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world that one elected from among the elders should be placed over the rest, so that the care of the Church should devolve on him, and the seeds of schism be removed." In another passage, he writes: "When afterwards one presbyter was elected that he might be set over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism, that each man might not draw to himself and thus break up the Church of Christ."

Ceillier's observations on these passages of Jerome's are extremely naïve: "To understand rightly this opinion of Saint Jerome's, it is necessary to remember that his only object in speaking so honourably of priests was to repress the pride of the deacons, who, deliberately ignoring the rank they really held, raised themselves above the priests, and measured their dignity, not by their merit, but by the riches of the Church which they held under their control. This Father was very glad to humble them by reminding them of their original function, which consisted in serving tables and relieving widows, and by showing them how much higher than the order of deacons was the order of priests." Yes, but this hardly touches Jerome's point: were the priests the equals of bishops? Jerome's object in his comment on the passage quoted by Ceillier, seems to have been to humble the bishops as well as to humble the deacons. [Ceillier, *Histoire des Auteurs Sacrés et Ecclésiastiques*, vii. 681(b), 682(a).]

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD : MISTAKEN AND UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO ASSERT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE APOSTOLIC POLITY

MONTANISM—LATENT CONGREGATIONALISM—NOVATIAN AND PURITY OF COMMUNION—DONATISM—AUGUSTINE'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST A RIGID STANDARD FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP—HIS CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH AND ITS TRUE MEMBERS—THE IDEAL AND THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

THAT noble ideal of the Church which was expressed in the church polity of apostolic times, continued to haunt the imagination of devout men through century after century of corruption, superstition, and spiritual tyranny. Again and again attempts were made to realise it ; but the earlier of these attempts were ruined by extravagance, fanaticism, and violence, and by a fatal incapacity to apprehend the spiritual principles in which the apostolic polity was rooted.

I

In the last quarter of the second century, Montanus, a native of Phrygia, claimed to be a divinely inspired prophet, and revolted against the growing power of the bishops and clergy. The extraordinary movement which he originated began to attract attention in the west about A.D. 177 : it extended over Asia Minor, reached Constantinople, and obtained adherents in many parts of the Western Church. It was finally suppressed by the Emperor Justinian in the middle of the sixth century.

At that time the Christian Gospel was coming to be regarded as a tradition which had been entrusted to the bishops as its official guardians ; Montanism asserted that the Spirit of God did not forsake the Church when the apostles passed

away, that divine illumination was still granted to men—and to men who held no office in the Church; that inspired prophets—not consecrated bishops—are the true successors of the apostles and the divinely appointed guardians of the Christian faith. The ordinary ministers of the Church were beginning to usurp the prerogatives and powers of a priesthood; Montanism asserted the priesthood of all Christians. Great masses of men, with no spiritual life, regarded themselves as secure of the divine favour in this world and of eternal blessedness in the next, because they were in the Church; Montanism taught that the Church consists of those, and of those only, who hear the voice of God and obey it.

The movement was a passionate attempt to recover a lost ideal; but it was wanting in that calmness, sobriety, and spiritual wisdom, which alone could have given it success. Every one of its great protests against the corruption of the age was marred by the gravest error. It asserted a noble truth in maintaining that the Holy Spirit still illuminated the true Church; but its conception of inspiration was mechanical and pagan rather than Christian. To Montanism the freedom and personality of the prophet were overpowered by the activity of the Spirit of God; he was not an inspired *man*, he was only a passive instrument of revelation.

It asserted a second noble truth in maintaining that every Christian man is a priest; but the moral worth of this testimony was destroyed by the inference that the asceticism which a false conception of the Christian life imposed on priests should be practised by all Christians.

It asserted a third noble truth in maintaining that those alone are true members of the Church who hear the voice of God and obey it; but by those who hear the voice of God Montanism meant those who recognised the inspiration of the new prophets; and so the true Church was made to consist—not of all those who received the Christian Gospel and found in Christ the Lord and Giver of Life, the Brother and Redeemer of men—but (1) of Montanist prophets, and (2) of those who acknowledged their inspiration.

II

To what extent the original conception of the Church survived in a purer form among obscure Christian men who organised no sect, and broke out into no revolt against the ecclesiastical authorities, it is impossible to say. It is, however, interesting to notice that in the middle of the third century, when Cyprian was making every bishop "the vicegerent of Christ," and was contending vehemently that where there was no Catholic bishop there was no true Church, and that where there was no true Church salvation was impossible, he was met by the objection that the presence of *Christ* in a Christian assembly—not the presence of a Catholic bishop—is the essential thing; and that Christ is present wherever two or three are gathered together in His name. Cyprian attempted in vain to give any effective answer to the objection; it was fatal to his whole position, and fatal to the whole theory of the Church which was now achieving a disastrous supremacy.

III

The real cause of all the disorders by which the Church was troubled was the introduction into its communion of large numbers of persons who were Christians only in name. For an assembly to secure that presence of Christ which makes it a Church, it must be an assembly of Christians. Only those who are "in Christ" can be gathered together in the name of Christ. But was it possible to clear the Church—and to keep it clear—of those who had no right to membership? Was it the duty of the Church to close its gates against those who were not loyal to Christ? If the obligation were made plain, could the duty be discharged? These questions were raised, but in a singularly unfortunate form, by the schism of Novatian.

Cornelius, who was elected Bishop of Rome A.D. 251, shortly before the death of the Emperor Decius, was charged with receiving back into the communion of the Church those who had sacrificed to heathen gods during the recent persecution. He was a "Catholic" bishop; the validity of his orders could not be contested. But Novatian—a presbyter

of the Roman Church, who before his conversion to the Christian faith had been a Stoic philosopher—maintained that idolatry was a mortal sin for which the Church had no power to grant absolution¹; that the true Church of Christ is a holy fellowship; that by receiving idolaters into its communion, the Church which submitted to the authority of Cornelius had ceased to be holy; that it was, therefore, no longer a true Church, and that Cornelius himself was no longer a true bishop. Novatian himself—perhaps against his will—was consecrated to the episcopate of the Roman Church, and endeavoured to obtain from the great Churches of Carthage, Antioch, and Alexandria, the recognition of his claims. His contention was, not that Cornelius, as a bishop, asserted an authority which belonged to the commonalty of the Church, but that he had not exercised his authority with sufficient severity.

In the party of Novatian there were large numbers of men who had endured cruel losses and sufferings through their fidelity to Christ. To them it seemed that the time of trouble had separated the chaff from the wheat. What the relaxed discipline of a degenerate age had been unable to effect had been effected by persecution. The Church had been cleared of “false brethren” who had corrupted its communion. A golden opportunity had come for restoring the zeal and the sanctity of an earlier age. If the Church were thrown open to those who in times of peril had denied the faith, the opportunity would be lost.

The controversy raised a question which touches the very foundation of the Congregational polity. The opponents of Novatian maintained that every religious society—however corrupt—under the charge of a bishop duly consecrated, and therefore standing in the true episcopal succession, is a part of the true Church of Christ; and that to separate from its communion on the ground of its corruption is to be guilty of schism. Novatian maintained that when the communion of a Church becomes corrupt, it is a part of the true Church of Christ no longer; to separate from its communion on the ground of its corruption is a duty. This, in substance, is the

¹ A Christian who had lapsed into idolatry might, according to Novatian, obtain the divine forgiveness; but the Church had no power to absolve him: all that it could do was to exhort him to repentance and commit him to the divine mercy.

contention of Congregationalism. A Christian Church should consist only of Christians ; and when any society consciously and systematically admits persons into its membership whether they are Christians or not, it has deliberately surrendered the ideal which every Christian Church should endeavour to realise.

But in the Novatian scheme the controversy assumed a form which involved a true and noble principle in discredit. Among those whose courage had failed in the persecution, there were doubtless many whose faith in Christ was genuine, and whose lives in more peaceful times were governed by His laws. To exclude them from the Church for ever, to refuse to receive their confession of sorrow for their fall, was an outrage on Christian charity ; and charity is the chief glory of the Christian Church. On the other hand, among those who had stood firm there were doubtless some, at least, whose steadfastness was due rather to the native stubbornness of their temper and to the vehemence of their party spirit than to the energy of their devotion to Christ.

The leaders of the schism claimed to be the defenders of the purity of the Church. They were altogether right in maintaining that there can be no true Church where the commonalty of the Church are corrupt. But their test of corruption was mechanical, unmerciful, unchristian.

IV

Another half-century passed by, and the Churches of Africa were rent by a schism in which some Episcopalian writers have discovered so close an analogy to Congregationalism that they have described Congregationalists as the modern Donatists.²

During the Diocletian persecution Mensurius, Bishop of

² But Roman controversialists have drawn from the history of the Donatists weapons to attack the position of Anglicans. A sentence of Augustine's, quoted by Bishop Wiseman in an article on the Donatists with an application to Anglicanism, made a profound impression on Cardinal Newman while he was still a "priest" in the English Church. "By those great words of the ancient Father, the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverised. . . . I had seen the shadow of a hand upon the wall" (John Henry Newman, *Apologia*, 211-213). To Anglicans, Congregationalists who separate from the English Church on account of its corruption are Donatists. To Romanists, the separation of England from the Western Church on account of its corruption involves all Anglicans in the sin of Donatism.

Carthage, had endeavoured to repress a fanatical eagerness for martyrdom, and to correct the superstition which regarded the martyrs with excessive veneration. In this policy he was supported by his archdeacon Cæcilian. Mensurius died A.D. 311, and Cæcilian was elected and consecrated in haste as his successor. The Numidian bishops denied the validity of his consecration on the ground that Felix, Bishop of Aptunga, who had consecrated him, was a *traditor*—that is, had been guilty of purchasing escape from martyrdom by surrendering copies of the Sacred Scriptures to the heathen during the persecution. The charge against Felix was denied, but an assembly of several Numidian bishops proceeded to depose Cæcilian, and consecrated Majorinus to fill the bishopric. Cæcilian refused to submit, and both parties appealed to the Emperor to decide the quarrel. Constantine directed the Bishop of Rome and five Gallic bishops to hear the appeal; their decision was given in favour of Cæcilian, but his opponents impugned the authority of the tribunal. The Emperor then remitted the question to a Council which met at Arles. The Council confirmed the previous decision; but the defeated bishop still refused to yield. Constantine himself was entreated to hear the cause, and after hearing it at Milan he confirmed Cæcilian in the bishopric.

Majorinus died A.D. 315; he had for his successor Donatus, who became the head of the party opposed to Cæcilian and gave his name to it.³ The Emperor, to crush the schismatics, deprived them of their churches, and a Roman army was sent into North Africa to enforce the imperial edict. The Donatists resisted, and they were supported by hordes of wild and reckless men who, according to the description of Augustine, “followed no kind of useful occupation; they held their own lives in fanatical contempt, and thought no death too cruel for those who differed from them; they wandered about from place to place, chiefly in the country districts, and haunted the huts of the peasants for the purpose of obtaining food. Hence they were called ‘Circumcelliones.’”⁴ Property was destroyed;

³ A Numidian bishop of the same name had already been one of the principal opponents of Cæcilian. It is *possible* that the adherents of the “schism” were called Donatists before “Donatus the Great” was elected Bishop of Carthage.

⁴ Augustine, *contra Gaudentium Donatistam*, i. § 32. Migne, ix. 725.

houses and churches were burnt ; large numbers of persons were massacred. So formidable were the outrages that Constantine at last yielded, and the laws against Donatism were repealed. On his death, Constans, who succeeded him in North Africa, attempted by a lavish distribution of money among the adherents of the schism to reconcile them to the Catholic Church. This provoked fresh violence, which the Emperor endeavoured to repress by fresh severities. Another attempt to bribe them into submission was followed by another fierce outburst of revolt, and the Circumcelliones again attempted to terrify the representatives of the empire by the devastation of property, by assassination, and massacre. They were again suppressed. At the accession of Julian (A.D. 361), the Donatists were restored to their churches. At his death the persecution was renewed.

A conference, at which 565 bishops were present, was held at Carthage A.D. 411, in the presence of an imperial commissioner, with a view to terminate the quarrel.⁵ Among the Catholics, who were in a small majority, was Augustine, who was now taking a leading part in the controversy. The commissioner decided in favour of the Catholic Church ; the Donatist clergy were exiled and their adherents fined. From this time the power of Donatism was crushed ; the great authority of Augustine effected what persecution had been unable to accomplish. The schism originated in the validity of the ordination of a bishop ; it soon raised questions of supreme importance in relation to the nature of the Christian Church.

The Catholics contended that as long as a Church retained the true episcopal succession, it was a part of the true Church of Christ, and that to separate from it was to forfeit the blessings of the Christian redemption. The Donatists, like the Novatians, replied that the character of the members of a Church is not less important than the succession of its bishops ; that there can be no apostolic Church where there is no apostolic discipline ; that when a Church permits unworthy members to remain in its communion, it loses the "note" of sanctity,

⁵ There is some doubt as to the number of those actually present at the Council. Mansi gives 286 Catholic and 279 Donatist bishops. Seven representatives were chosen by each side to argue the case before the imperial commissioner. (*Concilia*, iv. 7-276.)

and separation from it becomes the duty of all who desire to be loyal to Christ.

The Catholics maintained that the Donatists were in schism. The Donatists replied by appealing to the constancy of their martyrs, to the holy lives of their bishops, to the visions which came to them from God, to the miracles which were wrought in answer to their prayers. The Catholics declined to acknowledge that these were infallible signs of the true Church; Christ Himself had said that "there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."⁶

The Donatists quoted the words of Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where he insists on the practice of church discipline.⁷ "When the Church did not act in accordance with these rules," said they, "but tolerated unworthy members in her communion, she lost the predicates of purity and holiness."

Augustine replied: "It was true, church discipline should, by all means, be vigorously maintained; but that still such a complete separation from the rest, even of manifest transgressors, was, in the existing state of the Church, impracticable; that the evil must be patiently endured, to avoid a still greater one, and to give opportunity for reformation to such as could be reformed, especially in those cases where the wickedness which was to be corrected by church discipline was shared by too many." He attempted to show, by what we must allow to be a rather forced interpretation, that "the Apostle Paul was speaking only of *individuals*, whose vices were not common to many, and whose vices were universally known; so that the sentence of excommunication pronounced against such persons must have been acknowledged as just by all. . . . Where the infection of sin had seized on the many, the severity of a divine chastisement was required; for the counsels of human separation were vain and mischievous. They proceeded from pride; they rather disturbed the weak among the good, than exerted any power of reformation on the boldly wicked. Let man then punish what he may punish, in the spirit of love. Where he may not, let him suffer patiently, sigh and mourn with love, until either chastisement and reformation come from above, or, at the general harvest, the tares be rooted out

⁶ Matt. xxiv. 24.

⁷ 1 Cor. v.

and the chaff sifted away.”⁸ When the Donatists met Augustine’s argument from the parable of “the tares of the field” by our Lord’s own explanation of it, in which “the field” is declared to be, not the Church, but the world, Augustine replied that in this passage Christ used the term “world” in place of the “Church”—an assertion which has been made over and over again by the defenders of the Catholic theory from Augustine’s time to our own.

It has been a great and lasting misfortune to Christendom that the noble idea to which the Donatists were driven to appeal in defence of their schism should have been presented to the majestic and regal mind of Augustine under conditions so unfavourable to a fair estimate of its truth and importance. Among the Donatist bishops there may have been men of conspicuous holiness; but, while asserting the necessity of maintaining the sanctity of the Church, they were intimately associated with wandering bands of fanatics and assassins. Where there is the most earnest protest on behalf of the authority of Christ, there ought to be the most generous charity. But the Donatists were not satisfied with insisting that they themselves were bound in conscience to separate from Cæcilian and to deny the validity of his consecration; they went on to declare that every Church that continued to recognise Cæcilian as Bishop of Carthage ceased to be a true Church of Christ, and that the only true Church in the whole world consisted of the partisans of Donatus in North Africa. It was doubtful whether Felix was a “traditor.” The Catholics were satisfied that he was not; and they retaliated on their opponents by appealing to official municipal documents to show that the Donatists were “traditores” themselves. But if Felix were guilty and the Donatists innocent, this was no justification of a schism which broke up the peace of hundreds of Churches, and inflicted on a whole province a century of horrible outrages and crimes. The trouble began on a merely technical question, lying very remote from the great principle which was declared to be involved in the controversy.

Augustine himself was not a man to refuse to recognise the contrast between the real and the ideal Church. In his

⁸ Neander, *Church History*, iii. 275–276, and Augustine, *Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis*, iii. § 15. Migne, ix. 632. Cf. *contra Cresconium*, ii. 43. Migne, ix. 492.

treatises on Baptism, on the unity of the Church, and against Cresconius, he teaches that the Church really consists of those—and of those only—who are one with Christ. He says that men may administer and may receive the sacrament of Baptism, and yet not be spiritually regenerated; that only those who are spiritually regenerate are members of the Body of Christ; and that it is of these—and only of these—that the Church consists. He says, further, that the Church consists of those who build on the rock—that is, of those who hear the words of Christ and do them, and not of those who hear the words and do them not. But to attempt to separate the regenerate from the unregenerate seemed to Augustine impossible. The Catholic Church had thrown open its gates to all comers, and the number of those who had entered, but were flagrantly destitute of all qualifications for “the communion of saints,” was so enormous, that to have attempted to exclude them would have broken up every existing Church both in the East and in the West. To begin afresh, to gather together in city after city those who gave credible evidence of their loyalty to Christ, would have been a policy of enormous difficulty. To Augustine such a policy would have appeared destructive of the very foundations of faith. He had found a refuge from scepticism in the traditions and authority of those great historic societies which had preserved through generation after generation “the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” These constituted the Catholic Church; and apart from these, so Augustine believed, there was no sure knowledge of the mind of Christ, and no possibility of eternal salvation. Naturally, inevitably, he endeavoured to justify their position. He concluded that the laws and characteristics of the ideal Church are not to determine the constitution and discipline of those visible societies which are held together by participation in the Christian sacraments. The tares are to grow together with the wheat till the harvest comes, and then the tares will be burnt in the awful fires and the wheat will be gathered into the garner of God. The ideal contrast between the Church and the “world” remains, but no attempt must be made to realise it. These conclusions, enforced by the name of the most illustrious theologian of the early centuries, have governed the policy of the great Churches of Christendom for fourteen hundred years.

CHAPTER III

THE SURVIVAL OF THE TRADITION OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

SACRAMENTS, NOT SPIRIT, THE QUALIFICATION FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP—ATTEMPTS TO REALISE THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS—MONASTICISM—FREE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES—BEGUINES—BEGHARDS—BRETHREN OF THE COMMON LOT: GERHARD GROOT—LUTHER AND THE BROTHERHOOD—FAILURE OF SUCH EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE TRUE IDEAL OF THE CHURCH—THE WALDENSIAN CHURCHES: PETER WALDO.

THE controversy with Donatism ended in giving a decisive victory to a false conception of the Church. The Church was now regarded as a great society consisting of all those who had received the Christian sacraments from duly authorised ministers. To determine whether any particular assembly was a Christian Church—or part of the Christian Church—it became unnecessary to inquire whether the persons who constituted it loved Christ and each other, and whether in their character and conduct they gave evidence of possessing that supernatural life in virtue of which all saintly souls are one with Christ and, therefore, one with God. The questions to be asked were of a formal and technical character. Had they received the Christian sacraments? Had they received the Christian sacraments, from a minister who had been authorised by a bishop to administer them? Had the bishop who authorised him been consecrated by the proper persons and according to the proper rites? To receive the Christian sacraments was to belong to the Christian Church; and things had come to such a pass that the Christian sacraments were not refused to persons who were flagrantly destitute of Christian life.

There are some “tares,” indeed, which even Augustine thought should be destroyed before the final judgment. The

sword was invoked to defend the Church from those who impugned the truth of its creeds or resisted the authority of its rulers. Heresy and schism were extirpated by ecclesiastical censures, by the fierce discipline of fire, imprisonment, torture, and death. But the more wholesome discipline which would have closed the doors of the Church against those whom no breadth of charity could regard as "faithful brethren in Christ," and as "sanctified in Christ Jesus,"¹ was neglected. The Church had ceased to be a society of saints.

I

But Christian men still longed for fellowship with those who shared their faith in Christ. Those who were born of God retained their near kinship to each other. The real tie which united them was the possession of a common life in Christ, not their common membership of a visible society which was very largely composed of persons in whom no indication of the presence and power of that life could be discovered. They were "taught of God to love one another": they knew that they had "passed out of death into life" because they loved the brethren.² Those longings for "the communion of saints" which the Church in its corrupt condition could not satisfy, sought satisfaction in other ways.

Devout men and devout women retreated into monasteries, not only to live a more regular life than was possible in the "world," but for the sake of the safety and strength and happiness which they hoped would come from close association with those whose hearts were filled with the divine love and whose lives were controlled by the divine law. They despaired of salvation while they were alone. Communion with those who knew and loved God was almost as necessary as communion with God Himself. In many cases it cannot be doubted that the monastic community was an assembly of really Christian men gathered together in Christ's name; and, though the conditions under which they were associated were artificial, and in many ways most pernicious, Christ knew what was in their hearts; and since they were drawn together by love for

¹ Col. i. 2; 1 Cor. i. 2.

² 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 John iii. 14.

the brethren and love for Him, He was in the midst of them.

II

When monasticism degenerated,—“there grew up beside it something new, and nearly allied to it, which strove by a purer and freer method to realise that for which the monastic communities were originally designed, but which they were now no longer able to effect. . . . Through the greater part of the Middle Ages we can trace a succession of *free spiritual associations*, which were often oppressed and persecuted by the hierarchy, pertained rather to the life of the people than to the framework of the Church, exhibited more or less a regulated form, and professed a diversity of doctrines, but which all emanated from a fundamental endeavour after practical Christianity.”³ In other words, those who earnestly desired to live a Christian life were conscious that they could not live it while they were alone. They discovered that association with others who shared their joy in the consciousness of restoration to God, and their hope of immortal glory, not only satisfied strong cravings of their spiritual nature, but increased the fervour of devout affection, added vigour to faith, and gave greater steadiness to Christian obedience. They learnt from personal experience that when they were near to those who loved Christ, Christ Himself came near to them.

As early as the eleventh century there were formed in the Netherlands societies of Christian women who were called *Beguines*, or “praying women.” They were not nuns, for they took no oaths that were binding for life; but while they remained in the community they were under vows to live a single life and to submit to the authority of the Superior. They had houses of their own; they were supported partly by their own earnings, and partly by the contributions of the charitable. “Their dress was uniform, consisting of a garment of coarse brown material and a white veil. They took their meals at a common table, and assembled daily at fixed hours for prayer and exhortation. The rest of the day was occupied actively, with manual labour and the care of the poor and the sick.”⁴ They were regarded with jealousy by the monks

³ Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, ii. 11.

⁴ Ullmann, *ibid.*, ii. 13.

and the clergy, but were greatly beloved by the common people and received the protection of princes and magistrates. In A.D. 1250 there were a thousand of these Christian women at Cologne. In Mechlin there were several thousands of them, and the *Beginagium*, which was surrounded by a ring-wall, must have resembled a modern Moravian settlement.

Early in the thirteenth century similar communities of men were founded—the first of them, apparently, at Louvain, A.D. 1220. “Being unmarried tradesmen, and chiefly weavers, they, too, lived together under a Master, took their meals in common, and met daily at a fixed hour for devotional exercises and addresses. They, likewise, wore a particular dress of a coarse stuff and dark colour, occupied themselves with handicrafts and works of charity, and earned the good opinion of the public by a usefulness like that of the *Beguines*.”⁵ The men living in these communities were called *Beghards*. “The *Lollards* differed from the *Beghards* less in reality than in name.”⁶ We are informed, respecting them, that at their origin in Antwerp shortly after A.D. 1300, they associated together for the purpose of waiting upon patients dangerously sick and burying the dead.”⁷ At first, the only object of the *Beghards* and *Beguines* had been to care for the wretched after the example of Christ, and to reach a higher level of Christian perfection than seemed to them attainable while they were living an isolated religious life. They accepted the doctrines of the Church and acknowledged the authority of its rulers. But early in the fourteenth century they broke away from the traditional creeds into the wildest mysticism—a mysticism which destroyed the obligations of morality. Their flagrant heresies and their flagrant immoralities provoked fierce antagonism. In the year 1329 their opinions were condemned by the Pope. Traces of the *Beghard* communities are to be found in several of the great cities of Germany as late as the end of the century, but they were at last suppressed.

Another attempt to realise “the communion of saints” was made by the *Brethren of the Common Lot*. Gerhard Groot, with whom this new attempt originated, was born at Deventer,

⁵ Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, ii. 13-14.

⁶ The *Lollards* were people that chanted or sang, as the *Beguines* and *Beghards* were people that prayed—if the traditional etymology be correct.

⁷ Ullmann, *ibid.*, ii. 14.

A.D. 1340.⁸ He was a student in the University of Paris and the University of Cologne; at Cologne he also distinguished himself as a Professor. On leaving Cologne he became Canon of Utrecht and of Aix-la-Chapelle. He was wealthy, took part in public amusements, was self-indulgent, and apparently wholly indifferent to the duties of his calling. But a great change came. He discovered the vanity of earthly things, and the awfulness of death and of eternity. He retired from the world and spent three years in a Carthusian monastery, reading the Scriptures, praying, examining his own heart, and practising a severe asceticism. Then he obtained a licence to preach. The churches were too small to hold the people that crowded to hear him. Frequently preaching twice a day, and three hours at a time, he created throughout the whole diocese of Utrecht a genuine revival of religion. Stolen property was restored; drunkards became sober; people that had been living in gross sin began to live a virtuous life. He was no enemy of the Church, but he attacked with unsparing severity the corrupt morals of the clergy, and this raised up an opposition to his work which the bishop was unable to resist. His licence to preach was withdrawn, and he went back to his old home at Deventer.

Here he won the affections and admiration of the young men who were preparing for a priesthood at a school in the town. He invited them to his table; gave them direction in their studies; and assisted the poorer students to earn a little money. He set them to copying manuscripts for him, and paid them for their work. One of them said to him: "Dear master, what harm would it do, were I and these clerks, who are here copying, to put our weekly earnings into a common fund and live together?" Gerhard consented, and in this way the first society of the Brethren of the Common Lot was founded.

The new institution at once attracted the hearts of those who were conscious of the difficulty of living a Christian life without the aid and support of communion with Christian brethren. One "Brother-House" after another was founded in the Netherlands; soon the movement spread to other countries, along the Rhine, and to the very centre of Germany.

⁸ For fuller information as to the life of Gerhard Groot and his remarkable work, see Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, ii. 57-184.

The "Brethren" lived together under a regular rule, which determined their diet, dress, and the way in which they were to spend their time; but they were not excluded from the world like the monks. The members of the Brotherhood usually surrendered their property to a common fund, but in the infancy of the institution—whatever may have been the practice afterwards—this does not seem to have been compulsory. They worked for their living, but did not refuse to receive voluntary gifts, though they were forbidden to solicit them except in cases of necessity. They were not required to take any vows binding for life. In the government of the societies there was a large respect for individual liberty; and the Houses were not placed under any rigid and uniform system of laws. The Brethren spent their time in copying books, in preaching to the people, and in conducting schools in which some eminent scholars received their education. Thomas à Kempis was one of their pupils, and his *De Imitatione Christi* illustrates the type of mystical piety that he had seen in his teachers.

Their great prosperity extended from the beginning to the end of the fifteenth century. The invention of printing was a heavy blow to them: at first, indeed, they set up printing-presses of their own; but they had innumerable rivals, and the large income which for several generations they had derived from their work as copyists was lost. Their schools were gradually superseded; the scholars whom they had educated established schools of their own with a wider range of learning. When the Reformation came, the Brotherhoods were dissolved. The Brethren were compelled to choose between the new faith and the old. If they chose the old, it was inevitable that the Brother-Houses should submit to a more rigid rule and become Catholic monasteries; if they chose the new, it was not easy for them to maintain their separation from the Christian commonalty around them. Luther, indeed, was their firm friend and would have been glad to see the Houses preserved. Writing to the Burgomaster and Council of Herford in Westphalia (A.D. 1531), he said:—

"Inasmuch as the Brethren and Sisters were the first to begin the Gospel among you, lead a creditable life, have a decent and well-behaved congregation, and at the same time faithfully teach and hold the *pure* Word, may I affectionately entreat your worships

not to permit any dispeace or molestation to befall them, on account of their still wearing the religious dress, and observing old and laudable usages,⁹ not contrary to the Gospel? For such monasteries and Brother-Houses please me beyond measure. Would to God that all monastic institutions were like them. Clergymen, cities, and countries would then be better served, and more prosperous than they now are.”¹⁰

III

Monasticism and the freer spiritual communities of the Middle Ages, such as the Beguines, the Beghards, and the Brethren of the Common Lot, were endeavours to recover that healthy social environment for the religious life which had disappeared with the ecclesiastical polity of apostolic times. The craving for the communion of saints could not be suppressed, and the Church no longer satisfied it. Devout men and women were driven to found private societies of their own—societies separated from the “world,” from which the Church was no longer separated; societies composed of persons who were penitent for sin, who loved Christ, who seriously recognised the authority of His precepts, and seriously endeavoured to obey them. Only in such societies could Christian men feel that they were in their true home. Only in such societies could there exist the frankness of Christian confidence and the generous warmth of that love of the brethren which is a “note” of the true Christian life. Only in such societies could the ideal of Christian righteousness, imperfectly apprehended by the individual conscience, be illustrated and enforced by the spirit, temper, and example of a community. In such societies there was possible a freedom of brotherly exhortation not possible elsewhere. The common prayer of an assembly composed of the truly devout was something infinitely more wonderful and blessed than prayer offered in the heterogeneous crowd where the vicious and profane might largely outnumber those whose hearts had been filled with awe and with gratitude by the discovery of the righteousness and grace of Christ. What the Church, founded

⁹ “Laudable usages” was the name given by the Brethren to their precepts.

¹⁰ Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, ii. 176.

by Christ, had once been—"the house of God," the home of God's children, their refuge from the darkness and tempest and peril of the world outside—good men and women hoped to find in monasteries and free spiritual communities founded by themselves. Their hope was not altogether disappointed. In many cases it was largely fulfilled. But these voluntary associations were at the best private religious clubs—not, in the noblest sense of the words, Christian Churches. If it was their endeavour to receive into their fellowship only those whom Christ had received, many of those whom Christ had received were by the nature of their organisation excluded. They were not open to all Christians; they were open only to certain classes of Christians who were able to attempt what was generally regarded as a loftier kind of life than that which was attainable by the commonalty of the faithful. From the first they contained the elements of corruption and decay. They were the visible and pathetic signs of a deep and general longing for a society in which those who loved Christ might realise their brotherhood in Him; but they could not permanently satisfy that longing. They bore witness to the loss of the true idea of the Christian Church; but they did not restore it.

IV

Among the Waldenses, whose home was in the valleys of Piedmont, but who in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries became numerous in the south of France and in the north of Italy, and found their way even into Germany and Spain, there was a nearer approach to the ecclesiastical life and polity of apostolic times. It has been contended, indeed, with a considerable amount of evidence, that among the shepherds living in the secluded valleys of the Alps the tradition of apostolic teaching and apostolic practice had been preserved, while the rest of the Church was surrendering its original faith and freedom; and it is claimed for the Waldensian Church that it has maintained an unshaken fidelity to the simplicity of the Gospel from the earliest times to our own.

Towards the close of the twelfth century Waldensianism began to spread over southern Europe. About the year 1160

Peter Waldo,¹¹ a wealthy merchant of Lyons, having an earnest desire to learn for himself the true will of God concerning human salvation, employed two priests, one a man of some learning and the other a practised writer, to prepare for him translations of the Gospels and of other portions of Holy Scripture : the scholar dictated while the other wrote. Copies of these translations, which were originally made for Peter's own use, were distributed freely among the common people, and those who were kindled to religious earnestness were drawn into societies for religious instruction and worship. Laymen began to expound the Scriptures, to preach, and to conduct religious services ; they heard confessions, gave absolution, and administered baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹² They appealed from the tradition of the Church to the Holy Scriptures. Some of the brethren were appointed to office in the Waldensian societies, but every man that knew the Gospel was free to make it known to others. An opponent represents them as saying : " With us, men and women teach, and he who is a scholar of seven days already teaches others. Among the Catholics a teacher is rarely to be met with who can repeat from memory, letter for letter, three chapters of the Bible ; but with us, a man or woman is rarely to be found who cannot repeat the entire New Testament in the vernacular language."¹³ They had preserved or recovered the great idea of the priesthood of the commonalty of the Church.

The earliest adherents of Peter of Lyons appear to have had tendencies to asceticism and to have believed that poverty is a necessary element of Christian perfection ; but from these errors they soon escaped, and it is the distinction of the Waldensians that in endeavouring to realise the communion of saints they did not, like most of the societies described in this chapter, withdraw men from the ordinary pursuits of life.

It was no part of Peter Waldo's purpose to break with the Roman Church. Like John Wesley in later times, he was

¹¹ Those who assert that the Waldensian Churches have maintained—rather than revived—the tradition of early Christian Churches, contend that they received their name from the *valleys* in which their faith had been secluded from the general corruption of Christendom, and that Peter of Lyons was not called Peter Waldo till he had received the Waldensian faith.

¹² Neander, *Church History*, viii. 435.

¹³ *Ibid.*, viii. 431.

willing to recognise existing ecclesiastical authorities, if he and those who shared his faith were permitted to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to associate themselves together for communion with God and each other. Innocent III. was disposed to treat them gently, but the bishops who insisted on severity had a truer understanding of the real nature of the Waldensian movement. It was a protest against the usurpation of the priests, and against the corruption which had infected the fellowship of the Church. It recalled the first age of the Church : it was the prophecy of the Reformation.

CHAPTER IV

THE REFORMATION AND CHURCH POLITY

THE REFORMATION A REVOLT AGAINST THE CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH, AS THE SEAT OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY, THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE, AND THE CHANNEL OF SPIRITUAL GRACE, EMBODIED IN POPE AND BISHOPS—SUFFICIENCY AND SUPREMACY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE—TEST OF SCRIPTURE AS A DIVINE REVELATION—LUTHER'S METHOD: WHEN GOD SPEAKS, MAN CAN HEAR—THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT, THE RIGHT OF EACH MAN TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF GOD FOR HIMSELF—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: DIVINE SALVATION OFFERED TO THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL—INTERVENTION OF PRIEST UNNECESSARY—LUTHER ON ORDINATION—PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION FATAL TO THE CATHOLIC IDEA OF EPISCOPACY—LAMBERT'S SCHEME OF CHURCH POLITY, PARTLY CONGREGATIONAL, PARTLY PRESBYTERIAN—LUTHER AND LAMBERT'S PLAN—HIS GERMAN ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE—CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH DESCRIBED BY LUTHER, BUT PROTESTANTS NOT READY FOR IT.

I

THE Protestant Reformation, whatever else it may have been, was a great and successful revolt against that conception of the Church which had maintained its authority in Western Christendom for more than a thousand years. The Catholic Church, according to that conception of it, consisted of those—and of those only—who were in communion with duly appointed bishops. For Christ Himself had constituted the apostles the rulers, teachers, and priests of the Church: to resist their authority was, therefore, to resist the authority of Christ; and the apostles had transmitted to bishops the august powers which they had received from their Lord. It was the function of bishops to preserve the tradition of apostolic doctrine, to administer the sacraments, to absolve from sin, to govern the Church. They delegated some of these duties to priests, but the fountain of authority was in themselves. It was through the bishops that Catholic Christendom was

held together, and was constituted one mystical and glorious society ; it was through the bishops that the Church of later centuries inherited the grace and blessedness of apostolic times. But the bishops were confederate under the Pope ; and for several centuries before the time of Luther the Pope had been usurping the powers and prerogatives of the episcopate, as the bishops had already usurped the powers and prerogatives of the commonalty of the Church.

The place of the Christian people in the apostolic polity had been lost ; and the loss was something far graver than a mere loss of ecclesiastical authority—of the power to elect their own ministers, to control their own worship, and to determine the general policy of the corporate body to which they belonged. The disappearance of the organisation of the apostolic Churches was the visible sign of the disappearance of some of the characteristic ideas of the Christian Gospel. The Christian commonalty had lost their original position in the Church because their true relation to God was denied or obscured. For their certain knowledge of the contents of the Christian Gospel, Christian people had to depend on the priests, whose commission to teach was derived from the bishops. The Scriptures were withheld from the laity ; and even those laymen who had access to them were under religious compulsion to receive the interpretation which had been imposed on the words of Christ and of the apostles by the great Councils which represented the bishops of Catholic Christendom. “ The faith,”—so it was supposed—had been “ once for all delivered ”—to the bishops, not to “ the saints.” The episcopate—not “ the Church of the living God ”—was “ the pillar and ground of the truth.”¹ No man was permitted to listen to Christ for himself. The holiest women could no longer understand what Christ said to the woman of Samaria at the well, nor the most saintly men what He said to the crowd that heard the Sermon on the Mount. The definitions of Councils were necessary to prevent the words of Christ from leading unwary souls to perdition.

For the grace of pardon, and for that eternal life which was supposed to be given and sustained through the two great sacraments of the Gospel, the Church was also dependent on the bishops, and on the priests whom the bishops authorised

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

to absolve from sin, to baptize, and to celebrate the mass. The Christian salvation was accessible only through the appointed ministers of the Church. God was afar off from common men : He came near to them through the sacraments administered by the priesthood.

Against these pretensions the Reformers asserted (1) the supremacy and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as the final authority in all questions of religious faith and practice ; and (2) the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

II

1. But how are ordinary Christian people to know that the Holy Scriptures contain a divine revelation ? How can they tell what books are properly included in the Canon, what books are properly excluded from it ? Have not these questions been settled by the authority of the Church—or, in other words, by the authority of the bishops ? And if the decisions of the Church with regard to the Canon of Scripture are infallible, may not its decisions with regard to the meaning of Scripture be also infallible ?

Or, if the Canon is not accepted on the authority of the Church, must not ordinary Christian people accept it on the authority of theological scholars ? How can a merchant, a tradesman, a mechanic, master the evidence which proves that the Book of Jonah was written by an inspired prophet, that the Epistle to the Romans was written by an apostle, that the Gospel of John contains an authentic record of the discourses of Christ ? Must not unlearned men depend for the settlement of these questions on the authority of scholars ? What is to be done if the opinions of scholars vary ? And may not the tyranny of scholars be as grave an interference with Christian liberty as the tyranny of bishops ? If devout men and women can never be sure that they have a divine revelation in their hands until learned men have agreed that every book that is bound up in the Bible has a right to be there, the faith of the Church, instead of resting on the strong foundation of the divine Word, rests on the uncertain supports of human learning.

Luther's method of dealing with these difficulties was singularly courageous. It consisted in a bold application

of the principle underlying our Lord's account of the relations between the Shepherd and the sheep. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for *they know his voice*. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."² God's word—this was in substance Luther's contention—is not so like man's word that it is possible to mistake the one for the other. The Scriptures shine in their own light. Their authority, like the authority of conscience, is its own evidence and needs no support or confirmation either from scholars or bishops. Every true and honest man may know the voice of God when he hears it. If the books of Scripture are bright with a divine glory, why need we ask any man whether the books are divine? If they break the heart to penitence, if they inspire faith in the divine love and righteousness, if they actually reveal God, what further proof do we need that they contain a divine revelation? Who asks for the decree of a council or the judgment of scholars to assure him that the fires of the sun were kindled by a divine hand? To Luther it was equally unnecessary to ask for any external proof that the writer of the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans was taught of God: Luther saw for himself that the teaching was divine. He carried his principle to dangerous lengths. Where he himself could not see the direct evidence that the contents of a canonical book were divine, he had no scruple in challenging its authority. He called the Epistle of James "an epistle of straw." This was presumptuous. Other men might find God where Luther could not. He was too peremptory and too self-confident. But the principle of his method was in harmony with the whole contents of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. They assume that when God speaks, devout hearts will recognise His voice.

2. In asserting the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures the Reformers asserted what has been called "the right of private judgment." By this is not meant the right of every man to think as he pleases, which indeed is a right that no serious and rational person ever claimed either for himself or for other men. The moral and religious obligation to do our best to make our thought true to the fact is just as strong as the moral and religious obligation to do our best

² John x. 4, 5.

to make our word true to our thought. No man claims the right to "think as he pleases" in the investigation of historical events: it is his duty to submit his judgment to the evidence and to find all the evidence he can. In scientific investigation there is a similar obligation. No man claims the right to "think as he pleases" about the laws of electricity or of light; what he claims is the right to adjust his theory to the phenomena without interference on the part of "authority"; and the right to make his theory known without fear of penalties. Where we are ignorant we can "think as we please"; where we have knowledge thought ceases to be free; it must yield to the compulsion of fact.

And the right of private judgment in religion, as the Reformers understood it, was not the right of every man to form a religion according to his own fancy, but the right of every man to listen for himself to the voice of God. In the Scriptures, which contain the record of divine revelation, there is an appeal to the whole human race. It is every man's right, it is every man's duty, to consider that appeal for himself. The Scriptures were, therefore, translated into the language of the common people; tradesmen and peasants must be free to read them. Scholars and preachers may be of service in illustrating their meaning; but the final appeal is to the heart, the conscience, and the judgment of the individual man. It is to *him* that God speaks, and neither bishop nor pope has a right to stand between him and God. This was destructive of that episcopal usurpation which had suppressed the vigour of the religious life of Christendom for more than a thousand years. It reinvested the commonalty of the Church with the august responsibilities of freedom.

III

The doctrine of Justification by Faith worked in the same direction. The Christian Gospel, according to the Reformers, is a revelation of the infinite grace of God. God makes no terms, prescribes no conditions, but offers the remission of sins and eternal life to every man. To meet His wonderful revelation with faith secures redemption; sin is forgiven; the sinful man is justified, and is made one with God through Christ.

The intervention of the priest is unnecessary. Preaching and the sacraments have their place ; but the offer of eternal salvation is made to the individual man, and it is for him to make it his own by faith. No excommunication can prevent the salvation from being his. He may be cursed by the Church, but if he has faith in Christ the curse cannot harm him. On the other hand, in the absence of faith all the blessings of the Church are unavailing. Bishops and priests had ceased to be necessary in order to open the channels of divine grace.

“ All Christians are priests,” said Luther ; “ all may teach the Word of God, may administer baptism, may consecrate the Bread and the Wine ; for has not Christ said—‘ Do this in remembrance of Me.’ All we who are Christians have the power of the Keys. Christ said to the apostles, who were the representatives about Him of mankind at large, ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.’ ”

Again,—“ The priest should be elected by the suffrages of the people and afterwards confirmed by the bishop ; that is to say, after the election, the first, the most venerable among the electors should lay his hands on the elected.”³

When the Calixtines of Bohemia found that the bishops of their country refused them ministers, they had gone so far as to take the first vagabond priest.

“ If you have no other means of procuring pastors [wrote Luther to them, in 1523], rather do without them, and let each head of a family read the Gospel in his own house, and baptize his children, sighing after the sacrament of the altar as the Jews at Babylon did for Jerusalem. The consecration of the Pope creates priests—not of God, but of the devil, ordained solely to trample Jesus Christ under foot, to bring His sacrifice to naught, and to sell imaginary holocausts to the world in His name. Men become ministers only by election and calling, and that ought to be effected in the following manner : *First, seek God by prayer ; then, being assembled together with all those whose hearts God has touched, choose in the Lord’s name him or them whom you shall have acknowledged to be fitted for this ministry. After that, let the chief men among you lay their hands on them, and recommend them to the people and to the Church.*”⁴

³ Michelet, *Life of Luther*, translated by W. C. Hazlitt (Bohn), 138.

⁴ D’Aubigné, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, iv. 38–39.

IV

The two central principles of the Reformation—the principles which gave inspiration, dignity, and passion to the whole Protestant movement—were fatal to the Catholic theory of episcopacy. The new faith could not tolerate the old polity. In whatever Church the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures and the doctrine of Justification by Faith were frankly adopted, “bishops” with the powers and prerogatives which had been claimed for them since the time of Cyprian were impossible.

Protestant Churches might consistently adopt either the Presbyterian or the Congregational polity; the Episcopal—in the Catholic sense—was necessarily excluded. Early in the history of the Reformation a scheme of polity for the Protestant Churches—Congregational in its essential principles, with some Presbyterian modifications—was drawn up by Francis Lambert,⁵ and was formally adopted as the organisation of the Church in Hesse at a conference held in the Castle of Homberg in August, 1526. Ranke has given an admirable account of its central principle.

“The idea was formed of constituting a Church consisting solely of true believers. The following was the scheme drawn up to that effect. It was proposed that, after a sermon, a meeting should be held, and every one should be asked whether he was determined to submit himself to the laws, or not. Those who refused should be put out and regarded as heathens. But the names of those who chose to be in the number of the saints should be written down; they must not be troubled if, at first, they should be few, for God would soon increase their number: these would constitute the congregation [*i.e.* the church]. The most important business of their meetings would be the choice of their spiritual leaders [here simply called bishops]. For this station any citizen of irreproachable life and competent instruction should be eligible, whatever his profession; but he should be allowed to retain it only so long as he preached the genuine Word of God.”⁶

The local Church was also to appoint deacons and officers charged with the care of the poor. It was to have the power of deposing as well as appointing all its officers. And it was

⁵ See Note A on Francis Lambert, p. 43.

⁶ Ranke, *History of the Reformation in Germany* (Mrs. Austin's translation), ii. 485-486.

to have the power of excommunicating any of its members. Church meetings were to be held every Sunday.

So far the scheme was purely Congregational. But a general Synod was to be held every year at which each Church was to be represented by its pastor and an elected layman. The Synod was to appoint Visitors, whose term of office was apparently to be annual, and who were to visit the Churches, to examine those who had been elected bishops, to confirm the bishops they approved, and to provide for the execution of the decrees of the Synod. The Synod was to be governed by the Word of God; for "the Word of God outweighs a majority. Its decisions were not to be 'decrees' or 'statutes,' but simply 'the answer of the Hessian Synod,'" and they were to be supported by Scripture. For the first year the Visitors were to be appointed by Philip of Hesse.

There was also to be a permanent Committee for the general superintendence of the Churches. The Committee was to consist (1) of thirteen persons appointed by the Synod; and the princes and nobles present at the meeting of the Synod were to have the right of voting with the pastors and lay representatives of the Churches; (2) of the three Visitors; (3) of special representatives of the Church at Marburg. At the meetings of the Committee the Landgrave was to have the right to be present.

It is obvious that the power entrusted to the Committee, the Visitors, and the Synod could not be exercised without limiting and repressing that independence of the separate Churches which Lambert was anxious to assert. He may have hoped that after a period of transition, during which the separate Churches might give sufficient proof of their strength to satisfy those who regarded the scheme with distrust, the functions of the Synod would naturally cease. But the scheme was never carried out. In Hesse, as elsewhere, the ecclesiastical authority assumed by the Civil Power suppressed the freedom of the Church.⁷

Luther's own position in relation to the questions raised

⁷ Lambert's treatise on *The Sum of Christianity* was translated into English with an Epistle to Anne Boleyn. See extracts from the Dedication to "the noble prince of Lausanne" in Waddington, i. (1200—1557), 543—544. This treatise had doubtless some influence in encouraging the development of Congregational tendencies in England.

by Lambert's proposals is interesting and characteristic. In his *German Order of Divine Service*, which he declares is not to be regarded as "a compulsory law," but is to be used at the good pleasure of the Churches, and "where, when, and as long as circumstances favour and demand it," he speaks of three different forms of divine service. He is willing that the service should be conducted in *Latin*: "and if the Greek and Hebrew tongues were as familiar to us as the Latin, and possessed as great store of fine music and song as that does, were I able to bring it about, mass should be celebrated, and there should be singing and reading in our churches on alternate Sundays, in all four languages—German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew." The Latin service was to be for educated people: "for the sake of the simple laymen" he proposed that divine service should be in *German*. His conceptions of the nature and objects of the German service illustrate his estimate of the actual congregation for which he had to make provision. "There are many," he says, "who attend upon the public worship of God who are not yet believers or Christians; the greater part stand and gape, that they may see something new; and it is just as though we celebrated the service of God on an open square or field among Turks or heathens." The German service was to be an evangelical service; not a service for the complete expression of the life of the Church.⁸

But he thinks that the true type of evangelical order should include a *third* service. This should not be celebrated "publicly among all the people," but—

"Those who are desirous of being Christians in earnest, and are ready to profess the Gospel with hand and mouth, should register

⁸ Another passage confirms this statement. He says, "In fine, we institute this order not for the sake of those who are Christians already, for they have need of none of these things, nor do they live for them; but they live for the sake of those who are not yet Christians, that they may make them Christians; they have their divine service in their spirits. But it is necessary to have such an order for the sake of those who are to become Christians or are to grow stronger, just as a Christian has need of baptism, the Word, and the sacrament, not as a Christian, for as such he has them already, but as a sinner. But, above all, the order is for the simple and for the young folk. . . . For the sake of such we must teach, preach, write, and devise; and if it could in any way assist or promote their interests, I would have all the bells pealed and all the organs sounded, and let everything make a noise that could." Hagenbach, *History of the Reformation*, ii. 9-11.

their names and assemble in some private house to read, to baptize, to receive the sacrament, and practise other Christian works. In this order, those whose conduct was not such as is befitting Christians might be recognised, reprovèd, reformed, rejected, or excommunicated, in accordance with the rule laid down by Christ. (Matt. xviii. 15 *seq.*). But I cannot and would not order or arrange such a congregation or assembly at present. I have not the requisite persons for it, nor do I see many who are urgent for it. But should it come to pass that I must do it—that I am so pressed upon as to be unable with a good conscience to leave it undone—then will I gladly do my part to secure it, and will assist it as best I can. . . . In the meantime, I would abide by the two aforesaid methods, and publicly among the people aid in the promotion of such divine service, besides preaching, as shall exercise the youth, and call and incite others to faith, *until those Christians who are thoroughly in earnest shall discover each other and cleave together*, to the end that there may be no faction-forming (sectional partyism), such as might ensue if I were to take the management of the whole matter upon myself; for we Germans are a savage, rude, tempestuous people, not lightly to be led into anything new, unless there be most urgent occasion.”⁹

It appears from this that the organisation which Luther constructed was a missionary and educational agency rather than a Church. But he looks forward to the time when “those Christians who are most thoroughly in earnest shall discover each other and cleave together,” and organise themselves into societies which will be Christian in the true sense of the word—Churches with the powers attributed by Christ Himself to those that are gathered together in His name. To Luther Congregationalism was the ideal polity; but, as he thought, the time had not come for attempting to institute it.¹⁰

NOTE A

Francis Lambert

This remarkable man was born in Avignon about 1487. He was the descendant of a noble family; his father was Secretary of Legation at the apostolic palace. At fifteen years of age he entered the order of the Franciscans. Having an ardent and impassioned temperament, he became a most effective popular preacher. He studied the Scriptures with great earnestness, and expounded them to the country people in the villages about Avignon. His zeal

⁹ Hagenbach, *History of the Reformation*, 12-13. ¹⁰ See Note B, p. 44.

provoked irritation in his convent, and in 1522 he left it, never to return. He found his way to Zurich, and when he was preaching in the cathedral on the intercession of the Virgin and the saints, Zwingle exclaimed—"Brother, thou errest." The opponents of Zwingle thought that Lambert might show himself a match for the great Swiss reformer, and arranged for a disputation between them. The discussion lasted four hours, and then Lambert thanked God that by the light of God's Word he had been convinced of his error. He then gave up his monk's dress and went to Germany, being very anxious to see Luther. After many vicissitudes he found protection and support from Philip of Hesse. He died April 18, 1530. There is an excellent account of him under his name in Haag, *La France Protestante*, vi. 238-243; and in Waddington, i. (1200-1557), 357-383.

NOTE B

Congregational Ideas among Foreign Protestants

The following story from Foxe is an illustration of the extent to which some at least of the principles of Congregationalism were held by foreign Protestants.¹¹ Aymond de la Voye, a French priest, was accused of heresy at Bordeaux, in 1543. In the course of his examination the judge asked him—"Dost thou believe in the Church?"

The Martyr.—"I believe, as the Church regenerated by the blood of Christ, and founded in His Word, hath appointed."

Judge.—"What Church is that?"

The Martyr.—"The Church is a Greek word, signifying as much as a congregation or assembly: and so I say that whensoever the faithful do congregate together to the honour of God, and the amplifying of Christian religion, the Holy Ghost is verily with them."

Judge.—"By this it should follow that there be many Churches: and whereas any rustical clowns do assemble together, there must be a Church."

The Martyr.—"It is no absurd thing to say that there be many Churches or congregations among the Christians: and so speaketh St. Paul, 'To all the churches which are in Galatia,' etc. And yet all these congregations make but one Church."

Judge.—"The Church wherein thou believest, is it not the same Church which our creed doth call the Holy Church?"

The Martyr.—"I believe the same."

Judge.—"And who should be Head of that Church?"

The Martyr.—"Jesus Christ."

Judge.—"And not the Pope?"

The Martyr.—"No."

¹¹ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1631), ii. 131.

BOOK II

*ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER
ELIZABETH*

CHAPTER I

ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER ELIZABETH: INTRODUCTORY

1558—1603

ENGLAND AND ROME: RESTLESSNESS WITHOUT REVOLT—THE “WEAVERS” OR “PUBLICANS”: THEIR TEACHING AND TREATMENT—ASSIZE OF CLARENDON: ORDER AGAINST HARBOURING HERETICS—OTHER HERETICS IN TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES—THE “HARLOTS”—JOHN BALL—WYCLIF AND REVOLT AGAINST ROME—HIS INFLUENCE AND TEACHING—TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE: LAY EVANGELISTS—THE LOLLARDS—THEIR PETITION FOR REFORM—THE ACT “DE HERETICO COMBURENDO”—MARTYRDOM OF SAWTRE AND THORPE—OLDCASTLE’S REVOLT AND EXECUTION—PERSECUTION OF LOLLARDS—SECRET CONGREGATION AT CHESTERTON—MARTYRDOM OF THOMAS MAN—PROGRESS OF FREE FAITH—HENRY VIII. AND THE POPE—SECRET ASSEMBLIES IN LONDON AND ESSEX DURING MARY’S REIGN: THEIR CHARACTER AND AIM.

FOR three centuries after the Norman Conquest England was loyal to all the traditions of the “Catholic Church.” The persistent endeavour of the Papacy to use its authority as the final court of appeal in all ecclesiastical causes, to make appointments to English benefices, and to enrich Italian priests from the revenues of the English Church, provoked the resentment of the King, the nobles, the native clergy, and the people, and gave occasion to angry controversies in which sometimes the Crown and sometimes the Pope won a temporary success; but there was neither heresy nor schism. One or two obscure movements which indicated restlessness and discontent were promptly suppressed, and produced no apparent impression on the general religious faith of the nation.

I

In the reign of Henry II., about the year 1160, a singular company of foreigners appeared in England and awakened the alarm of the ecclesiastical authorities. There were about thirty of them—men and women. With the exception of Gerhard, their leader, who had some learning, they are described as altogether “unlettered, and perfect boors both in knowledge and conversation.” They spoke German, and had crossed the sea to preach a new faith. A Council was held at Oxford to inquire into their opinions.¹ Gerhard said that they were Christians and that the doctrine of the apostles was their rule of faith. On being pressed with questions about the details of their belief, it appeared that they held the orthodox creed on the Trinity and the Incarnation, but that they “rejected Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, declared against marriage and Catholic communion.”² To prevent the spread of the heresy, the bishops handed them over to the King, and it was ordered that they should be branded in the forehead and publicly whipped out of the city. All persons were strictly forbidden to give them food or shelter. They bore their sentence with great courage, Gerhard marching at the head of them singing, “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you.” It was winter, and they all died a miserable death from starvation and cold. One poor woman, who was supposed to be their only convert, “confessed her error and deserved reconciliation.”

These persons are described in the Annals of Tewkesbury as “weavers,” and by a contemporary chronicler as “of that class . . . which is generally called Publicans.” They may, therefore, be identified with numerous “heretics,” who in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were found in northern Italy, in France, in Germany, in the Low Countries, and even in Spain, and who were known under a great variety of names. In France they were called “weavers” and “publicans.”

¹ The Council at Oxford was held probably in January, 1165-6. See Wilkins, *Concilia*, i. 438-439; and Hale, *Pleas of the Crown*, i. 398. Stow, however, places it in 1162, and some other authorities even earlier.

² Collier, ii. 263.

They appear to have followed the trade of "weavers," partly for the sake of earning their living, but also to enable them to pass from country to country without provoking the suspicion of the authorities. Early in the thirteenth century they established an institution in Languedoc, in which young persons were educated for the ministry among them under the pretext of being brought up to that trade.³ The name "Publicans" seems to be a corruption of "Poplicani," which may mean "Men of the People." These heretics maintained that the Church "is a congregation of men and women"; they, therefore, denied "any house made with hands to be a Church," and "they preferred to worship in stables, in sitting-rooms, and even in bedrooms, rather than in churches." They rejected some of the superstitious practices of Rome, such as extreme unction and pilgrimages to the shrines of saints. They taught that salvation is by grace and faith—not by works. They claimed for all Christian people, men and women alike, the liberty to preach. They asserted that Holy Scripture is the one supreme rule of faith and duty, and maintained that every Christian man must interpret the Scriptures for himself. In fact, they anticipated some of the characteristic doctrines of the Reformation, and their secret assemblies were practically Congregational Churches.⁴

The chronicler who tells the story of their condemnation at Oxford and their death adds, with devout complacency, that "the pious firmness of this severity not only cleansed the realm of England from the pestilence which had now crept into it, but also prevented it from again creeping in, by means of the terror with which it struck the heretics."⁵

But the success of the "pious" severity was not complete. The King was not satisfied that the heresy was crushed. At an Assize held at Clarendon soon after the Council of Oxford, the King's subjects are warned against receiving "any of the

³ For an extremely interesting account of "Evangelical Nonconformity under the Plantagenets," see an article bearing that title in *The British Quarterly Review* for April, 1870, 362-392, of which free use is made in this chapter. It is generally understood that the article was written by the late Rev. T. W. Davids, of Colchester.

⁴ The quotations are from Ebrard, a native of Flanders, who wrote in the thirteenth century. *British Quarterly Review*, l.c., 378-379. See Gretser, *op.*, xii., *Trias Scriptorum* (Bibl. Pat. Lugd.), xxiv. 1525.

⁵ Guilielmus Neubrigensis [William Little, or Petyt, of Riveaux], in Wilkins, *Concilia*, i. 439.

sect of the renegades ” which had just been excommunicated ; if the warning is disregarded, the offender is to be at the King’s mercy, and the house in which the heretics have been received is to be carried outside the town and burnt.⁶

At the close of the reign of Henry II., heretics whose opinions had been drawn from continental sources are said to have been numerous in every part of England. During the reign of Richard I. there were Waldenses in Kent. Very many Albigenses were burnt during the reign of John. The order of the Preaching Friars became infected with the prevailing “heresy,” and in 1246 Henry III. addressed a writ to the sheriffs, commanding them to apprehend all “minor friars who had apostatised from their order, and to commit them to the King’s prison.”⁷

In 1263—a hundred years after the death of Gerhard—Henry III. wrote to the sheriff of Oxfordshire, charging him to suppress “the meetings, conventicles, or contracts” of “certain vagrant persons—which call themselves Harlots—maintaining idleness in divers parts of our Realm, most shamelessly making their meetings, assemblies, and unlawful matches against the honesty of the Church and good manners.”⁸

These “meetings and conventicles” were evidently for purposes of religious worship. The “contracts” which the sheriffs are directed to suppress suggest that there were regularly organised secret societies, the members of which were bound together by mutual engagements and common vows. As they were exceptionally numerous in Oxfordshire, it seems probable that Gerhard’s teaching had not been forgotten ; and perhaps “Harlots” was a name of bitter reproach suggested by “Publicans,” which was the earlier name for the sect. Or did they call themselves “Harlots” in order to show that all their hope of salvation was in the infinite grace of Christ, that in themselves they were as worthless as the most worthless of the human race ?

Early in the fourteenth century the Preaching Friars who had broken away from the Church seem to have been numerous. In the middle of the century John Ball, a priest of the diocese

⁶ Assize of Clarendon, § xxi., in Stubbs, *Hoveden’s Chronicles* (*Record Publications*), ii. 252.

⁷ J. S. Brewer, *Monumenta Franciscana* (*Record Publications*), i. 614. Cf. *ibid.*, 615, for a similar precept of Edward II.

⁸ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1631), i. 435.

of Norwich, began to preach at "public fairs," at "meat-markets," and in "burial grounds," the doctrines which, when preached a little later by John Wyclif, threatened to separate England from Rome.⁹

II

Two hundred years had passed since Gerhard first preached heresy on English soil, and since the "pious firmness" of the severity with which he was punished appeared for the moment to have confirmed the fidelity of the English people to the Catholic faith. Heresy had not been crushed, nor had there been any great and serious attempt to reform the corruptions of the English Church. At last there was a menacing revolt against the authority of the Pope and against some of the most sacred of Catholic traditions.

In 1365 Urban V. demanded of Edward III. payment of the annual tribute of 1,000 marks which King John, 150 years before, had engaged should be paid by himself and his successors as an acknowledgment that they held the crown of England under the Pope as their feudal superior. The claim was passionately resisted by the King, the Parliament, and nearly the whole nation. John Wyclif, who was already famous as a scholar and theologian, took a prominent part in the struggle; and from that time till his death on December 31, 1384, he held a great position in the political and religious life of the country.

His first attack was on the arrogance and covetousness of the Papacy, and its unscrupulous appropriation of the revenues of English benefices to enrich Italian priests who rendered no spiritual service to the English people. But in a few years the controversy widened. He assailed the mendicant orders. He condemned with vehemence the irreligion, the vices, and the ignorance of the clergy. He declared that the endowments of the clergy were not held of absolute right, but were liable to forfeiture for neglect of duty, and that secular princes were bound under peril of eternal

⁹ At the end of 1381 Ball was hung, drawn, and quartered at St. Albans as a traitor. Riley, *Walsingham's Hist. Angl. (Record Publications)*, ii. 32-34. Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 14. For Ball as a forerunner of Wyclif, see Lumby, *Knighton's Chronicle (Record Publications)*, ii. 151.

damnation to alienate church property and to devote it to secular uses if the Church fell into grave error, or if the property was persistently abused by the clergy. He maintained that the most solemn acts of excommunication are ineffective if they are pronounced with the intention of increasing or even protecting the revenues of the priesthood. He shook the very foundations of the Catholic system by denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation; for by this he impugned the infallibility of the Popes and Councils.

Wyclif does not appear to have discovered the great doctrine of Justification by Faith; but the earnestness, fulness, and fervour with which he taught that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man, and the author of human redemption, must have produced an impression on the minds of those who heard him not unlike that which was produced by the preaching of Luther. He must have led men to put their faith in Christ for eternal salvation, even though he did not teach them that by their faith alone they were justified.

He also translated the Bible into English. A chronicler who wrote towards the end of the fourteenth century complained that whereas Christ gave the Gospel, not to the Church as a whole, but only to the clergy and doctors of the Church, to be by them communicated to the laity, Wyclif by his translation of the Bible had made it more accessible to the laity, including even the women who were able to read, than it used to be to the well-educated clergy. The pearl was now "thrown to the swine and trodden under feet."¹⁰

This was the supreme service which Wyclif rendered to the religious life of England. He taught the common people to appeal from the authority of priests, bishops, and popes to the authority of Christ and His apostles. God—so Wyclif said—had spoken to the laity, not to the clergy merely; and it was the duty and therefore the right of the laity to listen for themselves to His voice. It was even their duty, and therefore their right, to compare the lives and the teaching of the clergy with the divine Word, and to judge whether those who claimed spiritual authority could be lawfully obeyed. It was in the same spirit that towards the close of his life Wyclif appointed laymen as well as priests as itinerant evangelists.

¹⁰ Knighton, in Twysden, *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores*, ii. 2644 (A.D. 1382), and Lumby (*Record Publications*), ii. 151-152.

The impression which this daring policy must have made on the popular mind it is not easy to exaggerate. In every part of the country simple laymen preached the Gospel to wondering crowds ; and they had been sent out to preach by a great theologian and a famous professor, who had been honoured with the confidence of the King. What was more, the common people found in the preaching of these laymen a light, a hope, and a joy, which they had not found in the teaching of the priests. Wyclif's translation of the Bible and Wyclif's lay evangelists must have given to the English nation quite new conceptions of the place of the common people in the Church of Christ.

III

In the judgment of a distinguished historian, " ' Lollardry ' has a history of its own ; but it forms no proper part of the history of the Reformation. It was a separate phenomenon, provoked by the same causes which produced their true fruit at a later period ; but it formed no portion of the stem on which those fruits ultimately grew. It was a prelude which was played out, and sank into silence, answering for the time no other end than to make the name of heretic odious in the ears of the English nation." ¹¹ But a struggle on so large a scale and extending over so many years must surely have left profound and enduring results. The fierce reaction which set in before the death of Wyclif against the movement for reformation, and which became more violent a few years later, intimidated those who shared his opinions ; but the new spirit with which he inspired the religious life of the English people was not extinguished.

In 1395 the Lollards presented a petition to the House of Commons, maintaining that the possession of temporalities by the clergy is contrary to the law of Christ, and perilous to virtue ; that the Roman priesthood is not the ministry that Christ established ; that the celibacy of the clergy is the occasion of scandalous irregularities ; that the pretended miracle of transubstantiation tends to make men idolaters ; that exorcisms and benedictions pronounced over bread, wine, oil, salt, water, and other material things, have more of necromancy in them

¹¹ Froude, *History of England* (1872), i. 481.

than of religion ; that prayers for the dead are “ a false foundation of alms ” and are likely to be displeasing to God ; that prayers offered to images are akin to idolatry ; that auricular confession is a practice dangerous to virtue ; that priests have no power to absolve from sin.¹²

This petition is a proof that the followers of Wyclif were not only faithful to his teaching, but inherited his courage ; it also appears to indicate their belief that there were members of the House of Commons who were not friendly to the Church.¹³

The alarm of the clergy at the spread of the doctrines of Wyclif is shown by the Act which was passed in 1400 for destroying heresy by fire.¹⁴ The preamble states that whereas the Catholic faith and holy Church had been hitherto maintained in England without being “ perturbed by any perverse doctrine, or wicked, heretical, or erroneous opinions ”—

“ Yet nevertheless divers false and perverse people of a certain new sect, of the faith, of the sacraments of the Church, and the authority of the same, damnably thinking, and against the law of God and the Church usurping the office of preaching, do perversely and maliciously, in divers places within the said realm, under the colour of dissembled holiness, preach and teach these days, openly and privily, divers new doctrines, and wicked, heretical, and erroneous opinions. And of such sect and wicked doctrine, they make *unlawful conventicles and confederacies* ; they hold and

¹² *The Book of Conclusions or Reformations, exhibited to the Parliament*, etc. See Foxe, *Acts and Monumentis* (1631), i. 662–664.

¹³ That the House was not disposed to encourage or even to protect heresy is evident from the passing of the Act *De Heretico Comburendo*, described in the next paragraph. But a very few years later it appeared that both the King (Henry IV.) and the Commons had profited from Wyclif's teaching about Church temporalities. In 1404 Henry wanted money for his war in Wales, and, to avoid levying an “ aid,” he proposed, among other schemes, that he should appropriate certain portions of the property of the Church. The House of Commons received this proposal with the heartiest satisfaction. It was defeated by the fierce resistance of the clergy. In 1409 the King was again in want of money, and the Commons, on their own motion, prayed him to take away the estates of the bishops, the abbots, and the priors, which were spent by them in useless pomp and luxury. But the action of the clergy five years before had taught the King that this policy of disendowment was dangerous, and he met the prayers of the Commons with a sharp reproof. Echard, 178–179 ; and Riley, *Walsingham, Hist. Angl. (Record Publications)*, ii. 258–259, 282–283. Walsingham attributes the proposal of 1404, not to the King, but to the soldiers—*milites et scutiferi*.

¹⁴ 2 Henry IV. cap. 15.

exercise schools ; they make and write books ; they do wickedly instruct and inform people ; and, as much as they may, incite and stir them to sedition and insurrection, and make great strife and division among the people ; and other enormities horrible to be heard, do perpetrate and commit."

The statute, therefore, provides that henceforth no one shall preach, either in public or private, without the licence of the diocesan of the place ; that no one shall either speak or write against the Catholic faith, as determined by the Church ; that no one shall favour or maintain such teachers of heresy ; that any person in possession of heretical books or writings shall deliver all such books and writings to his diocesan within forty days from the proclamation of the statute. The diocesan is authorised to arrest and imprison, not only open offenders but persons evidently suspected, and may hold them in custody till they clear themselves, or abjure their heresy. Those who refuse to abjure, or who relapse, upon conviction in the diocesan courts are to be made over to the sheriff of the county, or the mayor and bailiffs of the nearest town, and are to be burnt—

"before the people in a high place. . . . that such punishment may strike in fear to the minds of others, whereby no such wicked doctrine, and heretical and erroneous opinions, nor their authors and abettors in the said realm and dominions, against the Catholic faith, Christian law, and the determination of the Holy Church—which God prohibit—may be sustained, or in any wise suffered."

A week before the Act was passed, William Sawtre, a priest, was burned in Smithfield.¹⁵ "This was he," says Fuller, "whose faith fought the first duel with fire itself, and overcame it."¹⁶ His crimes were the denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation and of the lawfulness of worshipping images. In 1407 William Thorpe, another priest, a man distinguished for his learning, was burnt for the same heresies. He acknowledged Wyclif and some of Wyclif's friends as his teachers.

In 1414 the vigour with which the Church and the Crown

¹⁵ Fitzjames Stephen, in his *History of the Criminal Law of England* (ii. 446-447), gives the dates (a) of the writ for burning Sawtre—March 2, 1400 ; (b) of the passing of the Act, March 10, 1400. For a defence of the bishops against Sir Edward Coke, see Collier, iii. 254-259.

¹⁶ Fuller, ii. 391.

were repressing the new doctrines was met with the menace of a popular outbreak. Notices were fixed against the doors of London churches that if the persecution went on, a hundred thousand men would rise in arms. There were wild rumours of a design to seize the person of the King (Henry V.). The King left his palace at Eltham, where it was said that the conspirators meant to surprise him. St. Giles's Fields, where the insurgents were to meet, was occupied with troops. Only eighty men were found, but these, it is said, were armed. Others were seized at Harringay Park. Thirty-nine of the prisoners were hanged as traitors and then burnt as heretics.

If a royal proclamation is to be trusted, there was a widespread plot to destroy the hierarchy, to suppress the monasteries, to confiscate the estates of the Church, to proclaim Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, who was popularly regarded as the Lollard leader, Protector of the realm. Oldcastle escaped to Wales and remained in concealment till 1417. In that year the Duke of Albany and Earl Douglas crossed the English border with a considerable army, invited, it is said, by the Lollards, who had promised to join them. Sir John Oldcastle came out of hiding and appeared in the neighbourhood of London. The Picts were driven out of the kingdom by the Duke of Bedford, and Sir John Oldcastle fled to Wales. He was arrested and tried by the House of Lords, and condemned as a traitor and a heretic. Like the Lollards caught in St. Giles's Fields, he was first hanged and then burnt.

Under Chichely (appointed Archbishop of Canterbury 1414) the prisons were crowded with persons accused of holding the opinion of Wyclif. Some of them were burned, but to have burned all who were convicted might have created popular sympathy with the martyrs. The Lollards' Tower at Lambeth is the memorial of Chichely's primacy and of the severity with which he pursued heresy. The persecution went on under Chichely's successors. Large numbers of men and women were arrested in different parts of the country: many abjured the erroneous opinions with which they were charged; many, layman and priests, mechanics and serving-men, citizens of London and country people, were sent to the flames.

In 1457 Peacock, Bishop of Chichester, who had written against the "Bible-men," was himself charged with heresy. He

taught that it is not necessary to believe in the Holy Catholic Church, or in the communion of saints, or in transubstantiation, or in the infallibility of General Councils, or in the security of the universal Church from error.¹⁷ He recanted, but was deposed from his bishopric and thrown into prison, where he is said to have remained till his death in 1460.

“The civil wars,” says Fuller, “diverted the prelates from troubling the Lollards, so that this very storm was a shelter to those poor souls.”¹⁸ But the persecution was vigorously renewed on the accession of Henry VII.; and the faith and the patience of the last of the martyrs that died for the truth they had learned from Wyclif gave courage to the earliest of the martyrs that died for the truth they had learnt from Luther.

In the letter of Henry III. to the sheriffs of Oxfordshire (1263) already quoted,¹⁹ he charged them to suppress “the meetings, conventicles, or contracts” of certain heretical persons who were “making their meetings, assemblies, and unlawful matches against the honesty of the Church and good manners.” In the preamble to the Act *De Heretico Comburendo* the Lollards are described as making “unlawful conventicles and confederacies”; and “the privy conventicles” of the heretics are mentioned in an official letter of Chichely’s to the Bishop of London in 1416. Of these early “assemblies,” “conventicles, and confederacies” few traces have been discovered. But from an entry in a manuscript register of William Gray, Bishop of Ely, we learn that in 1457 there was a secret congregation at Chesterton, near Cambridge, which met for divine worship and had at least three teachers²⁰ who denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation; maintained that fasting is not binding on labourers and married people, but only on priests and monks; that it is better to confess to a man cut off from the Catholic Church than to a priest; that there is no benefit in burial in consecrated ground; that extreme unction does no good to the body and only defiles the soul; that prayer in the fields is as profitable as prayer in the church; and that the presence

¹⁷ Stow, *Annals* (1631), 402-403; and Collier, iii. 388-394.

¹⁸ Fuller, ii. 469.

¹⁹ See p. 50, note 8.

²⁰ John Baile, of Chesterton; Robert Sparke, of Recch; and John Crud [or Crowd], of Cambridge.

of the priest at the celebration of marriage was only made compulsory for the sake of gain.²¹

What these assemblies were is also illustrated by a deposition at the trial of Thomas Man, who was burnt for heresy at Smithfield in 1518, the year after Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the doors of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, and before the influence of the great reformer could have been felt among the common people of England: and indeed the deposition travels back to a time when Luther was a student at Erfurt and a child at Eisenach or Eisleben.

“In the deposition of one Thomas Risby, weaver of Stratford Langthorne, against the afore-named martyr Thomas Man, it appeareth by the Register, that he had been in divers places and countries in England, and had instructed very many, as at Amersham, at London, at Billerica, at Chelmsford, at Stratford Langthorne, at Uxbridge, at Burnham, at Henley-upon-Thames, in Suffolke and Northfolke, at Newbery and divers places more: where he himself testifieth, that as he went westward, he found a great company of well-disposed persons, being of the same judgment touching the sacrament of the Lord’s supper that he was of, and especially at Newbery, where was (as he confessed) *a glorious and sweet society of faithful favourers, who had continued the space of fifteen years together*, till at last, by a certain lewd person, whom they trusted and made of their counsel, they were bewrayed; and then many of them, to the number of six or seven score, were abjured, and three or four of them were burnt. From thence he came then (as he confessed) to the Forest of Windsor, where he, hearing of the brethren who were at Amersham, removed thither, where he found a godly and a great company, which had continued in that doctrine and teaching twenty-three years. . . . Against these faithful Christians of Amersham was great trouble and persecution in the time of William Smith, bishop of Lincoln, about the year of our Lord, 1507, at which time divers and many were abjured, and it was called the ‘Abjuratio Magna,’—‘the great Abjuration’; and they which were noted of that doctrine and profession were called by the name of ‘known men’ or ‘just-fast’ men. . . . In this congregation of the faithful brethren were four principal Readers or instructors; whereof one was Tilesworth, called then Dr. Tilesworth, who was burnt at Amersham. . . . Another was Thomas Chase, called amongst them Dr. Chase, whom we declared before to be murdered and hanged in the bishop of

²¹ An account, in some particulars erroneous, of this passage in Gray’s *Register* (Baker MSS. in the University Library, Cambridge) is given by Robert Robinson in his preface to Claude’s *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*. The Rev. J. Jackson Goadby, in his *By-paths in Baptist History*, 14–16, has corrected Robinson’s errors.

London's prison at Woburn, called Little-ease. The third was this Thomas Man, called also Dr. Man, burned, as is here mentioned, in Smithfield *anno* 1518. . . . He confesseth himself in the same Register that he had turned seven hundred people to his religion and doctrine, for the which he thanked God. . . . The fourth was Robert Cosin, named likewise among them Dr. Cosin, burnt in Buckingham."²²

Writing in Elizabeth's time, Foxe expresses his judgment that in the first quarter of the sixteenth century there were in England "great multitudes which tasted and followed the sweetness of God's Holy Word almost in as ample manner for the number of well-disposed hearts, as now."²³

It is not contended that these secret assemblies, which were probably held in many parts of England from the time of Wyclif to the time of Luther, were regularly organised Congregational Churches, or that their members held the Congregational theory of church polity. But the devout men and women who met together for common worship and for mutual instruction in Christian truth had discovered that "the communion of saints" was necessary for the satisfaction of some of the deepest and strongest cravings of their spiritual nature, for the enlargement of their knowledge of God, the discipline of their strength, and the perfecting of their faith and joy; and they had also discovered that such

²² Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1631), ii. 29.

²³ "Although public authority then lacked to maintain the open preaching of the Gospel, yet the secret multitude of true professors was not much unequal: certes the fervent zeal of those Christian days seemed much superior to these our days and times; as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading and hearing; also by their expenses and charges in buying of books in English, of whom some gave five marks, some more, some less, for a book; some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul in English. In which rarity of books, and want of teachers, this one thing I greatly marvel and muse at; to note in the Registers, and to consider how the word of truth, notwithstanding, did multiply so exceedingly as it did amongst them. Wherein is to be seen no doubt the marvellous working of God's mighty power; for so I find and observe in considering the Registers, how one neighbour, resorting and conferring with another, eftsoons with a few words of their first or second talk, did win and turn their minds to that wherein they desired to persuade them touching the truth of God's Word and His sacraments. To see their travels, their earnest seekings, their burning zeals, their readings, their watchings, their sweet assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living, their faithful marrying with the faithful, may make us now, in these our days of free profession, to blush for shame." Foxe, *ibid.*, ii. 31-32.

communion was not to be had in the corrupt institution which claimed to be the Catholic Church. They had discovered that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, though not in consecrated walls and without a priest, Christ Himself is among them; and it was their experience of the peace and blessedness which His presence in their assemblies imparted to them, that drew them together at the peril of life itself. They had discovered that devout men on whom the bishops had conferred no mysterious powers could instruct their brethren in Christian faith and duty and lift up the hearts of an assembly to God in prayer. Their teachers were men in whom they themselves had recognised the light and power of the Spirit of God. The only justification of their secret meetings, and the only explanation of the spiritual benefit they derived from them, was to be found in the principles of Congregationalism.

IV

In 1527 Henry VIII. submitted to Clement VII. the question of the legality of his marriage with Katharine of Aragon: in 1528 a commission was granted by the Pope to Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeggio, authorising them to inquire whether the dispensation of Julius II., allowing the marriage, had been obtained by unfair means; and further authorising Wolsey and any one of the English bishops to dissolve the marriage if the Commission pronounced against the validity of the dispensation. This was the beginning of the quarrel between the English Crown and the Pope. Through all the vicissitudes of the struggle,²⁴ which was not closed till the accession of Elizabeth in 1558, secret assemblies for Christian worship continued to be held in London and in many other parts of the kingdom.

In 1527 "one Hacker, of Ebbe, who was a great reader and teacher about six years past in London, and now in the parts of Essex about Colchester, Witham, and Braintree," being pressed hard by the authorities, gave the names of many of his friends and followers in Essex and London. "Their conversations, teachings, and readings were kept at one

²⁴ For the principal dates showing the progress of the conflict, see Note A, pp. 63-64.

Russel's house, at the gates of Bird's-alley, against St. Stephen's Church in Coleman Street"; the three persons against whom he informed had "continued in his company, and he with them, by the space of six years." Strype, in his *Memorials*, gives a long list of the "known men and women, as they were then called," who were discovered through the information of Hacker and Pykas, who were "the chief leaders and teachers of the rest."²⁵

In 1550 "sectaries" appeared in Essex and Kent, sheltering themselves under profession of the Gospel. "These," says Strype, "were the first that made separation from the Reformed Church of England, having gathered congregations of their own."²⁶ There was a congregation at Feversham in Kent, and another at Bocking in Essex. Between the two congregations there was friendly intercourse: "the members of the congregation in Kent went over unto the congregation in Essex, to instruct and to join with them, and they had their meetings in Kent in divers places besides Feversham." The assembly at Bocking numbered sixty persons. Nine of them who were arrested by the Sheriff of Essex were "cowherds, clothiers, and such-like mean people." They confessed that they met "to talk of the Scriptures"; that they had refused the communion for above two years, on grounds which were determined by their judges to be "very superstitious and erroneous"; and that they held what the same authorities pronounced to be "divers other evil opinions, worthy of great punishment." Among these "evil opinions" were the following: "That the doctrine of *predestination* was meeter for devils than for Christian men"; "that there was no man so chosen, but that he might damn himself; neither any man so reprobate, but that he might keep God's commandments and be saved; that St. Paul might have damned himself if he listed"; and "that children were not born in original sin." They also taught—but this is hardly a theological heresy—"that learned men were the cause of great errors," and they rejected infant baptism.²⁷

In the reign of Queen Mary there were many secret congregations of Protestants in London. Some of them had for

²⁵ Strype, *Memorials*, i. (1), 114-115; 123; 599.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. (1), 369.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ii. (1), 369-370; and *Cranmer*, i. 334-335.

their ministers ordained clergymen who were driven from their churches by the restoration of the Romish service. But there were also congregations in London and elsewhere which accepted the ministry of laymen. Of one of these unordained ministers, who died in prison in 1556, Strype gives the following account :—

“ This Clement I esteem to be one of that sort of laymen, that, in the private assemblies of the professors, in these hard times, did perform the office of ministers among them. For when the learned preachers and ministers were most of them burnt or fled, (as they were by the middle of this [that is, Mary’s] reign), and the flocks left destitute of their faithful pastors, some of the laity, tradesmen, or others, endued with parts and some learning, used, in that distress, to read the Scriptures to the rest in their meetings, and the letters of the martyrs and prisoners, and other good books ; also to pray with them, and exhort them to stand fast, and to comfort and establish them in the confession of Christ to the death. Such an one was that excellent, pious man and confessor, John Careless, who was a weaver, of Coventry, and this Clement, a wheelwright.” ²⁸

When Elizabeth came to the throne the blessedness of those secret meetings for worship would not soon be forgotten. Devout men and women had learnt that in a small company of Christian people, united to each other by strong mutual affection and a common loyalty to Christ, it was possible to realise in a wonderful way the joy and strength of the communion of saints ; and that such an assembly, though it had only a weaver or a wheelwright for its minister, might have a vivid consciousness of access to God through Christ, and might receive surprising discoveries of the divine righteousness and love. For more than a hundred and fifty years there had been meetings of the same kind in England. They had not been prevented by the severity with which Henry VI. and Henry VII. persecuted the Lollards, or by the severity with which Mary persecuted the Protestants. Was it not possible that such assemblies were a nearer approach to the ideal of the Christian Church than the miscellaneous congregation which gathered on Sundays and festival days to join in the prescribed prayers which were read by the parish priest and to listen to his sermons ? To this question the theory of the Congregational polity, for which during the last twenty years

²⁸ Strype, *Memorials*, iii. (1), 587.

of the reign of Elizabeth men were willing to endure imprisonment, exile, and death, gave an affirmative answer.

Congregational Churches, though imperfectly organised, had existed in England long before Browne and Barrowe formally developed the Congregational polity and demonstrated that it had the sanction of apostolic authority and the practice of the apostolic age.

NOTE A

The following dates illustrating the struggle between the English Crown and the Papacy, and the vicissitudes of the English Reformation, are taken from Acland and Ransome's *Handbook in Outline of the Political History of England*, 241-242.

HENRY VIII.

1521.—Henry VIII. receives from the Pope the title of Defender of the Faith for having written a work against Luther.

1527.—Henry VIII., having doubt about the legality of his marriage with Katharine of Aragon, submits the case to the Pope.

1528.—A commission to Cardinals Wolsey and Campeggio to try the question of the King's marriage is granted by the Pope.

1529.—Katharine appeals to the Pope, and the cause is finally avocated to Rome.

Fall of Wolsey.

November.—The Seven Years' Parliament, which carries out the severance from Rome, now meets for the first time. Parliament regulates fees paid to the clergy and forbids pluralities.

1530.—Cranmer carries the opinions favourable to the divorce which had been received from the Universities to the Pope.

1531.—The clergy, incurring the penalty of "præmunire" and being fined for acknowledging Wolsey as papal legate, address Henry, after much protest, as "Head of the Church and Clergy so far as the law of Christ will allow."

Convocation makes the first proposal to limit the Pope's power by petitioning the King and Parliament to abolish the payment of annates to the Pope.

1532.—Parliament reforms the spiritual courts, and strengthens the Mortmain statutes.

An Act for restraining all appeals to Rome is passed

1533.—Cranmer is consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, and declares Henry's marriage with Katharine void and that with Anne Boleyn legal.

1534.—The Act forbidding the payment of annates to Rome is

passed, and the election of bishops by *cong e d' lire* finally arranged. (See list of bishoprics, 1534.)

The clergy are forbidden to make laws binding on themselves without the King's consent. (The legislative power of Convocation is thus practically suppressed.)

The Act abolishing the authority of the Pope in England is passed. The Convocations of Canterbury and York declare that "the Bishop of Rome has no greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God in the Kingdom of England than any other foreign bishop."

1535.—Henry takes the title of "Supreme Head of the Church of England," by the *Act of Supremacy*.

Fisher and Sir Thomas More are executed, practically for denying the King's supremacy.

Thomas Cromwell is appointed vicar-general.

1536.—Benefit of clergy is now restricted by Act of Parliament, and henceforth in the matter of jurisdiction clergy and laity are on an equality.

The smaller monasteries and nunneries are dissolved, and their property transferred to the Crown.

An English translation of the Bible is set up in the Churches.

1539.—All monasteries are now dissolved and granted to the King. The Act of the Six Articles, with severe penalties for disobedience, is passed.

1540.—Fall and execution of Thomas Cromwell.

EDWARD VI.

1547.—An ecclesiastical visitation is directed, to order the use of English in services, and to pull down images. Bonner and Gardiner protesting, they are imprisoned.

1549.—The "First Prayer-Book of Edward VI." is approved, and the "Act for Uniformity of Service" passed in Parliament.

A rebellion in Devon and Cornwall demanding the restoration of the old Liturgy is put down by Russell.

1552.—A second Act of Uniformity and second Prayer-Book are issued.

MARY

1553.—Bonner is made Bishop of London, and Gardiner Lord Chancellor.

The laws concerning religion passed in Edward VI.'s reign are annulled in Parliament.

1554.—Cardinal Pole comes to England.

All statutes against the Pope since the twentieth year of Henry VIII. are repealed (but the monastic lands remain in the hands of their present owners).

1555.—The persecuting statutes of Henry IV. and V. against heretics are revived.

Hooper and many others are burnt as heretics.

October.—Latimer and Ridley are burnt.

1556.—Cranmer is burnt.

Cardinal Pole, papal legate, is made Archbishop of Canterbury. (He dies in 1558.)

ELIZABETH

1558.—Elizabeth forbids unlicensed preaching, and allows part of the Liturgy to be used in English. A new Prayer-Book is prepared.

1559.—The Act of Supremacy is passed in Parliament, with penalties for refusing it.

The Act of Uniformity is passed establishing the revised Prayer-Book.

Parker is made Archbishop of Canterbury.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH UNDER ELIZABETH

ACCESSION OF ELIZABETH—PROTESTANT HOPES OF REFORM DISAPPOINTED—ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATION—THE ACT OF SUPREMACY: ITS PROVISIONS—THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY—ONE FORM OF RITUAL AND WORSHIP ESTABLISHED BY LAW; ALL OTHERS MADE ILLEGAL; CHURCH ATTENDANCE COMPULSORY—LEGISLATION BY QUEEN AND PARLIAMENT WITHOUT REFERENCE TO BISHOPS OR CONVOCATION—CLAIMS OF CONVOCATION IN BEHALF OF EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY DISREGARDED—BISHOPS VOTE AGAINST BOTH ACTS—BISHOP OF CHESTER'S PROTEST—BISHOPS AND OTHERS DEPRIVED—REASONS WHY SO FEW WERE DEPRIVED—THE QUEEN EXCOMMUNICATED—SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION ENFORCED—SUBSCRIPTION AS AFFECTING PURITANS AND CATHOLICS—MOTIVES OF THE QUEEN'S POLICY—LEGISLATION AGAINST ROME—THE SPELL OF ELIZABETH—WAS SHE A PROTESTANT QUEEN?—HER PROTESTANTISM POLITICAL RATHER THAN RELIGIOUS—NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND RELIGIOUS UNITY HER FIRST AIM—HER POLICY OF COMPROMISE AND ITS LATER RESULTS.

ELIZABETH came to the throne on November 17, 1558. Within a month there was great religious excitement in London and in other parts of the kingdom. She was a Protestant queen, and fervent Protestants were indignant that she did not at once abolish the superstitions and idolatries of Rome. They were indignant that the clergy who had been driven from their livings and from the country in Queen Mary's time were not at once restored. Mass was still being sung in parish churches; popish priests were still preaching in the pulpits, were still listening to the confessions of penitents and professing to absolve them from their sins. Popular zeal began to show itself in dangerous forms. Violent mobs broke into the churches, interrupted the service, pulled down the images of saints, scattered and profaned the relics of martyrs and saints. Protestant preachers, creeping from their hiding-places, or released from prison by the Queen's

orders,¹ gathered great crowds of people who listened to them with delight and enthusiasm while they denounced the idolatries and the crimes of Rome, and demanded instant reformation. The Romanists, on the other hand, were alarmed and, as Strype says, "took frequent occasion . . . to speak very untoward words against the Queen, reflecting (as it seems) upon Queen Anne Boleyn, her mother, and her own legitimacy and title to the succession, and in favour of the Queen of Scots."² There lay Elizabeth's danger. If she could not conciliate the Catholics, they might rise in favour of her sister Mary; and the rising might receive help from France. That peril menaced her during a great part of her reign and determined very much of her policy in relation to religion.

To prevent popular tumults, a proclamation was issued on December 28, forbidding all preaching and all listening to preaching; allowing the Gospel and the Epistle for the day, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, to be read in English; but declaring that no other changes would be permitted in the Catholic service until her Majesty could consult Parliament.

Parliament met towards the end of January, and passed in rapid succession a number of laws in relation to religion. The most important of these were (1) *an Act to restore to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the Estate Ecclesiastical and Spiritual, and abolishing all foreign Powers repugnant to the same*; (2) *an Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Service in the Church and Administration of the Sacraments*.

I

The first of these Acts,³ after reviving certain laws passed under Henry VIII. and repealed under Mary, declared that—

¹ "One of her earliest actions was to release the captives, and to restore liberty to the freeborn. Therefore order from above was sent to the keepers of the prisons, wheresoever these honest and pious people were detained, that they should set them at liberty, taking their own bonds for their appearance whensoever they should be called to answer." The prisoners had been previously described as "the afflicted professors of the Gospel in bonds and imprisonment." Strype, *Annals*, i. (1), 54-55.

² Strype, *ibid.*, 63.

³ 1 Eliz. cap. 1; and see Gibson, *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani*, i. 42-49, and especially 44, 45.

“And to the intent that all the usurped and foreign power and authority Spiritual and Temporal, may for ever be clearly extinguished, and never be used and obeyed within this Realm, or any other your Majesties Dominions or Countries, May it please your Highness that it may be further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no Foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate Spiritual or Temporal, shall at any time after the last day of this Session of Parliament, use, enjoy or exercise any manner of power, jurisdiction, superiority, authority, pre-heminence or privilege Spiritual or Ecclesiastical, within this Realm, or within any other your Majesties Dominions or Countreys that now be, or hereafter shall be, but from thenceforth the same shall be clearly abolished out of this Realm, and all other your Highness’s Dominions for ever; any Statute, Ordinance, Custom, Constitutions, or any other matter or cause whatsoever to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding. And that also it may likewise please your Highness that it may be established and enacted by the authority aforesaid, That such jurisdictions, privileges, superiorities, and pre-heminences Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, as by any Spiritual or Ecclesiastical power or authority hath heretofore been, or may lawfully be exercised or used for the visitation of the Ecclesiastical state and persons, and for reformation, order and correction of the same, and of all manner of errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, shall for ever, by authority of this present Parliament, be united and annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm.”

The Act further provides that archbishops, bishops, and “every other Ecclesiastical person,” every temporal judge, justice, mayor, and every other person in the service of the Crown,⁴ shall take the following oath:—

“I, A. B., do utterly testify and declare in my Conscience, That the Queens Highness is the only Supreme Governour of this Realm, and of all other Her Highness’s Dominions and Countries, as well in all Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Things or Causes, as Temporal; and that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State or Potentate, hath or ought to have any Jurisdiction, Powers, Superiority, Pre-heminence, or Authority Ecclesiastical or Spiritual within this Realm, and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign Jurisdictions, Powers, Superiorities and Authorities, and do promise, that from henceforth I shall bear Faith and true Allegiance to the Queens Highness, her Heirs and lawful successors, and to

⁴ In the second Parliament of Elizabeth (1562), this oath was imposed on all members of the House of Commons and on many other persons. It was not imposed as a qualification for sitting in the House of Lords, as the loyalty of the peers was held to be above question (5 Eliz. cap. 1, §§ 5, 10, 17).

my power shall assist and defend all Jurisdictions, Privileges, Pre-eminences and Authorities, granted or belonging to the Queens Highness, her Heirs and Successors, or united and annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, So help me God, and by the contents of this Book.”⁵

Persons refusing to take the oath are to lose their offices, whether ecclesiastical or civil. In future the taking of the oath is to be a necessary qualification for holding any office under the Crown, whether ecclesiastical or civil, and for all university degrees.⁶

To maintain, by preaching, writing, or in any other way, the Papal supremacy is made a crime : the first offence is to be punished by forfeiture of all goods and chattels, or, if these are not worth £20, by a year’s imprisonment ; the second offence is to render the offenders liable to the “ dangers, penalties, and forfeitures ” of the Statute of Provision and Præmunire ; the third offence is to be “ deemed and adjudged High Treason ” ; and the offender being “ lawfully convicted and attainted, according to the Laws of this Realm,” is to “ suffer pains of death, and other penalties, forfeitures, and losses, as in case of High Treason by the Laws of this Realm.”⁷

The Bill was delayed for a few weeks, while the Queen was endeavouring to secure the aid of Philip in her troubles with France. It reappeared as soon as the Peace of Cambray was signed and, though resolutely opposed by all the bishops, became law.

II

The Act of Uniformity,⁸ like the earlier Acts of Edward VI. (1549 and 1552) and the later Act of Charles II. (1662), did not merely provide that public worship in cathedrals and parish churches should be conducted according to the forms provided in the Book of Common Prayer, which was a schedule to the Act ; it made any other form of worship penal. For a Catholic priest to celebrate mass was a crime : for a Catholic layman to be present at the celebration of mass was a crime. For an “ Anabaptist ” minister to baptize an adult by immersion was

⁵ 1 Eliz. cap. 1, §§ 16, 17, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, §§ 19, 20-25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, §§ 27-30.

⁸ 1 Eliz. cap. 2 ; and see Gibson, *Codex*, 267-272.

a crime ; to submit to such baptism was a crime. For a Presbyterian minister to baptize a child, administer the Lord's Supper, or conduct public worship after the custom of the Church at Geneva was a crime ; and it was a crime to be present at any of these illegal services.⁹

The same political authorities that tried to compel all persons over six years of age, with some exceptions, to wear woollen caps instead of felt hats ; that made it a penal offence for ordinary Englishmen to use foreign drugs and costly spices at their christenings and weddings, or to wear the fine clothes allowed to dukes, earls, landed gentlemen, and other persons of great estate—this same political authority ventured on a still more daring and surprising interference with the freedom of the English people. When they met to confess their sins to Almighty God and to implore His mercy, the only words they were allowed to use were the words provided for them by the Queen and the Parliament. The Queen and the Parliament also determined what prayers and thanksgivings they should offer when they baptized their children and met at the table of the Lord. It was not enough that the Queen's clergy when celebrating worship in the Queen's churches should use the Queen's prayers ; no other prayers could be legally offered by any congregation of Englishmen.

Nor was this all. The Act of Uniformity required that every Englishman should be present every Sunday at the religious services which the Queen and Parliament had set up. The following was one of the clauses of this memorable Act :—

“From and after the said Feast of the Nativity of Saint John Baptist next coming, all and every person and persons inhabiting within this Realm, or any other the Queens Majesty's Dominions, shall diligently and faithfully, having no lawful or reasonable excuse to be absent, endeavour themselves to resort to their Parish Church or Chapel accustomed, or upon reasonable let thereof, to some usual place where Common Prayer, and such Service of God shall be used in such time of let, upon every *Sunday*, and other Days ordained and used to be kept as Holy-days, and then and

⁹ 1 Eliz. cap. 2, § 4 ; and see the case of Dyer cited by Gibson, *l.c.*, 269, *note b.* “It was held, That the Indictment was good, not only against him who said mass, but also against those *queux oyent et mainteigne le dit Masse*, implying, That to hear is to *maintain*.”

there to abide orderly and soberly, during the time of the Common Prayer, Preaching, or other Service of God there to be used and ministered.”¹⁰

The penalty for absence from church was ecclesiastical censure and a fine of twelve pence for every offence ; and the fine of twelve pence in Elizabeth’s time was equal to a fine of twelve shillings in our own. As the religious services were instituted by the Queen and Parliament, and attendance at church was an ordinary legal obligation like the payment of rates and taxes, the execution of the law was entrusted not merely to the ecclesiastical courts ; judges of assize, and in some cases mayors and other magistrates, as well as bishops, were empowered to inflict the penalties of the Act.¹¹

III

The history of the process by which the English Church, which had been Roman Catholic under Mary, assumed its present form under Elizabeth illustrates the real nature of the existing ecclesiastical establishment. It was not the Church, as represented either by the bishops or by Convocation, that effected this great and memorable revolution. It was caused by the State—by the Queen and Parliament—in the teeth of the bishops and in the teeth of Convocation.

The accession of Elizabeth, and her selection of statesmen who were known to be favourable to Protestantism as her advisers, filled the clergy with alarm. At the meeting of Convocation, the Lower House drew up an address to the bishops, declaring the faith of the clergy on the principal points of controversy between the Protestant Churches and Rome, and requested that it might be laid by the bishops before the Lords in Parliament. They affirmed :—

“(1) That in the sacrament of the altar, by virtue of the words of Christ, duly spoken by the priest, is present *realiter*, under the kinds of bread and wine, the natural body of Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary, and also his natural blood.

“(2) That after the consecration there remains not the substance of bread and wine, nor any other substance but the substance of God and man.

¹⁰ 1 Eliz. cap. 2, § 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, §§ 17, 22.

“ (3) That in the mass is offered the true body of Christ, and his true blood, a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and dead.

“ (4) That to Peter the apostle, and his lawful successors in the apostolic see, as Christ’s vicars, is given the supreme power of feeding and ruling the church of Christ militant, and confirming their brethren.

“ (5) That the authority of handling and defining concerning the things belonging to faith, sacraments, and discipline ecclesiastical, hath hitherto ever belonged, and ought to belong, only to the pastor of the church, whom the Holy Ghost for this purpose hath set in the church, and not to laymen.”¹²

The address was presented by Bonner, Bishop of London, to the lord keeper Bacon.¹³ But the lords were not disposed to allow to the clergy the power they claimed under the fourth article, and proceeded to arrange in their own way the creed, the worship, and the polity of the national establishment. The bishops were as powerless as their clergy to arrest the action of the Queen and Parliament. According to the Catholic theory, a theory which has lately been revived in the English Church, the bishops are the divinely ordained guardians of “ the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints,” the successors of the apostles, invested with august and awful powers as the rulers of the Church. If there is any fragment of truth in this theory, it was for them to determine whether the Pope had any authority over the English Church and was the true head of Christendom. There were nine bishops in the House of Lords when the Supremacy Bill was read a third time, and they all voted against the Bill which excluded the authority of the Pope and vested in the Crown what was described as “ its ancient jurisdiction over the state ecclesiastical and spiritual,” and abolished “ all foreign powers repugnant to the same.” No bishop voted in its favour. No bishop was even neutral.¹⁴

¹² Strype, *Annals*, I (1), 81, and Fuller, iv. 272–273.

¹³ Bacon had now succeeded Heath, the Archbishop of York. Strype, *ibid.*, 78.

¹⁴ Collier gives the following list of lords spiritual summoned to Elizabeth’s first Parliament : “ Heath, Archbishop of York ; Bonner, Bishop of London ; White, of Winchester ; Pate, of Worcester ; Kitchen, of Llandaff ; Bayne, of Coventry and Lichfield ; Turberville, of Exeter ; Scot, of Chester ; Oglethorpe, of Carlisle ; and Fecknam, lord abbot of Westminster. The bishops of Durham, Peterborough, Ely (now ambassador), Bath and Wells, and St. David’s, sent their proxies : the other sees were vacant by death ” (vi. 223).

The Abbot of Westminster voted with the bishops against the

It was the same when the Uniformity Bill was read a third time. Seven eminent divines and a layman, a doctor of civil law, had been appointed to revise the Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI. : their authority to revise it came, not from the Church, but from the Crown. They were selected by the Queen and her advisers. Their powers were of the same kind as the powers of any ordinary royal commission. The revised Prayer-Book was the schedule of the Uniformity Bill. It regulated the ordinary worship of the Church ; it provided forms for the administration of baptism, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for the burial of the dead, and for other religious observances. The result of their labours was so unacceptable to the bishops that all the bishops in the House of Lords voted against the Bill by which the Prayer-Book was imposed upon the English nation. The question at issue was critical. Fecknam, in his speech on the Bill, said that—" *two different religions being the subject of their inquiry*, he looked upon it as a point of the last importance to resolve on the right side of the question."¹⁵ The Bishop of Chester spoke with great dignity and earnestness. He said :—

"The business of this bill is to bring on a change of religion, or more properly a total suppression of what was anciently professed. . . . I have no intention to say anything to lessen the authority of Parliament. I own the acts of this honourable court are not to be contested, when passed upon matters within your jurisdiction. But as to religion, I humbly conceive that is a subject altogether foreign to the business of Parliament. For faith, as I have observed before, ought to have a firm basis, to be unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and not stand liable to amendments and repeals, and all other casualties of the statute-book. . . . (As to) the importance of the matter nothing can be greater. It is no temporal interest, no money business, no branch of property ; no, it is of much higher consideration. The fate of eternity, life and death, heaven and hell, are concerned in it."

He proceeded to criticise severely the new order for the celebration of the Holy Communion ; maintained that it

Supremacy Bill. He appears to have been absent on the third reading of the Act of Uniformity. If the proxies were used, they were used on the same side. The ecclesiastical vote was solid against the ecclesiastical change.

¹⁵ See an extended report of his speech in Collier, vi. 234-8.

withheld from the faithful the blessings which Christ confers in the sacrament when properly administered ; that according to the form in the Prayer-Book there was no true consecration of the bread and wine, and therefore no Real Presence of Christ in the sacramental elements. He also pointed out that there was no provision for " the offering " of the body and blood of Christ to the Father. He protested against the competency of Parliament to pronounce on the questions in debate :—

"The body of the Parliament consists mostly of the temporal nobility, and the commons, which though persons of great judgment and learning in civil matters, yet divinity is none of their profession. The exposition of the Scriptures, the reading of the ancients, has been none of their employment. These things considered, they cannot be supposed to be rightly qualified to pronounce upon the doctrines and practice of the Church. Neither, indeed, do these things belong to their function or lie within their character."¹⁶

This was manly and courageous speaking. On his own theory of the episcopal office—the theory which had been accepted by Christendom for a thousand years, the theory which underlies the whole system of Anglo-Catholicism—he was wholly in the right. He and his brethren on the bench were entrusted with the defence of the faith and the government of the Church, and the action of Parliament was a sacrilegious invasion of their functions. But the theory of Elizabeth and her advisers was wholly different. They assumed that the political rulers of the English nation had the authority to regulate the religious faith and practices of the English people.

IV

All the bishops except Llandaff refused to take the Oath of Supremacy, and were deprived. Thirteen deans, fourteen archdeacons, fifteen heads of colleges, fifty prebendaries, eighty rectors of Churches, six abbots, priors, and abbesses were also deprived—in all 192.¹⁷ According to another account, the number of the deprived clergy was about 243.

¹⁶ Collier, vi. 238–248.

¹⁷ MS. in the Cotton Library, quoted by Strype, *Annals*, i. (1), 106.

Several explanations may be given of the small number of the clergy that were removed from their livings.

(1) It is probable that the Oath of Supremacy was, for some time, pressed only on the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries : the inferior clergy were let alone.

(2) It seems certain that for some time after the Act of Uniformity was passed, it was very generally disregarded. In some of the remoter parts of the kingdom, especially in Lancashire, the clergy continued to celebrate the mass, and were not disturbed.

(3) The religious changes through which the nation had passed during the previous thirty years had been so great and so rapid that large numbers of the clergy who clung to the old faith were willing to read the new service, hoping that before long the ancient rites would be restored. The Queen's Prayer-Book might be defective—according to the Bishop of Chester it was fatally defective in the form it prescribed for the most sacred and awful of the Christian sacraments—but it contained little or nothing that was positively offensive to the conscience of a devout Romanist. It was also possible so to celebrate the new ritual as to make it hardly distinguishable from the old, except that it was in English instead of Latin. Till 1570, when the Pope issued a bull excommunicating the Queen and releasing her subjects from their allegiance, there was hope of reconciliation between England and Rome. Till then, it is probable that most of the Romish laity attended the English services, and that large numbers of priests, who at heart were loyal to the Pope, persuaded themselves that they might use the Prayer-Book without separating themselves from the Catholic Church.

(4) It was not till 1571 that the Queen permitted Parliament to enforce subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, in which some of the most conspicuous Romish doctrines are explicitly condemned. This was immediately after the Pope excommunicated her.

For nearly thirteen years after her accession, the Romish priests who remained in the Church had only to read the English service ; now they were required to renounce the Romish creed. The Act of 1571 enacts, not only that the articles shall be subscribed in future by all clergymen

on admission to a benefice, but that they shall be subscribed by—

“every person under the degree of a bishop, which doth or shall pretend to be a priest or minister of God’s holy Word and Sacraments, by reason of *any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth by Parliament in the time of the late King of most worthy memory, King Edward the Sixth, or now used in the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady.*”¹⁸

This enforced subscription on the Puritans, some of whom had received only a Presbyterian ordination; but the Act was passed in a Parliament which was vehemently in favour of Puritanism. Presbyterian ordination was implicitly recognised as valid, and the subscription which the Act required was only to those articles “which concern the Christian faith and the doctrine of the Sacraments.”¹⁹ In these articles, which are strongly Protestant, the Puritans found nothing to trouble them; they were exempted from subscribing those articles which concern the polity of the Church to which they objected.

But to the Romish clergy who had been ordained by Romish bishops, and according to the Roman form, the Act was a severe blow. It recognised their ordination as valid, and of this the Puritans complained; but in requiring them to subscribe the doctrinal articles, it compelled them to abjure some of the principal points of the Romish creed. A considerable number of the clergy were deprived. The Pope’s excommunication of the Queen, and this Act, compelled them to choose between the new faith and the old. Till now the choice might have been evaded.

This new policy was forced upon the Queen by grave perils. Towards the end of 1569 the Catholic north had broken out into revolt. In 1570 the Pope had excommunicated her, released her Catholic subjects from their allegiance, dissolved the obligation of their oaths, and pronounced them excommunicated if they continued to recognise the Queen’s authority. To the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland—the leaders of the recent rebellion—he addressed a

¹⁸ 13 Eliz. cap. 12, § 1. *An Act for the Ministers of the Church to be of sound Religion.* It is to be found in G. W. Prothero’s *Select Statutes*, 64–65.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, § 1.

letter, honouring their piety, giving them his blessing, and promising, not only to move the princes of Catholic Christendom on their behalf, but to send them at once all the money he could command, and to assist them in their holy purpose to the utmost of his power. Soon after Parliament met in 1571, a great plot was detected for liberating the Queen of Scots from confinement and placing her on the English throne. In this plot the Pope, Philip of Spain, the Duke of Alva, and the Duke of Norfolk were implicated.

It was necessary, not only to strike hard at the Queen's enemies, but to do something for the Queen's friends. Bills were passed making it high treason to introduce Papal bulls into England; high treason for any man claiming to be a priest to receive an English subject into the Romish Church; high treason for English subjects to be so received; and high treason to call the Queen a heretic, a schismatic, a tyrant, an infidel, or a usurper of the crown, even if these treasonable words were followed by no treasonable act.²⁰ The Queen's friends, the Puritans, received satisfaction from the measure which compelled the clergy to subscribe to Protestant articles of faith. She was reluctant to make this concession to them—it was a violation of the central principle of her ecclesiastical policy; but her necessities compelled her to yield.

V

Elizabeth is one of the few English sovereigns who have acquired a lasting ascendancy over the imagination of the English people. She has become a national legend. She has won a place in the heart of the English nation which removes her beyond the reach of historical criticism. We may condemn the hastiness and cruelty with which she persecuted the Puritans and the Separatists on the one hand and the Roman Catholics on the other; we may think bitterly and speak bitterly of the vacillation and treachery with which she acted towards foreign Protestants; vanity, meanness, lying, a hard, merciless temper in working out her purposes—all these vices may be proved against her, and yet the spell of her name is unbroken. That she was great notwithstanding

²⁰ 13 Eliz. capp. 1, 2.

these vices, is perhaps the last proof of the solid quality of her greatness. To discover the secret of her power is not easy. But she had robust courage ; she cared for the greatness of England ; she had a lofty pride in the English Crown. Above all, she never doubted the firmness of her hold on the affection and loyalty of the English people ; she took it for granted and relied on it, just as we rely on the law of gravitation. She could therefore make concessions to her subjects in a style which transformed her very concessions into fresh proofs and guarantees of her authority. Whatever we mean when we speak of the royal spirit—this she had. And so, good statesmen did her bidding ; and though she often brought trouble and dishonour both on herself and them by following her own wayward and wilful impulses rather than their counsel, by trusting her own craft rather than their capacity, this never destroyed, it never lessened, their devotion to her ; and they continued to the end to regard it as the proudest of earthly distinctions to be her servants. Gallant sailors, heroes of romance, fought for her glory and made the English name terrible in distant seas. It was her extraordinary felicity that during her reign English genius revealed a sudden and unexpected splendour. Spenser, Shakespeare, and Hooker have contributed to her renown.

But what has done most of all to enthrone her in the imagination of the English race is the impression that she was the great Protestant queen whose accession extinguished the fires of Smithfield and liberated the country from the tyranny of priests and popes, and whose long reign secured the triumph of Protestantism in England and prevented the destruction of Protestantism in Europe.

The popular impression is substantially true. To an Evangelical Nonconformist, a descendant of the Puritans, the policy of Elizabeth may seem monstrous ; and it was unquestionably her own policy. It was she who was responsible for arresting the progress of the English Reformation, and who threw back the English Church to a point short of that which it had reached under Edward VI.²¹ She hectored her bishops

²¹ In revising the Liturgy of King Edward VI., the rubric was struck out which declared that by kneeling at the sacrament no adoration was intended to any corporal presence of Christ in the elements. In the Litany, the petition "From the tyranny of the Bishop of

—one of them²² she suspended from his office and confined in his house—for not enforcing the laws against the Puritans. When her most sagacious ministers urged her to be more tolerant to men whose chief crime was hatred to Rome, she steeled herself against their appeals for mercy—and this at the very time when her life was in danger from Romish plots, and when Rome would have sung a *Te Deum* if a successful revolt had deprived her of her crown. Most of her Parliaments were eager to carry reformation further, and tried hard to induce her to relax the terms of conformity to which the Puritans objected; but she held fast to her own policy; she told the Commons that matters of religion belonged to the Crown and not to them, and commanded them in her impressive way to attend to their own affairs. Her policy succeeded. She kept the peace between Catholics and Protestants, and saved the nation from the horrors of a religious civil war. When she came to the throne, she found the vast majority of her people worshipping at the altars of Rome; when she died, the vast majority of her people were worshipping at the altars of the Anglican Church.

She was Protestant by birth, and Protestant by the necessities of her position. She could not acknowledge the authority of the Pope without breaking with her best friends. She did not want to acknowledge it. Her queenly pride, her natural spirit, made her resent the interference of a foreign bishop in the ecclesiastical affairs of her kingdom; but for the theology of Protestantism she cared nothing, and the baldness of a Protestant service was alien to her taste. She had a lingering sentiment in favour of some of the practices and mysteries which had been renounced. She rebuked a preacher who argued in his sermon against the Real Presence, and she kept a crucifix in her private chapel. The crucifix provoked great excitement, and it was removed; but it was soon replaced. To the very last, she had a strong prejudice against a married clergy, and treated the wives of her bishops with scant courtesy. What she cared for was neither the theology of Protestantism nor

Rome and all his detestable enormities, Good Lord deliver us," was cancelled. The vestments forbidden by the second Prayer-Book of Edward VI., but permitted by the first, were made lawful. A few other changes were made in the same reactionary direction. See Cardwell, *Conferences*, 32–36.

²² Archbishop Grindal, in 1577. Strype, *Grindal*, 329, 343, 345, 346.

its ritual, but the loyalty of her people and the ecclesiastical independence of her Crown. She was resolved to be the Queen of all Englishmen, and to permit no rival power to command the obedience of her subjects: the acknowledgment of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Pope seemed to her a humiliation of her regal dignity.

She was ready, therefore, from the moment of her accession to abjure, and to require all her servants to abjure, the papal jurisdiction. No one could be permitted to hold any office under the Crown, military, civil, or ecclesiastical, without acknowledging her individual authority. But she was resolved to make as few changes in the service of the Church as possible. She was obliged to concede much to the Protestants; but it was her aim to make the service tolerable to the Catholics. All over England, for some years after she came to the throne, the people found their old priests officiating before the old altars, wearing the old vestments, and celebrating a service which was very like the old ritual.²³ The clergy did not give up their livings; the people did not leave their churches. This was just what the Queen desired. She did not much care what the priests believed, if they were only willing to acknowledge her authority; had she been left to herself, they might have continued to practise many of the ceremonies which the Prayer-Book rejected, and she would never have disturbed them. She cared still less what the laity believed, if they were loyal to herself, attended the English service, and did not quarrel about religion. Her Protestantism was the offspring partly of policy and partly of national sentiment, rather than of religious conviction.

In the original settlement of the English Church under Elizabeth, the door was purposely left open for those who rejected

²³ "The new Prayer-Book was for the most part an English rendering of the old service. Even the more zealous adherents of Catholicism held as yet that in complying with the order for attendance at public worship 'there could be nothing positively unlawful.' Where party feeling ran high indeed, the matter was sometimes settled by a compromise. A priest would celebrate mass at his parsonage for the more rigid Catholics, and administer the new communion in church to the more rigid Protestants. Sometimes both parties knelt together at the same altar-rails, the one to receive hosts consecrated by the priests at home after the old usage, the other wafers consecrated in church after the new. In many parishes of the north no change of service was made at all." J. R. Green, *History of the English People*, ii. 306-307.

a great part of the Protestant theology. It was not till 1571 that the English clergy were required to renounce the creed of Rome as well as the jurisdiction of the Pope. This was forced upon her at a time of great danger ; and though for a moment she yielded, her policy was unchanged. She was resolved, at almost any cost, to conciliate the laity who clung to the ceremonial of the ancient service. They were repelled from her churches by the irregularities of the Puritan clergy, and, therefore, although Puritan loyalty was the surest defence of her throne, Puritan irregularities were fiercely repressed. Her patience and persistency received their reward. Even when the Pope excommunicated her, large numbers of her people who regarded Protestantism with suspicion and dislike continued to attend her churches. They had attended them for thirteen years, had thought themselves good Catholics while worshipping according to the forms of the English Prayer-Book ; and now that they had to choose between the Pope and the Queen, they held by the Queen—many of them thinking, no doubt, that they were good Catholics still. The Spanish Armada completed their conversion, and drew into the English Church large numbers of Englishmen who, till the ships of Spain were menacing the English coast, refused to conform to the new order. That a Spanish King should attempt to invade England in the name of Catholicism, was an offence not to be forgiven. To resist this outrage, Catholic and Protestant fought side by side ; and when they had fought together against a Catholic invasion, it became easier to pray together in an Anglican church.

It is possible that Elizabeth might have secured her ends by other means ; that if while conciliating the moderate Catholics she had also been willing to conciliate the Puritans, and permitted them both to remain in the national Church together ; if she had left the clergy free to wear vestments or not, to practise the old ceremonies or not, according to their own choice or the wishes of their parishioners, all that she aimed at might have been won, and many of the calamities that fell on the Church and the nation in later years might have been avoided. It is doubtful—more than doubtful—whether such a policy was possible ; whether, if possible, it would have been successful. As a matter of fact, she gained what she wanted. And it may be thought that if the political instinct

and sagacity of James I., and of Charles I., had been as keen as her own, the fierce strife which broke out in the Great Rebellion might have been prevented, the external religious unity of the nation might have been preserved, and the rise of Evangelical Nonconformity might have been indefinitely postponed. But, on the other hand, the policy of Elizabeth which drew her Catholic subjects into the English Church made the spirit of the English Church more Catholic. The triumph of Elizabeth lowered the fires of English Protestantism in the Establishment, and rendered possible the revival of the Catholic spirit and doctrine under Laud. She gave a permanent place in the English Church to the very forces which forty years after her death provoked the assault that for a time laid both the Church and the throne in the dust. The chief difficulties of James and of Charles were the direct results of the success of Elizabeth.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ENGLAND

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CHURCH—CONCESSIONS TO PURITANS PROPOSED BUT REJECTED IN CONVOCATION—VARIETIES AND IRREGULARITIES IN SERVICE AND RITUAL—UNIFORMITY ENFORCED—THE “ADVERTISEMENTS”—RESISTANCE OF THE PURITANS—ARCHBISHOP PARKER AND THE LONDON CLERGY—SEPARATIST CONGREGATIONS—THEIR MEETINGS PROSCRIBED—WORSHIPPERS AT PLUMBERS’ HALL ARRESTED, EXAMINED, AND IMPRISONED—RICHARD FITZ AND HIS SECRET CHURCH—THE FIRST REGULARLY CONSTITUTED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ENGLAND—GROUNDS OF SEPARATION PRACTICAL, NOT THEORETICAL—VESTMENTS CONTROVERSY—SYMPATHY WITH THE PURITAN OBJECTIONS—VESTMENTS NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE : THE SIGN OF THE PRIEST, THE RELIC OF ROME, THE MARK OF SEPARATION FROM FOREIGN PROTESTANTS.

IT soon became apparent that the settlement of the English Church was unsatisfactory to some of the firmest friends of the Queen. Among the new bishops and deans were men who during Mary’s time had been driven into exile, and who shared the opinions of the Protestants of Geneva and of Zurich on questions of ritual and of church polity.

I

Most of the livings which had been vacated by those of the Catholic clergy who refused to take the Oath of Supremacy, or to submit to the Act of Uniformity, appear to have been given to men who desired a more thorough Reformation than the Queen was willing to allow. The friends of the old order who remained in the Church felt that their only safety was in keeping quiet ; and in the Convocation which met early in 1562 the ardent Protestants had been allowed to secure a number of representatives out of all proportion to their

real strength among the clergy. It was proposed that all holy days, with the exception of Sundays, Christmas Day, Easter, and Whitsuntide, should be abolished; that in all parish churches the minister while conducting service should turn his face to the people—not to the altar—so that the congregation might “hear and be edified”; that the ceremony of making the cross on the child’s forehead in baptism should be omitted as tending to superstition; that each bishop should be at liberty to determine whether in his own diocese the communicants should be required to kneel at the Lord’s Supper; that the sacramental vestments should not be enforced, but that it should be “sufficient for the minister in time of saying divine service and ministering the sacraments to use a surplice”; and that the use of organs in divine service should be discontinued. A paper containing similar proposals had previously received the signatures of five deans, twelve archdeacons, the provost of Eton, and fourteen proctors.¹ On a division, these six Articles were supported by 43 against 35; but the extreme Reformers had only 15 proxies, while their opponents had 24. Including proxies, the numbers were 59 against, and 58 for; so that the Articles were lost by a single vote.

But though defeated in Convocation, the Puritans were not disheartened. They did all they could to bring the Romish vestments into contempt. The Dean of Wells, by way of insult, required a man who had been guilty of adultery to do his open penance in a priest’s square cap. In the celebration of divine service they wholly disregarded the directions of the Book of Common Prayer, and committed the grossest irregularities. A paper found among Cecil’s MSS., and dated February 14, 1564–5, illustrates the extent of the disorder.

VARIETIES IN THE SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION USED

Service and Prayer.—Some say the service and prayers in the chancel; others in the body of the church. Some say the same in a seat made in the church; some in the pulpit, with their faces to the people. Some keep precisely the order of the book; others intermeddle Psalms in metre. Some say with a surplice; others without a surplice.

¹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 239–240. Cardwell, *Conferences*, 39–41.

Table.—The table standeth in the body of the church in some places, in others it standeth in the chancel. In some places the table standeth altarwise, distant from the wall [a] yard. In some others in the middle of the chancel, north and south. In some places the table is joined, in others it standeth upon tressels. In some the table hath a carpet; in others it hath none.

Administration of the Communion.—Some with surplice and cap; some with surplice alone; others with none. Some with chalice; some with a Communion cup; others with a common cup. Some with unleavened bread; and some with leavened. ("He might have added," says Strype, "some with wafers, some with common manchet-bread.")

Receiving.—Some receive kneeling, others standing, others sitting.

Baptizing.—Some baptize in a font; some in a basin. Some sign with the sign of the cross; others sign not. Some minister in a surplice; others without.

Apparel.—Some with a square cap; some with a round cap; some with a button cap; some with a hat. Some in scholars' clothes, some in others.²

II

When the Queen heard of these disorderly practices, she was exceedingly angry. The officers in her army might as well refuse to wear their uniforms, or her judges their scarlet and ermine, as her clergy refuse to wear the vestments. The clergy were the servants of the Crown, and their irregularities were an insult to her authority. There were grave reasons for her impatience and displeasure. The general carelessness of the Puritan clergy about the external decencies of worship would be regarded as a sign of irreverence; and their refusal to wear such of the vestments, and to observe such of the ceremonies of the ancient faith, as she had determined to preserve, would repel large numbers of the people from the reformed services. She therefore directed the archbishop to enforce compliance with the Act of Uniformity. A book of "Advertisements" was drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London, Winchester, Ely, and Lincoln.³ It consists of a series of directions for the guidance

² Strype, *Parker*, i. 302.

³ The book was also signed by the Bishop of Rochester. It was entitled, *Advertisements partly for the Due Order in the Publique Administration of Common Prayers and Usinge the Holy Sacraments, and*

of the clergy. Every "parson" that is able to preach is required to preach, "in his own person," to his congregation once, at least, in every three months; but, if unable, he may "preach by another," and incur no penalty. If a preacher occupies the pulpit for a poor brother, he is not to exact or receive an unreasonable fee. All preachers are to avoid subjects "tending to dissension." No clergyman is to preach without a licence from the bishop of the diocese; until he is licensed, he must neither "preach" nor "expound, in his own Cure or elsewhere, any Scripture or matter of doctrine, or by the way of exhortation, but only study to read gravely and aptly, without any glossing of the same, or any additions, the homilies already set out" or any others that may be issued. There are directions about the celebration of the communion and the administration of baptism; the communion table is to be covered with a carpet of silk or other decent covering, and "with a fair linnen cloth at the time of ministration"; the communicants are to receive kneeling; in baptism it is forbidden to use basins. The dress of the clergy is carefully regulated. They are told what they are to wear on ordinary occasions; what they are to wear when travelling; every man is to be dressed according to his ecclesiastical rank; "in their private houses and studies" they may "use their own liberty of comely apparel." When saying public prayers or administering the sacraments in ordinary churches, the minister is to wear a "comely surplice with sleeves"; in collegiate churches the principal minister, the gospeller, and the epistoler are to wear copes when celebrating the Holy Communion.

Bishops are authorised to prevent improper and incompetent persons from being admitted to benefices. "At the Archdeacon's visitation the Archdeacon shall appoint the curate to certain Texts of the New Testament, to be conned without book"; and at the next Synod the curate is to be required to repeat them.

All licences to preach granted in the Province of Canterbury before March 1, 1564-5, are declared void; but "such as shall be thought meet for the office" are to receive a fresh

partly for the Apparel of all Persons Ecclesiastical, etc. 1564. Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 247-250. Sparrow, *A Collection of Articles, Injunctions, etc.*, 121-128 (3rd edition).

licence, "paying no more but four pence for the Writing, Parchment, and Wax."

On Sundays there are to be no shops open; "artificers" are not to go about their "affairs worldly"; and "in all Fairs and common markets falling upon the Sunday" there is to be "no shewing of any wares before the Service be done."

Finally, every clergyman before admission to any ecclesiastical office is to be required to promise that he will not preach without licence; that he will read the service plainly, distinctly, and audibly, so that all the people may hear and understand; that he will wear the appointed dress; that he will try to promote peace among his parishioners; that he will read every day at least one chapter in the Old Testament and one chapter in the New, "with good advisement," to increase his knowledge; that he will "keep and maintain such order and uniformity in all external polity, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Church as by the Laws, good Usages, and Orders are already well provided and established"; and that he will not "openly intermeddle with any artificer's occupation, as covetously to seek a gain thereby," if he has an ecclesiastical living worth twenty nobles a year.

The Puritans were alarmed when they heard of the Queen's determination to compel their submission, and they appealed to the Earl of Leicester, on whose friendly offices they were accustomed to rely. Through his influence the confirmation of the Queen in Council was withheld from the book, and it appeared without the direct sanction of the Crown. To enforce the new regulations, the bishops had to rely on their ordinary powers.

"The Archbishop," says Strype, "was now arrived to the sixty-first year of his age; and all the remainder of his days from hence to his grave was embittered by the labours and pains he had with such as would not comply with the established rites and orders of the Church."⁴

The most distinguished of those who refused to conform were Sampson, Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, and Humphreys, Regius Professor of Divinity in the same university and President of Magdalen. Humphreys resisted for a long time, but yielded at last. Sampson was deprived of his deanery.

At the end of March (1565-6) the Archbishop and Grindal,

⁴ Strype, *Parker*, i. 367.

Bishop of London, called all the London clergy before them at Lambeth. Cecil and the Lord Keeper Bacon and the Marquis of Northampton, who promised to be present, were not there. When the clergy were assembled, they found the Rev. Robert Cole, a city clergyman who had formerly refused to wear the habits, canonically dressed. The Bishop's Chancellor addressed them :—

“ My Masters and the Ministers of London, the Council's pleasure is, that strictly ye keep the unity of apparel like to this man, as you see him ; that is, a square cap, a scholar's gown—priest-like, a tippet, and in the church a linen surplice ; and invariably observe the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer, and the Queen's Majesty's injunctions,⁵ and the Book of Convocation.⁶ . . . Ye that will presently subscribe, write *Volo*. Those that will not subscribe, write *Nolo*. Be brief ; make no words.” When some wanted to speak, the answer was “ Peace, peace ! Apparitor, call the churches.”

As the name of each parish church was called, the minister was required to answer. Sixty-one promised conformity ; nine or ten were absent ; thirty—or perhaps thirty-seven—resisted. It was expected that the nonconforming clergy would have been “ rough and clamorous,” but they behaved with “ reasonable quietness and modesty.” Among them, as the Archbishop acknowledged, were the best clergymen in London and “ some preachers.”⁷ They were at once suspended from their ministry, and were to be deprived within three months if they did not submit. Some of the deprived clergy became physicians ; some entered other secular employments ; some went to Scotland ; some crossed over to the Continent ; some were reduced to beggary. Churches were closed in the City of London because there was no one to conduct the service. Six hundred persons came to a church on one Sunday to receive the communion and found the doors shut : the minister had been deprived.

⁵ Issued 1559.

⁶ Perhaps the Articles agreed upon in Convocation 1562 ; but they had not yet received the royal sanction.

⁷ Strype, *Parker*, i. 429. For a fuller account of this scene, see *Idem*, *Grindal*, 144-146. Strype gives two different accounts of the number of those who declined submission. In his *Life of Parker* he says that “ thirty-seven denied ” ; in his *Life of Grindal*, that “ only thirty did not subscribe.” Some of those who refused submission were Romanists. Perhaps the *thirty* were those who were ultimately deprived.

III

At last a crisis came. Some of the deprived ministers and many of their people began to consider the lawfulness and the necessity of separation from the national communion. The course which they were considering was full of peril. But they could not have the Word of God preached or the Sacraments administered in the church without what they called "idolatrous gear," and they concluded that their only course was to form a separate congregation. There had been secret societies of devout men in the evil times of their fathers ; and since their hopes of a complete Reformation had been wrecked, they determined that it would be no crime, but the fulfilment of a duty, for those who wished to cleanse the service of God from the superstitions which still defiled it, to assemble together in private houses and wherever else they could meet safely. They hesitated for a time whether they should use the Book of Common Prayer with necessary modifications, but decided to use the Geneva Service Book.

How often they met for worship before their meetings were discovered, there is nothing to show. When it came to the Queen's ears that some of her subjects in the City of London were having prayers and hearing sermons together in secret, and were even celebrating the Lord's Supper, she immediately charged the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to lay their hands on the offenders. In the first instance, gentle means were to be used to persuade them to conform ; if they were obstinate, they were to be deprived of the freedom of the city—a punishment which would involve a kind of civil excommunication, and make it unlawful for those of them who were merchants and tradesmen to carry on their business. If this failed, the Commissioners were to resort to severer measures.

On June 19, 1567, they were caught. They had hired Plumbers' Hall, telling the hall-keeper that they intended to celebrate a wedding. The sheriffs had information of the meeting, and found about a hundred persons—men and women—holding a religious service. A considerable number of them were carried off to prison, and the next day they were brought before the Lord Mayor, Grindal, Bishop of London,

and other Commissioners.⁸ Grindal argued with them gently. He reminded them that by separating themselves from the Church they condemned not only all that were at that time in communion with it, but the Reformers in the days of King Edward VI. and the martyrs who had suffered under Queen Mary; he quoted the judgment of Bullinger against the lawfulness of separation from the Church of England on the ground of vestments and ceremonies; he insisted that copes and surplices were things indifferent, and that in using them there could be neither sin nor virtue; that the Gospel was truly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered in the churches; that in relation to ceremonies and other matters of the same kind, which God had neither commanded nor forbidden, the Prince had authority to make regulations for the sake of public order. The Dean of Westminster argued much in the same way.

The prisoners maintained that surplices and copes were superstitious and idolatrous, and denied that the Prince had power to command the ministers of the Church to wear them. In reply to what was said about the vestments being "things indifferent," they quoted Melancthon on Romans xiv. : "When the opinion of holiness, or merit, or necessity is put into things indifferent, then they darken the light of the Gospel and ought by all means to be taken away." Grindal replied that to wear the vestments was not commanded as though it were necessary to acceptable worship. One of the prisoners rejoined: "You have made it a matter of necessity in the Church, and that many a poor man doth feel."

The Lord Mayor said:—

"I cannot talk learnedly with you in celestial matters, but I have a mother wit, and I will persuade the best I can. The Queen hath not established these garments and things for any holiness' sake or religion, but only for a civil order and comeliness; because she would have the Ministers known from other men; as the Aldermen are known by their tippets, and the Judges by

⁸ For an account of the proceedings before the Commission, see *An Examination of certayne Londoners before the Commissioners, about anno 1567, in A parte of a register, contayninge sundrie memorabile matters, written by divers godly and learned in our time, which stande for, and desire the reformation of our Church, in Discipline and Ceremonies, accordinge to the pure Worde of God, and the Lawe of our Lande*, 23-37. See also Strype, *Grindal*, 169-178.

their red gowns, and sometimes they wear coifs: and likewise Lords' servants are known by their badges. I will tell you an example: There was an Alderman within this year, that went in the street, and a boisterous fellow met him, and went between him and the wall, and put him towards the kennel,⁹ and some that were about him said, 'Knowest thou not what thou doest? He is an Alderman.' And he said, 'I knew him not: he might have worn his tippet.' Even so when the Ministers began to be despised, the Queen's grace did ordain this priests' apparel."¹⁰

His lordship also warned them that if they resisted the Queen, she "may have occasion to say: 'Will they not be content that I should rule in the Church? I will restore that my forefathers have followed: and therefore, masters, take heed.'"

The prisoners do not seem to have been alarmed by the menace; one of them answered, "Even so, my Lord, as you do say that the Alderman is known by his gown and tippet, even so by this apparel that these men now wear, were the papist mass-priests known from other men."

The bishop, who was a Puritan at heart, admitted in the course of the discussion that although he wore the cope and surplice in St Paul's, he would rather minister without them; he wore them for the sake of order and in obedience to the Queen. Upon this the prisoners declaimed against the vestments; one called them the "conjuring garments of Popery"; another compared the bishops to the Popish bishops of Queen Mary's time who made the mayor and aldermen their butchers. When reminded that the bishops and the authorities of the city were acting under the commission of the Queen, and that she was a godly sovereign, one of them had the audacity to say that "the fruits" showed what she was; and another added that the servants of God were persecuted under her. Most—if not all—of the prisoners, twenty-four men and seven women, were sent to the Bridewell, where they were kept for a year and then discharged.¹¹

⁹ The open sewer running along the street. "Go, hop me over every kennel home" (Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew*, iv. iii. 98).

¹⁰ *A Parte of a Register*, 31. The original has been slightly modernised in this and the following extracts.

¹¹ Strype, *Grindal*, 175-176, 200-201.

IV

In the report of the trial there is nothing to indicate that the congregation which met in Plumbers' Hall had any definite ecclesiastical organisation, or held any theory of church polity which required them to separate themselves from the English Establishment. Indeed one of them said: "So long as we might have the Word freely preached, and the Sacraments administered, without preferring of idolatrous gear above it, we never assembled together in houses."¹² But in a letter written by Grindal to Bullinger in June, 1568, about the time that the Plumbers' Hall prisoners were being released after their year's imprisonment, he speaks of the discovery of a secret Church in London, with ministers, elders, and deacons.

"Our controversy concerning the habits, about which you write, had cooled for a time, but broke out again last winter; and this by the means of some who are more zealous than they are either learned or gifted with pious discretion. Some London citizens of the lowest order, together with four or five ministers, remarkable neither for their judgment nor learning, have openly separated from us; and sometimes in private houses, sometimes in the fields, and occasionally even in ships, they have held their meetings and administered the Sacraments. Besides this, *they have ordained ministers, elders, and deacons, after their own way, and have even excommunicated some who had seceded from their church.* . . . The number of this sect is about two hundred, but consisting of more women than men. The Privy Council have lately committed the heads of this faction to prison, and are using every means to put a timely stop to this sect."¹³

Dr. Waddington was fortunate to discover in the State Paper Office three documents, one of which—printed in black letter—is signed by Richard Fitz, the pastor of a secret Christian society, meeting in London and organised on Congregational principles; the second—a manuscript—is signed by twenty-seven members of this society; the third—also in manuscript—is a declaration of reasons for separating from the English Church and renouncing "the relics of Antichrist."¹⁴

¹² *i.e.* in private houses. *Parte of a Register*, 24-25.

¹³ *Zurich Letters*: 1558-1579 (Parker Society), lxxxii. 201-202.

¹⁴ The documents are endorsed—"Bishop of London: Puritans." Dr. Waddington thinks that these papers were seized by the officers when the members of the Church were taken to the Bridewell prison. But this is clearly impossible. The imprisonment of the congregation

The first, signed by the pastor, is a reply to slanderous reports about the Church.

“THE TRUE MARKES OF CHRIST’S CHURCH, ETC.

“The order of the Privy Church in London, which, by the malice of Satan, is falsely slandered and evil spoken of.

“The minds of them, that by the strength and working of the Almighty, our Lord Jesus Christ, have set their hands and hearts to the pure, unmingled, and sincere worshipping of God, according to his blessed and glorious Word in all things, only abolishing and abhorring all traditions and inventions of man whatsoever, in the same religion and service of our Lord God, knowing this always, that the true and afflicted Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ either hath, or else ever more continually under the cross striveth for to have—

“First and foremost, the glorious word and Evangel preached, not in bondage and subjection, but freely and purely.

“Secondly, to have the Sacraments ministered purely only and altogether according to the institution and good word of the Lord Jesus, without any tradition or invention of man ; and

“Last of all, to have not the filthy canon law, but discipline only and altogether agreeable to the same heavenly and Almighty Word of our good Lord Jesus Christ.

“RICHARD FYTZ, *Minister.*”¹⁵

The second document, signed by twenty-seven members of the Church, is an appeal to England to return to God, and especially to acknowledge the supreme authority of His Word. The writers are resolved to do their part.

“Therefore, according to the saying of the Almighty our God, (Matt. xviii. 20), ‘Wherever two or three are gathered in my name there am I’ : So we a poor congregation whom God hath separated from the Church of England,¹⁶ and from the mingled and false

which met at Plumbers’ Hall—and it is to this imprisonment that Dr. Waddington refers—was in June, 1567. One of the documents was written in the thirteenth year of the Queen’s reign, which was 1571. It is curious that neither in his *History* nor in his *Congregational Martyrs* does he give the documents in a complete form or in the same form. The *History* contains only part of the second document, but gives all the signatures ; the *Congregational Martyrs* contains much more of the document, but gives only some of the signatures. Waddington, i. (1200—1567), 742–745, and *Congregational Martyrs*, 11–15.

¹⁵ Waddington, i. (1200—1567), 742–743 ; and *Congregational Martyrs*, 11–12.

¹⁶ They had not separated themselves : God had separated them. He had shown them His will ; and they had only to obey.

worshipping therein used, out of the which assemblies the Lord our only Saviour hath called us, and still calleth, saying—‘Come out from among them, and separate yourselves from them, and touch no unclean thing, then will I receive you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord’ (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). So as God giveth strength at this day, we do serve the Lord every Sabbath day in houses, and on the fourth day in the week we meet or come together weekly to use prayer and exercise discipline on them which do deserve it, by the strength and sure warrant of the Lord God’s Word, as in Matt. xviii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.”

They have suffered for their testimony.

“So this secret and disguised Antichrist, to wit, the Canon Law, with the branches and maintainers, though not so openly¹⁷ have, by long imprisonment, pined and killed the Lord’s servants (as our minister, Richard Fitz, Thomas Rowland, deacon, one Patridge, and Giles Fowler, and besides them a great multitude) . . . whose good cause and faithful testimony, though we should cease to groan and cry unto our God to redress such wrong and cruel handling of his poor remnant, the very walls of the prisons about this city—as the Gatehouse, Bridewell, the Counters, the King’s Bench, the Marshalsea, and the White Lion—would testify God’s anger kindled against this land for such injustice and subtile persecution.”

It concludes with a prayer for the Queen: that “she may cast down all the places of idolatry within her land, with the Popish canon law”; may send forth princes and ministers, and give them the Book of the Lord, that they may bring home the people of God to the purity and truth of the apostolic Church; and that she may have “a blessed, long, and prosperous reign, with peace of conscience in this life,” and eternal glory in the life to come. The date—1571—is given in the body of the document.¹⁸

Of the twenty-seven persons who signed this appeal, seven appear to have been among the Bridewell prisoners caught at Plumbers’ Hall in 1567; Thomas Rowland, the deacon who was dead when the appeal was signed, was one of the seven.¹⁹ Five of the Christian names do not correspond, but it was

¹⁷ That is, the present Church authorities do not, like the Romanists, openly profess to maintain the Canon Law; but are really the allies of that Antichrist.

¹⁸ Waddington, i. 743-744; *Congregational Martyrs*, 13-14.

¹⁹ Rowland is called *Bowelande* in *Parte of a Register*.

very possible for the names of the Bridewell prisoners to be erroneously recorded.

Whether the Church was formed before or after 1567 is doubtful. As nothing in the examination of the Plumbers' Hall prisoners suggests that they held any very definite conception of ecclesiastical polity, or attached any importance to "discipline," it is probable that the Church was organised after the prisoners were liberated.

The tradition of this Church survived. In a "Dialogue" printed in 1593, it is stated that "in the days of Queen Elizabeth there was a separated Church, whereof Mr. Fitz was pastor, that professed and practised that cause (*meaning Congregationalism*) before Mr. Browne wrote for it."²⁰ Henry Ainsworth, in 1608, speaks of "that separated Church whereof Mr. Fitz was pastor, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign."²¹ John Robinson too speaks of "a separated Church in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's days."²²

In earlier times there were secret Christian societies in England which were really Congregational Churches; but these societies were informal associations of devout men and women who met to worship God without any idea of restoring the polity of apostolic times. Richard Fitz and his friends called their society a Church: they claimed to be a Church in the apostolic meaning of the word; they restored the apostolic offices of the pastor and deacon; they attributed to the Church the power of discipline, which Christ declares is possessed by those who are gathered together in His name; they met regularly to exercise this power, and they believed that what they bound on earth was bound in heaven, and what they loosed on earth was loosed in heaven.

The first regularly constituted English Congregational Church of which any record or tradition remains was the Church of which Richard Fitz was pastor; and he died in prison for his loyalty to Congregationalism.

²⁰ Quoted, without reference, by Waddington, *Congregational Martyrs*, 15-16.

²¹ *Counterpoison . . . Mr. Bernard's book entitled The Separatists' Schisme, and Mr. Crashawe's Questions . . . examined and answered by H. A.*, 39.

²² John Robinson, *Works*, ii. 57.

V

It seems probable, however, that neither Richard Fitz nor those who were associated with him became Nonconformists for the sake of realising an ideal form of ecclesiastical polity. They thought that the services of the English Church were tainted with Romanism. The Romish vestments and the Romish ceremonies were intolerable to them. They could not, so they believed, continue to worship in the Queen's churches without being guilty of disloyalty to Christ; and therefore they resolved to form a separate congregation. They found the justification of their decision in the great words of Christ—"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."²³ They discovered that to such an assembly Christ had entrusted most august powers, and that it fulfilled Christ's own conception of a Church.

But the movement began in their irreconcilable hostility to the vestments; this was the origin of their quarrel with the English Church. And it may be urged that if the Queen was tyrannical in enforcing the vestments, the Separatists were narrow and unreasonable in breaking away from the national Church rather than submit to them. It is due to the memory of the Elizabethan Nonconformists to consider the grounds of their resistance.

(1) The very object of the Queen—for, at first, most of her bishops were very cool in sustaining her policy—the very object of the Queen in enforcing the vestments was one of the chief grounds on which the Puritans and Separatists refused to wear them. She knew that the common people who had been educated in Romanism would regard the clergy who wore priestly habits as priests. But the Puritans vehemently denied that they were priests; and they refused to be parties to the policy which was intended to make them appear priests. They maintained that whoever claimed to be a priest, and whoever permitted himself to be regarded as a priest, was guilty of obscuring the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

(2) When the Queen insisted that the priestly vestments

²³ Matt. xviii. 20.

should be worn by all Christian ministers, she raised the great question, Whether any secular ruler has authority to interfere with the regulation of Christian worship. The Puritans—the most moderate of them, as well as the most extreme—refused to concede the authority, and contended that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Sovereign and Legislator of the Church. They were willing that the Queen should enforce the laws of Christ ; but that she had any right to make laws of her own for the faith or discipline or worship of the Church, they peremptorily denied.

The controversy was not a new one. In the time of Edward VI., Hooper, who has sometimes been called the first English Nonconformist, refused to wear episcopal vestments, when he was appointed Bishop of Gloucester ; and unless he wore the vestments he could not receive episcopal consecration. The King and his Council were, however, resolved that he should be bishop. They could not remove his scruples by argument, and therefore shut him up for some time in his own house ; and when this failed, they put him in the Fleet prison. At last, he consented to a compromise. He engaged to wear the vestments when he was consecrated, when he preached in his own cathedral, and when he preached before the King ; but declared that he would wear them at no other times.²⁴

The men that were unwilling to wear the vestments in Elizabeth's time had the sympathy of most of the eminent statesmen who served the Queen—of the Earl of Bedford, and the Earl of Huntingdon, of Walsingham, Knollys, and the Lord Keeper Bacon. Leicester, the Queen's favourite, was among their friends. Cecil was continually remonstrating against the severities of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and begging them to use the Puritans mercifully.

They had among them some of the ablest and most learned as well as the most devout of the clergy. Humphreys and Sampson were distinguished scholars. Some of the bishops who took part in enforcing the Queen's will had felt the difficulties of their brethren whom they now oppressed. Jewel described the vestments as "theatrical habits," and said, that the vestments are "the relics of the Amorites cannot be denied." Writing in the very year that the Puritan clergy

²⁴ Collier, v. 377-384, 418-419.

in London were deprived, he said, "I wish that all, even the slightest vestige of Popery might be removed from our churches, and above all from our minds." Bishop Sandys, writing in 1559, bitterly lamented that the Popish vestments were still used.²⁵ Bishop Grindal, who shared with Parker the responsibility of depriving the London Puritans, had had scruples himself concerning the vestments and the ceremonies; and in 1556 he wrote to Bullinger, "We who are now bishops, on our first return and before we entered on our ministry, contended long and earnestly for the removal of the things that have occasioned the present dispute."²⁶ Early in the controversy, all the Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge, threw off their surplices and refused to wear them any longer. The Fellows of Trinity, with three exceptions, did the same. Mr. Hallam says with perfect truth that the Puritan scruples—

"were by no means confined, as is perpetually insinuated, to a few discontented persons. Except Archbishop Parker, who had remained in England during the late reign, and Cox, Bishop of Ely, who had taken a strong part at Frankfort against innovation, all the most eminent churchmen . . . were in favour of leaving off the surplice and what were called the Popish ceremonies. . . . In this early stage the advocates of a simpler ritual had by no means assumed the shape of an embodied faction, which concessions, it must be owned, are not apt to satisfy, but numbered the most learned and distinguished portion of the hierarchy. Parker stood nearly alone on the other side."²⁷

The reasons that made so large a number of eminent men reluctant to wear the vestments must deserve consideration and respect. They were strengthened by a passion which had a fierce strength in the hearts of the people. In those days the vestments were inseparably associated with the most terrible memories. When the service was held in Plumbers' Hall, it was only twelve years since the martyrdoms under Queen Mary had begun with the burning of Rogers at Smithfield and Hooper at Gloucester. Ridley and Latimer, Saunders, Bradford and Cranmer, soon died the same death. For three years, in town after town, and city after city, the

²⁵ For the opinions of these and other bishops, see Neal, i. 157-160.

²⁶ See Grindal's *Letter to Bullinger*, in Strype, *Grindal*, ii. 491, and *Zurich Letters*: 1558-1579 (Parker Society), lxxiii. 169.

²⁷ Hallam, *Constitutional History*, i. 175, 179.

faggots were built up in the market-place, and men, women, and children, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups, were burnt for their Protestant faith, while Popish bishops in their Popish vestments looked on. About two hundred and eighty martyrs perished by fire, besides those who suffered cruel wrongs and intolerable tortures in prison but were not burnt. When the service was held in Plumbers' Hall, it was not nine years since the flames had been extinguished. Some of those who met for worship had probably seen many of the victims of Romish cruelty burning at the stake. Some of them may have been the husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters of the martyrs. Some of them, perhaps, had been imprisoned themselves, and had narrowly escaped burning. In 1563—only four years before—the first English edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* had been published: it was already the most popular book in England; it was read everywhere, and everywhere it deepened the horror with which Protestants regarded the Church of Rome, and made more angry and vehement their indignation against the priests. To compel the ministers of the purer faith to wear the livery of the men who had put the saints of God on the rack and sent them to the flames, was horrible. To be present at any worship where that livery was worn, seemed like condoning the crimes from which the martyrs had suffered. Nor was this all. What Rome had touched—so thought the more earnest Protestants of those days—had pollution in it. Prayers and sacraments were defiled, if the ministers wore the vestments of Antichrist.

And by these hated garments they were separated from their brethren in Scotland, Germany, Holland, and France, who were struggling for the faith of the Gospel. Protestant Christendom, notwithstanding the division between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches, was vividly conscious of its essential unity. The Protestants of every country in Europe had common interests and common perils. They must stand or fall together. Spain and the Pope were their common foes. All who had renounced the superstitions of Rome, and defied its tyranny, were comrades in a struggle on which the liberties of nations and the eternal salvation of mankind depended. If English Protestants wore the Popish vestments, they adopted the uniform of the enemy;

and in such a fight as was then going on—a veritable battle of Armageddon—this was treachery to the good cause.

Jewel and Grindal and Sandys and Parkhurst, who shared the scruples of the Puritans, but who, in obedience to the Queen and for the sake of order, submitted to wear copes and surplices and, what was worse, took part in imposing them on others, were good and able men; their submission may be defended on strong grounds. It has been already conceded that the policy of the Queen to which they submitted may have saved the nation from those religious wars which inflicted permanent and immeasurable evils on Germany and France.²⁸ They doubtless believed that in submitting to it they were rendering what in the long-run would be the truest service to the cause of Protestantism, and were averting immediate political troubles.

To them a calm and impartial historical criticism may concede the honours of practical wisdom. To the extreme Puritans must be conceded honours of another kind. To them must be attributed an immovable resolution to be loyal to conscience and to Christ at all hazards; a deeply rooted faith that no compromise with error can be necessary to secure the ultimate victory of truth; a vehement abhorrence of superstition and idolatry; a relentless hatred of priestly pretensions and priestly tyranny,—and these are virtues which are more necessary to the life of nations and of Churches than the profoundest sagacity; and they are more acceptable to God.

²⁸ See *ante*, p. 79.

CHAPTER IV

ATTEMPTS AT REFORMATION WITHIN THE CHURCH

PURITAN EXPERIMENT AT NORTHAMPTON—INSTRUCTION, DISCIPLINE, “PROPHESYINGS”—ATTEMPTS AT SUPPRESSION—CONFLICT BETWEEN QUEEN AND PARLIAMENT OVER CHURCH LEGISLATION—CAUSES OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE ANGLICAN PARTY IN PARLIAMENT—“THE ADMONITION TO THE PARLIAMENT”: DEMAND FOR A PRESBYTERIAN ESTABLISHMENT—CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CARTWRIGHT AND WHITGIFT—LIMITATIONS OF THE POWER OF THE CHURCH TO VARY ITS ORGANISATION AND RITUAL—MEETING AT WANDSWORTH TO SET UP A SCHEME OF DISCIPLINE—GRINDAL, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—ATTEMPT TO ORGANISE A PRESBYTERIAN SYSTEM WITHIN THE CHURCH—GRINDAL INCURS THE QUEEN’S DISPLEASURE AND IS SUSPENDED—MORAL AND SPIRITUAL SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CLERGY: CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE—PURITAN REVOLT A STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IN the year 1571—the same year in which the members of the Congregational Church in London declared their faith and polity and appealed to their countrymen to return to “the purity and truth of the apostolic Church”—the more moderate Puritans were making a singular experiment in the town of Northampton. They were resolved to remain in the national Church till they were driven out of it; but they were rapidly constructing a theory of church order very different from that which had been set up by the Crown and Parliament, and were trying how much of it could be carried into practice within the restraints imposed by the law.

The scheme had the sanction and support of the bishop of the diocese, of the mayor and corporation, and of the magistrates of the town and country. It was both vigorous and comprehensive. The Puritans of Northampton could find no passage in the New Testament sanctioning the use

of organs in Christian worship ; and in every church in the town the organ was silenced. They could find no passage sanctioning the employment of "singing men and singing women" ; and in every church in the town the choirs were silenced. For the minister to conduct service in the chancel was a survival of sacerdotal superstition ; and the service was therefore conducted in the nave. Contrary to the direction of the Prayer-Book, the communion table was placed in the nave at the upper end of the middle aisle, and kneeling was dispensed with.

There were some nobler elements in the scheme. It was resolved that the people should be taught the Scriptures, and in the principal church there was a service every Tuesday and Thursday for the reading and expounding of the Old Testament and the New. To give ample time to this exercise, the Book of Common Prayer was set aside ; the service began with the Confession, and ended with prayer and the recitation of a confession of faith.

It was also resolved that the people should have sufficient preaching. In the principal church there was a sermon every Sunday and holy-day. In the other churches it was ordered that morning service should be closed by nine o'clock, that the congregation might be able to hear the preacher ; the parish minister was to charge his people to go to hear him, unless he meant to preach himself.

For an hour at the end of evening prayer, every Sunday and holy-day, the young people were examined in Calvin's catechism, and the catechism was expounded by the minister. While this exercise went on the elder people were present.

During the time of sermon and catechising, the people were not to sit in the streets, or walk up and down, or "otherwise occupy themselves vainly, upon such penalties as might be appointed."

Before the communion, which was celebrated in every parish church once a quarter, the minister and the church-wardens went from house to house to take the names of communicants, and to examine into the state of their lives. If any of the parishioners had quarrelled with each other, they were to be brought before the mayor and aldermen, who, with the assistance of the minister and others, were to attempt to reconcile them. If the attempt to reconcile them failed,

the obstinate person was to be kept away from the communion ; he might even be punished in other ways. After the communion there was a second visitation of every house. Those who had been absent were brought before the mayor, the aldermen, and the minister, to explain their reasons for neglecting their duty, and to receive reproof and exhortation if the reasons were not regarded as satisfactory.

Every Thursday the mayor and other members of the corporation, with the clergy and certain gentlemen appointed by the bishop, held a meeting for the exercise of discipline. All persons guilty of drunkenness, profaneness, and other gross vices, all persons that railed against the preachers or against religion—"scolds, ribalds, or such like"—were brought before them for reproof or punishment, or both. Seven men appointed for the purpose in each parish reported all such offences in writing, and the municipal and ecclesiastical authorities of the town, assisted by the magistrates, endeavoured to repress all flagrant irreligion and immorality.

Meetings for what were called "prophesyings" were held on Saturday morning—at first, once a fortnight ; afterwards every week—the ministers of the town and neighbourhood taking part in them. Every minister that wished to "prophesy" was required to sign a confession of faith and an engagement to submit to the discipline and orders of his brethren. There was a president, who appears to have been elected from time to time by the ministers who took part in the exercises. The first speaker expounded a passage of Scripture which had been chosen at the previous meeting ; he refuted false interpretations, and then was permitted, in the quaint language of these times, "to give comfort to the audience as the place ministereth just occasion." He was allowed three-quarters of an hour. The second and third speakers, whose duty it was to add anything that they thought had been omitted by the opener and to enforce his observations, were allowed a quarter of an hour each. The discussion was closed by one of the "moderators," official persons chosen by the members of the association ; so that there were always four speakers besides those that offered prayer. The service lasted two hours ; it was held in one of the churches, and every one that pleased was allowed to be present.

II

The "prophesyings" were extremely popular. There were no public meetings of any kind in those days, and the mere excitement of hearing a succession of men discuss the meaning of important or perplexing passages of Scripture was very attractive. Every speaker would be likely to speak his best. There was also a keen popular interest in the topics which were certain to occupy the chief place in these discussions. Common people followed with passionate earnestness the great controversy with Rome; they had seen men burnt for denying the doctrines which were now publicly and vehemently assaulted. They followed with equal earnestness the development of the mysterious and tremendous doctrines of the Calvinistic theology. Preaching had not yet become so common as to make the country familiar with the contents of the Christian Gospel, and there was an intellectual as well as a moral interest in the exhibition of the most elementary religious truth.

Not unfrequently there were other elements of excitement. The discussion would drift very near to the questions at issue between the Puritans and the bishops; it would be hard to smite Rome without giving a side blow at the Romanisers. Sometimes an extreme Puritan who had been silenced for Nonconformity would make his appearance and take part in the meeting. Sometimes a layman seems to have risen in the congregation, and not only ventured to speak, but was respectfully heard. The "prophesyings" extended rapidly into many parts of England. Some of the bishops encouraged them. Archbishop Parker, at the instigation of the Queen, tried to put them down; but he did not find his task an easy one, and in spite of the Archbishop they maintained their ground.¹

¹ For details of the system, see Strype, *Annals*, ii. (1), 133-140; and for a similar system established at Norwich, J. Browne, *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 18-20. Lord Bacon, in his essay on *The Pacification of the Church (Touching a Preaching Ministry)*, expresses a strong opinion in favour of the practice, which he describes as "the best way to frame and train up preachers to handle the Word of God as it ought to be handled," adding some suggestions for its development and improvement. *Works* [1778], iii. 157-158. For the suppression of the "prophesyings," see Strype, *Parker*, ii. 360-362.

III

The movement at Northampton was only a symptom of general and growing dissatisfaction with the settlement of the Church. In the same year (1571) in which the moderate Puritans of Northampton were making their attempt at reformation within the Church and the Congregationalists in London were appealing for a reformation of a still more fundamental kind, Mr. Strickland, who is described as "an ancient gentleman of hot zeal,"² laid a Bill on the table of the House of Commons for the alteration of certain parts of the Book of Common Prayer to which the Puritans objected. The Bill was regarded by the Queen as an invasion of her prerogative as supreme governor of the Church; Mr. Strickland was called before the Privy Council, and was forbidden to take his place in the House of Commons. But just then the House was too excited to endure this act of tyranny even from Elizabeth. The insurrection of the Catholics in the north of England, the victories and cruelties of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, the bull of the Pope excommunicating Elizabeth and releasing her subjects from their allegiance, had heated the temper of English Protestants to a white heat. Mr. Strickland was allowed to return to his seat.³ When the House met again after Easter, bold speeches were made about the invasion of its liberties; the blood of the House was up, and it went on discussing ecclesiastical affairs in a spirit of hearty sympathy with the Puritans.⁴ Parliament was in the same mood when it met in 1572, though its courage was not quite so high. The Queen demanded to see certain Bills touching rites and ceremonies that had been read in the House; and her demand, if resented, was not resisted.⁵ But in the ensuing session, which began in February, 1575-6, Mr. Peter Wentworth made a vigorous attack on the encroachments of the Crown, especially protesting against the restrictions set on the liberty of Parliament in discussing questions of religion.

² Strype, *Annals*, ii. (1), 93, and see also 93-99. "A grave and ancient man of great zeal," D'Ewes, *Journals*, 156.

³ D'Ewes, *ibid.*, 175-176.

⁴ This was the Parliament which passed the Act described on pp. 75-76.

⁵ D'Ewes, *ibid.*, 213-214.

For this offence he was sent to the Tower, and was released only after an abject apology and a severe reprimand.⁶

The strength of Puritanism in the House of Commons throughout the reign of Elizabeth was unquestionably out of all proportion to its strength in the country. One reason may have been that by an Act passed in 1562 members of the House of Commons—but not peers—were required to take the Oath of Supremacy, which definitely repudiated the authority of the Pope. Earnest Roman Catholics would have shrunk from contesting a seat, had the Act never been passed; their safety was in remaining in obscurity. But the Act excluded men of a different kind. An immense number of Englishmen were drifting away from Rome without quite knowing where the stream was carrying them. They continued to worship in the churches where they had worshipped in Queen Mary's time. The service was read in English instead of in Latin, but it was not very unlike the service which used to be celebrated before England quarrelled with the Pope; and the clergy still wore the old vestments. As to the quarrel, they probably thought that there was a great deal to be said on both sides. There had been troubles between kings and popes before. They were not clear that the Queen was altogether in the wrong; they were not clear that the Pope was altogether in the wrong: they wanted to see what would happen, and meantime had no disposition to run heavy risks by refusing to go to church and by celebrating mass in secret. But if they were asked to take an oath renouncing the Pope's authority, they felt scruples. As a politician the Pope might go wrong, and Elizabeth might have cause of complaint against him: but he claimed to be the successor of St. Peter and Head of the Church; to deny him all ecclesiastical authority might be perilous. Large numbers of men might have gone into Parliament to help the Queen against the Puritans, if they had not been required to take the oath; the oath excluded them.

The true Anglican party—the party with a clear and strong determination to resist the claims of the Pope, and with an equally strong determination to resist extreme Protestantism—was very weak. The House of Commons was, therefore, largely composed of men who wanted to shelter the Puritans.

⁶ D'Ewes, *Journals*, 236-244; 258-260.

IV

It was now becoming apparent that the Puritan controversy with the Crown was passing into new and perilous regions. In 1572 appeared an "Admonition to the Parliament"⁷ of a very startling character, drawn up by Mr. Field, minister of Aldermanbury in the City of London, with the assistance of Mr. Wilcox and other Puritan clergymen. The vestments, the ring in marriage, kneeling at the sacrament—these were, after all, slight matters. The writers of the "Admonition" asked for a complete ecclesiastical revolution. The bishops were at first horror-struck and then indignant. Bishop Cox wrote to a correspondent, Rodolph Gualter:—

"You would have learned . . . what confusion has been occasioned in our not ill-constituted church by some factious and heady men, who, in their writings and sermons, and private conversation, condemn and pull in pieces the whole economy of our church, and bring all the bishops and other ministers into incredible disfavour with the people, and also with the magistrates and nobility. Nay, they even reject this order [i.e. *the episcopal order*] as being of no use to the Church of Christ, and are striving by every means in their power that it may be altogether abolished. . . . Their object is to revive the ancient presbytery of the primitive church and to establish . . . an equality among ministers."⁸

The Puritans were asking for a Presbyterian establishment.

And the Puritan assault was bringing the bishops into "incredible disfavour . . . with the *magistrates and the nobility*." It was not merely the "people," but the more powerful classes in the State that were beginning to think that bishops were "of no use to the Church of Christ," and that it would be well to restore "the ancient presbytery of the primitive Church and to establish an equality among ministers."

When the "Admonition" appeared, the first business of the ecclesiastical authorities was to throw Field and Wilcox into Newgate. Then Whitgift, Master of Trinity, and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, was requested by Archbishop Parker to publish a reply.⁹ Whitgift's reply was met with a rejoinder

⁷ *An Admonition to the Parliament*: see Note A, pp. 117-119.

⁸ *Zurich Letters*: 1558-79 (Parker Society), cix. 284-285; cf. *ibid.*, cvii. 280-281.

⁹ *An Answer to a certen Libel intituled An Admonition to the Parliament, by John Whitgifte, D. of Divinitie*, 1572.

under the title of *A Second Admonition to Parliament*, by the most illustrious of the Puritan leaders, Thomas Cartwright. To this Whitgift issued an answer, and Cartwright again replied. These two controversialists had crossed swords before, and, whatever his success in controversy, Whitgift had succeeded in inflicting severe penalties on his opponent. Cartwright had been a Fellow of Trinity ; Whitgift had stripped him of his Fellowship. Cartwright had been Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity ; Whitgift had assisted to deprive him of his Professorship. The great Puritan scholar had been reduced to poverty and driven for a time into exile ; but his spirit was unbroken and he renewed the conflict with a masculine courage.

The whole substance of the controversy between the Presbyterian Puritans of that age and the Church of England is to be found in the "Admonition" and in the writings of these two men who attacked and defended it. The topics discussed are such as these : Whether Christ forbade rule and supremacy to His ministers—which raised the whole question between Episcopacy in any form and Presbyterianism ; Cartwright contending that all pastors have equal rank and that the authority claimed by bishops is illegitimate. The authority of the Church in things indifferent, such as Church Order, Ceremonies, and Discipline—the Presbyterians maintaining that Christ is the King of the Church, that He has given laws for its government, and that the Church has no right to set these aside. The Election of Ministers—that is, who ought to have the power of electing them ; the Presbyterians asserting that the people had the right to a voice in the appointment of ministers, and that for the Crown, or the bishops, or private patrons to impose a minister on a congregation without its consent is tyranny. Whether men should be ordained ministers without charge of a particular congregation. Whether men should be ordained ministers who cannot preach. Whether ministers should hold more livings than one. Whether they should hold civil offices. What kind of preaching is most effective. Whether deacons should preach, and what are the true duties of their office. Whether the government of particular congregations should be vested in elders. Who ought to excommunicate. The use of fonts and the cross in baptism. The ceremonies observed at the

communion. The apparel of ministers—which was the old controversy about the surplice and the other Romish vestments. The authority of the civil magistrate in ecclesiastical matters.

The ultimate question at issue may be stated very briefly. As against the Puritans, Whitgift contends that no exact form of church polity and discipline and no definite rules for the regulation of Christian worship are contained in the Holy Scriptures, and that many things are left to the judgment and control of the Church. On this he insists with much rhetorical diffuseness, which is sometimes not ineffective.

“The Scripture,” he says, “hath not prescribed any place or time wherein or when the Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated, neither yet in what manner. The Scripture hath not appointed what day in the week should be most meet for the Sabbath day, whether Saturday, which is the Jews’ Sabbath, or the day now observed, which was appointed by the Church. The Scripture hath not determined what form is to be used in Matrimony, what words, what prayers, what exhortations. The Scripture speaketh not one word of standing, sitting, or kneeling at the Communion; of meeting in churches, fields, or houses, to hear the Word of God; of preaching in pulpits, chairs, or otherwise; of baptizing in founts, in basons, or rivers, openly or privately, at home or in the church. . . . And yet no man (as I suppose) is so simple to think that the Church hath no authority to take order in these matters.”¹⁰

Cartwright, of course, is not so irrational as his opponent’s vigorous rhetoric implies. He answers that while much is necessarily left to the Church in regard to “details” of polity and worship, such as hours of prayer, places of prayer, and the like, it cannot be conceded that the Church has power to deal with and to change things which God has established—such as

“to make a new ministry by making an archbishop; to alter the ministry that is appointed by making a bishop or pastor without a church or flock; to make a deacon without appointing him his church whereof he is deacon, and where he might exercise his charge of providing for the poor; to abrogate clean both the name and the office of the elders. . . . Of the which there is no time nor place nor person nor any other circumstance which can cause any alteration or change.”¹¹

¹⁰ *An Answer to the Admonition*, 21–22.

¹¹ *A Replye to an Answer made of M. Doctor Whitgift againste the Admonition to the Parliament by T. C.* (1573), 27–28.

And in determining details there are certain moral rules which should regulate the Church's action—such as that the regulation “should offend not any, especially the Church of God”; and that “all be done in order and comeliness, . . . to edifying . . . and the glory of God.”¹²

In other words, Cartwright contended that the order and discipline of the primitive Church should be preserved, except in those details which were suggested by circumstances which have passed away; that the presumption is always on the side of apostolic practice; and that this should never be departed from unless there is decisive reason for believing that such changes have taken place in the condition of the Church, or in the circumstances of human society, as would have led the apostles themselves to depart from their own previous practice.

Whitgift, while he maintained very earnestly that the polity of the English Church, in its large outlines, had the sanction of Christian antiquity and of the apostles themselves—and on these points Cartwright opposed him with great learning—did not recognise the obligation to follow apostolic practice so closely. Questions of church government are, according to him, questions of expediency; an archbishop, for instance, in Whitgift's judgment is not “necessary to salvation, but profitable to the government of the Church, and, therefore, consonant to the Word of God.”¹³ “The authority and thing,” he says, “whereof the archbishop hath his name was in Paul's time, and therefore the name [is] lawful.” He thinks that he recognises archiepiscopal power in the apostles themselves, and in Timothy and Titus; but, he adds:—

“If it had not been in S. Paul's time yet were both the name and the office lawful, because it pertaineth to the external policy and regiment of the Church, which is variable according to the place, time, person, and other circumstances.”¹⁴

Most modern Congregationalists believe with Whitgift that the polity of the Church is nowhere made the subject of positive law in the New Testament, and that even apostolic practice is not authoritative. They might concede to Cart-

¹² *A Replye, etc.*, 27.

¹³ *Defense of the Answers to the Admonition*, 307.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 310.

wright that the presumption is in favour of the primitive organisation and discipline ; but they would prefer to determine the controversy by deeper principles. They would contend that the *idea* and *functions* of the Church, as illustrated by the contents of the Christian revelation, by the laws of the Christian life, and by the apostolic order, must always be preserved, and that these determine its constitution. Accepting this canon, they conclude that the Congregational polity of apostolic times has not been improved but deteriorated by subsequent innovations.

The impassable gulf between Whitgift and Cartwright—between Whitgift and all the Elizabethan Puritans—between Whitgift and all that inherit Puritan traditions—is created by the *authority* to which he attributes the power to regulate and vary the discipline and ceremonies of the Church. He insists on the right of the *Church* to modify its polity and the circumstances of its worship according to changing circumstances—a right which, within limits to be determined by great spiritual principles, modern Congregationalists would admit ; but he means that this right belongs to the civil magistrate. It was against this intolerable claim that Cartwright and all the Puritans, whether belonging to the extreme or the moderate section of the party, vehemently protested.

V

This great controversy gave definite aim to the Puritan movement. Episcopacy was established by law, but the Puritans believed that without abolishing the bishops it was possible to presbyterianise the English Church. They were made bold by the support of a powerful party in the House of Commons. The massacre of the Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, kindled the Protestantism of England to fury ; and whatever increased the national hostility to Rome increased the national sympathy with Puritanism. In the November of that year—the year in which the “ Admonition ” to Parliament had been published, a number of Puritan clergymen and laymen met at Wandsworth, then a quiet village, now one of the crowded suburbs of London, and drew up a scheme of “ Discipline,” resolving to practise it as far

as the evil circumstances of the time permitted. Thomas Cartwright was there; and Walter Travers was there, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a friend of Beza, whom he had known in Geneva. A few years later he became domestic chaplain to Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer; and a few years later still he was elected by the lawyers of the Temple as lecturer at the Temple Church—an appointment which he could hold without subscription; it was while he held this position that his controversy began with Richard Hooker, which ended in the publication of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Of the other ministers who were present, Dudley Fenner, Stephen Egerton, and John Field, lecturer at Wandsworth, were the most conspicuous. An outline of a Presbyterian organisation was created, and eleven of the laymen were appointed elders.

The meeting, says Dr. McCrie, “was virtually, though not formally, a meeting of presbytery. It was the first time that an attempt was made to associate those holding presbyterian principles in the English Church in mutual conference. It was the first endeavour made to unite them under the banner of presbyterial discipline.” “But,” he adds, “there is no evidence that either at Wandsworth or elsewhere during this reign there was anything resembling the election and organisation which are essential to the working of presbytery. . . . There was no formal constitution or organisation of a church court—no separate congregations were gathered from the parishes—no chapels erected for Nonconformist worship.”¹⁵

VI

Archbishop Parker died in 1575. Grindal, who succeeded him in 1576, was appointed at the instance of Lord Burleigh, who probably hoped that his known sympathy with the

¹⁵ McCrie, *Annals of English Presbyterianism*, 103–105. The Scheme of Discipline adopted at Wandsworth, a copy of which was found in the study of Cartwright after his death, was published during the sittings of the Long Parliament as a contribution to the polemical literature of those stormy years. It was entitled, *A Directory of Government contended for, and, as far as the time would suffer, practised by the first Nonconformists in the days of Queen Elizabeth; found in the study of that accomplished divine, Thomas Cartwright, and reserved to be published in such a time as this*, 1644.

Puritans would alleviate the severity with which they had been treated by Parker. In the very first year that he was at Canterbury there were attempts to establish parts of the Presbyterian discipline in the county of Northampton and the county of Warwick. There were consultations on the same subjects in the eastern counties. Sixty clergymen from Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire met at Cockfield in Suffolk to consider their position in the national Church. If they left it they would be silenced. They met to consider how they might make their position tolerable; what parts of the Book of Common Prayer they might use, what parts of it their loyalty to Christ obliged them to omit; which of the rubrics they might obey, which they were bound to resist. They also considered to what extent it was possible for them, while remaining the ministers of an Episcopal Church, to introduce a Presbyterian form of church government. Some of the conclusions at which they arrived—apparently under the advice of Cartwright and Travers—are interesting, some amusing, some almost grotesque. The ministers believing in the Presbyterian discipline and living in the same neighbourhood were to form themselves into a presbytery, conference, or “classis”; and there was a scheme for the assembling of provincial and national synods. No minister was to submit to ordination by a bishop until the presbytery in the neighbourhood of his church had sanctioned and acknowledged his divine vocation to the ministry. The Popish ceremonies enjoined in the Book of Common Prayer were to be omitted; but if a minister was in danger of being silenced for omitting them he was to consult his presbytery as to which of them he might promise to perform. Where the parishioners were of the right way of thinking, care was to be taken to secure the election as churchwardens of men who might act as Presbyterian elders. Under cover of appointing the legal overseers for the poor, men might be chosen who would discharge the functions of deacons. It was all very ingenious; but it showed a fatal want of intellectual courage. The ecclesiastical problem was not to be solved by such a scheme as this.¹⁶

The proceedings of the Presbyterian Puritans were not likely to escape the notice of the bishops and their officers.

¹⁶ Neal, i. 277–280.

Grindal had no desire to bear hardly upon them, and, though he was obliged to deal with flagrant offences against uniformity, he tried to give those who had scruples about the ceremonies as much liberty as he dared. But his power to protect them soon ceased. He refused to suppress the "prophesyings," and was confined to his house for six months and suspended from the exercise of his jurisdiction. It was not Convocation that suspended him, nor the bishops, but the Queen in Council. At the close of the six months the suspension was continued, and it was not removed till at the end of five years he humbled himself and confessed that he was most heartily sorry that her Majesty was offended with him, a matter more grievous to him than any other earthly calamity. He did not acknowledge that he had done wrong; he was sorry that he had offended the Queen—this was all that he could say. Soon after his suspension was removed he died.¹⁷

But even during his suspension he appears to have discharged some of his duties as archbishop, and his sympathy with the Puritans lessened the rigour with which their irregularities were suppressed, although in some counties the ecclesiastical laws were not only firmly but fiercely enforced. In a pamphlet published towards the close of Elizabeth's reign the writer recalls the archbishopric of Grindal with grateful delight:—

"In all the south parts of England there was great concord among the ministers, and they joined in great love and joy one with another, in the Lord's work. So that in the space of four or five years, as I remember, there were infinite souls brought to the knowledge of Christ . . . It was a golden time, full of godly fruit, great honour to the Gospel, great love and kind fellowship among all the ministers, preaching the faith; and the people united in the true fear of God, and cheerful reverence to her Majesty."¹⁸

VII

The extract given in the preceding paragraph directs attention to one aspect of the Puritan struggle which is too often forgotten. We judge the Puritans falsely if we imagine

¹⁷ Strype, *Grindal*, 343, 350-352, 403-404.

¹⁸ Josias Nichols, *The Plea for the Innocent*, etc. Quoted by Hanbury in *Historical Memorials*, i. 4.

that they were contending for nothing more than the abolition of ceremonies which they regarded as superstitious, and of ecclesiastical regulations for which they could find no authority in the letter of the New Testament. They were not mere ecclesiastical antiquarians, troubled about a ritual which offended them and a polity which was destitute of the sanction of the primitive Church. They were contending for a great moral and spiritual reform. The Puritan struggle was a struggle for righteousness.

In their days the English Church failed grossly—failed notoriously—to discharge the functions of a Church. The evidence is only too abundant. A petition addressed to Parliament in 1578 or 1579 alleges that—

“There are in this city [London] a great number of churches, but the one half of them at the least are utterly unfurnished of preaching ministers, and are pestered with candlesticks not of gold but of clay, unworthy to have the Lord’s lights set in them, with watchmen that have no eyes and clouds that have no water; in the other half . . . there is scarcely the tenth man that makes conscience to wait upon his charge, whereby the Lord’s sabbath is oft-times wholly neglected, and for the most part miserably mangled.”¹⁹

In a “Supplication” from the people of Cornwall still heavier charges are brought against the clergy.

“We have,” they say, “about one hundred and sixty churches, the greatest part of which are supplied by men who are guilty of the grossest sins; some fornicators, some adulterers, some felons, bearing the marks in their hands for the said offence, some drunkards, gamesters on the Sabbath day, etc.”²⁰

In 1584 seven members of the Privy Council, including Lord Burleigh, the Earl of Warwick, and Sir Francis Walsingham, remonstrated with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London for suspending “a great number of zealous and learned preachers” in the county of Essex for Puritanism, while they left many men undisturbed in their livings who were “charged or chargeable with great and enormous faults, as drunkenness, filthiness of life, gaming

¹⁹ Neal, i. 294. From *The Second Part of a Register*, 137-138, a manuscript in Dr. Williams’s Library (*Morrice MSS.*, B).

²⁰ *Idem*, i. 294-295. From *ibid.*, 135-137. Neal suppresses the worst charges.

at cards, haunting of ale-houses, and such like." They say that they have "sought to be informed of some particulars" concerning the religious condition of that county; and having received the information which they asked for, think it their duty, "without intermeddling ourselves with your jurisdiction ecclesiastical, to make report unto your lordships as persons that ought most specially to have regard thereto."²¹ They sent with their letter a list of the clergy "reported to be learned, zealous, and good preachers," deprived and suspended; also a list of the clergy who were reported to be unfit for their office.

These lists have been preserved. They are headed: "A Survey of sixteen Hundreds in the County of Essex containing Benefices 335; wherein there are of ignorant and unpreaching ministers 173; of such as have two benefices apiece 61; of non-residents that are single-beneficed 10; preachers of scandalous life 12; *summa totalis* 255." In the long and melancholy list of "unpreaching ministers" appear entries like the following:—

Mr. Whiting, parson of Topesfield, sometime a serving-man.

Mr. Hunt, curate of Gible Hiningham, a very infamous person.

Mr. Bulie, parson of Borlie, a man of scandalous life, a drunkard.

Mr. Philipps, parson of Sturmer, sometime a Popish priest.

Mr. Pinnock, vicar of Much Maplestead, sometime a tailor.

Mr. Levit, parson of Leden Roding, a notorious swearer, a dicer, a carder, a hawker, and hunter, . . . a quarreller and fighter, for he quarrelled with the parson of Stoke in a common inn in Chelmsford. [Names of witnesses in the case given.]

Mr. Hall, of West Ham, a drunkard.

Mr. Newton, of Little Ilford, a great drunkard.

Mr. Andrews, vicar of Wormingford, a notorious drunkard.

Mr. Warrener, of West Mersey, an adulterer.²²

These are but illustrations of the charges brought against a large number of the Essex clergy. Many of them were

²¹ For the substance of the letter, and the Archbishop's reply, see Strype, *Whitgift*, i. 328-330, 331-333. Davids, *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in the County of Essex*, 79-80, gives portions of it.

²² For the lists, see *Second Part of a Register*, B (*original*), 52, 112-121; C (*transcript*), 735-742; and Davids, *ibid.*, 88-126. The "*summa totalis*" should be 256, not 255; but the figures in the manuscript are clear. The lists of "unpreaching ministers," . . . double-beneficed men, non-residents, and "the sufficient painful and careful preachers," appear separately.

without education ; many of them were vicious ; and there is no reason to suppose that the clergy of Essex or of Cornwall were worse than the clergy in the other counties of England.

In the English Church there were great scholars, upright men, saintly men ; but the clergy as a whole were disgracefully inefficient, and many of them grossly immoral. It was not the controversial vigour of the Puritans that constituted their strength. They were learned men ; and large numbers of the clergy were extremely ignorant. They were earnest and eloquent preachers ; and the enormous majority of the clergy were unable to preach. They were moral men ; and too many of the clergy were living in notorious vice. Their religion was fervent, devout, intense ; and the religion of most of the clergy was either sluggish or superstitious. Their quarrel with the bishops was not merely about the cross in baptism and the ring in marriage, or the Scriptural authority of ruling elders, but about the drunkards and profane men who held church livings, about the gross ignorance and incompetence of the men who were permitted to occupy pulpits, about the general irreligion of the people which resulted from the general inefficiency of the clergy. They tried to get the Church better organised that they might get better ministers. They believed that if they could recover the primitive polity, they might recover something of primitive fervour. They wanted a clergy with more learning, more intellectual vigour, purer morals, and deeper religious earnestness. These were the chief demands of the Puritans, whether of the more moderate or of the more extreme type ; and it was because they were incomparably superior to the great mass of the clergy on these points that they were able to maintain for so long their difficult struggle with the Crown.

NOTE A

The Admonition to the Parliament

The Admonition to the Parliament was first printed in 1571. In one passage, Strype (*Parker*, ii. 110), says that " Thomas Cartwright . . . was the chief author, though there was (as it was thought) a club concerned in the composing thereof." Elsewhere he speaks less positively : " Several persons had assembled privately in London

(as Dr. Bancroft was informed), namely, Gilby, Sampson, Lever, Field, Wilcox, and some other, *Cartwright* very likely among the rest; and then it was agreed upon, that an *Admonition* should be compiled, and offered unto the Parliament approaching" (*Whitgift*, i. 55). The tract had a large circulation; for it had "been printed and reprinted no less than four times . . . notwithstanding the diligence of the bishops to suppress it. The last time, which was this year (1572), it came forth with additions" (*Parker, ibid.*). He adds, "the *second part* of the *Admonition* was upon the subscription to the articles required by the Commissioners, to give a view of such causes as withheld many Ministers from subscribing; which was called Popish abuses yet remaining in the English Church" (*Whitgift*, i. 56). The copy of the first *Admonition* in the Archbishop's Library at Lambeth, which gives neither date nor publisher, shows the two parts distinctly: the first part including pages 1-14; the second, page 15 to the end (with the address to the Christian reader and the letters of Gualter and Beza). This second part is headed, *An admonition to the Parliament—A view of Popishe abuses yet remaining in the—Englishe Church, for the which Godly—Ministers have refused to subscribe*; with two texts of Scripture below.

The first part of the tract lays down a complete scheme of reformation: "It hath been thought good to proferre to your godly considerations, a true platforme of a church reformed" (3). It then deals with the ordination and appointment of ministers, and the discharge of their functions; with the sacraments; and with discipline, which is to be exercised, not by a priestly order, but by the whole body of the Church. There is to be no ecclesiastical hierarchy—"instead of an Archbishop or Lord Bishop, you must make equalitie of ministers" (11). If reform is needed elsewhere, it is needed in England: "Is a reformation good for France? and can it be evill for England? Is discipline meete for Scotland? And is it unprofitable for this realme?" (13). And reformation, to be effectual, must be thorough: "You may not do as heretofore you have done, patch and peece. . . . But altogether remove whole Antichriste, bothe head and tayle, and perfectly plant that puritie of the word, that simplicitie of the sacraments, and severitie of discipline, which Christe hath commanded and commended to His Church" (13, 14).

It is possible that the second part of the *First Admonition* was an addition to the original treatise—it may, indeed, in the first instance have been printed separately, and then incorporated with it. For in the *Second Admonition* the author says, "There were *two* little Treatises lately sette forthe, both tending to one ende, namely to admonishe the parliament what it had to do touching religion, and tending to one ende they beare one name, that is an admonition to the parliament." And, he adds, "the persons that are thought to have made them are laide in no worssse prison than Newgate" (3). Strype tells us who these "persons" were—Field

and Wilcox, "imprisoned in Newgate for offering this seditious book to the Parliament" (*Annals*, ii. (1), 275).

The *Second Admonition* (1572) was Cartwright's work. But it was not written in reply to Whitgift's treatise—*An Answer to a certaine libell intituled An Admonition to the Parliament* (1571). For the author expressly states that he has not seen the answer to the first *Admonition*: "They say there is an answer towards: for my part I long to see it, and yet, to say truth, I should be lothe, considering they cannot but betray their weaknesse to the papistes, or else confirme them in their follyes, but principally offend the Church of God" (4). But he has seen a short treatise against it (5). He made an elaborate reply to Whitgift in the following year (1573). The difference in purpose and method between the two *Admonitions* is thus stated: "The *first* admonition, as being short, shows what to reform; the *second*, how to reform" (5).

CHAPTER V

“ REFORMATION WITHOUT TARRYING FOR ANY ”

ROBERT BROWNE—HIS FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE—PREACHES AT CAMBRIDGE—HIS CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH—CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ESTABLISHED AT NORWICH—ITS OFFICERS AND ORGANISATION—BROWNE IN NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK—ARRESTED BY BISHOP FREAKE—BURLEIGH INTERVENES—BROWNE RELEASED BUT AGAIN ARRESTED—AT MIDDELBERG—“ A BOOKE WHICH SHEWETH THE LIFE AND MANNERS OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS ”—PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT SET FORTH IN IT—SOURCE OF AUTHORITY IN CHURCH AND STATE—“ A TREATISE OF REFORMATION WITHOUT TARRYING FOR ANY ”—ATTACK ON PURITAN INACTION—“ AN ORDER OF STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES ”—METHODS OF STUDY AND EXPOSITION—FORMAL LOGIC AND RHETORIC OUT OF PLACE IN THE PULPIT—BROWNE IN SCOTLAND—AGAIN BEFRIENDED BY BURLEIGH—SUBMISSION, AND APPOINTMENT TO THE MASTERSHIP OF ST. OLAVE'S SCHOOL—RECTOR OF ACHURCH—MENTAL DISORDER DURING LATER YEARS—BROWNE'S CHURCH PRINCIPLES THE PRINCIPLES OF MODERN CONGREGATIONALISM.

CARTWRIGHT and the moderate Puritans clung to the hope that the Queen and the bishops would sooner or later cease to enforce the obnoxious vestments and ceremonies, and would consent to the reformation of the English Church by the gradual introduction of Presbyterianism. In 1581 their policy of patience was rudely and violently assaulted by Robert Browne, who is commonly described as the founder of English Congregationalism.

I

He belonged to an ancient Rutlandshire family, and was born towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII., or early in the reign of Edward VI. He was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. While there he became an ardent Puritan.

On leaving Cambridge he became a schoolmaster and got into trouble with a clergyman whom he describes as “the preacher of the town,”¹ and with some of the people, through his zeal for those principles of religious reformation for which, he says, he had already suffered some things at the University.

“Whatsoever things he found belonging to the church, and to his calling as a member of the church, he did put it in practice. For even little children are of the church and kingdom of God; yea, of such, saith Christ, doth his kingdom consist: and therefore both in his school he laboured that the kingdom of God might appear, and also in those of the town with whom he kept company.”²

As a result of the hostility which he provoked, he was dismissed from his office, but he continued to teach in the same town till the plague came and his friends in Rutlandshire were alarmed and sent for him to come home.

After living for a short time with his father he returned to Cambridge, or rather to Dry Drayton, in its immediate neighbourhood, to study theology under the direction of Richard Greenham,³ a well-known Puritan clergyman. Here he began to preach; and he preached so powerfully that he was invited by the Mayor, the Vice-Chancellor, and some other persons, to accept an appointment as preacher in one of the Cambridge churches. But by this time he had grasped very firmly the central principle of the Congregational polity, and he states it in a very startling form.

If he is to accept any church office he must receive it from Christ Himself; for Christ is the Head of the Church. And who has authority to speak for Christ? The bishop of the diocese, “by whom so many mischiefs are wrought”?⁴ That seems an impossible hypothesis. Christ, he argued, is the Head of the Church, and next under Him is the assembly of the saints. “The voice of the whole people, guided by the elders

¹ The particulars of Robert Browne’s life are taken from a pamphlet written by himself. The only copy known to be in existence is in the Archbishop’s Library at Lambeth. It was discovered by Dr. Dexter; of Boston, U.S. The copy seems to be an imperfect one. Browne does not say in what town it was that he became a schoolmaster. The pamphlet bears the title: *A True and Short Declaration, both of the gathering and joyning together of certaine persons: and also of the lamentable breach and division which fell among them.*

² *A True and Short Declaration*, 1-2.

³ Brook, i. 415-418.

⁴ *A True and Short Declaration*, 2.

and the forwardest,⁵ is . . . the voice of God." And, "therefore, the meetings together of many churches, also of every whole church, and of the elders therein, is above the Apostle, above the Prophet, the Evangelist, the Pastor, the Teacher, and every particular elder." "And this also meant Paul where he saith . . . 'We are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'⁶ So that the Apostle is inferior to the church, and the church is inferior to Christ, and Christ, concerning his manhood and office in the church, is inferior to God."⁷ He saw that the organisation of the Church by parishes was wholly inconsistent with the true conception of a Christian Church. "He judged that the Kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, were they never so few."⁸ Only those who are really in Christ should be in the Church; and an assembly, however small, of those who are really in Christ is the organ of His will. They dwell in Christ, and Christ dwells in them. When they are gathered together in Christ's name, He is one of the company. Their acts are His acts. Their prayers are His.

About this time Robert Harrison, a friend of Browne's and a member of the same college, but now "Master of the hospital at Norwich," came to Cambridge.⁹ He was thinking about entering the ministry, but he was a strong Puritan, and was not quite clear whether he ought to accept a licence to preach from a bishop.¹⁰ After long discussions he received Browne's theory of the true nature of a Christian Church; and as Harrison knew that there were a considerable number of devout persons at Norwich who were discontented with the existing condition of ecclesiastical affairs, the two friends resolved to attempt to form a Congregational Church in that city. Browne describes the manner in which the Church was formed.

"This doctrine before being showed to the company, and openly preached among them, many did agree thereto. . . . There was a day appointed and an order taken for redress of the former abuses,

⁵ That is, those who have made the greatest progress in the Christian Church (*A True and Short Declaration*, 3).

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 23. "We" for "all."

⁷ *A True and Short Declaration*, 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

and for cleaving to the Lord in greater obedience. So a covenant was made and their mutual consent was given to hold together. There were certain chief points proved unto them by the Scriptures, all which being particularly rehearsed unto them with exhortation, they agreed upon them, and pronounced their agreement to each thing particularly, saying, 'to this we give our consent.' " ¹¹

They agreed "to join themselves to the Lord, in one covenant and fellowship together, and to keep and seek agreement under his laws and government." ¹² This included a complete separation from the worship of the English Church.

They elected a "pastor"—Robert Browne—and a "teacher"—Robert Harrison; and "prayed for their watchfulness and diligence, and promised their obedience." ¹³ Whether at their first meeting they elected "elders" does not appear.

They arranged the order of their services. Not only officers of the Church, but other persons who had "the gift," were to instruct and edify the Church. If anything was said that appeared "doubtful and hard" to any of the members of the Church, they could ask for explanations.

It was agreed "that any might protest, appeal, complain, exhort, dispute, r^eprove, etc., as he had occasion, but yet in due order, which sci^s then also declared." ¹⁴ In other words, there were to be n^things of the Church for free conference.

The members c^{ve}enanted to "further the kingdom of God in themselves, and n^especially in their charge and household, if they had any, or in their friends and companions and whosoever was worthy." ¹⁵

Arrangements were made for calling meetings of the church members both for worship and for discipline. Regulations were adopted for the reception of new members into communion, and for the exclusion of the unfaithful; for ascertaining the judgment of the Church in disputed matters; for the election, as they might be required, of those church officers who were not immediately appointed; for corresponding with other Churches, "to have their help, being better reformed, or to bring them to reformation." ¹⁶

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

II

But Robert Browne was too restless and energetic a spirit to be content with his pastoral work at Norwich. He was about thirty or thirty-five years of age, a man of audacious intellect and vehement temperament, and his heart was all on fire with his revolutionary ideas about the true nature and glory of the Christian Church. He held secret meetings in town after town in every part of Norfolk and Suffolk, expounding and enforcing his theory of the Church with a free and flowing and impetuous eloquence, and attacking fiercely the bishops and the clergy of the Queen's Church. Nor did he spare the Puritan ministers. It seemed to him that the Puritans shrank from carrying out their own principles; they said that Christ was the only King of the Church, and yet submitted to a discipline and celebrated a worship which, in their own judgment, Christ condemned. For this inconsistency and this cowardice he reserved his most fiery denunciation. No wonder that the two counties burst into flame. Magistrates and persons of rank as well as the common people were carried away by his boldness and earnestness.

In April, 1581, he was arrested and brought before the Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Freake. The bishop wrote to Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer, complaining of Browne's irregularities, saying that he "had been lately apprehended on complaint of many godly preachers, for delivering unto the people corrupt and contentious doctrine"; and that "his arrogant spirit of reproving was something to be marvelled at."¹⁷ Lord Burleigh, who was a kinsman of Browne's, suggested that the young man's errors were doubtless the result "of zeal rather than malice"; expressed the hope that he would be "charitably conferred with and reformed"; and proposed that if he were not at once discharged he should be sent to London, "to be further dealt with as I shall take order for upon his coming."¹⁸

Browne was released, but not "reformed." In August of the same year he was arrested again, and the bishop wrote once more to the Lord Treasurer. Browne's "strange and

¹⁷ Hanbury, *Memorials*, i. 19 (from the Lansdowne MSS., xxiii. 13, 20).

¹⁸ For Burleigh's reply, see Fuller, v. 63-64, and Strype, *Annals*, iii. (1), 22.

dangerous doctrine," which he preached in "all disordered manner," "had greatly troubled the whole country, and brought many to great disobedience of all law and magistrates." Other men of the same kind, the bishop thinks he might be able to check; but Browne's meetings are so "close and secret" that the bishop and his officers are baffled. He, therefore, asks the help of the Lord Treasurer in "suppressing" him.¹⁹

It was probably by Burleigh's advice that a few months later Browne and Harrison and sixty of the members of the Norwich Church left England and settled in Middelberg in Zealand.

III

Here he began to print. In 1582 he published his principal work, under the title, *A Book which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians, and how unlike they are unto Turkes and Papistes and Heathen Folke*, etc. This is a manual of theological doctrine, ethics, and ecclesiastical principles. It is curiously and ingeniously arranged so as to be useful both for "simple people" and for scholars. For the "simple people" everything is stated in the simplest language, and in the form of questions and answers: these are in the outer column of the left-hand page. On the right-hand page the same truths are stated in the form of "Definitions," contained in the column on the left, with "Divisions" in the column on the right. The errors which deny or corrupt the truths affirmed in the "Definitions," and illustrated in the corresponding questions and answers, are discussed and refuted in the inner column of the left-hand page.²⁰

The subjects included in this manual are the Trinity, the glorious Perfections of God, His Authority, the Fall of man, the Divinity of our Lord; the doctrines of the Atonement, of Redemption, of Election, and of Calling; the theory of the Church and of the Sacraments, and the standing privileges there Christians. After a description of Jewish ceremonies there

¹⁹ For the bishop's letter, see Strype, *ibid.*, iii. (1), 22-23, and Hanbury, *Memorials*, i. 20.

²⁰ In sections 65-81, dealing with *ceremonies*, the method is discarded, and the four parallel columns are merged in one.

follows an account of the general duties of the Christian Life—Repentance, Faith, Honouring God, Obeying God, Public Worship, and the observance of the Sabbath. There are also sections on social duties—the Duties and Qualifications of Church Governors, of Civil Magistrates, of Householders; on the Institution of Marriage; on the Duties of inferiors to those above them; on Duties owing to good men; and Duties owing to the miserable. The book closes with sections on Personal Duties—Chastity, Industry, Providence, Justice, Fidelity, Equity, Truth, Simplicity, Secrecy, and there are special warnings against Slander and Covetousness.

In his theology and his theory of Baptism²¹ and the Lord's Supper, Browne was Calvinistic. The following Definitions show the principles which he taught in relation to church government and some other subjects.

"*The Church* planted or gathered is a company or number of Christians or believers, which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep his laws in one holy communion; because Christ hath redeemed them unto holiness and happiness for ever, from which they were fallen by the sin of Adam."²²

"*The Church Government* is the Lordship of Christ in the communion of his offices: whereby his people obey to his Will, and have mutual use of their graces and callings, to further their godliness and welfare."²³

The *Kingdom* of all *Christians* is their office of guiding and ruling with Christ, to subdue the wicked and make one another obedient to Christ. Their *priesthood* is their office of cleansing and redressing wickedness, whereby sin and uncleanness is taken away from amongst them. . . . Their *prophecy* is their office of judging all things by the word of God, whereby they increase in knowledge and wisdom among themselves."²⁴

(This was the foundation on which Browne rested the powers and responsibilities of the Christian commonalty. In virtue of their union with Christ, they share the regal, priestly, and prophetic offices.)

"*The Kingdom of Christ* is his office of government, whereby he useth the obedience of his people to keep his laws and commandments, to their salvation and welfare."²⁵

²¹ Browne believed that baptism should be administered to "the children of the faithful" (*A Booke which sheweth*, § 40).

²² *Ibid.*, § 35.

²³ *Ibid.*, § 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, § 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, § 48.

"A *Pastor* is a person having office and message of God, for exhorting and moving especially, and guiding accordingly : for the which he is tried to be meet, and thereto is duly chosen by the church which calleth him, or received by obedience where he planteth the church." ²⁶

"A *Teacher* of doctrine is a person having office and message of God, for teaching especially, and guiding accordingly, with less gift to exhort and apply : for the which he is tried, etc." ²⁷

"An *Elder*, or more forward in gift, is a person having office and message of God, for oversight and counsel, and redressing things amiss : for the which he is tried, etc." ²⁸

"The *Reliever* (or *Deacon*) is a person having office of God to provide, gather, and bestow the gifts and liberality of the church, as there is need : to the which office he is tried and received as meet."

"The *Widow* is a person having office of God to pray for the church, and to visit and minister to those which are afflicted and distressed in the church, for the which she is tried and received as meet." ²⁹

"The *gathering of voices and consent of the people* is a general inquiry who is meet to be chosen ; when first it is appointed to them all, being duly assembled, to look out such persons among them ; and then the number of the most which agree is taken by some of the wisest, with presenting and naming of the parties to be chosen, if none can allege any cause or default against them." ³⁰

"The *Ordaining* by some of the forwardest and wisest is a pronouncing them with prayer and thanksgiving, and laying on of hands (if such imposition of hands be not turned into pomp or superstition), that they are called and authorised of God, and received of their charge to that calling." ³¹

"*Eldership* is a joining or partaking of the authority of Elders, or forwardest and wisest in a peaceable meeting, for redressing and deciding of matters in particular churches, and for counsel therein." ³²

"A *Synod* is a joining or partaking of the authority of many churches met together in peace, for redress and deciding of matters which cannot well be otherwise taken up." ³³

IV

There are several points in these Definitions which deserve consideration.

I. Browne believed that if on any question a single Church

²⁶ *Ibid.*, § 53. ²⁷ *Ibid.*, § 53. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, § 53. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, § 54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, § 119. On the outer column of the right-hand page, the definition is thus stated : "The consent of the people must be gathered by the Elders or guides, and testified by voice, presenting, or naming of some, or other tokens, that they approve them as meet for that calling."

³¹ *Ibid.*, § 119.

³² *Ibid.*, § 51.

³³ *Ibid.*, § 51.

was unable with clearness and confidence to discover the will of Christ, it should invite other Churches to meet with it that they might consider the questions together. Such a meeting he called a *Synod*. It was not to consist of the *representatives* of the several Churches, but of the Churches themselves : and it was not to have a permanent authority, but was to be convened as occasion arose.

2. The *Elders* of a Church—and, as a matter of course, the Pastor and the Teacher would be Elders—were in Browne's judgment a permanent Church Council, having a general spiritual superintendence over the members. They could not subject any member to discipline without the concurrence of the whole Church ; but by counsel and warning they might render church censure unnecessary. If any member disregarded their admonition, and was in their opinion unfit to remain in fellowship, their decision was to be reported to the Church, which could confirm, modify, or reject their judgment.

3. It was not Browne's view that the powers of Pastors, Teachers, and Elders were derived from the people. Pastor, Teacher, Elder, have " office and message of God," and the Church has simply to discover to what persons " the office and message of God " have been entrusted. The right which Browne claimed for the Christian commonalty was not " the right to choose their own ministers," but the right to judge what ministers God had chosen for them.

He had a very lofty conception of Authority of all kinds.

" *Church Governors*," he says, " are persons receiving their authority and office of God for the guiding of his people the church, received and called thereto, by due consent and agreement of the church." ³⁴

The Civil Magistrate also exercised functions entrusted to him by the divine will :—

" *Civil Magistrates* are persons authorised of God, and received by the consent or choice of the people, whether officers or subject, or by birth and succession also, to make and execute laws by public agreement, to rule the commonwealth in all outward justice ; and to maintain the right, welfare, and honour thereof, with outward power, bodily punishments, and civil forcing of men." ³⁵

³⁴ *A Booke which sheweth*, § 117. They receive their authority, not from those who elect them, but from God.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, § 117.

V

Bound up with this Manual of Theology, Ethics, and Ecclesiastical Polity³⁶ is a *Treatise of Reformation without tarrying for Anie*. This brief pamphlet is an assault on the Puritan preachers who deplored the evils of the English Church, and especially its want of discipline, but who were waiting for the Queen and Parliament to effect reformation. The vigour, directness, and eloquence with which Browne presses his attack, explain the immense impression produced by his preaching.

The Puritans say that they must “tarry for the Magistrate.” “Are they not ashamed thus to slander the Magistrate?”³⁷ The reformation of the Church is the duty of those to whom the necessity of reformation has been revealed; it is the duty of the ministers of Christ, not of the Queen. Let the silenced Puritan preachers do the work to which Christ has appointed them, do it at all costs; at present, they are refusing to carry their own burden, and are crying out that “it is not carried by the fault of the Magistrate.”³⁸ Their compromising and cowardly policy makes the will of the magistrate the supreme authority in the Church instead of the will of Christ.³⁹

“How long, therefore, will these men take the inheritance from the right heir, and give it unto the servant? For the spiritual power of Christ and his Church, and the Keys of binding and loosing, they take from Christ and give to the Magistrate. The Magistrates have the civil sword, and lest they should strike them therewith, they give them the ecclesiastical also.”⁴⁰

They say that if they were apostles or prophets they would preach in spite of the magistrate; but as they are only ordinary ministers of Christ, they have no right to preach when the magistrate forbids them. But the apostles, answers Browne, were no more exempted from obedience to magistrates than other preachers. They were just as much under the civil authority of kings and governors as we are. But like them

³⁶ But with a separate title-page in the Lambeth copy.

³⁷ *Reformation without Tarrying*, 2. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁹ “Do they not pull down the head, Christ Jesus, to set up the hand of the magistrate?” (*Ibid.*, 2.)

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

we must obey God rather than man. Our gifts and calling as preachers came from God; the magistrate cannot take them away. He may shut me up in prison for preaching the truth; but "the magistrate so using me cannot be a Christian, but forsaketh the church: And how then should my office in the church depend on him which is none of the church?"⁴¹

"Except the Magistrates will go into the tempest and rain, and be weather-beaten with the hail of God's wrath, they must keep under the roof of Christ's government. They must be under a Pastoral charge: they must obey to the Sceptre of Christ, if they be Christians. How then should the Pastor, which hath the oversight of the Magistrate, if he be of his flock, be so overseen of the Magistrate, as to leave his flock, when the Magistrate shall unjustly and wrongfully discharge him? Yet these Preachers and Teachers will not only do so, but even holding their charge and keeping with it, will not guide and reform it aright, because the Magistrates do forbid them forsooth."⁴²

VI

Brown also wrote what he describes as *A Treatise upon the 23 of Matthewe, both for an order of studying and handling the Scriptures, and also for avoyding the Popishe disorders, and ungodly communion of all false Christians, and especially of wicked Preachers and Hirelings*.⁴³

He gives seven suggestions for studying and expounding any passage of Scripture. In substance these suggestions are: (1) Make sure that the translation is correct, and then consider the true meaning and doctrine of the *words*. (2) If the words are hard to be understood, search out why such words were used to express the meaning. (3) Find out and determine the *place* of the doctrine in a theological system. (4) Consider what objections and difficulties the doctrine provokes. (5) State the error opposed to it, and make both the truth and the error plain by some parable or illustration

⁴¹ *Reformation without tarrying*, 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴³ This treatise follows the tract *Reformation without tarrying for Anie*, in the Lambeth copy. Though it has no separate title-page, it is not mentioned in the general title-page prefixed to the volume, and the page-registers run straight on. The third treatise, *A Booke which Sheweth*, comes next, with a different title-page and separate registers.

or ancient Jewish ceremony. (6) Apply the truth. (7) Close with exhortation.⁴⁴

After these suggestions comes a keen and a rather amusing attack on preachers. First he attacks them for quoting Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in their sermons.⁴⁵ Then he attacks their "vain logic"; showing that the methods of formal logic are worse than useless in the study and exposition of Scripture. It is possible, he says, to reason, without using the technicalities of the schools. "Job disputed with his friends; but did he urge them with Syllogisms? Did his proofs walk upon a 'Major' or a 'Minor,' or did two such stumps bear up his conclusions?"⁴⁶ One of his practical objections to the use of formal logic in exposition throws a light upon the importance which he attached to free conference on Christian truth and duty.

"By it is the exercise of prophecy or mutual edifying, also the right use of Synods or general meetings, of determining controversies, of discussing matters, of communing, disputing, and searching out the truth, clean taken away. By that also the people which have not learned Logic, are shut out and discouraged from talking, pleading, and mutual edifying in the church meetings."⁴⁷

Then he condemns the use in sermons of the technical terms of rhetoric, and ridicules the preachers who cannot expound the Scriptures without talking of an hyperbole, a trope, a synecdoche, and the rest. Finally he condemns their "curious methods and divisions."

Browne was an orator as well as a theologian and a controversialist. While he insisted that the *substance* of sermons should be solid and weighty, he insisted with equal earnestness that their *form* should be free and popular.⁴⁸

He also wrote, either while he was at Middelberg, or immediately after leaving it, *An Answer to Master Cartwright his letter for joining with the English Church; whereunto the true copy of his said letter is annexed.*⁴⁹

⁴⁴ *An Order of studying the Scriptures*, 4-5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁸ In 21-40 he illustrates his principles by practical application to his text, and ends his treatise by a vigorous onslaught upon "the Parishes Preachers and hired Lecturers, and all that Popish rabble—the Scribes and the Pharisees [who] sit in Moses' seat" (Matt. xxiii. 2).

⁴⁹ Published probably in 1583.

VII

Grave troubles disturbed the Church of the exiles at Middelberg. Browne was charged with being too severe and peremptory in the exercise of his pastoral authority. Three times he resigned his pastorate, and three times he resumed it. But at the end of November, 1583, he and a few of his friends sailed for Scotland. The Presbyterians retained for many years the impression of horror produced by what they regarded as his wild and revolutionary talk about church polity. In January, 1583-4, he was cited to appear before the Edinburgh Presbytery. Articles defining his heresies were drawn up to be presented to the King; but the ecclesiastical authorities appear to have received an intimation that the case against him was not to be pressed. It is probable that he remained in Scotland for several months.

In the summer of 1584 the restless, eager man was in London, and was again rescued from the bishops by Lord Burleigh, who, in October, 1585, sent him home to his father in Rutlandshire with a kindly letter.

"I thought good," wrote the Lord Treasurer, "considering he was your son, and of my blood, to send unto my lord of Canterbury on his behalf that he might find what reasonable favour he could shew him, before whom I perceive he hath answered in some good sort . . . and, therefore, for that he purposeth to repair to you, I have thought good to accompany him with these my letters, and to pray you for this cause, or any his former dealings, not to withdraw from him your fatherly love and affection; not doubting but with time he will be fully recovered and withdrawn from the relics of some fond opinions of his, which will be the better done if he be dealt withal in some kind and temperate manner."⁵⁰

Here he remained as a kind of "ecclesiastical prisoner on parole."⁵¹ But Lord Burleigh's hope that he might be "recovered and withdrawn from the relics of some fond opinions of his" was not fulfilled. At his father's request, and with Lord Burleigh's consent, he left Tolethorpe for Stamford in February, 1585-6. At that time there were no indications that his hostility to the English Church was relenting.

⁵⁰ In Fuller, v. 65-66.

⁵¹ Joseph Fletcher, *History of Independency*, ii. 123.

VIII

What happened during the next six months is uncertain ⁵² ; but on November 21 of the same year (1586) he was chosen master of St. Olave's Grammar School, Southwark, and subscribed six articles : (1) Not to keep conventicles ; (2) To go with the children to church ; (3) To conform to the doctrine of the Church of England ; (4) To use no catechism but that authorised by public authority ; (5) To communicate at the parish church according to law ; (6) And, if he be not content to keep these articles, no longer to keep the school-mastership. In June, 1589, Burleigh wrote to the Bishop of Peterborough asking that Browne might be received again into the ministry " as a means and help for some ecclesiastical preferment," and assuring the bishop that he had for " a good time " given up his " strange manner of writing and opinions " and " submitted himself to the order and government established in the Church." ⁵³

IX

Two years later—September, 1591—Browne resigned his mastership and became rector of Achurch-cum-Thorpe, a small hamlet and parish in Northampton. The living was in the gift of Lord Burleigh. Here he remained for forty years. Thomas Fuller, who was born a mile from Achurch, says that in his time Browne " had a wife with whom for many years he never lived "—and a church " wherein he never preached." " He was of an imperious nature," says Fuller, " offended if what he affirmed but in common discourse were not instantly received as an oracle." ⁵⁴ In a passion he struck the constable of the parish, who had somewhat roughly required him to pay a rate, and the constable had him committed to Northampton gaol, where he died—an old man of eighty. The date of his death is uncertain ; but it was between June 2, 1631, and November 8, 1633.

⁵² See Note A, p. 136.

⁵³ The letter is given by Strype, *Whitgift*, i. 620.

⁵⁴ Fuller, v. 68-69, says that when he was a " youth " he often saw Browne. He must have been more than twenty-two years of age at the time of Browne's death.

All that we know of the last forty years of Browne's life comes from those who regarded his early ecclesiastical opinions with abhorrence. There are some strong indications that his excitement sometimes became positive insanity⁵⁵; and this, perhaps, is the true explanation of the grosser scandals connected with his name after he had conformed to the English Church. His strength was broken. He used to say that "he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, and in some of them he could not see his hand at noon-day⁵⁶"; and English prisons in the days of Elizabeth were often foul, damp, and fatal to the most robust health. He felt the bitterness of disappointment. In his youth he had dreamt dreams and seen visions of an ideal Church, and with a vehement zeal had endeavoured to realise it; but the dream had passed and the vision had faded. He was alienated from the men who had shared his enthusiasm and his faith; and his courage failed him. That he had ceased to hold his ecclesiastical principles is not at all certain. Strype says that he "continued still very freakish"⁵⁷; and Stephen Bredwell, who wrote against him in 1588 when he was master of St. Olave's school, declares that "the man remaineth of the same judgment against the English assemblies, which he held before, when he passed the Seas."⁵⁸ But the great reformation on which he had set his heart, and for which he had endured such cruel sufferings, made no progress, and he turned from it in despair.

With a temperament like his—ardent, sanguine, restless—and with his health injured by repeated imprisonments, there would be nothing to surprise us if in the wreck of all his hopes his reason gave way. During the second half of his life it is possible that he was in a state bordering on insanity and was hardly responsible for his actions; while he was a Congregationalist he appears to have been an excellent Christian, rough in speech after the manner of those times, but free from all moral reproach and a man of intense and fervent religious zeal.

⁵⁵ Dexter (120-126) suggests that during his later years Browne's reason was troubled.

⁵⁶ Fuller, v. 67.

⁵⁷ Strype, *Parker*, ii. 69.

⁵⁸ Quoted by Dexter, 84. There are many passages in Bredwell's *Raising of the Foundations of Brownism* which sustain this assertion. Some of them Dexter has quoted.

X

The ecclesiastical principles which Browne advocated in his earlier years are the principles of modern Congregationalism. The Christian Church, as he contended, should consist only of Christians—a position which may seem sufficiently obvious. But this was the root of the controversy between Browne and the Queen—between Browne and the English Church. Whitgift spoke for Elizabeth and her bishops when he declared that he acknowledged no difference between a Christian Commonwealth and a Christian Church—a theory maintained twenty years later by Hooker in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, and the only theory by which the English Establishment can be explained or justified. This was the theory of Edmund Burke, who denied that there is any alliance between Church and State in this country; for the Church and the State are not allied—they are one and the same community. This, too, was the theory of Coleridge and of Dr. Arnold.

The early Congregationalists maintained that a man is not necessarily a Christian because he is an Englishman, and that the evil lives of large numbers of Englishmen were a clear proof that they were not Christians, and, therefore, were not proper members of a Christian Church. To recover the idea of the Church, Browne and his disciples believed that it was necessary, first of all, to reject and to tear to pieces the fiction which treated the English nation or an English diocese or an English parish as a Church of Christ; and then to establish what were called “gathered Churches,” consisting of those “Christian believers which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep his laws in one holy communion.”⁵⁹

They believed that, according to the will of Christ and the precedent of the apostolic Churches, every separate society of such persons should be free from all control except that of Christ Himself, who is present wherever two or three are gathered together in His name. They believed that in receiving or rejecting members, or excommunicating those who had proved themselves unworthy, and in the election of its officers, it is the duty of each separate Church to learn for itself the will of Christ and to do it.

⁵⁹ *A Booke which sheweth*, § 35.

The Church, according to their conception of it, is not a voluntary club for the regulation of which the members may make what rules they please, the rights and powers of individual members being based upon free contract between themselves; it is a Society of which Christ is the Founder, the Head, and the Lord. Its members have no right to admit whom they like or to exclude whom they like; they have no right to elect men to office according to their private tastes and preferences. Nor are they at liberty to please themselves in the conduct of public worship. In the whole life of the Church they have simply to give effect to the will of Christ, who is present whenever the Church meets, and apart from whose concurrence and sanction all the decisions of the Church are without validity.

Congregationalism does not assert that all Christian people have a *right* to *choose* their own ministers and to control the affairs of the Church; Congregationalism asserts that it is the *duty* of all Christian people to assert and defend the authority of Christ in the election and appointment of church officers, in the administration of church discipline, in the conduct of Christian worship. "Christ," said Browne, "uses the obedience of his people to keep his laws and commandments, to their salvation and welfare."⁶⁰

NOTE A

Browne's Submission

Brook (ii. 368) says that "after travelling up and down the country preaching against the laws and ceremonies of the church, he went to reside at Northampton. Here his preaching soon gave offence, and he was cited before Bishop Lindsell of Peterborough, who, upon his refusing to appear publicly, excommunicated him for contempt. The solemnity of this censure made such an impression upon Browne that he renounced his principles of separation." What authority there is for this story Brook does not give. Dexter, who quotes from the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ* (1709, xii.) a tradition of the excommunication and of its effect on Browne, inclines to the opinion that he was excommunicated. But the evidence seems rather unsubstantial. (Dexter 81, note 87.) See, however, Burrage, *True Story of Robert Browne*, 67-70.

⁶⁰ *A Booke which sheweth*, § 48.

The Rev. T. G. Crippen, the Librarian of the Congregational Library at the Memorial Hall, informs me that a document, undoubtedly in Browne's handwriting, has recently been discovered. He says that "on Browne's first partial submission at the end of 1585, Barrowe and Greenwood sent him a letter of remonstrance, not now extant. To this Browne replies in the lengthy document now discovered, in which his attitude is on the whole opportunist. It seems clear that, not so much the persecution that he had endured, as the practical breakdown of the experiment at Middelberg, had brought him to this position. He does not renounce his ideal, but seems to look upon it as a kind of spiritual Utopia to be approximated as nearly as circumstances may permit; and altogether repudiates the uncompromising combativeness of his correspondents." To this letter Mr. Burrage thinks that the Barrowe treatise, which it was Mr. Crippen's good fortune to bring to light last year, was intended as a reply; Browne rejoining with the *Answer to one Barrowe*, now lost, but quoted by Bancroft.

In addition to the various references given above, special mention should be made of Mr. Champlin Burrage's treatise, *The True Story of Robert Browne*, and of the articles by the Rev. F. Ives Cater in *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, September 1905, January 1906. The same Society has reprinted Browne's *Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anie* and *A New Years Gift*, discovered in 1903 by Mr. Burrage.

CHAPTER VI

MARTYRS

TROUBLES AT BURY ST. EDMUNDS—MEMORIAL ON BEHALF OF HANDSON AND GAYTON—COPPING, THACKER, AND DENNIS IMPRISONED AND EXECUTED—HENRY BARROWE—HIS CONVERSION—JOHN GREENWOOD—BARROWE AND GREENWOOD ARRESTED AND EXAMINED—MEMORIAL FROM PRISONERS IN LONDON GAOLS—ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN EVIDENCE BY MEANS OF VISITING CLERGY—TREATMENT OF PRISONERS—BARROWE'S "BRIEF DISCOVERIE OF THE FALSE CHURCH"—GREENWOOD RELEASED BUT AGAIN ARRESTED—BARROWE AND GREENWOOD TRIED AND EXECUTED—JOHN PENRY—HIS LIFE AT CAMBRIDGE AND OXFORD—PROPOSALS FOR THE EVANGELISATION OF WALES—SECRET PRESS ESTABLISHED—PENRY'S PUBLICATIONS—THE MAR-PRELATE TRACTS—PENRY APPEALS TO PARLIAMENT AGAINST THE HIGH COMMISSION—TAKES REFUGE IN SCOTLAND, BUT IS BANISHED—JOINS THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN SOUTHWARK—ARREST AND EXAMINATION—CHARGES GROUNDED ON PASSAGES IN HIS PRIVATE PAPERS—PENRY TRIED, CONVICTED, AND HANGED—HIS CHARACTER.

I

IN the letter written by the Bishop of Norwich to Lord Burleigh, April 19, 1581, complaining of the irregularities of Robert Browne, the bishop also complains of the "many great disorders in the town [of Bury] and the country thereabouts, as well in the clergy as the laity."¹ These "disorders" had existed in Bury St. Edmunds for several years before Robert Browne disturbed the two counties of Suffolk and Norfolk by preaching Congregationalism. In 1573 John Handson, curate of St. James's Church in that town, had been examined before the Bishop's Chancellor on account of his Puritan practices.² Richard Gayton, who had been suspended by the bishop in 1576 for refusing to make the sign of the cross in baptism and for other acts of

¹ Strype, *Annals*, iii. (1), 21.

² Brook, i. 238-239.

nonconformity,³ was “preacher” at the same church when Robert Browne visited Bury in 1581. Neither Handson nor Gayton had renounced Puritanism, and the bishop was resolved that their resistance to the ecclesiastical authorities should be arrested and punished. But 170 of the inhabitants of the town sent up a memorial to the Privy Council in 1582 protesting against his proceedings. They say :—

“ In most lamentable and humble manner complain unto your honours, the poor inhabitants of the town of Bury St. Edmunds in the county of Suffolk, beseeching your lordships to take pity upon our miserable and wretched estate, whereunto presently we are plunged, and in the same likely for ever to stick fast, if by your most gracious and honourable means we be not delivered. Your honours are not ignorant that our town hath been of long time instructed in the gospel of salvation by many, but in these latter years most plentifully and painfully taught by two godly and faithful ministers, Mr. Handson and Mr. Gayton, the first whereof hath been for about ten years a preacher amongst us, and the other about five years.

After describing how much good the town had received from their devout and zealous ministry, and bearing testimony to their personal excellence, the memorialists proceed to say :—

“ Yet, nevertheless, neither their approved integrity nor wonderful patience, which for all their injuries increased have not . . . opened their mouths to revenge, leaving the judgment of their enemies to the Lord God, could any way prevail to stop the passages of some men’s malice ; but they have so continually afflicted them by untrue accusations, that as men not able to support so intolerable burdens, Mr. Gayton, by their dealing, a quarter past, departed from us (whom they have threatened being absent to pursue). Mr. Handson, now at last wearied with their violent and continual practices, hath also yielded up his place, to the great danger and unspeakable grief of the inhabitants of the town, and also to all well affected to the truth and Her Majesty in the whole country about, which received by their confessions singular commodity by their ministry.”⁴

The memorial does not seem to have had any good effect. Mr. Gayton had left the town, and so appears to have escaped

³ His name is given variously as Gayton, Gaiton, and Gawton. Brook, ii. 241-247 ; and Strype, *Annals*, ii. (2), 59-62 ; iii. (1), 26-28.

⁴ State Papers : Elizabeth (Domestic Series), Aug.—Nov., 1582, vol. 155 (5).

immediate harm ; but at the assizes held at Bury in July, 1583, Mr. Handson was convicted of “ depraving the Book of Common Prayer.”

At the same assizes two other prisoners met a harder fate. John Copping had been sent to prison in 1576 for certain Puritan opinions which his judges called “ false and malicious.”⁵ In 1578 one of the prison authorities reported that though Copping had been two years in gaol, and during that time had been seen by learned preachers who had tried to bring him to a better mind, he still refused to renounce his errors. What was worse, he was so zealous in maintaining and defending his opinions that many of his friends who had come to see him in prison were now of the same way of thinking. It was dangerous to keep him in Bury, even though he was in gaol, for he would not be silenced, and “ infected others.” If he was sent elsewhere he would be equally earnest in propagating discontent. And yet it seems to have been difficult to bring home to him any definite offence.⁶

At last depositions were signed charging him with having refused to permit his child to be baptized with god-fathers and god-mothers, and with having said that none but a godly minister should conduct the service. He was also charged with having spoken treasonable words against the Queen ; for he said that she had sworn on her accession to carry out a full reformation of the Church, and that she was “ perjured,” for she had not done it.⁷ These words, or words of the same meaning, appear to have been spoken in the heat of private

⁵ Described as having been “ a minister near Bury ” : John Browne, *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 46 ; and Brook, i. 262.

⁶ Copping and his fellow-prisoner Thacker complained at quarter sessions of their long and illegal imprisonment, and the justices interceded with the bishop in their favour. “ Whereupon his Lordship drew up twelve articles of impeachment against the justices themselves, and caused them to be summoned before the Queen and the Council to answer for their misdemeanour. They were charged with countenancing the prisoners and other disorderly clergymen ; and with contempt of his lordship’s jurisdiction in refusing to admit divers ministers whom he had ordained, because they were ignorant and could only read ; and with removing one Wood from his living on the same account.” J. Browne, *Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 45. And see Strype, *Annals*, iii. (1), 28–29 ; and for the justices’ reply to the articles of impeachment, iii. (2), 172 foll.

⁷ Strype, *Annals*, iii. (2), 187 ; Neal, i. 313–314 ; and Brook, i. 262–264.

discussion. They were sworn to by the keeper of the gaol, by the chaplain, by the under-keeper, and two of the prisoners.

There was another prisoner in Bury gaol—Elias Thacker, who is said to have been a “Brownist minister”; he had been in prison for five or six years.⁸ In July, 1583, he and Copping were brought to trial. The charges in the depositions against Copping were dropped, and both he and Thacker were tried for circulating, while in prison, the writings of Robert Browne and Robert Harrison, which fiercely attacked the settlement of the Church and denied the ecclesiastical authority of the Queen. The Chief Justice reported that “the book acknowledged Her Majesty as chief ruler civilly.”⁹ But so was their terms, and no further. And though Dr. Stil [the Archbishop’s chaplain] and others travailed and conferred with them, yet they were at that very time of their death unmoveably of the same mind.”¹⁰ They were convicted under the Act passed in the twenty-third year of Elizabeth (1581), which provided—

“That if any person or persons . . . shall advisedly and with a malicious intent against our said sovereign lady devise and write, print, or set forth any manner of book, rhyme, ballad, letter or writing, containing any false, seditious, or scandalous matter to the defamation of the Queen’s Majesty . . . [or shall] procure or cause any such book, rhyme, ballad, letter or writing to be written, printed, published or set forth, . . . That then every such offence shall be deemed and adjudged felony, and the offenders therein being thereof convicted and attainted, shall suffer such pains of death and forfeiture, as in case of felony is used, without any benefit of Clergy or Sanctuary to be allowed unto the offender in that behalf.”¹¹

The Separatists contended that the Act was passed to protect the Queen against the Papists who were plotting against her crown; but under it several Congregationalists

⁸ J. Browne, *Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 46.

⁹ *i.e.* as civil magistrate only.

¹⁰ Strype, *Annals*, iii. (1), 269–270; where Copping’s fellow-martyr is described as Elias Fawker in the quotation from the Chief Justice’s letter. Waddington, *Congregational Martyrs*, 43, and Dexter, 210, give the passage, with variations, taken from the *Lansdowne MSS.*, xxxviii. 64.

¹¹ 23 Eliz. cap. 2, § 4.

were convicted of treason. Copping and Thacker were hanged during the assizes.¹²

About the same time, William Dennis, of Thetford in Norfolk, a "godly man and faithful in his place," was hanged for the same crime.¹³ These martyrs of Congregationalism denied that the civil magistrate had authority to regulate the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. This was their only offence. They believed that Christ, and Christ alone, who founded the Church, has authority to legislate for it.

II

Henry Barrowe, who next to Robert Browne was the most famous of the Elizabethan Congregationalists, was born at Shipdam in Norfolk about 1546. He was of a good family, and was educated at Cambridge, where he was entered as a fellow-commoner at Clare Hall, November, 1566. In 1576 he became a member of Gray's Inn. Whether he ever practised at the Bar is uncertain. For some years he lived a careless and perhaps a vicious life: Lord Bacon describes his youth as vain and dissolute.¹⁴ He sometimes went to court, but he cared more for pleasure than for politics. The powers of conversation which he displayed at the common table of the lawyers of Gray's Inn and at "ordinaries" in the city made him a well-known man in London. His books show how much he must have talked. He was keen,

¹² Thomas Gibson was also convicted at these assizes of circulating the writings of Browne and Harrison; but he abjured the errors in the books, and was reprieved. Strype, *Annals*, iii. (1), 177; Dexter, 210.

¹³ Governor Bradford's *Dialogue* (1648) in Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth*, 427.

¹⁴ "Being a gentleman of a good house but one that lived in London at ordinaries and there learned to argue in table talk and so was very much known in the city and abroad, he made a leap from a vain and libertine youth to a preciseness in the highest degree, the strangeness of which alteration made him very much spoken of." Bacon, *Works*, (Montagu's edition), v. 441.

R. Bancroft, in *A Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline*, charges him with "roisting and gaming," and with having "run so far into many a man's debt that he durst not show his head abroad." See Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 187.

alert, humorous, and witty, vigorous in abuse, full of epigram, dashing, coarse, reckless. Suddenly the whole habit of his life was changed, and he became the close associate and loyal comrade of obscure men who at the peril of liberty and life were endeavouring to promote an extreme reformation in religion.

“ Walking in London one Lord’s Day with one of his companions, he heard a preacher at his sermon very loud as they passed at the church. Upon which Mr. B. said to his consort, ‘ Let us go in and hear what this man saith that is thus in earnest.’ ‘ Tush,’ saith the other, ‘ what, shall we go to hear a man talk ? ’ But he went and sat down. And the minister was vehement in reproving sin, and sharply applied the judgments of God against the same ; and, it should seem, touched him to the quick in such things as he was guilty of, so as God set it home to his soul and began to work for his repentance and conviction thereby, for he was so stricken as he could not be quiet until by conference with godly men and further hearing of the Word, with diligent reading and meditation, God brought peace to his soul and conscience, after much humiliation of heart and reformation of life. So he left the Court and retired himself to a private life, some time in the country, and some time in the city, giving himself to study and reading of the Scriptures and other good works very diligently ; and being missed at Court by his consorts and acquaintances, it was quickly hinted abroad that Barrowe was turned Puritan.”¹⁵

He soon became not merely a Puritan, but a Separatist. Whether he was led to this extreme position by his own reflections on the actual condition of the English Establishment as contrasted with the ideal Church of the New Testament, or by the writings of Robert Browne, or by his friendship with John Greenwood, is doubtful.

John Greenwood was a Puritan clergyman some years younger than Barrowe. He had been deprived of his benefice

¹⁵ Governor Bradford, *Dialogue*, in Alexander Young’s *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of New Plymouth*, 433-434. Bradford thus describes Barrowe’s character : “ And thus much we can further affirm, from those that well knew him, that he was very comfortable to the poor and those in distress in their sufferings ; and when he saw he must die, he gave a stock for the relief of the poor of the church, which was a good help to them in their banished condition afterwards. Yea, and that which some will hardly believe, he did much to persuade them to peace, and composed many differences that were grown amongst them whilst he lived, and would have, it is like, prevented more that after fell out, if he had continued ” (*ibid.*, 434-435).

in the county of Norfolk and became one of the domestic chaplains of Lord Rich at Rockford in Essex. His fellow-chaplain, Robert Wright, had with the sanction of Mr. Berri-man, the parish clergyman, formed a Church in his own house, and Greenwood was associated with him in the pastorate. The Bishop of London was resolved to suppress these irregularities. Both Lord Rich and Wright were imprisoned; Greenwood left Rockford, came to London and formed a secret congregation which met at the house of Henry Martin, at St. Andrews in the Wardrobe, near St. Paul's.¹⁶ Of this congregation Henry Barrowe was probably a member.

Early in October, 1586, Greenwood was arrested while conducting a service. Evans, who had been ordained by Grindal, was arrested with him. Rather more than a month later, on Sunday, November 19, Barrowe, having heard of his friend's imprisonment, went to the Clink to visit him between nine and ten o'clock in the morning. The gaoler, who knew that Whitgift was anxious to lay his hand on Barrowe, arrested him, without any warrant except Whitgift's verbal authority, and went to Lambeth with the news of his arrest. In the course of the same afternoon Barrowe was put into a boat, and taken to the Archbishop's palace, where he was examined before the Archbishop himself, the Archdeacon, and Dr. Cosins. His complaint of the illegality of his arrest was peremptorily put aside, and he was sent back to prison without being formally charged with any offence. He was brought up for examination again towards the end of November [27], towards the end of March [24], 1586-7, and in the middle of July [18].¹⁷ In July, Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer, the Archbishop, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Buckhurst, the Bishop of London, Justice Young, Dr. Some, and others were present. The following extract from the examination illustrates Barrowe's ecclesiastical position.¹⁸

¹⁶ Waddington, ii. (1567-1700), 29; and *idem*, *Congregational Martyrs*, 67. Strype, *Annals*, iii. (1), 177-180; for details of Wright's examination and defence, *ibid.*, iii. (2), 228-237; and *Aylmer*, 54-57.

¹⁷ The record—*The Examinations of Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, and John Penrie*—has "18 day of the 3 month," which, according to Barrowe's practice in dating, would be March 18. But a manuscript exists in which the date is given as July 18, and "7" may have been turned into "3" by a printer's error (Dexter, 216, note 38).

¹⁸ *The Examinations of Henry Barrowe, etc.*, 14-17.

Lord Treasurer. "Why are you in prison, Barrowe?"

Barrowe. "I am in prison, my Lord, upon the statute made for recusants."¹⁹

Lord Treasurer. "Why will you not go to church?"

Barrowe. "My whole desire is to come to the Church of God."

Lord Treasurer. "Thou art a fantastical fellow, I see; but why not to our churches?"

Barrowe. "My Lord, the causes are great and many . . .

(1) Because all the profane and wicked of the land are received into the body of your Church; (2) You have a false and Antichristian ministry set over your Church; (3) Neither worship you God aright, but after an idolatrous and superstitious manner; (4) and your Church is not governed by Christ's Testament, but by the Romish Courts and canons, etc."

Lord Treasurer. "Here is matter enough, indeed. I perceive thou takest delight to be an author of this new religion."

The Lord Chancellor said he never heard such stuff in all his life. After questions on various other subjects, the Lord Treasurer asked Barrowe whether he held tithes to be lawful.

Barrowe. "My Lord, they [tithes] are abrogated and unlawful."

Lord Treasurer. "Why, thou wouldest have the minister live of somewhat: whereof should he live?"

Barrowe. "*Ex pura eleemosyna.* Of clear [clean?] alms, as Christ in his testament hath ordained, and as he and his apostles."

Lord Treasurer. "But how if the people will not give?"

Barrowe. "Such are not the people of God."

Lord Treasurer. "But what shall the ministers do in the meantime?"

Barrowe. "Not stand a minister to such, neither take the goods of the profane."²⁰

About the same time that Barrowe was examined at Whitehall before Burleigh, Whitgift, and other great authorities both civil and ecclesiastical, Greenwood was examined by the Bishop of London at his palace. They were sent back to the Fleet, and there they remained for several years.²¹

Barrowe and Greenwood were not alone in their sufferings. In 1588 a Memorial was presented to Lord Burleigh from

¹⁹ By this time, apparently, a warrant had been issued charging him with the offence for which he was imprisoned.

²⁰ It was a great point with Barrowe that we have religious communion with those who contribute with us to a common fund for religious purposes. He would, therefore, not allow the contributions of those outside the Church to go into the church treasury or to be received for the maintenance of church worship or church work.

²¹ *Examinations of Henry Barrowe, etc.*, 18-21. Penry was examined by Fanshaw and Young, but the place is not stated, *ibid.*, 21 foll.

The Fleet prison occupied the site of the present Congregational Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street.

“many poor Christians, imprisoned by the bishops in sundry prisons in and about London.” The memorialists say :—

“Pleaseth it then your lordship to understand, that we, her Majesty’s loyal, dutiful, and true-hearted subjects, to the number of threescore persons and upwards, have, contrary to all law and equity, been imprisoned, separated from our trades, wives, children, and families ; yea, shut up close prisoners from all comfort ; many of us the space of two years and an half, upon the bishop’s sole commandment, in great penury and noisomeness of the prisons ; many ending their lives, never called to trial ; some haled forth to the sessions ; some cast in irons and dungeons ; some in hunger and famine : all of them debarred from any lawful audience before our honourable governors and magistrates, and from all benefit and help of the laws : daily defamed, and falsely accused by published pamphlets, private suggestions, open preaching, slanders, and accusations of heresy, sedition, schism, and what not. And above all, (which most utterly toucheth our salvation,) they keep us from all spiritual comfort, and edifying, by doctrine, prayer, or mutual conference.”²²

Ten of the number had died ; the surviving memorialists pray that they may be brought to trial—“and if anything be found in us worthy of death or bonds, let us be made an example to all posterity : if not, we entreat for some compassion to be shown in equity according to law for our relief.”²³

Early in 1589 the Bishop of London was directed by Whitgift and the two Chief Justices to arrange for the visitation of these contumacious persons by selected clergymen who were to “seek by all learned and discrete demeanour to reduce them from their errors.” But these kindly and brotherly visits had another and very different purpose. The visiting clergymen were to take notes of what the prisoners said—to take notes so carefully as to be able to swear in a court of justice that the words were actually spoken by the prisoners.²⁴ It came to this : if the prisoners recanted their opinions about the Prayer Book, the ecclesiastical laws, and the Queen’s supremacy over the Church, it would be well, and they might be set at liberty ; but if in the warmth of discussion, or in the frankness with which they opened their hearts to a

²² Strype, *Annals*, iv. 128–129.

²³ Waddington, *Congregaional Martyrs*, 86 ; see also 85–87.

²⁴ *A Collection of certaine Sclaunderous Articles . . . also the some of certain conferences had in the Fleet* (1590), 6.

Christian brother who was visiting them in their trouble, they spoke incautiously, and used words on which a legal prosecution might be rested, what they said was to be brought against them on their trial. The visiting clergyman was to discharge two incongruous functions : he was to be a zealous and compassionate pastor charitably endeavouring to rescue a Christian soul from perilous errors ; and he was to be a government spy eager to obtain from the prisoner's own lips decisive proof of disloyalty to the Crown. Nor was it only against the prisoners that evidence was to be obtained in these remarkable pastoral visits : it might also be possible to obtain the names of their associates. " Who be those saints you speak of—where are they ? " asked one of these clergymen of Barrowe. Barrowe was too keen for him—" *They are even those poor Christians whom you so blaspheme and persecute and now most unjustly hold in your prisons.*"—" But where is their congregation ? "—" *Though I knew I purposed not to tell you.*"²⁵

The treatment which the prisoners received varied at different times ; it probably varied in different prisons. Many of them complained of the dark, damp, and foul dungeons in which they were confined. Some—as the memorial states—were put in irons. Some were beaten with cudgels. Sometimes they were forbidden to see each other. But these severities were not always maintained. Occasionally a kindly gaoler allowed one of his prisoners to go out to see his friends and children. Still more frequently the prisoners were allowed to meet together for worship, reading the Scriptures, and mutual exhortation. Barrowe and Greenwood, during the greater part of the time they were imprisoned together, appear to have been treated very badly. The books they wrote were produced under difficulties which would have crushed the spirit of men of weaker fibre and inferior courage. They were denied proper materials for writing, and had to use what scraps of paper came in their way or were secretly furnished them by their friends. Their manuscript was sent out of the prison secretly, a page or two one week, a page or two the next, by any hand they could trust. They could keep no copy of what they wrote, and they saw no " proofs." The printers in Holland to whom

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

these fragments were generally sent had to make what they could of them ; and, on the whole, did their work fairly well.²⁶

Barrowe's principal work, a small quarto of rather less than two hundred and eighty pages, appeared in 1590, under the title *A Brief Discoverie of the False Church*.²⁷ It is subscribed on the last page "By the Lord's most unworthy servant and witnes in bondes, Henry Barrowe." The motto on the title page—"As the Mother such the Daughter is" (Ezekiel xvi. 44)—indicates the spirit and substance of the book. Barrowe insists that the English Church is the daughter of the Roman apostasy, and is infected with the vices, corruptions, and superstitions of her origin. He denounces the corrupt communion of the English Establishment which includes—

"all the profane and wicked of the land, Atheists, Papists, Anabaptists, and heretics of all sorts, gluttons, rioters, blasphemers, perjurers, covetous, extortioners, thieves . . . witches, conjurers, etc., and who not, that dwelleth within this island, or is within the Queen's dominion." "All without exception or respect of person are received into, and nourished in the bosom of this Church, with the word and sacraments." . . . "All this people, with all these manners, were in one day, with the blast of Queen Elizabeth's trumpet, of ignorant Papists and gross idolaters, made faithful Christians and true professors."²⁸

He is equally severe on the ministry of the Establishment. He maintains that its archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, rectors, curates and the rest hold offices and discharge functions which were never instituted by Christ. He contended that the English Establishment was governed by those to whom Christ had given no authority in His Church, and that those who had received authority from Christ had no power. Christ, he said, has committed to the Church,

²⁶ In Barrowe's *Brief Discoverie of the False Church* (A. iii.) he says, "If some unperfect sentences, or superfluous repetitions arise in the reading, attribute those to his weakened memory, that is but a little cherished, as also, to the inconvenience of the place, through the iniquity of the times : where such was the rage of the enemy, as he might not keep one sheet by him, whiles he was writing of another, having also as evil means to revise or retract that he had written : so no wonder though many things escaped which might with more diligence have been prevented."

²⁷ There is a fictitious reprint of this work (1707), in which, without any intimation, the editor has struck out of the text whatever offended his taste.

²⁸ *A Brief Discoverie*, 9-10.

and to the whole Church, those "holy oracles" which are the enduring revelation of His will: it is the duty of the Church to maintain their purity and their supremacy.

"Hereunto is the whole Church, and every particular member thereof, both jointly and severally bound: both because they have all of them interest in the tree and river of life, all are bound to the maintenance of the faith which is given and common to all the saints; and because they are all of them the members of Christ, and together his body and each others members in him."²⁹

To transfer to bishops and other ecclesiastical rulers the authority and responsibility which Christ Himself had vested in the Christian commonalty, was to break up the whole constitution and order of the Church. Those whom Christ had trusted with the duty of maintaining His will in the Church could not without the gravest guilt consent to surrender that duty to others; to resist the power claimed by the Crown and the bishops, was therefore one of the supreme obligations of all Christian men.

Barrowe also criticises with great severity the Book of Common Prayer. It was "abstracted out of the Pope's blasphemous book";³⁰ but if it were the best that was ever devised by mortal men it could not, in his judgment, be rightly used either in churches or in private houses as the uniform rule of prayer.

"Shall we think," he asks, "that God hath at any time left these his servants so singly furnished and destitute of his grace, that they cannot find words according to their necessities and faith, to express their wants and desires, but need thus to be taught line unto line, as children new weaned from the breasts, what and when to say, how much to say, and when to make an end? Prayer I take to be a confident demanding which faith maketh through the Holy Ghost, according to the will of God, for their present wants, estate, etc."³¹

In other words, as Barrowe believed that the presence of Christ in the Church guides its decisions, he also believed that the grace of the Spirit suggests and guides its prayers.

Every separate office of the Church is criticised in a spirit of relentless hostility—sometimes with a keen wit and amusing humour. The Saints' Days provoke his special anger, and

²⁹ *A Brief Discoverie*, 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

the celebration of the saints is regarded as an encroachment on the honour due to God.

“ And that they might not fail at time of need, see; they make all the saints and innocents in Heaven their friends and on their side, celebrating to the innocents one day of their solemn Christmas : unto all saints (because none should be forgotten and they are many in number) they keep an especial and principal feast-day, with a devout fast upon the Eve, etc. Yet lest some of the chief saints, as John the Baptist, and the Twelve Apostles, might be displeased in that they are numbered and passed over with other common saints, they severally remember them again in their turn with their peculiar eves, days, fasts, feasts, and worship.”³²

He condemns the monuments and memorials of Romanism still preserved in the church buildings ; and thinks, indeed, that as in Jewish times idol temples were to be destroyed—not preserved for the worship of the true God—the ancient cathedrals and churches should all have been levelled to the ground.³³ The Canon Law and the Ecclesiastical Courts are wholly contrary to the will of Christ.

In the autumn of 1592 there was a relaxation of the rigour with which some, at least, of the Separatist prisoners were treated.³⁴ Greenwood was allowed to leave the Fleet—either on bail or on his personal promise to appear when required—and he went to live with Roger Rippon in Southwark.³⁵ Rippon’s

³² *A Brief Discoverie*, 82.

³³ The following note is pasted upon the margin (133): “ Though this Booke could not by the Author be corrected or revised, yet he signified his minde doubtful, if not changed, in this point. Namely, that though these Synagogs being dedicated to Idolatry and defiled with Idols, ought therefore to be plucked downe, yet not with such detestation as to be utterly destroyed, as these Idols which had worship given unto them, but that the idolatrous shapes being utterly abolished, the stuffe of these Synagogs, as the stone, tumber, leade, yron, etc., may be converted to civile and honest uses, as the good creature of God, as meate offered to Idols, etc.” The note, though in different type, has been printed in such a form as to adapt it for marginal insertion.

³⁴ For the date, see Dexter, 233, *note* 71 ; and Barrowe’s evidence there given.

³⁵ Waddington, ii. [1567—1700] 72-73, says that Greenwood “ was transferred from the Fleet Prison to the charge of a private citizen, Roger Rippon.” It is hardly probable that he was placed in the charge of a Separatist like himself ; and Waddington, in his *Congregational Martyrs*, 129, states more correctly that “ he was transferred to the charge of a private citizen, who was responsible to the authorities for his appearance before them when required.” And he adds, “ Roger Rippon had extended to him the same relief.”

house was one of those at which the members of a secret Church which had been formed four or five years before, held their meetings; Greenwood, now that he was out of prison, met with them and was appointed their "doctor" or "teacher." But the bishops were alarmed by what they heard of the spread of Separatism, and on December 5 Greenwood was again arrested and committed to the Fleet.

On March 23, 1592-3, he and Barrowe, after being in prison for seven years, were brought to trial. They were charged with "publishing and dispensing seditious books"; the proofs of the charge were found in the writings which they had published during their imprisonment. Their "sedition" consisted in denying her Majesty's ecclesiastical supremacy and attacking the existing ecclesiastical order. They were found guilty under the Act of the 23rd of Elizabeth,³⁶ and were condemned to be hanged.

The next morning, March 24, preparations were made for their execution, but they were reprieved. "Certain Doctors and Deans" were then sent to confer with them, but the prisoners claimed an open discussion—"A Christian and peaceable disputation . . . for the ready and happy deciding or composing" their differences; this, of course, was refused.³⁷ On the 31st they were conveyed to the place of execution—"as early and secretly as well they could be"³⁸; and with the ropes round their necks, they were allowed to address the few persons who had met to see them die. They were again reprieved.³⁹ But six days later, April 6, 1593, were hanged at Tyburn.

III

John Penry, who has sometimes been described as "the morning star of the reformation" in Wales, was hanged a few weeks later. He was born in the district of Bulth, in Breconshire, in 1559,⁴⁰ and was admitted to Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1580. Cartwright had been driven into exile, and the

³⁶ See above, p. 141; and Barrowe's letter in *An Apologie or Defence of such true Christians*, etc., 91.

³⁷ Strype, *Annals*, iv. 239-241; and *An Apologie*, 92

³⁸ *An Apologie*, 95. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁴⁰ Claims are advanced for two parishes—Cefnbrith in Llangamarch, and Merthyr-Cynog. Waddington (*John Penry*, 3) prefers Cefnbrith following Cooper, *Ath. Cant.*, ii. 154.

Puritan enthusiasm of the university had cooled. Penry found men in his college who still retained their affection for the Catholic faith.⁴¹ He was induced to join his Catholic friends in their worship, and sometimes stole out at midnight to assist a priest in celebrating the mass. But Puritanism still survived, though it was closely watched and severely discouraged. Some of the members of the university met weekly for prayer and the reading of the Bible, and at these meetings the heart of Penry was broken by the discovery of his sin and was inspired with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Among those who attended these meetings was John Udall, who afterwards became a famous Puritan preacher.

Penry took his degree in 1583, and then went to Oxford, where he became a member of St. Alban Hall. In Oxford Puritanism was at this time less repressed than at Cambridge: Leicester, the patron of the Puritans, was Chancellor, and Dr. Reynolds, a distinguished Puritan theologian, was Reader in Divinity. Soon after his arrival at Oxford several ministers from Scotland, Mr. Gellibrand among them, visited the university with the hope of introducing Presbyterianism into the English Church. They asked the Puritan students to accept eleven "resolutions." The first of these was to the effect that no man should consent to be ordained by a bishop until (1) he had been invited by a particular congregation or Church to become its minister; and until (2) the invitation had been approved and confirmed by a "classis" or "conference" of the neighbouring clergy.⁴² Penry appears to have been convinced that ordination by a bishop "to an uncertain and vague ministry"—that is, apart from the call of a particular congregation—was contrary to apostolic order; he therefore declined to be ordained, and simply took a licence to preach from his university.

⁴¹ Henry Walpole matriculated at Peterhouse in 1575, and went up to Cambridge with the strongest Catholic leanings, if indeed he was not already a Catholic. His cousin, Edward Walpole, was also at Peterhouse, besides many of his kindred, three of whom afterwards became Jesuits like himself. He was still at Cambridge in 1578. Henry Walpole was executed as a Jesuit in 1595. See an article on "Jesuit Martyrs," *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1878, 469-503, especially 485; and Dr. Augustus Jessop's *One Generation of a Norfolk House, passim*.

⁴² Wood, *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (Gutch), ii. 224-225; and see Waddington, *John Penry*, 7-8.

But Penry cared little for the reform of the Church; his heart was on fire for the evangelisation of his fellow countrymen. The influence of the Reformation had hardly reached them; the people were grossly ignorant and superstitious; the clergy were flagrantly unfit for their duties. While he was still a student he had preached with great fervour in Breconshire, and there are four churches still in existence which are said to have been founded by his ministry. In 1587 he issued a pamphlet in which he made a passionate appeal to the Queen and Parliament on behalf of the evangelisation of Wales.⁴³ He proposed that three hundred preachers should be sent from the universities to the border-towns in which English was spoken. He thought that at least twelve preachers might be found at the universities who could preach in Welsh.⁴⁴ There were also clergymen in charge of English parishes who had been born in Wales and had not lost the use of their native tongue; these, he proposed, should be required to give up their livings and to preach where their preaching was more urgently needed. He even ventured to suggest that there were laymen, Welshmen by birth, who had "well profited in divinity," who might be sent to preach the Gospel without receiving ordination.⁴⁵ As for their maintenance, "they whose hearts the Lord hath touched would thresh to get their living, rather than the people should want preaching. Our gentlemen and people, if they knew the good that ensueth preaching, would be soon brought to contribute."⁴⁶

Whitgift was excited and dismayed by this audacious scheme. Orders were given that all the copies of the book should be seized and that the author should be arrested. Penry remained in prison for a week and was then brought before the Archbishop. It was difficult, however, to prove that he had committed any penal offence, and after a month he was liberated.⁴⁷

⁴³ *A Treatise containing the Equity of an Humble Supplication which is to be exhibited unto hir Gracious Majestie, and this High Court of Parliament, in the behalfe of the countrey of Wales, that some order may be taken for the preaching of the Gospel among those people, etc.* (1587).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁷ *Appellation*, 5. Penry in that appeal lays stress on the fact that no definite charge against him was ever made, that he was never formally examined, and that he was still ignorant of the crime imputed to him.

Soon after this Penry married and went to live at Northampton near his wife's family. Northampton had for many years been conspicuous for its Puritanism, and in the neighbourhood there were several families of consideration that gave strong support to the Puritan ministers. Sir Richard Knightley of Fausley invited to the manor-house the clergy and laymen who were known to belong to the Puritan party, to consider what could be done for the reformation of the Church and the extension of religion ; and as the ecclesiastical authorities were not only silencing the Puritan preachers, but preventing them from publishing any books or pamphlets which were unfriendly to the existing ecclesiastical order, it was resolved to establish a secret printing-press. Sir Richard Knightley contributed a large part of the cost.

The press was set up in 1588 at Mouldsey in Surrey at the house of a Mrs. Crane. Waldgrave was the printer, and during the summer Penry was at Mouldsey for three weeks. The first book that appeared was *An Exhortation unto the Governours, and people of hir Majesties countrie of Wales, to labour earnestly to have the preaching of the Gospel planted among them* [1588 ?]. This was immediately followed by *A Viewe of some part of such Public Wants and Disorders as are in the service of God within Hir Majesties countrie of Wales, together with an Humble Petition, unto this High Court of Parliament for their speedy redresse* [1588].⁴⁸ In this Penry appeals to the people that are living in parishes held by non-resident or non-preaching clergymen, to provide ministers of their own at their own cost. In answer to their objection that since they already paid tithes for the support of worship and preaching, it was unreasonable to expect them to contribute any additional money for these purposes, he says :—

“ Can you bestow no more to be instructed in the way of life, than that which law already hath alienated from your possessions ? You never made account of your tithes, as of your own. For shame ! bestow something that is yours, to have salvation made known unto you.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ This seems to be the right order. The *Exhortation* was reprinted, with additions, in 1588 ; and in the *Viewe* (2) there is a reference that might well apply to it : “ The Lord will have the cause *once againe* brought into the Parliament in my hands.”

⁴⁹ *An Exhortation*, 37.

Waldgrave—whether with Penry's concurrence or without it, is a debated question⁵⁰—now began to use the press for printing the Mar-prelate Tracts, the first of which came out in 1588. The Tracts provoked the fiercest antagonism, and Whitgift used great efforts to discover the printers. The press was therefore removed to Northamptonshire and set up in the nursery of Fausley Manor.⁵¹ Waldgrave, who was well known to the Archbishop's officers, was sent off to Scotland.

In 1589 Penry had a controversy with Dr. Some on the questions at issue between the Puritans and the bishops, and in the same year he issued another appeal to Parliament: *The appellation of John Penry unto the High Court of Parliament, from the bad and injurious dealing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other his colleagues of the High Commission*:⁵² *wherein the complainant, humbly submitting himself and his cause unto the determination of this honourable assembly, craveth nothing else, but either release from trouble and persecution, or just trial.*

He tells the House frankly that he had sought, though only by lawful means, to withstand "the tyranny, unlawful bondage, and unjust oppression of God's Church by ungodly . . . bishops";⁵³ protests against the incessant persecution to which he was subjected, and complains that the commissioners had exceeded their lawful authority and that their officer had exceeded the powers of his warrant.

As his appeal had no effect, he went to Scotland, where he hoped to be beyond the reach of the High Commission; and where he also hoped to be able to make use of Waldgrave to print his books. He had a cordial reception from the Scotch Presbyterians, having been commended to them as one who had reclaimed some that for want of a preaching ministry were in danger of becoming Brownists.

⁵⁰ Waddington says: "He [Penry] could not monopolise the press at Mouldsey, though he was chiefly responsible for its management. To his great inconvenience and sometimes in direct opposition to his remonstrances, Waldgrave pushed the anonymous Mar-prelate tract into circulation" (*John Penry*, 35). See Note A on Mar-prelate Tracts, p. 160.

⁵¹ The secret press was afterwards removed to Coventry, then to Warrington, then to Manchester, and was discovered by the Earl of Derby at Newton Lane in the summer of 1589. Penry had relinquished the charge of it in February. See Strype, *Annals*, iii. (2), 602-606.

⁵² See Note B on the High Commission, p. 163.

⁵³ *Appellation*, 16.

But Whitgift was resolved to lay his iron hand on the fugitive, and induced the Queen to address a letter to James warning him that there had risen both in the realm of Scotland and the realm of England "a sect of perilous consequence, such as would have no kings but a Presbytery, and take our place while they enjoy our privileges." The Privy Council issued a warrant signed by Whitgift and five others for Penry's arrest, and James banished him from the kingdom.⁵⁴ For a time, however, the Scotch clergy gave him shelter, and he issued another pamphlet (1590), entitled *A Treatise wherein is manifestly proved that Reformation and those that sincerely favour the same are unjustly charged to be enemies unto Her Majesty and the State*, etc. While in Scotland he also worked at a translation of certain *Theological Theses* by foreign divines, written in Latin and published at Geneva. The translation, which appeared in 1591, is entitled *Propositions and Principles of Divinity propounded and disputed in the University of Geneva; by certain professors of divinity there, under Theodore Beza and Anth. Faius, Professors of Divinity*.⁵⁵

About this time his views of ecclesiastical polity must have changed, for in September (1592) he reached London and at once associated himself with the secret Congregational Church in Southwark. When the Church elected its pastor, doctor, elders, and deacons, Penry was asked to accept one of the offices—probably that of doctor; but he declined.

"It hath been my purpose," he said, "always to employ my small talent in my poor country of Wales, where I know that the poor people perish for want of knowledge; and this was the only cause for my coming out of that country where I was, and might have staid privately all my life; even because I saw myself bound in conscience to labour for the calling of my poor kindred and countrymen unto the knowledge of their salvation in Christ."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Elizabeth to James, *State Papers relating to Scotland*, xlvi. (5), and *Calendar do.*, ii. 579 (July 6, 1590). For the order of expulsion, see *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, iv. 518-519, and note 1; and *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland*, ii. 574, 580, 581, 584, 585. Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 175.

⁵⁵ The original title of the work is *Theses Theologicæ in Schola Genevensi, sub D.D. Theodore Beza et Antonio Fayo, propositæ et disputatæ. Genevæ*, 1586.

⁵⁶ *Examinations of Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, and John Penry*, 25.

Though he did not accept office, he preached at the meetings of the Church in Southwark, Smithfield, and Stepney. He had now no printing-press at command, but wrote a treatise on the *History of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, manuscript copies of which were circulated among the church members.

On March 22 (1592-3) he was arrested—the day before Barrowe and Greenwood were brought to trial. On April 10, he was brought before Justice Young and Mr. Fanshaw.⁵⁷ His examination began with an inquiry into his reasons for refusing to attend the services of the Church of England, and in his reply he objected to the organisation of the Church—its archbishops, bishops, deans, chancellors, canons, prebendaries, priests, deacons, and the rest; the manner in which they were appointed, their functions, and their compulsory maintenance by tithes and other public property. The Queen, he thought, should employ the ecclesiastical revenues “to the holy civil uses” of the Prince and the State; and he suggested that the maintenance of the ecclesiastical establishment constituted a standing inducement to the Romanists to try to restore England to Rome.⁵⁸ When asked whether he knew of any “practice or intent of any sedition or commotion against her Majesty and the State for the pulling down of bishops,” he denied that he had any such knowledge.⁵⁹ He also spoke of “every particular congregation of the Church” as being “the body of Christ,” and as having authority to require the services of any of its members for its instruction, consolation, and edification. It was for this reason that although he held no office in the Church he had occasionally preached.⁶⁰

One of the grounds on which he rested his defence is exceedingly curious:—

“Her Majesty hath granted, in establishing and confirming the great charter of England (whereunto, as I take it, the kings and queens of this land are sworn when they come to their crown), that the church of God, under her, should have all her rights and liberties for ever. Let the benefit of this law be granted unto me and others of my brethren, and it shall be found that we have done nothing but what is warrantable by her laws.”⁶¹

It is unfortunate that one of the Commissioners, instead

⁵⁷ *Examinations of Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, and John Penry*, 20 foll.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

of challenging Penry to show how the great Charter sheltered the Separatists, asked him whether it was "meet that subjects should charge their princes to keep covenant with them and enter to scan what oaths they have taken for this purpose." ⁶² This question Penry answered with a firm but respectful loyalty.

"It is the crown and honour of princes to be known not only to hold but even to be in covenant with their subjects, that they will maintain and preserve them from violence and wrong; nay, heathen princes have thought themselves honoured when their mean subjects have charged them very earnestly with the covenants whereby they were bound unto their people." ⁶³

Had he been required to explain his appeal to the great Charter, he would probably have said that when a Christian Prince promises to guarantee the "rights and liberties" of the Church, the promise must be taken to refer to the true Church of Christ, and that the Christian men whom the bishops were persecuting were members of this Church.

It was difficult to discover any grounds on which he could be prosecuted. Whitgift believed that he was the writer of the Martin Mar-prelate Tracts; but of this there was no clear proof, and if there had been, it is doubtful whether the Tracts contained material for a capital charge. Penry himself maintained strongly that there was nothing in any of his published writings which brought him within the penal clauses of the 23rd of Elizabeth. But among his private papers ⁶⁴ were discovered the rough notes of a petition to the Queen dated April 30, 1592. These notes contained the following sentences and some others of the same character:—

"The last days of your reign are turned rather against Jesus Christ and his Gospel than to the maintenance of the same. . . . Amongst the rest of the princes under the Gospel that have been drawn to oppose themselves against the Gospel, you must think yourself to be one. . . . Your standing is, and hath been, by the Gospel. It is little or smally beholden to you, for anything that appeareth. The practice of your government sheweth that, if

⁶² *Examinations of Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, and John Penry*, 25.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁶⁴ When he was brought before the High Commission the first time, it was for alleged treason contained in "printed books and also in writings" (*Appellation*, 6).

you could have ruled without the Gospel, it would have been to be feared whether the Gospel should be established or not. . . . And, therefore, Madam, you are not so much an adversary unto us poor men as unto Christ Jesus, and the wealth of his kingdom. . . . But, Madam, thus much we must needs say, that, in all likelihood, if the days of your sister Queen Mary and her persecution had continued unto this day, the Church of God in England had been far more flourishing than at this day it is. . . . Now, madam, your Majesty may consider what good the Church of God hath taken at your hands; even outward peace, with the absence of Christ Jesus in his ordinance. Otherwise, as great troubles are likely to come as ever were in the days of your sister.”⁶⁵

There were also passages in these “Notes” which assaulted the bishops and the ecclesiastical settlement with great fierceness.⁶⁶

He was indicted for having deliberately, and advisedly, and with a malicious purpose against the Queen, devised and written certain false, seditious, and scandalous matters in defamation of her Majesty, and intending to instigate rebellion and insurrection against her authority. The case was heard at Westminster before the Lord Chief Justice on May 21, 1593; and he was found guilty.

The next day he addressed a protest to the Lord Treasurer, complaining that “the secret and confused observations” found among his private papers should be made the ground of a criminal charge; urging that some of the passages which had been brought against him were notes of what had been said to him by other men, notes which he meant to discuss “for her Majesty’s clearing”—for he believed that many things of which her Majesty knew nothing were done under her government to the hindrance of the free Gospel. This document seems to have been submitted to the judges; and they wrote, That “Penry is not, as he pretendeth, a loyal subject, but a seditious disturber of her Majesty’s peaceable government, appeareth in many ways.” Amongst others, “By his schismatical separation from the society of the Church of England, and joining with the hypocritical and schismatical conventicles of Barrowe and Greenwood. By his justifying

⁶⁵ In Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 178–180; and Collier, vii. 175–179, where all the passages used in the indictment, taken from Coke’s *Book of Entries*, 353–354, are given at length.

⁶⁶ Given in full by Strype, *Whitgift*, iii. 304–313. See also ii. 175–187.

of Barrowe and Greenwood, who, suffering worthily for their writings and preachings, are, nevertheless, by him reputed as holy martyrs.”⁶⁷

To impeach the ecclesiastical policy of the Queen, to condemn the Queen’s ecclesiastical Establishment, to associate with a Congregational Church—these were judged to be crimes worthy of death. On May 25 (1593) he was sentenced to be hanged; and the sentence was executed at St. Thomas-a-Watering⁶⁸ on May 29.

Penry was a fervent evangelist rather than an ecclesiastical reformer. Had the authorities in Church and State shown any disposition to provide for the neglected religious condition of the people of Wales, it is doubtful whether he would ever have attacked the supremacy of the Queen or discovered that bishops had no place in the apostolic Church. It was because the ecclesiastical Establishment, in Wales at least, wholly failed to instruct the people in the righteousness and grace of God that he assailed it so vehemently. His letters, written during his imprisonment, to the Southwark Church, to his wife, and to his children, reveal a singular tenderness of heart; and they contain passages of pathetic eloquence.

NOTE A

The Martin Mar-prelate Tracts

The Martin Mar-prelate Tracts are a series of pamphlets in which the bishops, the clergy, and the whole settlement of the Elizabethan Church are assailed with great audacity and passion.

⁶⁷ Strype, *Annals*, iv. 248-249.

⁶⁸ “This place of execution for the county of Surrey was situated close to the second mile-stone on the Kent road, and near a brook dedicated to St. Thomas-a-Becket” (Waddington, *John Penry*, 203). Dexter (251) quotes “the brutal epitaph” of some “Northerne Rimer” (from J. Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, 56):

“The Welchman is hanged
 Who at our Kirke flanged,
 And at her state banded,
 And brend are his buks.
 And tho he be hanged;
 Yet is he not wranged,
 The de’ul has him fanged
 In his kruked kluks.”

The Epistle appeared in November, 1588. *The Epitome* and *The Minerall Conclusions* in February, and *Hay any Work for Cooper?* in March, 1588-9. *Theses Martinianæ* or *Martin Junior* and *Martin Senior* in July, 1589. *The Protestation* in September, 1589.

The tracts are written in a free, vigorous, popular style; are often coarse, and sometimes brutal. They contain attacks on the private character of the bishops as well as on their public policy; and it is possible that these personal scandals greatly contributed to their immense popularity. The earlier tracts are less gross and violent than those which were published later. They were answered by a series of pamphlets on the other side written in a style still coarser and more brutal.

Whitgift was convinced that Martin Mar-prelate was John Penry. Strype attributes the authorship of the Tracts to Penry as though the fact were undisputed.⁶⁹ Many later authors—among them Mr. Edward Arber—have also attributed them to Penry.⁷⁰

There was strong *prima facie* evidence to justify Whitgift's suspicion. *The Epistle* and *The Epitome* were printed by the secret press while Penry had charge of it; one—if not both—of them he revised and corrected. Whether *The Minerall Conclusions* was printed before he left the press at Coventry is doubtful. But Wigginton, who was brought up before the Commissioners on suspicion of being the author, when asked, "Is Mr. Penry, then, the author of the *Demonstration* or of *Martin Mar-prelate*," answered, "I think he is not. And I think you are greatly deceived in charging him with it."⁷¹ Udall was asked whether he knew Penry, and answered, "Yes, my Lord, that I do." "And do you know him to be Martin?"—"No, surely; nor do I think him to be Martin."—"What is your reason?"—"This, my Lord; when first it came out, he, understanding that some gave him out to be the author, wrote a letter to a friend in London, wherein he denied it, in such terms as declare him to be ignorant and clear in it."⁷² On a later occasion, when Udall was brought up to receive sentence of death, he said to the judge: "For *Martin* and the rest of the books that you have named, they were never approved by the godly learned; and I am fully persuaded that these books were not done by any minister; and I think that there is never a minister in the land that doth know who 'Martin' is; and I for my part have been inquisitive, but I could never learn who [he] is."⁷³

Mr. Maskell—an important judge on this question—says, in

⁶⁹ *Annals*, iii. (2), 71, and elsewhere: though in *Whitgift*, ii. 175 he speaks with less assurance. Penry "was also reckoned the chief publisher, if not author, of these scurrilous libels, under the name of Martin Mar-prelate."

⁷⁰ *An Introductory Sketch to the Martin Mar-prelate Controversy* (The English Scholar's Library), 193-196, where he attributes the authorship to John Penry and Job Throckmorton conjointly.

⁷¹ Brook, i. 425.

⁷² *Ibid.*, ii. 11.

⁷³ *State Trials* (Howell), i. 1294; and Dexter, 186-187, notes 297, 298.

his *History of the Martin Mar-prelate Controversy* :⁷⁴ " We must not overlook this—that no evidence was found, and also that Penry himself at the time (which I cannot give much weight to) and always after, even when about to die, (when one is inclined to believe that he would speak the truth,) denied that he had been concerned in the writing of these tracts." The *internal* evidence is wholly against Penry's authorship. In his acknowledged writings there is nothing of the levity or coarseness that characterise " Martin," and in Martin there is a complete absence of that pathetic element which was characteristic of Penry.

Dr. Dexter attributes the Tracts to Barrowe. But *external* evidence of Barrowe's authorship there is none ; and the internal evidence does not seem to be very strong. On the other hand, as against Barrowe's authorship the two following considerations seem decisive.

1. Before the Martin Mar-prelate Tracts began to appear, Barrowe had become a Separatist, and was violently opposed to the moderate Puritans. But Martin shows no sign of sympathy with the ecclesiastical opinions which to Barrowe were dearer than life. At first, Martin, though violent in his language, would have been satisfied with moderate concessions.

In the *Epistle* he promises to be at peace with the bishops—(1) If they will " promote the preaching of the Word in every part of the land " ; (2) If they will ordain in future only such men as " for their godliness and learning " are fit for the ministry ; and will suffer Thomas Cartwright's answer to the Rhemish Testament⁷⁵ to be published ; (3) If they will not insist on any subscription beyond that required by the thirteenth of Elizabeth, and will cease to molest those clergymen who object to the vestments and ceremonies ; (4) If they will not molest those who refuse to kneel at communion, or who, if their parish ministers do not preach, go to hear other preachers ; (5) If they cease to excommunicate men privately, and no longer forbid public fasts.⁷⁶

Barrowe would not have offered the bishops these terms. He had been in prison as a Separatist for eighteen months before the first of the Tracts—in which these terms were proposed—appeared.

2. " Martin " has nothing of the wit, nothing of the humour, of Barrowe ; what wit and humour he has are of a ruder and coarser kind ; and the general intellectual force of the Tracts is greatly inferior to that which is displayed in the *Discoverie of the False Church*. Barrowe sometimes sinks as low as Martin ; but Martin never rises to the height of Barrowe. In the absence of positive exterior evidence of Barrowe's authorship—and there is none—there seems no reason for attributing the Tracts to him. Who wrote them remains doubtful.

⁷⁴ Maskell, 107–108.

⁷⁵ This was a Roman Catholic translation of the New Testament with notes.

⁷⁶ *An Epistle to the terrible Priests of the Convocation House*, 38–39.

NOTE B

The Court of High Commission

“The Act of Supremacy, while it restored all ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the crown, empowered the queen to execute it by commissioners appointed under the great seal, in such manner and for such time as she should direct ; whose power should extend to visit, correct and amend all heresies, schisms, abuses, and offences whatever, which fall under the cognizance and are subject to the correction of spiritual authority. Several temporary commissions had sat under this act with continually augmented powers, before that appointed in 1585, wherein the jurisdiction of this anomalous court almost reached its zenith. It consisted of forty-four commissioners, twelve of whom were bishops, many more privy-councillors, and the rest either clergymen or civilians. This commission, after reciting the acts of supremacy, uniformity and two others, directs them to inquire from time to time, as well by the oaths of twelve good and lawful men, as by witnesses and all other means they can devise, of all offences, contempts, or misdemeanours done and committed contrary to the tenor of the said several acts and statutes, and also to inquire of all heretical opinions, seditious books, contempts, conspiracies, false rumours or talks, slanderous words and sayings, etc., contrary to the aforesaid laws. Power is given to any three commissioners, of whom one must be a bishop, to punish all persons absent from church, according to the act of uniformity, or to visit and reform heresies and schisms according to law ; to deprive all benefited persons holding any doctrine contrary to the thirty-nine articles ; to punish incests, adulteries, and all offences of the kind ; to examine all suspected persons on their oaths, and to punish all who should refuse to appear or to obey their orders, by spiritual censure, or by discretionary fine or imprisonment ; to alter and amend the statutes of colleges, cathedrals, schools, and other foundations, and to tender the oath of supremacy according to the act of parliament.

“Master of such tremendous machinery, the archbishop proceeded to call into action one of its powers, contained for the first time in the present commission, by fendering what was technically styled the oath *ex officio*, to such of the clergy as were surmised to harbour a spirit of puritanical disaffection. This procedure, which was wholly founded on the canon law, consisted in a series of interrogations, so comprehensive as to embrace the whole scope of clerical uniformity, yet so precise and minute as to leave no room for evasion, to which the suspected party was bound to answer upon oath.”⁷⁷

The *ex officio* oath was one of the most monstrous and iniquitous instruments of tyranny ever invented. A clergyman might have omitted the sign of the cross in baptizing a child, and the parents would not betray him ; perhaps he omitted it at their desire. Or

⁷⁷ Hallam, *Constitutional History*, i, 200-201.

he might have omitted to use the ring in celebrating a marriage, and the bride and bridegroom would not inform against him; perhaps they objected to the ring as superstitious. In some parishes neither the clergy nor the parishioners liked the apocryphal lessons, and they were not read; but no one cared to give information to the bishops. In private conversation with a friend a clergyman might have expressed the opinion that there were some things in the Book of Common Prayer which seemed to him repugnant to the Word of God; but his friend, not being a traitor, would say nothing about it. Or, perhaps, though the clergyman had *said* nothing of the kind he might have *thought* it; but no one knew that he had thought it. The Archbishop was determined to have legal proof against the offender in all these cases. Twenty-four inquiries were addressed to the suspected clergyman himself. Had he ever omitted to sign the cross in baptism, or to use the ring in marriage, or to read the appointed lessons? Had he ever said to a friend that there were parts of the Book of Common Prayer contrary to the Word of God, or at least not convenient for use in the Church? Did he *think* that there was anything in the Book contrary to the Word of God. These inquiries the Commissioners had power to compel him to answer. If he refused he could be committed for contempt. Lord Burleigh got sight of the articles, and wrote a letter to the Archbishop telling him that they were worse than the Spanish Inquisition, used in order to entrap their prey: "according to my simple judgment, this kind of proceeding is too much savouring of the Roman inquisition, and is rather a device to seek for offenders than to reform any."⁷⁸ The Lords of the Council remonstrated. Parliament attempted to shield the Puritans. But the Archbishop was relentless, and the Queen stood by him.

⁷⁸ Strype, *Whitgift*, i. 268-271; iii. 81-87, 104-107, and 107-115.

CHAPTER VII

EXILES

FRESH LEGISLATION TO ENFORCE UNIFORMITY—PENALTIES OF DISOBEDIENCE—INCREASE OF THE SEPARATISTS—EXODUS TO HOLLAND—FRANCIS JOHNSON—FAILURE OF THE EXPEDITION TO AMERICA—HENRY AINSWORTH AND THE CHURCH AT AMSTERDAM—PURITANS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—THEY HOLD THAT THE MAGISTRATE SHOULD SUPPORT THE CHURCH, BUT MAY NOT LEGISLATE FOR IT—RIVAL AUTHORITY OF CHURCH AND STATE—PURITANS CHALLENGE CLAIMS OF THE STATE, CONCEDED BY THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, TO TOUCH THE PROVINCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AND FAITH—PURITANS CONCERNED WITH DUTIES RATHER THAN RIGHTS—THEY ASSERT THE SUPREMACY OF THE DIVINE AUTHORITY.

IN the early summer of 1593, before Barrowe and Greenwood were executed at Tyburn, Parliament was discussing a new Bill for the enforcement of Uniformity. An Act *To retain the Queen's Majesty's Subjects in their due Obedience* had been passed twelve years before.¹ That statute had been at the outset aimed mainly, if not wholly, against the Papists; but subsequently it had been used as a weapon against others also. Its provisions had given rise to dissatisfaction, on the ground that they were "likely to bring other innocent persons into danger not intended"; and so a new Bill was now drawn which became law in the course of the session.² It enacts that if any person or persons above sixteen years of age shall be absent from church for a month, or by writing, printing, or speech shall attempt to persuade any of her Majesty's subjects to deny the Queen's ecclesiastical supremacy, or shall attempt to persuade them from coming to church or to

¹ 23 Eliz. cap. 1.

² 35 Eliz. cap. 1. *An Explanation of a Branch of a Statute made 23 Eliz., entitled An Act to retain the Queen's Majesty's Subjects in their due Obedience.* And see Strype, *Whitgift*, i. 190-193; ii. 190-192.

be present at any unlawful meeting for religious worship, they shall be committed to prison without bail, till they conform and make submission. If for three months they refuse to do this they are to be banished from the realm. If they fail to leave the country, or return without licence, they are to be hanged as felons.³

With a refinement of cruelty it was made a penal offence to give shelter to a Separatist. For a man to receive into his house his dearest friend, if that friend refused to attend the services of the Queen's Church, made him liable to the ruinous penalty of £10 a month. His friend might be dangerously ill, and might have no other home; but the law was inexorable: to give him shelter from rain, snow, fog, and frost, was a crime. For a man to keep in his house his own wife, child, mother, father, sister, brother, if they refused to attend the Queen's churches, made him liable to the same penalty unless he could show that they had no other home.⁴

But the Act, with all its severities, was a proof that the bishops were becoming alarmed at the effect produced on the mind of the nation by hanging men for their ecclesiastical opinions. The number of the Separatists was increasing. Sir Walter Raleigh, speaking in the House of Commons, said that there were 20,000 Brownists in England, chiefly in London and the eastern counties.⁵ His estimate of their number was probably greatly exaggerated; but if there were 10,000, or even 5,000, it was impossible to hang them all; and while any remained in the country—even though they were in prison—no exertions of the bishops could restrain the growth of their opinions. Immediately after the passing of the Act, most of the Separatist prisoners were released from gaol, and several hundreds of them streamed over to Holland.

Among the first that fled were the members of the secret Church in London of which Barrowe and Penry had been members and Greenwood the pastor. They crossed the sea in separate companies, as they were able; and within three or four years most of them were settled in Amsterdam.

Francis Johnson, their pastor, was kept in prison for some time after most of his flock had reached Holland. His history is a remarkable one. He was born at Richmond, Yorkshire,

³ 35 Eliz. cap. 1, §§ 1, 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, § 8.

⁵ Strype, quoting D'Ewes, *Journals*, 517, in *Whitgift*, ii. 191.

in 1562; was educated at Cambridge and became a Fellow of Christ's. In a sermon preached at St. Mary's in January, 1587-8, he defended the Presbyterian polity, and on being examined declared that he solemnly believed that the want of this polity was the cause of the ignorance, atheism, idolatry, profanation of the Sabbath, disobedience to superiors and other evils which were prevalent in the country.⁶ A long imprisonment did not convince him that his opinions were wrong; and in the autumn of 1589 he was expelled from the university. Not leaving Cambridge at once, he was again imprisoned. Apparently in 1590 he became pastor of the Church of English merchants at Middelberg in Zeeland.⁷ While there he happened to discover that a book written by Barrowe and Greenwood was being secretly printed at Dort. At the request of the ambassador he kept watch over the progress of the printing, and when the last sheets were finished seized the impression and had the whole edition burned, with the exception of two copies; one of these he kept for his own reading, the other he meant to give to a friend.⁸ On reading it, his theory of ecclesiastical polity was shaken; he was almost convinced that the Separatists were in the right. He resigned his pastorate, crossed over to London, found access to Barrowe in the Fleet prison; and before the autumn of 1592 was so completely converted to Barrowe's position that he was elected pastor, as we have seen, of the secret Congregational Church in London. In 1605 he reprinted and published the book he had burnt.⁹

Johnson seems to have remained in prison from 1592 to the end of 1596. In 1597 there was a project for planting a colony on an island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or somewhere in the neighbourhood. The merchants who were engaged in this scheme asked leave to transport out of the realm "divers artificers and other persons that are noted to be sectaries, whose minds are continually in an ecclesiastical ferment."¹⁰

⁶ Strype, *Annals*, iii. (2), 117-122, and 611-615.

⁷ Cartwright and Dudley Fenner had been pastors of this Church. Johnson received £200 a year—an extremely handsome salary.

⁸ Governor Bradford's *Dialogue*, in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth*, 424-425.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 425.

¹⁰ *State Papers, Elizabeth (Domestic)* cclvi. 56; and *Acts of the Privy Council*, March 25, 1597: new series, xxvii. 6.

They received permission to take four persons of this description, on condition of giving bonds that none of the four would return to England till they were ready to submit themselves to the ecclesiastical laws. The four that went out were Francis Johnson, the pastor, and Daniel Studley, one of the elders of the secret Church ; George Johnson, the brother of the pastor, and John Clarke, who was, perhaps, the mayor of St. Albans that had got into trouble by sheltering unlicensed preachers and receiving John Penry into his house as guest and friend just before he was executed. The expedition was disastrous. It sailed in April, 1597 ; early in September it was back again in the English Channel. The four exiles were put ashore at Southampton, and by the middle of the month they reached Amsterdam.

At this time, or a little later, the Church of the exiles in that city numbered three hundred members. The pastor was Francis Johnson ; its teacher was Henry Ainsworth. Of Ainsworth's early history very little is known. He describes himself as " of Swanton, England," and must have been born in 1571. He came over to Amsterdam before Johnson was released from prison, and lived for some time in the most miserable poverty. It is doubtful whether he was ever a member of a university, but he was one of the greatest Hebrew scholars of that age. He was a man of singular gentleness and devoutness of spirit, and " things did flow from him with that facility, plainness and sweetness, as did much affect the hearers " ; and he " had this excellence above many, that he was most ready and pregnant in the Scriptures, as if the book of God had been written in his heart." ¹¹

The Church had also " four grave men for ruling elders and three able and godly men for deacons, one ancient widow for a deaconess, who did them service many years, though she was sixty years of age when she was chosen." ¹² Of this church officer Governor Bradford goes on to say :—

" She honoured her place and was an ornament to the congregation. She usually sat in a convenient place in the congregation, with a little birchen rod in her hand, and kept little children in great awe from disturbing the congregation. She did frequently

¹¹ Governor Bradford's *Dialogue*, in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth*, 448-449.

¹² *Ibid.*, 455.

visit the sick and weak, especially women, and, as there was need, called out maids and young women to watch and do them other helps as their necessity did require, and if they were poor, she would gather relief for them of those that were able, or acquaint the deacons; and she was obeyed as a mother in Israel and an officer of Christ.”¹³

II

It is customary to claim for the Elizabethan Puritans, and especially for the martyrs and exiles among the Elizabethan Separatists, the high honour of laying the foundations of that religious freedom which is the inheritance of the English race in every part of the world. The claim can be supported by the most solid proofs; but to suppose that either Puritans or Separatists had any clear conception of the modern Non-conformist theory of the true relations between Church and State would be a grave mistake. While Barrowe and Greenwood were in prison they said :—

“ We acknowledge that the prince ought to compel all their subjects to the hearing of God’s Word in the public exercises of the Church. Yet cannot the prince compel any to be a member of the Church, or the Church to receive any without assurance by public confession of their own faith; or to retain any longer than they continue and walk orderly in the faith.”¹⁴

In 1596 the exiles in Amsterdam and their brethren who remained in London published a Confession of Faith. In this they declare :—

“ That it is the Office and duty of Princes and Magistrates, who by the ordinance of God are supreme Governors under him over all persons and causes within their Realms and Dominions, to suppress and root out by their authority all false ministries, voluntary¹⁵ religions and counterfeit worship of God; to abolish and destroy the Idol Temples, Images, Altars, Vestments, and

¹³ *Ibid.*, 455-456.

¹⁴ *A Plaine Refutation of M. Giffardes Booke* (1605), iv. “ Both the Magistrate ought to compel the Infidels to hear the doctrine of the Church, and also with the approbation of the Church to send forth men with gifts and graces to instruct the Infidels.” *A Collection of certaine Letters and Confernces lately passed between certaine Preachers and Two Prisoners in the Fleet*, 59. And see Hanbury, *Memorials*, i. 25, 52-53.

¹⁵ *Voluntary*—*i.e.* originating in the human will, not in obedience to the divine law: “ will-worship.”

all other monuments of Idolatry and superstition ; and to take and convert to their own civil uses, not only the benefit of all such idolatrous buildings and monuments, but also the Revenues, Demesnes, Lordships, Possessions, Glebes, and maintenance of any false ministries and unlawful Ecclesiastical functions whatsoever within their Dominions. And, on the other hand, to establish and maintain by their laws every part of God's word, his pure Religion and true ministry ; to cherish and protect all such as are careful to worship God according to his word, and to lead a godly life in all peace and loyalty : yea, to enforce all their subjects, whether ecclesiastical or civil, to do their duties to God and men ; protecting and maintaining the good, punishing and restraining the evil, according as God hath commanded, whose Lieutenants they are here on earth." ¹⁶

There are words of Robert Browne's which might bear the largest and most generous meanings ; but it is certain that even he would have insisted that it was the duty of the civil magistrate to follow the example of pious Jewish kings and to suppress Romish idolatry and whatever remnants of it had been preserved in the English Church.

The real merit of Puritans like Cartwright and the Congregational martyrs and exiles was this—they maintained that in relation to religious faith and religious worship the civil magistrate had no *legislative* power ; that in these high matters princes, Churches, and nations were bound to acknowledge a more awful authority. God was supreme, and must at all hazards be obeyed. Puritanism was, in fact, the continuation of a movement which began with the beginning of the Christian faith. In the old pagan world the power of the State over the individual citizen was unlimited. The citizen existed for the commonwealth—not the commonwealth for the citizen ; and against the commonwealth the citizen had no rights.¹⁷

The Christian faith taught mankind that there is an invisible Lawgiver whose authority is more august than the authority of the civil magistrate ; and that whenever the commandments of God come into conflict with the legislation

¹⁶ *A True Confession of the Faith, and Humble Acknowledgment of the Alegeance which we hir Majesties Subjects falsely called Brownists doo hould towards God, and yeild to hir Majestie, etc.*, (1596), § 39.

¹⁷ And to this we should return if the power of religious faith—the great guarantee and defence of the sacredness of the individual man—ceased to control the political life of modern nations.

of earthly States, God must be obeyed, whatever comes of it. The martyrs of primitive ages did not struggle for human rights; they perished in their fidelity to divinely appointed duties. They had no theory on the extent of the function of civil rulers; they had simply an infinite reverence for the law of God and an infinite dread of incurring His condemnation.

But the triumph of the Christian Gospel was really a limitation of the authority of earthly princes. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye:"—with this challenge martyrs and confessors confronted the principalities and powers of this world, and the martyrs and confessors proved mightier than kings.

Thus there gradually grew up side by side with the organisation of the State another organisation which claimed divine authority to govern all those provinces of human life which had been rescued from the dominion of secular princes. It claimed authority to control religious faith and worship; to regulate marriage and the life of the family; to correct moral faults which the rougher hand of secular justice could not attempt to punish. The Church had its supreme ruler; its legislative assemblies; its code of laws enforced by tremendous penalties; and a spiritual magistracy and police far more vigorous and more alert than the magistracy and police of any of the kingdoms of Europe. The spiritual sovereignty of the Bishop of Rome was the corrupt and pernicious form in which for nearly a thousand years the great idea for which the martyrs had died was asserted throughout Western Christendom. It was a declaration that there are limits to the authority of kings. Kings might use their power to defend the Church and to maintain its rights; but all legislation relating to the religious faith and practice of Christian nations belonged to the Church—not to secular rulers. The lines between the province of the Church and the province of the State—though not very firmly drawn—perpetually reminded Christian princes that their authority was not absolute and unlimited. There were regions of human life in which the words of the humblest priest, the child of peasants or of slaves, was more mighty than theirs.

With the overthrow of the Papacy in Protestant countries,

the old boundaries between the civil and the ecclesiastical authority, between the State and the Church, disappeared. The power of the civil magistrate was for a time unchecked, and it looked as if in Protestant Christendom there was to be a restoration of the authority of secular governments over the religious belief and practices of their subjects.

No doubt there were always invisible limits to the ecclesiastical authority of the Crown. Wherever Christian faith was rooted in the heart, men refused to acknowledge that in religious matters the Prince was really supreme. Whitgift might appeal to the example of the Council of Nicæa in support of the monstrous theory that even in the determination of great questions of Christian doctrine the Church had always recognised the authority of Christian sovereigns ; but the bishops who persecuted the Puritans would have gone to the stake rather than deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the infinite preciousness of His atonement, at the bidding of the Queen. They, too, believed that there are provinces of human life in which no voice must be obeyed but the voice of God. But there were innumerable questions, that had hitherto been determined by the Church, which they were willing should be determined by the State—questions relating to the polity of the Church, to church discipline, to worship, to the ceremonies of divine service. There were judicial functions in relation to religious matters, that had hitherto been exercised by ecclesiastical courts, which they were willing to remit to courts created by the Crown.

The Anglicans of Elizabeth's days conceded to the Queen an authority so vague, so enormous, over the religious life of the nation, that if they had not been firmly resisted freedom would have perished. The Puritans and Separatists re-asserted the ancient law of the Christian Church. They maintained that within the sacred kingdom of religious faith and religious worship the greatest prince has no more authority than the humblest of mankind. There, he is but the servant of a loftier throne. Let him use his regal power to maintain divine laws, and it is well ; but whether the laws he maintains are divine or not, is a question which his subjects, at the peril of their souls, must determine for themselves. If they are his own laws, not God's laws, then again the old challenge must be heard—"Whether

it be right to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye."¹⁸

It is sometimes maintained that religious liberty is the child of religious uncertainty and doubt, and that if we were absolutely sure of religious truth, we should all be persecutors. But religious liberty owes very little to religious indifference. It was not a latitudinarian temper that laid the foundations of English freedom, but a passionate zeal for religious truth and a rigid, or—if men please to call it so—a fanatical conception of religious duty. Men resisted the ecclesiastical tyranny of the magistrate because it was their supreme desire to get the will of God done on earth as it is done in heaven.

And it was this which made many that inherited the Puritan tradition persecutors when their own turn came. They endeavoured to enforce on others the divine authority which filled their own hearts with awe and dread. When they resisted ecclesiastical authority they were not thinking of human rights, but of the necessity of doing the divine will ; when they rose to power they did not think of human rights ; they were still thinking that at all costs the divine will must be done. But as time went on the central principle of the Puritans bore its legitimate fruit. Their descendants have learnt that if religious faith and worship are to be regulated by the will of God, the authoritative intervention of the civil power in matters of religion is illegitimate. Puritanism by its assertion of the supreme authority of God contributes to secure, and to make for ever sacred, the inalienable rights of man.

¹⁸ The *True Confession*, referred to above, states the principle thus: "That therefore the protection and commandment of the Prince and Magistrates *maketh it much more peaceable, though no whit more lawful*, to walk in the way of Jesus Christ, which he hath commanded his Church to keep . . . until his appearing in the end of the world" (§ 40). "That if God withhold the Magistrates' allowance and furtherance herein, they yet proceed together in Christian covenant and communion thus to walk in the obedience of Christ, even through the midst of all trials and afflictions, . . . remembering always that we ought to obey God rather than man, and grounding upon the commandment, commission, and promise of our Saviour Christ . . . which he hath given without limitation of time, place, magistrates' allowance or disallowance, to be with them unto the end of the world. . . ." (§ 42).



BOOK III

*ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM FROM THE
DEATH OF ELIZABETH TO THE RESTORA-
TION*

1603—1660



CHAPTER I

APPARENT DEFEAT OF PURITANISM

ACCESSION OF JAMES—THE MILLENARY PETITION—PROCLAMATION AGAINST PETITIONS—"SUPPLICATION" OF THE EXILES IN HOLLAND AND THEIR BRETHREN IN ENGLAND—THEIR STATEMENT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL POSITION—RECEPTION OF THE "SUPPLICATION"—CONFERENCE OF PURITANS AND ANGLICANS AT HAMPTON COURT—THE KING'S BEHAVIOUR—RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE—BANCROFT APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP—PROTEST OF PARLIAMENT AGAINST UNDUE RIGOUR—CANONS OF 1604 CREATE NEW OFFENCES—POWER OF THE CROWN TO REGULATE THE CLERGY CONFIRMED BY THE JUDGES—PURITANS AND SEPARATISTS DRIVEN ABROAD BY INCREASED SEVERITY—VIGOUR OF PURITANISM ABATING—CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH.

ELIZABETH died on March 24, 1602-3, and James was at once proclaimed as her successor. Whitgift sent the Dean of Canterbury as soon as the Queen was dead to assure him of the loyal support of the bishops and to implore his favour for the Church.

I

On his way to London in April, the Puritans met him with what was called the *Millenary Petition*. The promoters—as shown by the text of the petition—intended to get it signed by a thousand ministers; but they were probably obliged to present it before they had completed their canvass; there were about eight hundred signatures, which were obtained from twenty-five counties.¹ Nothing could have been more moderate than the requests of the petitioners. They asked for the relaxation of the laws enforcing those

¹ The number of signatories is given by Fuller, v. 265, as 750, on the authority of Samuel Clarke's *Life of Hildersham* (at the end of his *General Martyrologie* [1651], 377). Neal, ii. 4-6, says "not more than 800."

ceremonies to which the least violent of the Puritans had always objected. They asked that more care might be taken to prevent the entrance of men into the ministry who had neither learning nor piety, and who could not preach. They prayed the King not to suffer Popish doctrines to be taught in the pulpits of a Protestant Church. They suggested some reforms in the ecclesiastical courts, and a more equitable and efficient administration of the revenues of the Church. They declared explicitly that they were not favourable to what they called "a popular parity in the Church"; by which they meant that they did not ask for the abolition of bishops and the establishment of a Presbyterian polity.² Other memorials poured in upon the King supporting the general prayer of the Millenary Petition; among the rest, one from the justices of the peace of the county of Lancaster, who bore a strong testimony to the worth of the Puritan clergy.

The agitation alarmed the King. In October, 1603, he issued a proclamation in which he said:—

"Hereafter, if any shall either by gathering the subscriptions of multitudes to supplications, . . . by contemptuous behaviour, . . . by open invectives and indecent speeches either in the pulpit or otherwise, or by disobedience to the processes proceeding from their jurisdiction, give us cause to think, that he hath a more unquiet spirit, than becometh any private person to have toward public authority, we will make it appear by their chastisement, how far such a manner of proceeding is displeasing to us. . . . We admonish all men hereby to take warning, as they will answer the contrary at their peril."³

II

The Congregational exiles in Amsterdam sent over a deputation—including probably Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth—praying that they might be allowed to live in peace in their native land without being urged to "the use or approbation of any remnants of popery and human traditions."⁴ They also presented a "Supplication" to James, in which they set out the "heads of differences" between

² For the petition itself, see Fuller, v. 305–309, and Neal, *l.c.*

³ Wilkins iv. 372; and Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 489.

⁴ Dexter, 306, *note* 48.

themselves and the English Establishment. In this "Supplication" they were joined by their brethren who were still enduring "grievous persecution" in England. The document recites in fourteen paragraphs the chief positions for which the early Congregationalists contended. It affirms :

1. That the Church is a divinely constituted Society, and that the will of its Founder determines its polity. In opposition to Whitgift and others who maintained that Christ has given to the Church no definite constitution, and that, therefore, the civil magistrate or the Church itself may vary the organisation of the Church at pleasure, the petitioners assert—

"That Christ the Lord hath by his last Testament given to his Church, and set therein, sufficient ordinary Offices, with the manner of calling or Entrance, Works, and Maintenance, for the administration of his holy things, and for the sufficient ordinary instruction guidance and service of his Church, to the end of the world."

2. That every separate society or congregation is absolutely independent and possesses all the powers which Christ has conferred on His Church.

3. That the Christian Church should consist only of Christians "joined together by voluntary profession of the faith of Christ in the fellowship of the Gospel."

4. "That discreet, faithful, and able men (though not yet in office of ministry) may be appointed to preach the Gospel"; and their converts may organise themselves into Churches without the intervention or aid of Bishop or Presbyter. Churches may be founded by laymen.

5. That a Christian Society so organised has power to appoint its own officers—"Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons, and Helpers."

6. That Christian ministers should not—as ministers—hold civil offices, nor be burdened with the execution of civil affairs, "as the celebration of marriage, burying the dead, which things belong as well to those without as within the Church."

7. That the ministers of the Church should be supported by the free contributions of their people :—

"That the due maintenance of the Officers aforesaid, should be of the free and voluntary contribution of the Church, that

according to Christ's ordinance, they which preach the Gospel may live of the Gospel : and not by Popish Lordships and Livings, or Jewish tithes and Offerings. And that, therefore, the Lands and other like revenues of the Prelates and Clergy yet remaining (being still also baits to allure the Jesuits and Seminaries⁶ into the Land, and incitements unto them to plot and prosecute their wonted evil courses, in hope to enjoy them in time to come) may now by your Highness be taken away, and converted to better use, as those of the Abbeyes and Nunneries have been heretofore by your Majesty's worthy predecessors, to the honour of God and great good of the Realm."

8. That no Church should be so large that its members cannot meet together for worship and discipline. The power of discipline lies in the Christian people as well as in the church officers.

9. That the Church should not be governed by Popish Canons or by any "human inventions," but by the laws of Christ recorded in the New Testament. Apocryphal Scriptures should not be used in the Church. And the Lord should—

"be worshipped and called upon in spirit and truth, according to that form of prayer given by the Lord Jesus, Matt vi., and after the Liturgy of his own Testament, not by any other framed or imposed by men, much less by one translated from the Popish Liturgy, as the Book of Common Prayer, etc."

10. "That the sacraments, being seals of God's Covenant, ought to be administered only to the faithful, and Baptism to their seed or those under their government." Both Sacraments should be separated from "Popish" and "other abuse."

11. That all Holy Days except the Lord's Day should be abolished. No ceremonies not imposed in Holy Scripture should be imposed by human authority. What God has left free, none ought to bind.

12. That all monuments of idolatry such as Popish vestments, "all Temples, Altars, Chapels, and other places dedicated heretofore by the Heathens or Antichristians to their false worship, ought by lawful authority to be rased and abolished."

13. That Popish degrees in Theology, compulsory celibacy in Colleges, "abuse of the study of profane heathen writers,"

⁶ The "Seminary" priests.

and other like corruptions in Schools and Academies should be discontinued.

14. "Finally, that all Churches and people (without exception) are bound in Religion only to receive and submit unto that Constitution, Ministry, Worship and Order, which Christ as Lord and King hath appointed unto His Church : and not to any other devised by Man whatsoever." ⁶

The men who submitted to James this bold scheme could have had no hope that he would accept it. For some weeks their "Supplication" received no answer, and then "an honourable personage" suggested that they should state as briefly as possible what they wanted, and offered to place their requests before the King. They replied, (1) That they wished to be allowed to live in England, as the French and Dutch Churches were allowed to live there, organising their Churches, and worshipping God according to their own conception of the will of Christ. (2) That they were loyal subjects, and were content to leave to his Majesty the redress of the abuses of which they had complained. (3) That they were willing to discuss, either in writing or in a Conference, with any persons that his Majesty might appoint, the fourteen propositions in which they had declared their differences from the English Church.⁷ What answer James gave to this appeal is unknown.

III

In the Millenary Petition the moderate Puritans had declared their readiness to explain their wishes more fully, either by writing or "by conference among the learned." The King determined to comply with this suggestion, and in the Proclamation which discouraged petitioning ⁸ he announced his intention of calling an Assembly to consider whether there was anything in the settlement of the Church which "might deserve a review and amendment."

This was quite in James's manner ; and it was in harmony with the constitution and traditions of the Establishment.

⁶ Contained in *An Apologie or Defence of such True Christians as are commonly (but unjustly) called Brownists . . .* (1604), 36-38. The fourteen propositions are argued in detail, with evidence from Scripture, 41-81.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁸ See above, p. 178.

He did not remit the question in dispute either to Convocation or to Parliament. He himself was Supreme Governor of the Church ; and though he declared that if when the Conference is held it should appear that any changes are necessary, he would proceed to reformation "according to the laws and customs of this realm by advice of his Council, or in his High Court of Parliament, or by the Convocation of his Clergy"—Convocation being placed last,—it was his own prerogative and duty to consider whether there was any reason for change at all; and he adds, "Upon which his princely care his pleasure was, that all his subjects should repose themselves, and leave to his conscience that which to him only appertained."⁹

The Conference met at Hampton Court in January, 1603-4. On the side of the Prelatists were the Archbishop of Canterbury, eight bishops, six deans, and two eminent divines.¹⁰ On the side of the Puritans Dr. John Reynolds and Dr. Thomas Sparkes of Oxford, Mr. Chaderton and Mr. Knewstubs of Cambridge.

The points raised by the Puritans were very much the same as those that were urged in the Millenary Petition ; but they also proposed that the clergy of every rural deanery should be permitted to meet once every three weeks, and that at these meetings there should be "prophesyings"; that questions which could not be determined at these smaller meetings should be referred to the clergy assembled at the archdeacon's visitation ; and that from this larger conference there should be an appeal to an episcopal synod consisting of the bishop and his presbytery. It was in answer to this proposition that the King declared that Dr. Reynolds and his colleagues were aiming at a Scotch presbytery, which, he said, agreed as well with monarchy as God with the devil. When the Puritans said that they acknowledged the King's

⁹ See Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 488-489.

¹⁰ For details, see *The Summe and Substance of the Conference . . . at Hampton Court, January 14, 1603-4. Contracted by William Barlow, Doctor of Divinity and Dean of Chester*: reprinted in Cardwell, *Conferences*, 167-212.

Strype (*Whitgift*, ii. 492-493) agrees with Barlow as to the number of those present at the conference, but arranges the names under different heads. In addition to the representatives of the two parties, Patrick Galloway, minister of Perth, was also present during part of the proceedings, as is shown by his letter given in Cardwell, *l.c.*, 212-217.

supremacy, he turned to the bishops and said, "If once *you* were out and they in place, I know what would become of my supremacy. No bishop, no King!"

There is no account of the proceedings from a Puritan hand. From the report written by Dr. Barlow, Dean of Chester,¹¹ it is apparent that the Puritans were often rudely interrupted by their opponents; that James, instead of maintaining the dignity and impartiality which might have been expected from a King presiding in such an assembly, treated the Puritan theologians coarsely and violently; and that his vanity led him to deliver long dissertations in reply to their objections.¹²

The bishops listened to him with ecstasy, and spoke of his speeches with profane adulation. After a defence by the King of the atrocious oath *ex officio*, Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said that undoubtedly his Majesty spoke by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost. Bancroft, Bishop of London, fell upon his knees and protested that his heart melted within him for joy, and he acknowledged to Almighty God the singular mercy they had received at His hands in His giving them such a King as, since Christ's time, he thought had never been.¹³ In Scotland the ministers had sometimes spoken to James with a brutal roughness: one had told him that all kings were the devil's bairns. To see a bishop in lawn sleeves kneeling on the floor and declaring that there had been no such king since Christ's days, and to hear the assurance of an archbishop that he had spoken with the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, made him feel that at last he had the power as well as the name of a king, and must have convinced him that episcopacy had the most sacred claims to his protection and support.

¹¹ To those who complained of the partiality of this report by a professed adversary, Fuller (v. 304) replies: "When the Israelites go down to the Philistines to whet all their iron tools, no wonder if they set a sharp edge on their own, and a blunt one on their enemies' weapons." For an account of the proceedings, see Fuller, v. 267-303; and Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 491-502, iii. 402-407; and, for the King's version, the extract from his letter to Blake, in note 12.

¹² "We have kept such a revel with the Puritans here this two days, as was never heard the like: where I have peppered them as soundly as you have done the Papists there." King James to Blake, "some person unknown" in Scotland, in Strype, *Whitgift*, iii. 408.

¹³ Fuller, v. 299-300.

The alterations which, as the result of this Conference, were made in the Book of Common Prayer for the satisfaction of Puritan scruples were insignificant and touched none of the serious obstacles to conformity. These alterations were not submitted either to Parliament or to Convocation. They were made by the King on his own authority.

“The King required his metropolitan and others of his commissioners for causes ecclesiastical to make declaration of the changes agreed upon, and then issued his letters patent to ratify their act, to provide for the publication of the liturgy in its new condition, and to enjoin the exclusive use of it in every parish of the two provinces. He probably thought it hazardous to refer considerations of so delicate a nature to any large assembly, whether of laymen or of clergy. He certainly believed that he possessed ample authority¹⁴ under the broad shield of his prerogative, and those two important statutes of Queen Elizabeth, which annexed the spiritual supremacy for ever to the crown, and made the use of the public liturgy binding upon his subjects. In describing the changes he had made as matters merely of exposition and explanation, he sought to shelter them under the clause introduced, at the desire of Queen Elizabeth, into the Act of Uniformity, which empowered him ‘by the advice of his commissioners or the metropolitan, to ordain and publish such further ceremonies as may be most for the advancement of God’s glory, the edifying of his Church, and the due reverence of Christ’s holy mysteries and sacraments.’ ”¹⁵

By the same authority the questions and answers about the Sacraments were added to the Catechism; a prayer for the royal family, and thanksgivings for rain, for fair weather, for plenty, for peace and victory, and for deliverance from the plague were added to the Prayer-Book. The most important result of the Hampton Court Conference was the preparation of the Authorised Version of the Old and New Testaments.

IV

A few weeks after the close of the Conference at Hampton Court, the Puritans were dismayed by the appointment of Bancroft as successor to Whitgift in the Archbishopric of Canterbury. For many years he had been their fiercest and most vigilant enemy. Under Whitgift he had given direction

¹⁴ The Convocation of the same year recognised his alterations and the authority by which he made them in the 80th Canon.

¹⁵ Cardwell, *Conferences*, 143.

to the lawyers who prosecuted them before the Star Chamber. He had detected their secret attempts to establish something like a Presbyterian discipline. It was he who had done more than any one else to hunt down John Penry and to bring him to the scaffold. He was hot, eager, keen, vigorous, and resolute, with theories in his head about the divine authority of episcopacy which were destined to bear fatal fruit in England before the seventeenth century had half run out.

It was clear that from James Puritanism would receive no favour. In his speech to his first Parliament he described the Puritans as "a sect rather than a religion—ever discontented with the present government and impatient to suffer any superiority, *which maketh their sect unable to be suffered in any well-governed commonwealth.*"¹⁶

Greatly to the annoyance of James, Parliament attempted to shelter the sect which he thought insufferable. Committees of both Houses were appointed to confer on the subject of religion. The Committee appointed by the Commons frankly took the Puritan side. They especially regret—

"the Pressing the Use of certain Rites and Ceremonies in this Church; as the Cross in Baptism, and the Wearing of the Surplice in ordinary Parish Churches, and the Subscription required of the Ministers, further than is commanded by the Laws of the Realm;¹⁷ Things which, by long Experience, have been found to be the Occasions of such Difference, Trouble, and Contention, in this Church, as thereby divers profitable and painful Ministers, not in Contempt of Authority, or Desire of Novelty, as they sincerely profess and we are verily persuaded, but, upon Conscience towards God, refusing the same, some of good Desert have been deprived, others of good Expectation withheld from entering into the Ministry, and Way given to the ignorant and unable Men, to the great prejudice of the free Course and fruitful Success of the Gospel, to the dangerous Advantage of the common Adversaries of true Religion, and to the great Grief and Discomfort of many of your Majesty's most faithful and loyal Subjects."¹⁸

¹⁶ C. J. (March 19, 1603-4), i. 144. Stow's *Annals*, 840.

¹⁷ It was one of the main contentions of the Puritans that Parliament (13 Eliz. cap. 12) had limited the subscription which was to be required of the clergy to those articles which "concern the confession of the true Christian faith and the doctrine of the Sacraments." This subscription was not against their consciences, and they asserted that for the bishops to ask for more was illegal. The Committee of the House of Commons sustained them in this position. For a discussion of the general question, see Archdeacon Hardwick, *History of the Articles* (1851), 226-229.

¹⁸ C. J. (June 13, 1604), i. 238.

But this protest produced no effect. During the seven years that Bancroft was Archbishop of Canterbury, Puritanism was repressed with merciless severity. The Convocation of the Province of Canterbury (1604) adopted a set of "Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical," in which the stringency of subscription was increased and new penalties were inflicted on Nonconformity and Schism.¹⁹ To affirm that the Church as by law established is not a true and apostolic Church, or that there is anything repugnant to the Word of God in the form of worship contained in the Book of Common Prayer, or in the forms for the administration of the Sacraments, or in the forms for making bishops, priests, and deacons, or in the rites and ceremonies of the Church, or in the government of the Church by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and the rest, is made an offence punishable by excommunication. All persons separating themselves from the communion of the English Church and forming new religious societies are to be excommunicated; all persons maintaining that such "meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the King's born subjects" are true and lawful Churches, are also to be excommunicated. To affirm that the "Sacred Synod of this nation, in the name of Christ and by the King's authority assembled, is not the true Church of England by representation"; and to affirm that no person, whether clergy or laity, "not being themselves particularly assembled in the said sacred Synod, are to be subject to the decrees thereof in causes ecclesiastical, made and ratified by the King's Majesty's supreme authority, as not having given their voices unto them," are likewise offences punishable by excommunication. And excommunication involved not only exclusion from the communion of the Church, but severe civil disabilities. The excommunicated person "could not serve on juries, could not be a witness in any court, and, what was worst of all, could not bring an action, either real or personal, to recover lands or money due to him."²⁰

¹⁹ Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 380-405. There are 141 separate propositions or enactments.

²⁰ Stephen, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, iv. 14-15. But the law, as Stephen points out, has been materially altered by a later act, 53 George III., cap. 127, which provides (section 3) that "no person who shall be . . . pronounced or declared excommunicate shall incur any civil penalty or incapacity whatever, in consequence of

The Puritans and their friends in the House of Commons maintained that the Canons could not have the force of law without an Act of Parliament; but the King summoned the judges, the law officers, and some of the peers, to meet him in the Star Chamber, and obtained from them the opinion that "the King without Parliament might make Orders and Constitutions for the Government of the Clergy, and might deprive them if they obeyed not"; this authority, in their judgment, was included in the King's "supreme ecclesiastical power." All the judges also committed themselves to the amazing opinion, that persons "who framed Petitions and collected a multitude of hands thereto, to prefer to the King in a public cause, as the Puritans had done, with an intimation to the King, That if he denied their suit, many thousands of his subjects would be discontented," committed an offence "finable at discretion, and very near to Treason and Felony in the punishment."²¹

"By these determinations," says the historian of the Puritans, "the whole body of the clergy are excluded the benefit of the common and statute law; for the king *without parliament* may make what constitutions he pleases; his Majesty's high commissioners may proceed upon these *constitutions ex officio*; and the subject may not open his complaints to the king, or petition for relief, without being fineable at pleasure, and coming within danger of treason or felony."²²

Armed with these opinions of the judges and the authority of the King, Bancroft exerted extraordinary energy to crush the Puritans. Three hundred of the clergy, "brethren of the second separation," were silenced or deprived of their livings. Large numbers of the clergy of London deserted their parishes and remained in hiding to avoid a second subscription. The Separatists shared the sufferings of the Puritan clergy. The few members of the secret Church in London who had not

such excommunication, save such imprisonment, not exceeding six months, as the court pronouncing or declaring such person excommunicate shall direct." The same section of the Act also provides that the excommunication and term of imprisonment shall be certified to the Crown in Chancery *before* the writ *de excommunicato capiendo* issues. Cf. Phillimore, *Ecclesiastical Law*, ii. 1099-1101.

²¹ Croke's Reports, Part 2, 2 Jac. I. 37-38 (Grimston's translation: 1658).

²² Neal, ii. 37.

passed over to Amsterdam appear to have maintained for a time meetings for communion and worship ; but though their organisation was probably not dissolved, they were so harassed by the ecclesiastical authorities that their strength was broken. Many of the moderate Puritans—learned ministers and devout laymen—left England and joined the English congregations, formed on Presbyterian principles and consisting of English traders, which had been for some years established in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and other cities in the Low Countries. A strong body of Congregationalists under the leadership of John Smyth, of Gainsborough, and John Robinson, of Scrooby, settled in Amsterdam. Of these, the larger number soon removed to Leyden. But the story of these exiles must be told in a later chapter.

V

It is evident, both from the timid proposals of the Millenary Petition and from the proceedings of the Conference at Hampton Court, that when James came to the throne Puritanism had lost its fire, and that the vigour and audacity which distinguished it twenty years before had disappeared. Cartwright, who died a fortnight before the Conference, had lived very quietly for some years at Warwick. He had received a licence to preach, on promising “not to meddle with controversy, but incline his hearers to piety and moderation ; and this promise he kept to the day of his death.”²³ Most of the other Puritan leaders had grown old and cautious, and the rank-and-file of the party had very little more of passion and boldness than their chiefs.

²³ The facts are far from clear. When Cartwright first settled at Warwick, Burleigh, then Lord Treasurer, and the Earl of Leicester could not obtain a licence for him, though “his peace was obtained from the Archbishop.” He promised Leicester “to take no other courses (at the hospital) but to draw all men to the unity of the Church” (Strype, *Whitgift*, i. 429). The licence was still refused (*ibid.*, 430) ; and he preached without one, “being exempt from the jurisdiction of the prelates” (Brook, ii. 247). This brought him into trouble, for he was arrested, and put upon his trial. After his release, he returned to Warwick, having given the Archbishop the pledge referred to in the text. See also Brook, *Cartwright*, 431, Walton, *Hooker*, 85–86, and Fuller, v. 252–254.

Two causes account for this decline of Puritan enthusiasm.

(1) For at least ten years before the death of Elizabeth the moderate party ceased to fight for their faith. They hoped that with the accession of her successor, who had been bred up among Presbyterians, their time of trouble would be over. They supposed that they had only to wait quietly and all their reasonable demands would be conceded. But people that cease to fight for their faith will soon cease to care for it.

(2) The vehemence with which Browne, Barrowe, and Greenwood had lashed the moderate Puritans for their unfaithfulness to their own principles, compelled them, in self-defence, to insist with a great deal of earnestness on their demands for the abolition of the more offensive ceremonies and the redress of the more flagrant ecclesiastical abuses. When Browne conformed, when Barrowe and Greenwood had been hanged, when the other Separatist leaders had been driven out of the kingdom, the moderate Puritans were no longer stung to activity by the keenness and fierceness of Separatist criticism, and their zeal rapidly cooled.

While moderate Puritanism was declining in courage and force, a new and formidable ecclesiastical party was gradually rising to ascendancy in the English Church. Elizabeth's first bishops cared very little for Episcopacy. Whitgift himself did not contend that it was the only legitimate form of church polity. But in 1588 Bancroft maintained in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross that the bishops were by divine right a separate order from the presbyters. That opinion and the public announcement of it provoked great resentment; ²⁴ but it did not die out. During the fifteen years which followed the destruction of the Armada, large numbers of Englishmen who had clung to Rome until a Catholic prince, blessed by the Pope, attempted the invasion of their country, broke with the old faith and came over to the Anglican Church. They brought with them their Catholic temperament and their Catholic traditions. They began to attribute to the English clergy the sacerdotal attributes of the Romish priests. They clung with devout and reverential affection to the rites, the ceremonies, and the vestments, preserved in the Anglican

²⁴ See Strype, *Whitgift*, i. 559, foll. ; and *Annals*, iii. (2), 100-102, 601-602.

worship, which recalled the communion from which they had separated. To them, the table of the Lord was an altar, and they acknowledged with awe and dread the real presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine. The "Catholic Revival" had begun, and the English Establishment, instead of drawing nearer to the great Protestant Churches of Germany, Geneva, and France, seemed to be drawing nearer to Rome.

CHAPTER II

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

PURITANISM AT SCROOBY—CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AT GAINSBOROUGH—JOHN SMYTH—JOHN ROBINSON—WILLIAM BREWSTER—CHURCH AT SCROOBY—REMOVAL TO HOLLAND—CHURCHES OF THE EXILES AT AMSTERDAM: TROUBLES AND FEUDS—SMYTH ON CHURCH OFFICERS AND SERVICE—DIVERGENT THEORIES OF THE POWERS OF THE ELDERSHIP—A THIRD CHURCH ESTABLISHED AT AMSTERDAM—EXILES AT LEYDEN—REASONS FOR LEAVING HOLLAND AND SETTLING IN AMERICA—THE PILGRIMS SAIL IN THE “MAYFLOWER”—THEY REACH PLYMOUTH—ROBINSON’S WORK AND CHARACTER.

WHEN James I. came to the English throne, the attempt to restore the Congregational polity seemed to have ended in hopeless defeat; and the fortunes of those great principles for which Barrowe and Greenwood had suffered martyrdom appeared to depend on the fidelity of the exiles in Amsterdam. But in 1602 Congregationalism had reappeared in a district in the north of England on the borders of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire.

For some years before the death of Elizabeth, several of the parishes lying round the village of Scrooby in Nottinghamshire had been occupied by Puritan incumbents and lecturers. Six or seven miles to the south of Scrooby, and just outside the town of Retford, is Bolworth, a large parish with a scattered population. Of this parish Richard Clyfton had been rector since 1585: he is described by Bradford as “a grave and reverend preacher, who by his fervour and diligence had done much good, and under God had been the means of the conversion of many.”¹

Richard Bernard, another Puritan clergyman of great fervour and zeal, who for a time appears to have had thoughts

¹ In Joseph Hunter, *Collections concerning the Founders of New Plymouth* (second edition, 1854), 40; and for the biographical details in this and following paragraphs, *ibid.*, 32 foll.

of becoming a Separatist, was rector of Worksop, which lies ten or twelve miles to the south-west. Robert Gifford, who was "hotly persecuted by the prelates," was incumbent of Laughten-en-le-Morthen, a parish adjoining Worksop. Thomas Toller, who is described as "one of the most zealous Puritans of this time," and who afterwards became vicar of Sheffield, had, a few years before, been a preacher or lecturer in the neighbourhood of Scrooby. When Elizabeth died, the whole district seems to have been leavened with Puritanism.

Bradford—afterwards Governor of New Plymouth—whose house was at Austerfield, a hamlet three miles north of Scrooby, describes the effect of Puritan earnestness :—

"When as by the travail and diligence of some godly and zealous preachers, and God's blessing on their labours . . . many became enlightened by the word of God . . . and began by his grace to reform their lives, and make conscience of their ways, the work of God was no sooner manifest in them, but presently they were both scoffed and scorned by the profane multitude, and the ministers urged with the yoke of subscription, or else must be silenced; and the poor people were so urged with apparitors, and pursuivants, and the Commissarie Courts, as truly their affliction was not small. Which, notwithstanding, they bore sundry years with much patience, until they were occasioned (by the continuance and increase of these troubles, and other means which the Lord raised up in those days) to see further into things by the light of the word of God. *How not only those base and beggarly ceremonies were unlawful, but also that the lordly and tyrannous power of the prelates ought not to be submitted unto*, which thus, contrary to the freedom of the Gospel, would load and burden men's consciences, and by their compulsive power make a profane mixture of persons and things in the worship of God. And that their offices and callings, courts and canons, etc., were unlawful and antichristian, being such as have no warrant in the word of God, but the same that were used in Popery and still retained. . . . So many therefore of these professors as saw the evil of these things, in these parts, and whose hearts the Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for his truth, they shook off this yoke of antichristian bondage, and, as the Lord's free people, joined themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in the fellowship of the Gospel, to walk in all his ways, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them."²

² Governor Bradford, *History of Plimouth Plantation* (Boston, 1900), 11-13; also in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of Plymouth*, 19-21; and in Hunter, *Collections concerning the Founders of New Plymouth*, 29-30.

This, then, was the origin of the new attempt to establish a Congregational Church in England. Devout men and women, whose hearts were moved by Puritan preaching, were mocked at by their neighbours, and their ministers pressed by the bishops to conform to church laws which they and their people believed to be contrary to the spirit of the Christian faith. The people as well as the ministers were harassed for refusing to conform to the ceremonies of the Queen's Church. They were driven to the conclusion that the authority which persecuted them was an encroachment on the sovereignty of Christ, and resolved to associate themselves in a spiritual society which should consist only of those who were loyal to Christ and in which the will of Christ should be supreme.

They determined that the ordinary meetings of the Church should be held at Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. For what reason they formed this decision is not apparent—as Gainsborough lies at a considerable distance from the centre of the district over which the homes of the church members were scattered. It is possible that Gainsborough was made the home of the Church because John Smyth, who appears to have been the leader of the movement, was already settled in that town. Whether he was connected with Gainsborough by birth is uncertain.

He was a Cambridge man, like most of the early ministers of the Congregationalists, and entered Christ's College in 1571; in 1579 he was elected Fellow. For a time he appears to have had Francis Johnson for his tutor, and from him he may have received the impulse which made him, first, a Puritan and, afterwards, a Congregationalist. On leaving the university he held a lectureship in Lincoln, and he is described as "preacher to the city." But after a time he began to doubt whether it was lawful to remain in the English Church. He went to Coventry and discussed the question with some eminent Puritan ministers in the house of Sir William Bowes; but his scruples were not removed. In 1592 he was in London, and he was imprisoned for acts of nonconformity.³ How long he had been living at Gainsborough before the formation of the

³ This is the ordinary tradition: Brook, ii. 195, and Neal, i. 430. But Dexter, 312, *note* 72, asserts that this is a mistake, and that the passage quoted in support (Strype, *Annals*, iv. 188) refers to W. Smith, another man.

Congregational Church of which he was elected pastor, is unknown. The Church consisted chiefly of small farmers and labouring people ; but among them were a few persons of liberal education and of a high social position.

In 1604—two years after its formation—it received a great accession of strength. John Robinson had gone up to Cambridge and entered Corpus Christi College in 1592. He became Fellow of his college in 1599. For four years after taking his Fellowship he appears to have been a lecturer or curate in Norwich or its neighbourhood. In 1603 or 1604 he was suspended for his disregard of the obligation of conformity, and then united himself to the Church at Gainsborough.

“ It must have been an impressive scene when at Gainsborough this new comer presented himself to the company which, now for some two years or more, had been testing successfully the ancient promise : ‘ The righteous will hold his way, and he whose hands are pure shall increase his strength.’ They had covenanted together ‘ to walk in all His ways, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them.’ John Smyth would preside. There probably would be Helwys and Murton, and Hugo and Ann Bromhead, and ‘ grave and fatherly ’ Richard Clyfton ; and the Scrooby converts, Richard Jackson and Robert Rochester. . . . Francis Jessop would be there leading his young wife Frances, and William Brewster (now 37 or 38), with the manly young Bradford, coming some twelve miles over from the manor-house (at Scrooby) and from Austerfield, and perhaps George Morton—to be by his own pen, and that of his eldest son, inseparably identified with the earliest historic literature of this Western World.”⁴

William Brewster, who was the elder of the Church, had been educated at one of the universities—probably at Cam-

⁴ Dexter, 377–378. Helwys and Murton after an exile of some years returned to England and founded in *Newgate* the first General (Arminian) Baptist Church in this country. Hugo Bromhead belonged to a good family in the neighbourhood of Scrooby ; he had taken orders in the English Church, but had become a Separatist ; he and his wife went with Smyth to Amsterdam. Richard Jackson and Robert Rochester belonged to Scrooby. Brewster and these two men were visited with penalties by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1608. Jessop was from Worksop, where he married Frances White, January, 1604–5 ; they too went with Smyth to Amsterdam. Bradford went to Leyden with Robinson, and was one of the Pilgrim Fathers ; he became Governor of New Plymouth. George Morton and Nathaniel Morton, his son, wrote the early chronicles of New England.

bridge. He became private secretary to Davison, one of the most eminent of the statesmen that served Elizabeth. Davison "esteemed him rather as a son than a servant, and for his wisdom and godliness, in private, he would converse with him more like a familiar than a master."⁵

After Davison's fall, Brewster remained with him for a time, and then went to live at Scrooby, which at that time was a post-town on the great north road, and is now a pleasant village with about five hundred inhabitants. Brewster was postmaster—an office of honour and profit. He lived in the manor-house, which belonged to the Archbishop of York; Wolsey had retired there for a time when he lost the favour of the King. Sandys, who was Archbishop of York in the later years of Elizabeth, leased it to his son, Sir Samuel, and it was under Sir Samuel that Brewster occupied it. Sir Edwin Sandys, a brother of Sir Samuel's, was a friend of Brewster's, and had probably known him while he was in Davison's service; Brewster may have obtained his appointment as postmaster through Sir Edwin's kindly offices.⁶ Of his life at Scrooby Bradford says:—

"He lived . . . in good esteem among his friends, and the good gentlemen of those parts, especially the godly and religious. He did much good in the country where he lived, in promoting and furthering religion; and not only by his practice and example, and provoking and encouraging of others, but *by procuring of good preachers to all places thereabouts, and drawing on of others to assist and help forward in such a work; he himself most commonly deepest in the charge, and sometimes above his ability.*"⁷

It was, therefore, largely through the influence of William

⁵ Governor Bradford's *Memoir* in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of Plymouth*, 463. Quoted by Hunter, *Collections concerning the Founders of New Plymouth*, 55; and for the family in general, *ibid.*, 53-89.

⁶ The statement in the text is made on the authority of Dr. Leonard Bacon (*Genesis of the New England Churches*, 304). Dexter describes Brewster as "agent of the Archbishop of York," 376. The relationships, as stated above, are doubtful. Strype, *Annals*, iii. (2), 65, gives the names of all the Archbishop's children: there is no Miles among them. Samuel Sandys had a son Edwin, and a cousin Edwin. The cousin was son of Miles Sandys, clerk of the Crown to Queen Elizabeth, and died in 1601.

⁷ Governor Bradford's *Memoir* in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 464-465.

Brewster that the district lying round Scrooby had been filled with Puritanism.

In the course of three or four years it was found inconvenient and dangerous to hold the meetings of the Church at Gainsborough. Most of the members lived at great distances from the town. It was difficult to conceal their journeyings from their enemies. They were in constant peril of falling into the hands of the officers of the ecclesiastical courts. It was, therefore, resolved that those who lived in the neighbourhood of Scrooby should be formed into a separate Church, with Richard Clyfton for pastor, the former rector of the neighbouring parish of Bolworth, John Robinson for leader, and William Brewster for elder. The Church usually met in the chapel of the manor-house. This separation probably took place in 1605 or early in 1606.

Later in 1606, the members who remained in fellowship with the Gainsborough Church, weary of persecution, determined to leave England. They crossed to Holland and settled in Amsterdam. Their brethren at Scrooby did not remain long behind them. They, too, became weary of the tyranny of the bishops. "Some were taken and clapt up in prison; others had their houses besett and watcht night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to fly and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood."⁸ But they made their escape from England with great difficulty. Some of them reached Amsterdam in 1607; the rest in 1608.

III

Smyth and the members of the Gainsborough Church united themselves with the Church of the exiles already settled in Amsterdam. When Robinson and Brewster, with the members of the Scrooby Church, reached the city, they thought it expedient to go on to Leyden.

The Church at Amsterdam had been agitated by violent controversies, and was not yet at peace. The early Congrega-

⁸ Governor Bradford, *History of Plimouth Plantation* (Boston, 1900), 14; and in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 23.

tionalists were intensely conscious that the members of a Christian Church share a corporate Christian life, and they were intolerant of individualism. Every church member felt that the righteousness of his fellow-members gave strength to his own righteousness, and that their sin brought shame and weakness on himself. If they were fervent, the fires of his own devotion burnt more brightly; if they were cold and careless, his own ardour was in danger of being quenched. In their pamphlets there is frequent reference to the story of Achan; and they had a firm belief in the great truth on which Paul insists, that the members of a Christian Church are one body in Christ, and "whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it."⁹ But the large and generous wisdom in judging of other men, which is one of the mellow fruits of disciplined and cultivated saintliness, was not likely to be common among these enthusiastic and vehement reformers. Every man was likely to impose his own moral ideas upon all his brethren, and to insist that if in any details of character and conduct they varied from the law which his own conscience approved, they were disloyal to Christ. The ethical sagacity of the essays written by John Robinson towards the close of his life at Leyden was far beyond the reach of most of the men who had been forced into incessant conflict with the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and who resented the hard usage which was the penalty of their fidelity to Christ.

Church discipline was, therefore, certain to be too inquisitorial. It was certain to interfere unnecessarily, unwisely, and sometimes most unjustly and harshly, with individual freedom. It was certain to disregard those varieties of temperament, and those varieties of social traditions and customs, which vary the application of the unchanging ethical laws of Christ. The danger was enormously increased by the frequency with which meetings for discipline were held. The Church of which Richard Fitz was minister in the early part of Elizabeth's reign met for this purpose every week. This custom seems to have been maintained. It led inevitably to serious church quarrels. The Church at Amsterdam was the scene of violent and shameful strife, originating in the intolerable rigour with

⁹ 1 Cor. xii. 26.

which it attempted to control the personal habits of its members.¹⁰

Before he left London, its pastor, Francis Johnson, had married the widow of a wealthy merchant, "a godly woman with a good estate."¹¹ After her second marriage she continued to dress as handsomely as she dressed before, and so provoked the severe disapproval of the members of her husband's congregation. She was guilty of two great crimes—she wore, after the manner of the fine ladies of those days, whalebone in the bodice and sleeves of her gown, and shoes with high cork heels. The Church, or rather some members of it, insisted—among them the father and brother of the pastor—that she should dress more plainly. The quarrel became ludicrous, though its results and the spirit in which it was conducted were most mournful. The lady and her husband were willing to make concessions; they consented to make the objectionable dress as much less fashionable as it could be made without spoiling it altogether. These terms were not accepted by the malcontents, and the strife became so violent that at last the father and the brother of the pastor were expelled from fellowship.

Robinson and Brewster had given up all things and come into a strange land, longing to set up a Church which should be the visible revelation on earth of the invisible kingdom of God, and they found that men who shared their faith and hope had been quarrelling fiercely over the whalebone in a lady's dress and the cork heels of her shoes. This is the common fate of reformers. They dream dreams and see visions; they are inspired with the courage of heroes and the fortitude of martyrs; they rise to mountain heights of spiritual effort and achievement,—and then they discover among their own comrades wilfulness, narrowness, hot passions ungoverned by wisdom and charity; and so the fair ideal for the sake of which sharp sufferings had been endured is degraded and lost in the imperfections of those who had been trusted to fulfil it. The follies and sins of friends are harder to bear than the hatred and cruelty of enemies.

¹⁰ The story is given at length in *A Discourse of some Troubles and Excommunications in the banished English Church at Amsterdam*, by George Johnson, brother of the pastor.

¹¹ "A widow of competent fortune." Brook, ii. 102.

When the Scrooby exiles reached Amsterdam the conflict was over, but bitter memories remained, and the Church was menaced with fresh divisions. John Smyth had discovered that in the principles of church polity which he had taught and practised at Gainsborough, and on which both the Church at Gainsborough and the Church at Amsterdam were founded, there were several grave errors, and that the methods of worship which these Churches had practised were not perfectly spiritual.

He maintained that the "tri-formed presbytery" consisting of pastor, teachers, and rulers [elders] is unlawful and "of man's device"; and that there is no difference between the office of pastor and elder; or, in his own words, "that all the Elders of the Church are Pastors, and that lay Elders [so called] are Antichristian."¹² He also maintained that it is unlawful to permit those who are not in the Church to contribute to its funds. To contribute to the church "treasury" for the maintenance of ministers, the relief of the poor, the purchase of the bread and wine for the Lord's Supper¹³ and other church purposes is a religious act; those who contribute take part in a common religious service; but all religious communion with the unregenerate is unlawful, and therefore the gifts of those who are not in church membership should be refused. In this opinion he had been anticipated by Henry Barrowe.¹⁴

With regard to "the worship of the New Testament, properly so called," he says, "we hold it to be spiritual, proceeding originally out of the heart."¹⁵ "Not everything done in the Church is a part of spiritual worship; for all the parts of public administration of the Kingdom are done in the Church, and yet cannot be said to be parts of spiritual worship properly so called."¹⁶ "When we read—whether the Scriptures or any other book—we receive matter into the heart; when we pray, prophesy, or sing, we utter matter out of the heart into

¹² *The Differences of the Churches of the Separation, Introd. iii.*, and 23-26.

¹³ There is a touching sentence of Smyth's to the effect that when "the charge of bread and wine be very great, as it falleth out in some countries and some years," and the "treasury" is very low, and the poor cannot be adequately relieved, it would be well to save the cost of the bread and wine, and use the money in relieving "the necessities of the saints" (*Ibid.*, 31).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *Introd. iii.*, and 30. See p. 145, *note 20*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, *Introd. iii.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

the ear of the Church.”¹⁷ He therefore maintains that “the reading of a book (though a lawful ecclesiastical action) is no part of spiritual worship, but rather the invention of the man of sin, it being substituted for a part of spiritual worship.” Since prophesying—or preaching—and the singing of psalms, are parts of spiritual worship, it is unlawful both in preaching and singing “to have the book as a help before the eye.”¹⁸ It is unlawful for a preacher to have even the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Holy Scriptures before him *while* he is preaching, for in all true “prophecy” the Holy Spirit suggests to the sanctified memory, the sanctified judgment, the sanctified heart and affections, and the sanctified conscience of the speaker the matter of what he should say to the Church.

To use the English translation as a part of spiritual worship is, if possible, a still more serious violation of the true law of the Church, for the translation is a merely human piece of work: it has been made for us by other men, and it is not free from errors. The translation may be used by those who do not understand Hebrew and Greek; it is “a secondary Scripture, but much inferior to the originals.”¹⁹ It may be read in church, and the Psalms may be sung; it may be expounded in church; it may be the ground of our faith, for the matter of the translation, so far as it is agreeable to the original, is inspired, but not the form; it may be made “an instrument to try doctrine by”; and it may be so used as to prepare the heart for spiritual worship:²⁰ but when the worship begins—whether prayer, singing, or preaching—it must be put aside.²¹ He asks, however, “whether the prophets of the Church may not in time of spiritual worship take the *originals*, and interpret out of them a text, and then shut the book and prophesy from that ground of Holy Scripture so interpreted.”²² That the “prophet” should have to rely for his text on a translation made for him by other men, was wholly inconsistent with Smyth’s theory of the true nature of “prophecy.”²³

¹⁷ *The Differences of the Churches, etc.*, 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 13, 18.

²² *Ibid.*, 7.

²³ At the close of his life Smyth wrote: “For other things, namely the chief matter in controversy, I hold as I did. Yea, which is more, I say that although it be lawful to pray, preach, and sing out of a book for all penitent persons, yet a man regenerate is above all books and scriptures whatsoever, seeing he hath the spirit of God within him, which teacheth him the true meaning of the scriptures,

When Robinson and his friends reached Amsterdam, Smyth was already maintaining these opinions. The controversy resulted in the secession of Smyth and most, if not all, of the Gainsborough people from the Church with which for two or three years they had been united ; and they formed a second Congregational Church in the city.²⁴

Another reason led the Scrooby exiles to conclude that it would be wiser for them not to associate themselves with what Bradford calls the " ancient church " in Amsterdam. Johnson and, with the exception of Ainsworth, all the elders of the Church attributed exorbitant authority to the eldership, and placed severe restrictions on the responsibilities and powers of the commonalty of the Church ; and in this the majority of the Church stood by them. They maintained that when the Church had elected elders, the powers and duties of the private members were exhausted. The elders were the rulers of the Church ; the only function of the private members was to determine what men should be elected to the eldership. " Tell it to the Church " meant " Tell it to the elders."

" A body of simple church members, aggregated without Elders, had no power except to elect Elders. It could not even ordain them. It could not excommunicate an erring and unrepentant member. And in a church fully organised with Elders, should the Eldership fall into the grossest heresy or crime, the congregation had no right to depose or excommunicate them, or any of them. On the other hand, the Elders had the power of excommunicating church members, without, and even against, the consent of the body."²⁵

Johnson contended that in the body of Christ the various " members " have different functions ; that the action of

without the which spirit the scriptures are but a dead letter, which is perverted and misconstrued, as we see at this day, to contrary ends and senses ; and that to bind a regenerate man to a book in praying, preaching, or singing, is to set the Holy Ghost to school in the one as well as in the other." Reprint of a tract in York Minster Library, entitled *The Last Book of John Smith (Smyth)*, etc., in R. Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, iv., in appendix to ch. 6.

²⁴ It has been very commonly supposed that Smyth seceded from the Amsterdam Church because he had come to believe in the unlawfulness of Infant Baptism, but he reached this conclusion *after* the secession. See Dexter, 314, *note* 90.

²⁵ Dexter, 326 ; cf. also 259-261, 281-282.

every member when performing its special office is really the action of the whole body ; that the function of the elders, elected by the Church, is to rule ; and that whatever authority was vested by Christ in the Church as a whole should be exercised by those destined and separated to that office.

He aimed at what has been called an " intra-Congregational Presbyterianism." He insisted that every Church was absolutely independent, and even carried the principle of Independency to extreme lengths, denying that when a Church was in trouble it should either ask for the advice of sister Churches or give any heed to that advice if it was offered without solicitation. But while he asserted Independency he almost suppressed Congregationalism ; for when elders were once chosen, he maintained that the whole power and authority of the Church passed into their hands.

Robinson and his friends, on the other hand, denied that the elders are in any sense the Church ; and he expressly repudiated the theory that since the elders *represent* the Church, the acts of the eldership are the acts of the Church.

"(1) No godly, no, nor reasonable man will affirm, that this representation is to be extended to all the acts of religion, or indeed to others than these which are exercised in the governing of the church. What is it, then ? The elders in ruling and governing the church must represent the people, and occupy their place. It should seem, then, that it appertains unto the people, unto the people primarily and originally under Christ, to rule and govern the church, that is themselves. . . .

"(2) If the elders in their consistory represent the church, then whatsoever they either decree or do, agreeing to the Word of God, whether respecting faith or manners, that also the church decreeth and doth, though absent, though ignorant both what the thing is which is done, and upon what grounds it is done by the elders ; this being the nature of representations, that what the representing doth within the bounds of his commission, that the represented doth primarily, and much more, as but using the other for his instrument. Now how dissonant this is to true faith and piety, how consonant unto the papists' implicit faith, no man can be ignorant ; and I had rather a wise man should consider, than I aggravate." ²⁶

Robinson, therefore, maintained that though the elders

²⁶ *A Just and Necessary Apology*, John Robinson, *Works*, iii. 34 (edited by R. Ashton).

might, in their private meeting, *prepare* church business, the business itself must be transacted by the whole Church.²⁷

At the end of December, 1610, Ainsworth and thirty of his friends who shared Robinson's opinions on the eldership seceded from their brethren, and so established a third Congregational Church in Amsterdam.

IV

The Scrooby exiles did wisely in determining to remove themselves beyond the reach of the exciting and distracting influences which were agitating the Church in Amsterdam, and they found in Leyden a quiet home. Some of them obtained employment in the weaving of baize and serge, which was one of the chief industries of the city. Others worked as hat-makers, twine-spinners, masons, carpenters, cabinet-makers, tailors, brewers, and bakers. Others engaged in commerce, and are described as "merchants"; but their transactions were probably neither very adventurous nor very profitable. Brewster taught English to gentlemen and gentlemen's sons, and seems to have earned a good income. He also established a printing-press, and issued many books which could not have been printed in England.²⁸

In May, 1612, they obtained possession of a considerable piece of land near the cathedral and the university; there was a large house on the site and a garden. They met for worship in the house, and seem to have built twenty-one small houses on the vacant land; these were probably occupied by the members of the Church.

Robinson became a member of the university, by which he secured exemption from the liability of ordinary citizens to have soldiers billeted upon them in case of siege or other need, and to take their turn in the night watch, and to contribute to public works or fortifications.²⁹

²⁷ The Leyden Church, under Robinson, insisted (1) that all elders should be "apt to teach," and (2) that those who were elected to office should be elected for life—not for a year or term of years (*ibid.*, iii. 29). For Robinson's views on the power of elders, see Note A, p. 207.

²⁸ See Dexter, 386-387; and Bradford's *Memoir* in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 466.

²⁹ Dexter, 388. Many other particulars of Robinson's life at Leyden have been discovered or verified by Dr. Dexter, and the results of his investigations are used freely in this chapter.

Like all the early Congregationalists, the pastor of the Leyden Church was a firm Calvinist. On the invitation of some of the Dutch theologians, he engaged in a public disputation with Episcopius, the famous defender of Arminianism, and he was thought by his friends to have won a "famous victory" over his opponent. It was while Robinson was at Leyden that the Synod of Dort was convened by the States-General, at which Arminianism was condemned.³⁰ At this Synod the English Church was represented by some of its most eminent divines. Robinson wrote a *Defence* of its decisions. This, however, was not published till 1624.³¹

The prosperity and peace of the Church of the exiles were unbroken. Robinson its pastor, and Brewster its elder, were men of great vigour and nobleness of character and of remarkable sagacity. One of its deacons, John Carver, had such admirable capacity, and commanded such large confidence among those who knew him, that he was elected the first Governor of the settlement of New Plymouth. Its other deacon, Samuel Fuller, who was a physician and surgeon, was also a man of large intelligence and high integrity. The officers of the Church trusted and honoured the people; the people trusted and honoured the officers. The Church came to number three hundred members.

But after living in Leyden for eight or nine years, they decided that it was desirable to find a new home in what was then vaguely called Virginia. For (1) they were afraid that if they continued much longer in Holland, all the ties that bound them to their mother-country would be dissolved; "that their posterity would in few generations become Dutch, and so lose their interest in the English nation"; and they wished "to enlarge his Majesty's dominions, and to live under their natural prince." (2) They were troubled by the habits of their Dutch neighbours, especially by their carelessness about the "observation of the Lord's Day as a sabbath." (3) Many of their children were impatient of their hard life; some were drawn into bad habits by the temptations which surrounded them; some became soldiers; some went "far voyages at sea," and so missed the gracious influence of godly

³⁰ It met November 13, 1618, and did not dissolve till May 9, 1619.

³¹ *A Defence of the Doctrine propounded by the Synode at Dort: against John Murton and his associates, etc.* Reprinted in *Works*, i. 261-471.

homes. (4) Their countrymen who came over to them found it difficult to earn a fair income; what money they brought with them was soon spent, and they were obliged either to return to England or to "live very meanly." (5) "And (which was not least), a great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world; yea, although they should be but even as stepping-stones unto others for the performing of so great a work."³²

The negotiations with the authorities in England for founding a settlement in Virginia were tedious, perplexing, and difficult, but were at last brought to a close. On July 21, 1620, there was an assembly of the Church in the pastor's house to bid farewell to those who had determined to make the great venture. Nearly all their brethren who were to remain in Leyden went down with them to Delfs-Haven to see them embark. And "So," says Governor Bradford, "they left that goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting-place near twelve years. But they knew they were *Pilgrims*, and looked not much on those things, but lifted up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."³³ The word caught the imagination of their children and their children's children, and the members of the Congregational Church who laid the foundations of the greatness of New England have been called for many generations "The Pilgrim Fathers." On July 22 the colonists went on board the *Speedwell* and sailed for Southampton.

At Southampton they joined the *Mayflower*, and the two vessels sailed on August 15, 1620, with a hundred and twenty passengers. The *Speedwell* was discovered to be unseaworthy, and both ships had to put into Dartmouth for repairs. They sailed again on September 2, and when they had passed the Land's End the *Speedwell* again proved to be unfit for the weather they were likely to meet on the Atlantic, and they had to return to Plymouth. Twenty of the exiles were landed;

³² N. Morton, *New-Englands Memoriall*, 11-12; and W. Bradford, *History of Plimouth Plantation*, 32 (16). And in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 47; see also 45-46.

³³ W. Bradford, *History of Plimouth Plantation*, 72 (36), and in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 87.

the *Speedwell* was discharged ; on September 16 the *Mayflower* sailed alone with the rest of the company ; and on December 21, after a stormy and dangerous voyage, they landed on Plymouth Rock.³⁴

Brewster, the elder of the Church, and Carver and Fuller, the deacons, were among the Plymouth settlers. Robinson remained behind at Leyden. He hoped that he might follow them, but the hope was not fulfilled. He died at Leyden on March 1, 1625.

The services which Robinson rendered to the principles of Congregationalism can hardly be measured. He was a man of considerable learning, a theologian, and a most formidable controversialist, and his *New Essays or Observations Divine and Moral* show that he was a keen student of what he describes as "the great volume of men's manners." His *Just and Necessary Apology of certain Christians, no less contumeliously than commonly called Brownists or Barrowists*, was a calm and, at the same time, a vigorous statement of the principles of the Congregational polity and of the opinions of the Congregationalists on the questions upon which they differed both from Episcopalians and Presbyterians. Bradford, who knew him well, describes him as a man of "a solid judgment, and of a quick and sharp wit . . . of a tender conscience, and very sincere in all his ways." He was—

"a hater of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and would be very plain with his best friends. He was very courteous, affable and sociable in his conversation, and towards his own people especially. . . He was never satisfied in himself until he had searched any case or argument he had to deal in thoroughly and to the bottom ; and we have heard him say to his familiars that many times, both in writing and disputation, he knew he had sufficiently answered others, but many times not himself."³⁵

³⁴ When the practice of celebrating the anniversary at Plymouth began, in 1769, eleven days were erroneously added to the recorded date (December 11), to accommodate it to the Gregorian style, then newly adopted in England. An attempt has been made within the last few years to substitute the true allowance of ten days. But the *twenty-second* day of December has taken a firm hold on American thought and literature which the *twenty-first* will scarcely displace.

³⁵ Governor Bradford's *Dialogue*, in Alexander Young, *Chronicles of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 452, and in Hunter, *Collections concerning the Founders of New Plymouth*, 96-97.

His memorable words addressed to the founders of New Plymouth when he was bidding them farewell express the true spirit of Congregationalism—a spirit apart from which its mere external polity is worthless.

“We are now ere long,” he said, “to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should see our faces again. But whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and His blessed angels, to follow him no farther than he followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of His, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident *the Lord* had more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy Word.”³⁶

NOTE A

Robinson's Views on the Power of Elders

The following passages are extracted, and in some parts condensed, from a lecture on *The Early Independents*, delivered in connection with the Jubilee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

The Congregational theory attributed such extraordinary powers and prerogatives to the individual members of the Church, to the most ignorant, to those whose Christian life was most imperfect, as well as to the wisest, the most learned, and the most saintly, that outsiders naturally supposed that a Congregational Church must be a disorderly mob, in which age and experience commanded no reverence, and the rulers exerted no authority. Not unnaturally, too, some of the members of Congregational Churches interpreted the theory in a manner which permitted every man to claim for his own opinions the authority of inspiration, and to disregard the judgment of all his brethren. . . . But a theory cannot be rightly judged unless it is taken as a whole. It was, after all, to the Church—not to its individual members—that the Congregational theory ascribed such lofty prerogatives; and for an individual to resist the judgment and power of the Church was to incur an awful risk. There might be circumstances in which the resistance was necessary; but if he resisted the Church when the Church was acting under the control of the law of Christ, he was resisting Christ's own authority, and would suffer terrible penalties.

And all the principal leaders of Independency had very high views of the place and power of pastors and elders. It was not their theory that the authority of church officers is derived from

³⁶ E. Winslow, *Hypocrisy Unmasked*, 97–98.

the people who elect them. They believed that the Church merely determines what persons shall rule ; the power of rulers is derived from God. Browne describes " church governours " as " persons receiving their authority and office of God, for the guiding of His people the Church, received and called thereto by due consent and agreement of the Church " ; and he insists with great seriousness on the duty of giving to rulers due obedience. Henry Barrowe also maintains that though there is communion in the Church there is no equality. The various members of the body of Christ have a common interest in Him, but their functions differ. He says in his vigorous, homely way that " the Eye guides the Hand, showing it how it ought to work ; and that the Hand washes and wipes and does all loving help to the Eye." The least member in the Church has the same freedom in Christ as the greatest, but not the same gifts or functions.

The early Independents believed that every member of a Church might be charged with responsibility for every action of the Church, and might have an unrestricted right of criticism, without lessening the just authority of the church officers. No doubt this is possible ; but it implies the possession, both by church officers and private church members, of great and noble qualities of judgment and temper. Human nature, even when under the power of the Spirit of Christ, does not touch ideal perfection, and sometimes, even in those days, Churches were rent with violent strife.

In Amsterdam, Francis Johnson attempted to lessen the danger by absorbing in the eldership a large part of the power of the Church. . . . The position he assumed was the result, partly of the disorders which seemed necessarily incident to the freer form of polity, partly of the influence of Presbyterianism. Robinson, at Leyden, returned to very much the same conception of the relations between the elders and the people as that which had been held by Browne and Barrowe, though perhaps he added a little emphasis to the authority of the elders. He says :—

" We believe that the external church government under Christ, the only Mediator and Monarch thereof, is plainly aristocratical, and to be administered by some certain choice men, although the State, which many unskillfully confound with the government, be after a sort popular and democratical. By this it appertains to the people freely to vote in elections and judgments of the Church. In respect of the other, we make account it behoves the elders to govern the people, *even in their voting, in just liberty*, given by Christ whatsoever (1 Cor. xii. 28 ; 1 Tim. v. 17 ; Heb. xiii. 17). Let the elders publicly propound, and order all things in the Church, and so give their sentence on them ; let them reprove them that sin, convince the gainsayers, comfort the repentant, and so administer all things according to the prescript of God's Word : let the people of faith give their assent to their elders' holy and lawful administration ; that so the ecclesiastical elections and censures may be ratified, and put into solemn execution

by the elders, either in the ordination of officers after election, or excommunication of offenders after obstinacy in sin."³⁷

But the strength of this declaration is greatly qualified by another passage in the same treatise, in which he appears to deny to the "highest church officers and governors" any real official authority. Contrasting the position of the civil magistrate with the position of church rulers, he says that in many things the bare authority of the magistrate requires submission; in nothing does the bare authority of church rulers require submission. There are many cases in which, with reason or without reason, the civil magistrate can demand obedience; there are no cases in which church rulers can assert a similar authority. To quote his own words—

"Neither are the ministers in anything at all, as are the magistrates in many things, to be obeyed for the authority of the commander, but for the reason of the commandment, which the ministers are also bound in duty to manifest, and approve unto the consciences of them over whom they are set."³⁸

This limits the power of church rulers to the right to persuade; and this right, according to the Congregational theory, belongs to every private member of the Church.

But to define the limits of authority on the one hand and of submission on the other, and yet to preserve the Congregational ideal, is impossible. The just relations between the rulers of the Church and the people can be preserved only by the intimate and perfect union of both people and rulers with Christ. The relations are too delicate, too subtle, too variable, to be fixed by a rigid rule; they must be determined by the immediate action of a Living Spirit and a Personal Will. The whole life of the Church belongs to a region in which external law can have no effective place. With a wise and unflinching loyalty to Christ penetrating the whole Church, no difficulty will emerge that will not soon admit of a satisfactory solution; without this loyalty no regulations will be able to avert bitterness, strife, and schism."—R. W. Dale, *Congregational Union Jubilee Lectures*, i. 48-53.

³⁷ John Robinson, *A Just and Necessary Apology*; *Works*, iii. 42-43 (R. Ashton's edition). Robinson protests against those whom "it hath pleased . . . contumeliously to upbraid us," and who charged the Independents with allowing women and children to vote. "Only men, and them grown, and of discretion," Robinson acknowledged as having a right to the franchise. He definitely asserts the right and the duty of the elders to meet at times apart from the body of the Church to consider questions affecting its interests, and to prepare the business. *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, iii. 61-62.

CHAPTER III

REVIVAL OF CONGREGATIONALISM IN ENGLAND

ABBOT APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP—CLARENDON'S ESTIMATE OF HIM—SEVERITY AGAINST PURITANISM RELAXED—FLIGHT IN PERSECUTION CENSURED AND DEFENDED—CONTROVERSY BETWEEN BROUGHTON AND BILSON OVER OUR LORD'S DESCENT INTO HELL—HENRY JACOB INTERVENES—HE BECOMES A LEADER OF THE PURITAN PARTY—HIS ATTITUDE TO THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH—ACCEPTS CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLES—ORGANISES A CHURCH IN SOUTHWARK—SETTLES IN AMERICA, AND DIES THERE—LATHROP, HIS SUCCESSOR AT SOUTHWARK, ARRESTED—ACTIVITY OF LAUD AGAINST THE SEPARATISTS—CHURCHES ESTABLISHED IN WALES.

BANCROFT died in 1610, and was succeeded by Abbot, who owed his rapid promotion in the Church to the favour of the King's favourite, the Earl of Dunbar. Lord Clarendon says that—

“he was preferred . . . to the bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield, and presently after to London, before he had ever been parson, vicar, or curate of any parish-church in England, or dean or prebend of any cathedral church; and was in truth totally ignorant of the true constitution of the church of England, and the state and interest of the clergy; as sufficiently appeared throughout the whole course of his life afterward. He had scarce performed any part of the office of a bishop in the diocese of London, when he was snatched from thence and promoted to Canterbury.”¹

According to the same authority, the new Archbishop—

“considered Christian religion no otherwise, than as it abhorred and reviled popery, and valued those men most, who did that most furiously. For the strict observation of the discipline of the church, or the conformity to the articles or canons established, he made little inquiry, and took less care; and having himself made a very little progress in the ancient and solid study of divinity,

¹ Clarendon, *History*, i. 125.

he adhered wholly to the doctrine of Calvin, and, for his sake, did not think so ill of the discipline² as he ought to have done. But if men prudently forbore a public reviling and railing at the hierarchy and ecclesiastical government, let their opinions and private practice be what it would, they were not only secure from any inquisition of his, but acceptable to him, and at least equally preferred by him. . . . That temper in the archbishop, whose house was a sanctuary to the most eminent of that most factious party, and who licensed their most pernicious writings, left his successor a very difficult work to do, to reform and reduce a church into order, that had been so long neglected, and that was so ill inhabited by many weak, and more wilful clergymen."³

Under Abbot's primacy the vigilance with which the ecclesiastical laws had been administered during the previous six years was relaxed.⁴ Clergymen who omitted the ceremonies were still silenced, and Separatists were still thrown into prison, and kept there without trial; but the vigour with which offenders had been hunted down by Bancroft ceased.

It seemed possible to make another attempt to establish Churches in England after the apostolic model. Grave risks would have to be run; but was it right for those to whom

² By "the discipline" Clarendon means the church polity for which the Presbyterian Puritans contended.

³ *Ibid.*, 125, 126.

⁴ James professed to believe in the impolicy of religious persecution. "No state," he said to his Parliament in 1614, "can evidence that any religion or heresy was ever extirpated by the sword or by violence, nor have I ever judged it a way of planting the truth. One example of this I take where, when many rigorous counsels were propounded, Gamaliel stood up and advised 'that if that religion were of God it would prosper; if of man it would finish of itself.'" But under the reign of the monarch who could say these wise things, and under the archbishopric of Abbot, Bartholomew Legatt was burnt at Smithfield for Arianism (March 18, 1611-2); and a month later Edward Wightman suffered the same fate at Lichfield, being charged in the warrant with the incompatible and mutually contradictory heresies of Arius, Cerinthus, Manichæus, and the Anabaptists, not to mention twelve others. Brook, i. 66-67; and Fuller, v. 418-425, who says that the effect of "this seasonable severity" was not altogether wholesome, for "the burning of heretics much startled common people, pitying all in pain, and prone to asperse justice itself with cruelty, because of the novelty and hideousness of the punishment. . . . Wherefore King James politicly preferred that heretics hereafter, though condemned, should silently and privately waste themselves away in the prison, rather than to grace them and amuse others with the solemnity of a public execution."

Christ had revealed His will concerning the true organisation of His Church to remain any longer in exile, consulting their own safety instead of endeavouring to make known to their fellow countrymen the truth they had received from God? This was a question which had been seriously discussed by those who had gone with Browne and Harrison to Middelberg many years before. It was now raised by a pamphlet published by Thomas Helwys, one of the original members of the Church at Scrooby, who had renounced the practice of infant baptism and returned to England, where he had founded a Baptist Church.⁵

Robinson, "forced by the unreasonable provocation of Mr. Thomas Helwys, who in great confidence and passion layeth load of reproaches both upon our flight in persecution, and also upon our persons for it,"⁶ attempted to justify himself and his Church. He appealed to the flight of Jacob, of Moses, of David, of Jeremiah, of Baruch, and of Elijah; to the flight of Joseph and Mary, who carried our Lord with them into Egypt; to our Lord's own example during His public ministry—for He Himself kept out of the way of His enemies till the hour for His suffering came; to His direction to His disciples that when they were persecuted in one city they should flee to another; to the example of Peter, Paul, and the rest of the apostles.

In a pamphlet which appeared in 1615, the appeal to these examples was challenged.⁷ An *Indifferent Man*, who intervenes in a discussion between *Christian and Anti-Christian* on the questions at issue between the Separatists and the ecclesiastical

⁵ Helwys remained in Amsterdam when Robinson went to Leyden. With John Smyth he seceded from the Amsterdam Church and established a Church on Baptist principles. On the death of Smyth he became its pastor. About 1611 he and a considerable number of his friends returned to England, and in 1612 he published a treatise entitled *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*. It was to statements in this treatise on "Flight in Persecution" that Robinson replied in ch. iii. of his *Religious Communion Private and Public* (1614). *Works* (edited by R. Ashton), v. 135-164.

⁶ Robinson, *ibid.*, 155-156.

⁷ *Objections answered by way of Dialogue, wherein is proved . . . that no man should be persecuted for his Religion*. It was probably written by a member of the Church in London of which Helwys was pastor—perhaps by John Murton—but after the death of Helwys. It was reprinted by the Hanserd Knollys Society in *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience* (1846).

authorities, and between the Baptists and other Separatists, says :—

“ One thing there is yet which hath much troubled me and others, and in my judgment hath much hindered the growth of godliness in this kingdom, and that is, that many so soon as they see or fear trouble will ensue, they fly into another nation, who cannot see their conversation, and thereby deprive many poor ignorant souls in their own nation of their information, and of their conversation among them.”

To this *Christian* replies :—

“ Oh ! that hath been the overthrow of religion in this land, the best able and greater part being gone, and leaving behind them some few, who, by the others’ departure, have had their afflictions and contempt increased, which hath been the cause of many falling back, and of the adversaries’ exulting.”⁸

Christian goes on to argue that although in the Scriptures there are the records of the flight of many holy men from persecution, their flight was only for a time, and that when the work of God had to be done, God would “ in no case . . . suffer them to fly.” And then, bringing his argument to a practical application, he says, “ If any of these men can prove that the Lord requireth no work at their hands to be done for His glory, and the salvation of thousands of ignorant souls in their own nation, let them stay in foreign countries.”⁹

Moved by such appeals as this, Henry Jacob, a member of Robinson’s Church at Leyden, resolved to return to London. Jacob was a native of the county of Kent, and was born about 1563. When sixteen years of age, he went up to Oxford as a commoner of St. Mary’s Hall. On leaving the university he received orders in the English Church, and was appointed to the living of Cheriton in his native county.

In 1598 he published *A Treatise of the Sufferings and Victory of Christ in the Work of our Redemption, etc., written against certain Errors in these points publicly preached in London*. It was the common opinion of those clergy of the English Church who did not belong to the Puritan party, that the clause of the Creed, declaring that “ Christ descended into Hell,” was

⁸ Hanserd Knollys Society, *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience*, 176.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 176–177.

to be interpreted as meaning that our Lord after His death descended into the region of eternal torment to wrest from the devil the keys of death and hell. This opinion had been vigorously contested by Hugo Broughton, one of the greatest scholars of those times, who maintained that our Lord ascended from the Cross to Paradise, and that by Hades or Sheol is not meant the place of eternal torment, but the unseen world.¹⁰ Calvin had given a different interpretation of the clause. He taught that—

“Christ is said to have descended into hell, since he suffered that death which the wrath of God inflicts on transgressors. . . . The relation of those sufferings of Christ which were visible to men, is very properly followed by that invisible and incomprehensible vengeance which he suffered from the hand of God; in order to assure us that not only the body of Christ was given as the price of our redemption, but that there was another greater and more excellent ransom, since he suffered in his soul the dreadful torments of a person condemned and irretrievably lost.”¹¹

This opinion was attacked by Bilson in a sermon preached at St. Paul’s in 1597.¹² Bilson contended that—

“after the great work of our redemption was finished on the cross by [our Lord’s] corporal death only, by the dignity of him that suffered this death, and his huge price for our disobedience paid in his blood, his body resting in the grave, his soul descended to the lowest hell: that he might make an honourable triumph of victory over his chief enemies, death, sin and the Devil.”¹³

Calvin’s opinion on this subject was generally held by the English Puritans, and the Separatists had vehemently attacked Whitgift, Bancroft, and the other rulers of the English Church.¹⁴

¹⁰ “When he [our Lord] had poured out his soul to death, a sin-offering, there was no further suffering: but all suffering was fulfilled: and . . . our Lord went presently through the veil of his flesh to Paradise; to heaven, to his kingdom, as the thief believed, and his own tongue taught.” *An Explication of the Article*, etc., 4-5; and see his attack on Bilson in *Somers’ Tracts* (second edition), ii. 3-11.

¹¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 2, xvi. § 10.

¹² Bilson published his sermon, revised and amplified, in 1599. *The Effecte of certaine Sermons touching the Full Redemption of Mankind by the Death and Blood of Christ Jesus*.

¹³ This passage summarises the substance of Bilson’s discourse; *l.c.* 137 foll. See also his *Survey of Christ’s Sufferings* (1604), 539 foll.

¹⁴ Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 365. Whitgift, who had first held “the old received sense” of the clause in the creed, came over to Broughton’s opinion *Ibid.*, 320 foll.

The question was regarded on both sides as of such gravity that it was even supposed—though very inaccurately—that but for this doctrinal controversy Barrowe and Greenwood and other Separatists would have conformed to the English Church. Bilson's sermon created great excitement and discussion. Henry Jacob defended the Calvinistic position. Before the publication of this treatise Jacob had been known as a Puritan of extreme opinions, and he was invited during Francis Johnson's imprisonment to discuss with him the constitution, worship, and ceremonies of the English Church. There was probably a hope that he might be convinced of the duty of separation. But this hope was not immediately fulfilled. Jacob published the result of his discussions with Johnson in *A Defence of the Churches and Ministry of England. Written in two treatises, against the reasons and objections of Mr. Francis Johnson, and other of the Separation commonly called Brownists. Published especially for the benefit of those in these parts of the Low Countries* (Middelberg, 1599). In the same year he published *A short Treatise concerning the trueness of a pastorall calling in pastors made by prelates. Against the Reasons and objections of Maister Francis Johnson, with others of the Separation commonly called Brownistes* (Middelberg, 1599).

Four years later—in 1603—Jacob was the most active of the Puritan clergy in promoting the petition to James on his accession in favour of a reformation in religion. From Wood Street in the City of London he sent out circulars to ministers and influential laymen in the different counties of England, urging them to send memorials to the King complaining of the violence and oppression which they were suffering from the ecclesiastical authorities, and of the neglected condition of many of the parishes. Whitgift and Bancroft wrote to Lord Burleigh (September 24, 1603), complaining of the agitation, and singled out Jacob as one of the worst of the agitators.

“One Jacob, a very insolent person, of much more boldness than either learning or judgment; a man that hath been imprisoned by us for his disobedience, and who is subject to our further censures when these dangerous times are past; was an especial leader in the first petition, and now by his and his fellows' example a second complaint is made and procured

in the name of the meaner souls in Sussex, by the means of one Pearson."¹⁵

In 1604 he published a pamphlet containing *Reasons taken out of Gods Word, and the best humane testimonies, proving a Necessitie of reforming our Churches in England*.¹⁶ This was intended to convince the bishops of the necessity of reformation, and the Bishop of London invited him to Fulham to discuss his grievances against the English Church and its rulers. After a brief conference the bishop, unable to convince him of his errors, committed him to the Clink.

In 1605 he was pastor of a Church at Middelberg. He was still hoping that if the Puritan case could only be fairly and publicly stated, reformation was possible, and he published another pamphlet under the title of *A Christian and Modest Offer of a most Indifferent Conference, or Disputation, about the maine and principall Controversies between the Prelats and the late silenced and deprived Ministers in England: tendered by some of the said ministers to the Archbishops and Bishops, and all their adherents, etc.* (1606).

His position was that the congregations in England which were willing to accept the ministry of himself and other Puritans were true Churches, though very imperfect in their constitution; that if the bishops would allow him and those who shared his convictions to remain in the ministry of the Church, "without personal communion with those corruptions" to which they objected, they could hold their position with a good conscience, but that if conformity was stringently enforced they must become Separatists.

No friendly answer came to this appeal, but still he did not despair. In 1609 he issued a pamphlet addressed "To the right High and Mightie Prince, James," and containing *An humble Supplication for Toleration and libertie to enjoy and observe the ordinances of Christ Jesus in the administration of His Churches in lieu of human constitutions*, etc. But such toleration as he asked for was not to be granted in England for many years to come, either to those who remained in the Established Church, or to those who separated from it.

It is probable that when he published the "Supplication"

¹⁵ Waddington, ii. (1567—1700), 131-132; from *State Papers (Domestic Series)*, James I., iii. 83. *Calendar, do.* (1603—1610), 41.

¹⁶ Strype, *Whitgift*, ii. 481-482.

to the King he was already in correspondence with Robinson at Leyden, and in the following year he declared his acceptance of the Congregational polity in a small treatise on *The Divine Beginning and Institution of Christs True Visible or Ministerial Church. Also the Unchangeableness of the same by men, viz. in the form and essential constitution thereof*, etc. (Leyden, 1610). He still, however, distinguished firmly and clearly between the *form* of a Christian Church and its *substance*.

"I acknowledge," he said, "that in England are true Visible Churches and Ministers (though *accidentally*, yet) such as I refuse not to communicate with. My meaning is, that as those particular Congregations have in them godly and holy Christians *consociated together* to serve God (so far as they see) agreeably to his Word, so they are in right from Christ essentially true Churches of God and are so to be acknowledged by us, and in public not to be absolutely separated from. But in respect as these Congregations are parts of proper Diocesan and Provincial Churches, so they are true Churches of Christ *accidentally*. For proper Diocesan and Provincial Churches being not in the N(ew) Testam(ent) have in them by accident the true essential forms of Christ's Visible Churches."¹⁷

For six years he seems to have remained in communion with the Leyden Church. In 1616 he came over to England to organise a Congregational Church. He consulted Arthur Hildersham, Job Throckmorton, John Dodd, and Richard Mounsel, who were in the Clink, and had their concurrence. He invited Staiesmore, Browne, Prior, Troughton, Allen, Gilbert, Farre, Goodal, and others to meet him, and laid before them the principles which he believed should determine the membership and constitution of a Christian Church. They met again to spend a whole day in fasting and prayer; then—

"each of the brethren made open confession of his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and then, standing together, they joined hands and solemnly covenanted with each other in the presence of Almighty God, to walk together in all God's ways and ordinances, according as He had revealed, or should further make known to them. Mr. Jacob was then chosen pastor by the suffrage of the brotherhood, and others were appointed to the office of deacons with fasting and prayer and imposition of hands."¹⁸

¹⁷ *A Declaration and Plainer Opening of certain Points* (1611), 6; and *An Attestation* (1613), 305.

¹⁸ Waddington, ii. (1567—1700), 199.

The pastor was the only "elder"; the other officers of the Church were "deacons." In this particular the organisation of the Southwark Church differed from that of the Church at Leyden or Amsterdam. Jacob united in himself the functions which had been divided between the "pastor," the "doctor" or "teacher," and the other elders who shared with the pastor the spiritual oversight of the Church. The form of organisation was that which has become almost, if not quite, universal among modern Congregationalists. The Church which was then founded has passed through great vicissitudes, but it still survives; and the "Pilgrim Church" in the New Kent Road, which inherits its life and traditions, may claim to be the oldest existing Independent Church in England.¹⁹

Immediately after the Church was formed, Jacob, who had an inexhaustible faith in the press, published *A Confession and Protestation of the Faith of certain Christians in England, holding it necessary to observe and keep all Christs true substantial Ordinances for his Church visible and Political, etc. Also an Humble Petition to the Kings Majesty for toleration therein* (1616). He remained for eight years the pastor of the Church which he had founded and then, with the consent of his people, went over to America; but it is unknown in what colony he settled, or where he died. After he left England all trace of him is lost.

He was succeeded by John Lathrop. In August, 1632, Lathrop and more than forty other persons were caught while meeting for worship in a house in Blackfriars, and twenty-four of them were imprisoned. Laud, who was one of the Commissioners before whom the prisoners were brought, described them as belonging to different places; some of them lived in Essex, some at Isleworth, others in various parishes in the City of London. The Archbishop of York condemned them with great vehemence for "dishonouring God and disobeying the King"; and "His Majesty," said the Archbishop, "is God's vice-gerent in the Church." It was ordered that the prisoners should be kept in close custody.²⁰ In 1634 Lathrop and thirty-one of his congregation joined the colony of New

¹⁹ See Note A, p. 220.

²⁰ Waddington, ii. (1567—1700), 273-277; and Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, i. 40.

Plymouth. He was succeeded in the pastorate of the Southwark Church by Henry Jessey.

Notwithstanding the severity with which the laws against Separatism were enforced, the Separatists became every year more numerous and created increasing anger and alarm among the bishops and their supporters. In 1624 the Corporation of Yarmouth was sharply rebuked by the Earl of Dorset for tolerating an assembly of Brownists; the Corporation repented and threw thirty of them into prison. In 1631, Hall, Bishop of Exeter, wrote to Laud:—

“ I hear to my grief that there are eleven congregations (as they call them) of Separatists about the City [of London] furnished with their idly-pretended pastors, who meet together in brewhouses and such other places of resort every Sunday. I do well know your Lordship’s zealous and careful vigilance over that populous world of men. So far as I am assured, your Lordship finds enough to move your sorrow and holy fervour in the cause of God’s Church.”²¹

A congregation of Separatists, Laud reports, was caught in June, 1632, while meeting in a wood near Newington in Surrey, “ in the very brake where the King’s stag should have been lodged for his hunting the next morning ”; ²² another congregation was broken up at Ashford in Kent, in 1637; ²³ another at Rotherhithe, in 1638.

Wroth, an Oxford man, Rector of Llanfaches in Monmouthshire, who in 1635 was denounced by the Bishop of Llandaff as “ a noted schismatic,” became a Separatist a year or two later, and, in 1639, Walter Cradock and Henry Jessey assisted him to found an Independent Church in the parish where he had been rector.²⁴ Churches were also formed at Wrexham, at Llanfair and some other places in Wales.

There were many indications before the meeting of the

²¹ Waddington, ii. (1567—1700), 272—273, from *State Papers, Charles I. (Domestic Series)*, cxci. 69.

²² Waddington, *ibid.*, from *State Papers, ibid.*, ccxviii. 46.

²³ These were Baptists.

²⁴ In the Church at Llanfaches, Baptists and Pædobaptists were united in communion. It had two pastors—Wroth, a Pædobaptist, and William Thomas, a Baptist. Wroth often took part in the meetings of the famous Separatist congregation in Bristol, which was the origin of the Broadmead Church. Brook, ii. 469; and Calamy, *Continuation*, i. 47.

Long Parliament that large numbers of devout people in different parts of England were profoundly convinced that loyalty to Christ compelled them to renounce the communion of the English Church and to attempt to restore the worship and the church polity of apostolic times. It was also clear that they were ready to carry their convictions into practice at the cost of fine, imprisonment, and death itself.

NOTE A

The Pilgrim Church in Southwark

In the Congregational Year Book for 1885 the date of the foundation of this Church is given as 1592. This would identify the Church in New Kent Road with the Church of which Francis Johnson was pastor in Queen Elizabeth's days, and would treat the proceedings of 1616 as a simple reorganisation of a previously existing communion. But is this strictly accurate? In 1624 Robinson wrote a letter in the name of the Leyden Church to "*the Church of Christ in London*" in answer to a letter, received some time before, asking for counsel. One of the questions on which counsel was requested was whether Mr. Jacob's Church was a true Church or not. It seems probable that the Church asking for counsel was the survival of that of which Francis Johnson had been pastor.²⁵ The members of this society, which in all probability had become extremely feeble, were scandalised by the practice of Jacob and his friends who occasionally attended the services of the Episcopal Church. They even appear to have discussed the propriety of excommunicating a young woman, one of their own members, for listening to Mr. Jacob and joining in the worship of his Church—arguing that Mr. Jacob and his people had become idolaters by attending the "assemblies" of the English Church, "in which many things are against the second commandment," and that by worshipping with those who had attended these "assemblies" the unfortunate young woman had come to be an idolater too. Robinson approves the decision that the young woman who had committed the alleged offence should be retained in communion, and contends strongly against the line of argument which would have excluded her. In reply to the question "Whether Mr. Jacob's congregation be a true Church or no," he says—"We have so judged, and the elders of the Church at Amsterdam and the body of the Church with them, as we conceive; and so do we

²⁵ Dexter, 634, notes, 29, 30; and 635-636.

judge still, having sent you with our letter a copy of certain papers, in which the matter is handled." ²⁶

It is clear, therefore, that in 1624 there was another Congregational Church in London—probably in Southwark ²⁷—which doubted whether the Church of which Jacob was pastor was a true Church.

It is probable from Robinson's whole discussion of the questions which this Church had proposed to their brethren at Leyden that it was in existence before Jacob returned from Holland in 1616. It is further probable that this Church was the same as that of which Francis Johnson had been pastor some years before, and the history of which was well known to Robinson and his friends. It is recognised by him as "the Church of Christ in London"; but the tone of Robinson's letter is not very cordial; and the fact that Jacob had founded a new Church indicates that to Jacob, and probably to Robinson, its condition had appeared unsatisfactory. The nature of the inquiries addressed to the Leyden Church indicates that it was animated by a very different temper from that which Robinson himself encouraged among the exiles.

Some of the persons who had been in communion with the older Church may very probably have united themselves with Jacob in founding the new Society of which he was pastor; but the older Church *continued to exist and it regarded the new Society with distrust*. Jacob's movement, therefore, constituted a fresh beginning: it was not the reorganisation of an old Church, but the foundation of a new one.

On these grounds it would appear that the "Pilgrim" Church, which is the Church that had Jacob for its pastor, and which may claim the honour of being the oldest Independent Church in England, was founded in 1616—not in 1592.

²⁶ Robinson, *Works* (edited by R. Ashton), iii. 381–385.

²⁷ This is also Waddington's opinion. See Robinson, *ibid.*, iii. 439.

CHAPTER IV

THE BISHOPS' WAR

ATTEMPT OF CHARLES TO FORCE EPISCOPACY UPON SCOTLAND—THE CANONS AND THE SERVICE-BOOK—OUTBREAK OF INDIGNATION AT EDINBURGH—THE COVENANT RENEWED—THE ROYAL COMMISSIONERS AND THE ASSEMBLY—SUPPRESSION OF PRELACY—CAMPAIGN OF THE COVENANTERS UNDER LESLIE—IMPOTENCE OF THE KING—TREATY OF BERWICK—THE "SHORT" PARLIAMENT SUMMONED AND DISSOLVED—HOSTILITIES RENEWED AND SUSPENDED—PARLIAMENT AGAIN CONVENED.

THE attempt of Charles to force a liturgy on Scotland, and to complete the destruction of the Presbyterian organisation of the Scottish Church, led to the suppression of the Prayer-Book and the abolition of Episcopacy in England. The Covenanters who in 1639 took up arms "For Christ's Crown and the Covenant" compelled the King to call the Long Parliament which sent Laud and Strafford to the scaffold, and broke up the whole political and ecclesiastical constitution of the kingdom.

I

In the summer of 1633 Charles was crowned at Edinburgh. To impress the Scottish people with the contrast between the bare simplicity of their own worship and the stateliness and beauty of the English liturgy, the *Dreadnought*, one of the vessels of his Majesty's navy, carried from Tilbury Fort to Leith twenty-six members of the choir of the Chapel Royal, and service was celebrated in the chapel of Holyrood with all the pomp of an English cathedral.

After all the efforts of James and Charles to increase the power of the Scotch bishops, the Church of Scotland still retained some of the essential characteristics of the Presby-

terian polity, and its worship was generally celebrated according to Puritan traditions. It was the fixed determination of the King and of Laud, who accompanied him to Edinburgh, that both in polity and in worship the Church of Scotland should conform to the Church of England.

Charles began by issuing a royal warrant directing that all the ministers of the Kirk should wear the surplice when conducting divine service. Four or five of the Scotch bishops were then commissioned to draw up a book of Canons and a liturgy. The Canons were to be submitted to the revision of Laud, who was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, and of Juxon, Bishop of London; the liturgy was to be submitted to the revision of Laud and of Wren, Bishop of Norwich, "a man of a severe, sour nature, but very learned, and particularly versed in the old liturgies of the Greek and Latin churches."¹

The Canons were ready first, and were confirmed by letters patent under the royal seal on May 23, 1635. No assembly of the Scottish clergy was consulted; some of the Scottish bishops knew nothing of them until they were published; even the lords of the council, who were responsible for the administration of Scotland, were not asked to give any opinion on them. This, says Lord Clarendon, was "a fatal inadvertency."² But it was not an "inadvertency"; it was an act of deliberate policy. The king intended to force Episcopacy, of the Anglican type, upon Scotland, whether the nobles, the clergy, or the people liked it or not.

The Canons provoked fierce indignation. They appeared to the Scottish people—

"to be so many new laws imposed upon the whole kingdom by the king's sole authority, and contrived by a few private men, of whom they had no good opinion, and who were strangers to the nation; so that it was no other than a subjection to England, by receiving laws from thence, of which they were most jealous, and which they most passionately abhorred."³

The substance of the Canons was as offensive as the manner in which they were imposed. They punished with excommunication every one that should affirm that the Scotch Book of

¹ Clarendon, *History*, i. 146.

² *Ibid.*, i. 148.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 149.

Common Prayer—which was not yet issued—or that the government of the Church by archbishops, bishops, etc., was in any particular corrupt, superstitious, or repugnant to the Scriptures. Extemporaneous prayer, which had been customary in the public services of the Scottish Church, was disallowed. A font was to be placed near the church porch, and a table for celebrating the holy communion was to be set at the upper end of the chancel, after the Anglican custom. The practice of private confession was implicitly sanctioned, it being enacted that no presbyter should discover anything told him in confession to any person whatever, excepting the crime were such that his own life would be in danger if he concealed it. No private meeting was allowed to be held by presbyters or by any other persons for expounding Scripture, or for debating matters ecclesiastical. No person was to teach either in public schools or in private houses without a licence from the archbishop of the province or the bishop of the diocese, and no licence was to be granted to any man who did not conform to the orders of the Church. No national or general assemblies of the Church were to be held without the authority of the King. Nothing was to be printed, unless first read and allowed by certain officers appointed for that purpose; the penalty for violating this canon—as in all other cases where no penalty is expressed—was to be left to the discretion of the bishops. Bishops and presbyters dying without children were required to leave their property, or a great part of it, to pious uses; and even if they had children, they were required to leave legacies to the Church, as a mark of their affection, and to promote the interests of religion. To impugn the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical causes was to incur the penalty of excommunication. No person was to be admitted to holy orders, or to be suffered to preach, catechise, administer the sacraments, or perform any other ecclesiastical function, without first subscribing the Canons.⁴

The next year, the Scottish Book of Common Prayer was published. Like the Canons, it was prepared without consulting any assembly of the Scottish clergy, or all the bishops, or the council at Edinburgh. It was issued on the sole authority of the King. The proclamation, addressed to the sheriffs and

⁴ Canons in Laud's *Works*, v. 583-599 (*Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*).

other public officers, enforcing its use—December 20, 1636—contained the following remarkable passage :—

“ Our will is, and we charge you straitly and command, that incontinent these our letters seen, you pass, and in our name and authority command and charge all our subjects, both ecclesiastical and civil, by open proclamation at the market-crosses of the head boroughs of this our kingdom, and other places needful, to conform themselves to the said public form of worship, which is the only form which we (having taken the counsel of our clergy) think fit to be used in God's public worship in this our kingdom. Commanding also all archbishops and bishops, and other presbyters and Churchmen, to take a special care that the same be duly obeyed and observed, and the contraveners condignly censured and punished, and to take especial care that every parish betwixt and Pasch next, procure unto themselves two at least of the said Books of Common Prayer for the use of the parish.”⁵

The excitement in Scotland was intense. The clergy in their sermons vehemently denounced the tyranny of the King in attempting to regulate by his personal will the religious worship of the whole kingdom, and the book itself was denounced as being more Popish than the English book of Common Prayer. On July 23, 1637, in the High Church of St. Giles's, Edinburgh, the Dean of Edinburgh was appointed to read the service for the first time. A great crowd thronged the church. As soon as he began to read, he was interrupted by angry shouts. “ The Mass is entered amongst us,” cried one. “ Baal is in the church,” cried another. “ Stones, sticks, and cudgels ” were flung at him.⁶ The whole church was in a tumult. The bishop went into the pulpit and tried to quiet the people, protesting against the profanation of holy ground. This appeal made the uproar more furious. A stool was aimed at the bishop, and all but grazed the head of the dean. The magistrates, at the call of the Archbishop, then expelled the more conspicuous of the rioters, and the dean went on with the service. But the uproar outside continued ; the crowd endeavoured to break down the doors, and the windows were

⁵ J. H. Burton, *History of Scotland*, vi. 145. He points out that “ betwixt and Pasch next ” (*i.e.* between now and next Easter), was a technical phrase of Scottish law. For the history of the Service-Book so imposed, its divergence from the English form, and its relation to an original draft—possibly submitted by the prelates of Scotland, *ibid.*, vi. 115-45.

⁶ Clarendon, *History*, i. 154.

shattered with stones. One woman who had remained in the church stopped her ears with her fingers, to save herself from the pollution and guilt of having any part in the idolatrous worship, and was reading the Bible to herself. A young man behind her startled her with a loud Amen. She dashed her Bible in his face, exclaiming, "False thief, is there no other part of the kirk to sing Mass in, but thou must sing it at my lug?" At last the service came to an end. The bishop was followed through the streets by a rough and angry mob, calling him opprobrious names and charging him with making them slaves and bringing back Popery into Scotland. Stones and dirt were flung at him, his robes were torn, and but for the protection of the Earl of Roxburgh it is doubtful whether he would have reached his house alive.⁷

In church after church the new Service-Book had the same reception. The whole nation was ablaze. Scottish patriotism fiercely resented the pretensions of the King, under the guidance of his English bishops, to impose ecclesiastical laws on Scotland. Scottish Protestantism resented as fiercely the attempt to impose on the Scottish Church a form of service which recalled the superstitions of Popery. The clergy revolted against the increased power of the bishops. The nobles and great landowners saw in this attempt of Charles to regulate ecclesiastical affairs by his own will the assumption of an authority which, if not resisted, would enable him to carry out the policy which they knew he favoured—of restoring to the Church the estates which had been alienated from it, and which now formed a great part of their own wealth. The nobles were also jealous of the political authority which had been given to the bishops.

From all parts of Scotland noblemen and gentry assembled in Edinburgh to protest in the name of the Scottish nation against the Service-Book and the tyranny of the King. Great crowds of people followed them to learn whether the King would yield to the hurricane of national indignation. The Council, alarmed for the public peace, agreed that if the people would return to their homes commissioners might be appointed to conduct negotiations with the King. Four *Tables*, or

⁷ Rothes, *Relation* (1830), 198–200. "The tradition which names Jeanie Geddes as the heroine of the day has long been abandoned." S. R. Gardiner, *Fall of the Monarchy of Charles I.* (1882), i. 111.

Committees, were therefore constituted—one representing the nobles, another the Lesser Barons (or gentry), another the boroughs, and another the Church.⁸ Then a great assembly was held in the Greyfriars Church (February 28 or March 1, 1637-8),⁹ at which the national covenant was renewed and the subscribers bound themselves with an oath "to adhere to and defend the true religion, and—forbearing the practice of all innovations already introduced in the matters of the worship of God—to labour by all means lawful to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel as it was established and professed before the aforesaid innovations." Within a few months the Covenant was signed, often with passionate tears, by people of all ranks in every part of the country.¹⁰

In November (1638), the temper of the country being now at white-heat, the General Assembly of the Church met at Glasgow.¹¹ At this time the General Assembly of the Church was the true Parliament of the Scottish people. The presbyteries elected 140 ministers and 98 ruling elders. Of the elders, 17 were noblemen of high rank, 9 were knights, 2 were landed proprietors, and 47 were respectable and influential citizens, belonging to the principal towns and cities of the kingdom. The bishops declined to attend, chiefly on the ground that the Moderator was a simple presbyter, and that some of the members of the assembly were laymen.

The Marquis of Hamilton—the Royal Commissioner—presented a declaration from the King, revoking the proclamation enforcing the Canons and the Service-Book, and abolishing

⁸ J. H. Burton, *History of Scotland*, vi. 170 foll.; and S. R. Gardiner, *Fall of the Monarchy*, i. 125, note 1.

⁹ See Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, i. 13, and note.

¹⁰ Rothes, *Relation* (1830), 70. The original Covenant was drawn at the instance of James, and was subscribed, at first by the King and his household in 1580, and afterwards by people of all ranks in 1581, when there was danger of a revolt of Catholic noblemen in Scotland with the hope of assistance from Spain. It was a repudiation of Popish errors and superstitions, and an engagement to submit to the discipline of the Scottish Church, and to defend it against all corruption. Henderson and Johnson now added to it a long and vehement protest against recent innovations. The Covenant is given in full by Rushworth, ii. (1), 734-741, and by Neal, iii. 59-62.

¹¹ No regular and lawful meeting of the General Assembly had been held for thirty-six years; for though "there had been six nominal assemblies during that interval, these were so overborne by royal interference and illegal and unwarrantable intrusions, that . . . they were all held to be null and void for ever" (Peterkin, *l.c.*, 14).

the Court of High Commission. It was hoped that this declaration, which had been issued some weeks before, would divide and break up the ranks of those who were opposed to the recent acts of the Crown, and avert the total overthrow of Episcopacy in Scotland. But the men who had met in Glasgow were not in the mood to leave their work half done. They determined to deal firmly with the bishops, who, as they believed, were the cause of all their troubles. Hamilton threatened that if the bishops were censured and their office condemned, he would leave the Assembly. The threat was disregarded; and then in the name of the King he declared that the Assembly was dissolved.¹²

But for this the Assembly was prepared. A protest was drawn up.

“ In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, THE ONLY HEAD AND MONARCH OF HIS OWN CHURCH, . . . in conscience of our duty to God and his Truth, the King and his Honour, the Church and her Liberties, this Kingdom and her Peace, this Assembly and her Freedom, to our Selves and our Safety, to our Posterity, Persons, and Estates, we profess, with sorrowful and heavy, but loyal hearts, That we cannot dissolve this Assembly.”¹³

The question was put, “ If they would abide the whole time and adhere to the protestation.”¹⁴ One or two had gone away, but the rest remained firm; and in answer to the question the whole Assembly rose and declared its determination to continue its deliberations and so to disregard the authority of the Crown.

The Assembly met on November 21, and continued to sit till December 20, holding twenty-four sessions. There were fourteen Scotch prelates: of these, two archbishops and six bishops were excommunicated, four deposed, two suspended. Scotland was left without a bishop. The Assembly condemned the Canons, the Service-Book, and the High Commission; abolished Prelacy, and restored Presbyterianism in its integrity. At the close of the sessions, Henderson, the Moderator, delivered

¹² R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals* (1841), i. 141-143.

¹³ Rushworth, ii. (1), 857, 859.

¹⁴ “ Whether we would adhere to the protestation against the commissioner's departure, and remain still to the end, till all things needful were concluded, or not ” (R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals* [1841], i. 144-145).

a great speech, full of fire and courage; a psalm was sung; the benediction was pronounced, and then Henderson uttered his last words to the Assembly: "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho: let him that rebuildeth beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite."¹⁵

And now many of the Scotch officers who had left their country to fight for the cause of Protestantism under Gustavus Adolphus returned to stand by the cause of Protestantism at home. Leslie was appointed commander-in-chief. The Committee of Estates were the real governors of Scotland, and they had an army to sustain their power. Their treasury was enriched from many quarters; the citizens of the great towns and Scottish merchants settled in foreign countries sent in voluntary contributions for the purchase of arms and ammunition; some of the nobility are said to have coined their plate for the same purpose.

To thwart the policy of England abroad, France had always been quick to favour any movement in Scotland which embarrassed England at home, and Richelieu now engaged to send to Leslie 100,000 crowns.

Early in March the Covenanters seized Edinburgh Castle. The next day they obtained possession of the Castle of Dumbarton. Traquair, the Lord Treasurer, surrendered to them the Castle of Dalkeith, with the regalia, and with a store of ammunition and arms. The Marquis of Huntley, who had raised 7,000 men for the King, was defeated and carried off by Leslie to Edinburgh. The Marquis of Hamilton with a fleet and 5,000 men attempted to rescue him. But the shores of the Forth were lined with Covenanters; every port was defended by batteries; and it was impossible for him to effect a landing. On March 30 Charles himself was at York, with 20,000 men. He was resolved, at all costs, to crush the outbreak which menaced his whole policy in England as well as in Scotland. Six weeks later he was on the border; but Leslie was waiting for him with an enthusiastic army, ready to resist his progress. On June 3 a body of the King's troops under

¹⁵ "In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub: according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of Joshua the son of Nun." 1 Kings xvi. 34.

the Earl of Holland crossed the Tweed to attack the Scotch at Kelso ; but Holland returned without striking a blow—his men had no heart to fight. Leslie was encamped on Dunse Law within a few miles of Berwick ; but Charles did not dare to attack him. The King saw that for the moment the attempt to break the force of the Scotch revolt was hopeless, and on June 18 he signed a treaty in which he left all ecclesiastical questions at issue between himself and his Scotch subjects to be determined by the General Assembly of the Church, and all civil questions by the Scotch Parliament. It was also agreed that a free General Assembly should meet at Edinburgh on August 6, and a free Parliament a fortnight later. The *Tables* and all unlawful committees were to be dissolved, and the royal castles in the hands of the Covenanters were to be restored to the officers of the King. Then the King returned to London.

The Assembly, when it met, was barred by the treaty from making any formal reference to the Glasgow Assembly of the preceding year, but it confirmed all its acts. The instructions given by the King to Traquair, the Royal Commissioner, authorised him to allow the abolition of Episcopacy, the Service-Book, and the Canons, and to sanction the signing of the national Covenant.¹⁶ Parliament subscribed the Covenant and then confirmed all the acts of the Assembly. It was prorogued by Traquair, to arrest an attempted encroachment on the royal prerogative.

Charles had returned from the north, humiliated by the Treaty of Berwick, and resolved to seize the first chance of breaking it. The discovery of the correspondence between the Scotch leaders and France gave him what he thought would be an irresistible appeal to the passion, the pride, and the patriotism of the English people.¹⁷ He resolved to call a

¹⁶ There was some modification of the terms of the Covenant as sanctioned by the Commissioner. Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, 235 ; and Burton, *History of Scotland*, vi. 271-272.

¹⁷ It seems certain that the letter on which Charles relied, which bore the signatures of seven Scotch lords and asked for the aid of the King of France, was never sent. It was written before the Treaty, and appears to have been stopped by the unwillingness of the Covenanting ministers and the common people to apply for assistance to a foreign and Catholic sovereign. The letter is given by Rushworth, ii. (2), 1037, 1119-1120. See also S. R. Gardiner, *Fall of the Monarchy*, i. 299, note 2, with the references there given ; and Clarendon, *History*, i. 183.

Parliament, and to ask for heavy subsidies that he might punish the Covenanters for their treasonable correspondence with the ancient enemy of England.

Parliament met on April 13, 1640. The letter of the Scotch lords was read, and Finch, the Lord Keeper, made a passionate speech against the "sons of Belial" who had resisted the King's authority and were conspiring with a foreign State against their true and lawful sovereign. Large promises were given that, when the subsidies were voted, his Majesty would join with them in redressing all just grievances.

But England had been for eleven years under the personal government of Charles and his Ministers; and now that a Parliament was once more assembled, the House of Commons was not disposed to lose the chance which had come to it of defending the liberties and the religion of the nation. They insisted that according to ancient custom grievances must take precedence of supply. They appointed committees for considering the affairs of the Church and of religion, the privileges of Parliament, and alleged violations of the rights of the subject. They discussed ship-money and the judgment against Hampden.¹⁸ It became apparent that no subsidies would be granted unless the King consented to reverse his whole policy; and on May 5 this Parliament—the *Short Parliament*—was dissolved. It had sat for only three weeks.¹⁹

¹⁸ See Whitelock's summary, 38-40. The judgment against Hampden was given in 1638.

¹⁹ Convocation continued to sit after the dissolution of Parliament, and adopted additional canons—the canons of 1640—which were severely dealt with in the next Parliament. One (i.) of these exalts the prerogatives of the Crown; another (vi.) imposes an oath never to consent to alter the government of the Church "by archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, etc., as it stands now established"; another (iii.) is directed to the suppression of Popery; another (v.) decrees that all those proceedings and penalties mentioned in the canons against Popish recusants shall, as far as they are applicable, stand in force against Anabaptists, Brownists, Separatists, Familists, and all other sects that refuse to worship and to receive the communion at the parish church. Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 543-553. Before separating, Convocation granted the King six subsidies at the rate of four shillings in the pound, to be paid within six years. They "did many things," says Clarendon, "which in the best times might have been questioned, and therefore were sure to be condemned in the worst . . . and drew the same prejudice upon the whole body of the clergy, to which before only some few clergymen were exposed." Clarendon, *History*, i. 209.

II

But Charles did not escape from his troubles by dissolving the English Parliament. The Parliament of Scotland published a series of manifestoes which maintained and increased the hostility of the Scottish people to the King's policy. They formally entrusted the whole executive power of the kingdom to the Committee of Estates, and levied heavy taxes for the support of the army. Leslie recaptured the castle of Edinburgh, which had been surrendered to Charles under the terms of the pacification of Berwick. The war had broken out afresh, and the Covenanters resolved to enter England with a force strong enough to compel the King to concede all their demands. Charles himself started again for the north to take command of his army; but before his arrival, the King's troops at Newburn on the Tyne under Lord Conway were put "to the most shameful and confounding flight that was ever heard of"²⁰ (August 28, 1640). The next day Newcastle was evacuated, and the English army was in full retreat, pursued by Leslie and his victorious Covenanters. In a few days, with the loss of less than twenty men, the four northern counties were in Leslie's power.

Fresh negotiations were now commenced. The Covenanters demanded that a firm and lasting peace between the two kingdoms should be settled by the English Parliament. Charles asked for a statement of specific grievances, and called a meeting of peers at York. The peers met; and, the first day of their meeting, as he had discovered that they would recommend him to call another Parliament, he anticipated their advice by the announcement that he had already determined that a new Parliament should meet on November 3. The Scotch invasion was discussed, and sixteen English peers were sent to Ripon to arrange with Leslie for the suspension, if not the termination, of hostilities. On October 23, within ten days of the meeting of Parliament—a final settlement not having been effected—it was agreed that the negotiations should be removed to London. For the present, the Scotch were to hold Newcastle, Durham, and all the towns on the eastern coast beyond the Tees, with the exception of

²⁰ Clarendon, *History*, i. 205.

Berwick. They were to receive £850 a day until the treaty was closed.

The disasters of Charles in what was popularly called "the Bishops' War" excited the hopes of all the enemies of his ecclesiastical policy in England. If the Scottish Covenanters were strong enough to get rid of their bishops, English Puritans might break the tyranny of Laud and save the English Church from Popery.

CHAPTER V

FROM THE MEETING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CIVIL WAR

THE "LONG" PARLIAMENT—STRAFFORD AND LAUD IMPEACHED—MEASURES TO SECURE CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY—ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATION—ROOT AND BRANCH, AND MINISTERS' PETITIONS—MEASURES TO CHECK DISORDER IN CHURCHES—PROPOSALS FOR CHURCH REFORM—SCOTTISH COMMISSIONERS IN LONDON—PRESBYTERIANISM AND EPISCOPACY—SMECTYMNUS—BISHOPS' EXCLUSION BILL REJECTED BY THE LORDS—PROPOSALS TO ABOLISH THE ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM AND TO DEAL WITH CHURCH LANDS—BISHOPS IMPEACHED—TREATY WITH SCOTLAND: ITS EFFECT ON PARLIAMENT—ORDERS FOR RITUAL REFORM—THE KING'S STRATEGY—THE INCIDENT—REBELLION AND MASSACRE IN IRELAND—THE GRAND REMONSTRANCE—POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS GRIEVANCES—THE REMONSTRANCE PUBLISHED—THE COMMONS ASSERT THEIR AUTHORITY OVER THE ARMY AND NAVY—ATTEMPTED ARREST OF THE FIVE MEMBERS—BISHOPS' EXCLUSION BILL AGAIN BROUGHT FORWARD—BISHOPS SENT TO THE TOWER—THE BILL PASSED.

PARLIAMENT met on November 3, 1640. "There was observed," says Lord Clarendon, "marvellous elated countenance in most of the members . . . before they met together in the House."¹ They knew that as long as the Scottish army held the north of England the King would not dare to dissolve them; and it was their policy not to bring the negotiations with Scotland to a close till they had broken the tyranny which had almost destroyed the civil liberties of the country, and had, as they believed, imperilled the very life of English Protestantism.

I

The two men who beyond all others were responsible for the recent innovations, both in Church and State, were Strafford

¹ Clarendon, *History*, i. 239.

and Laud. On November 11 Pym appeared at the bar of the House of Lords, and in the name of the Commons of England impeached Strafford of high treason. The earl was immediately arrested; bail was refused; and he was lodged in the Tower.² Laud was impeached on December 18, and was committed to the custody of one of the officers of the House of Peers; ten weeks later he too was lodged in the Tower. Nor were the Commons satisfied with striking at the two most trusted and powerful Ministers of the Crown. Finch, the Lord Keeper, was voted a traitor for his proceedings in connection with the levying of ship-money, and especially for his activity in securing a judgment against Hampden. Before his impeachment could be laid before the Lords he had fled to Holland. Windebank, one of the Secretaries, fled to Paris; he was charged with illegally releasing certain Romanists—priests and laymen—from prison.³

“So that within less than six weeks,” says Clarendon, “for no more time was yet elapsed, these terrible reformers had caused the two greatest counsellors of the kingdom, and whom they most feared, and so hated, to be removed from the king, and imprisoned, under an accusation of high treason; and frighted away the lord keeper of the great seal of England, and one of the principal secretaries of state, into foreign kingdoms, for fear of the like; besides the preparing all the lords of the council, and very many of the principal gentlemen throughout England, who . . . had been high sheriffs, and deputy lieutenants, to expect such measure of punishment from their general votes and resolutions, as their future demeanour should draw upon them, for their past offences; by which means, they were like to find no very vigorous resistance or opposition in their farther designs.”⁴

The same vigour and rapidity of action which the House had displayed in dealing with the advisers and abettors of the evil policy of the King were shown in the measures which were passed within a few months for surrounding the constitutional liberties of England with fresh guarantees. One Act, *For preventing Inconveniencies by the Long Intermission of Parliaments*, provided that no Parliament should sit for more than three years; that within three years from the dissolution of one Parliament writs should be issued for summoning another—

² C. J., ii. 26-27.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 41.

⁴ Clarendon, *History*, i. 250.

if the Chancellor or Keeper of the Great Seal failed to issue them, he was to be removed from his office, and suffer other penalties, and the peers were authorised to meet at Westminster and issue writs to the sheriffs; if the peers failed, the sheriffs on their own authority were to hold the elections; if the sheriffs failed, the electors themselves might meet and choose members. The Crown was deprived of the power of dissolving or proroguing Parliament—except by the consent of the Houses—within fifty days of the opening of the session. Another Act condemned ship-money as illegal. Another “declared and enacted that it is, and hath been, the ancient right of the subjects of this realm, that no subsidy, custom, or impost, or other charge whatsoever, ought or may be laid or imposed upon any merchandise exported or imported by subjects, denizens or aliens, without common consent in parliament.” Another abolished the Star Chamber, and abrogated the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the Privy Council. Another abolished the High Commission which had been the chief instrument of ecclesiastical oppression ever since the days of Whitgift.⁵

II

In dealing with the Church the House of Commons was equally resolute and energetic; but till the Civil War broke out it was generally thwarted by the Lords. Not that there was any desire on the part of the majority of the members, when Parliament opened, to abolish Episcopacy or to attempt any great ecclesiastical revolution. According to Lord Clarendon—then Mr. Hyde—who was himself a member of the House, and who for some months after it met was in the closest intimacy with Hampden, Pym, and the other leaders of the country party :

“In the House of Commons were many persons of wisdom and gravity, who being possessed of great and plentiful fortunes, though they were undevoted enough to the court, had all imaginable duty for the king, and affection to the government established by law and ancient custom; and without doubt, the major part of that

⁵ 16 Car. I. capp. 1, 8, 10, 11, 14. Scobell, 1-6, 9-12, 12-13, 13-14; Rushworth, ii. (2), 1382.

body consisted of men who had no mind to break the peace of the kingdom or to make any considerable alteration in the government of church or state.”⁶

Lord Brook and Lord Say in the Upper House, and Sir Harry Vane in the Lower, were irreconcilable enemies of the Episcopalian policy; and there were a few peers and a few commoners who approved of Presbyterianism; but the popular leaders and the immense majority of their followers in both Houses would have been satisfied with very moderate reforms. They were resolved that the ritual of the English Church should not be assimilated to the ritual of the Church of Rome, and they were anxious to afford relief to “tender consciences”; but they had no wish to introduce any serious changes into the Book of Common Prayer. They were resolved to diminish the powers of the bishops, and to depose some of the present holders of the sees who had been conspicuous for their support of Laud and their hostility to the Puritans; but to the episcopal order itself they were not hostile.

On November 6, 1640, following the example of preceding Parliaments in this reign, the Commons appointed a Grand Committee of the whole House to consider grievances of religion. On November 9, the House began to discuss the proceedings of Convocation, which had continued to sit in the earlier part of the year after the rising of Parliament. On December 15 it was resolved, without a dissentient voice, that Convocation has no power to “make any constitutions, canons, or acts, whatsoever, in matter of doctrine, discipline or otherwise, to bind the clergy or the laity of the land, without common consent of Parliament”;⁷ that all the actions of the two Convocations of Canterbury and York in 1640 were null and void; that the constitutions and canons agreed to in these Convocations contained “many Matters contrary to the King’s Prerogative, to the fundamental Laws and Statutes of the Realm, to the right of Parliaments, to the Property and Liberty of the Subjects, and Matters tending to Sedition, and of dangerous Consequence.”⁸ It was also resolved that “the several Grants of the Benevolence or Contribution” made to the King by the two Convocations were illegal.⁹

⁶ Clarendon, *History*, i. 258-259.

⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 51-52.

⁷ C. J., ii. 51.

⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 52.

But before the House had passed these resolutions, questions were raised of a much graver and more alarming kind. The "nobility, knights, gentry, and ministers" of several counties presented petitions for church reform. The earliest of these came from Bedford and Warwick, ten days after the meeting of Parliament. Petitions from Kent, Gloucester, and Chester soon followed. On December 11 a petition from the City of London, signed by 15,000 persons, was presented by Alderman Pennington.¹⁰ A great crowd accompanied him into the House. The petition began by declaring that "the government of Archbishops, Lord Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons, etc., with their courts and ministrations in them, hath proved prejudicial and very dangerous both to the Church and Commonwealth." It sustained this charge by a schedule of twenty-eight particulars; and it closed with the following prayer—"We therefore most humbly pray and beseech this Honourable Assembly . . . that the said Government, with all its dependencies, *roots and branches*, may be abolished; that all Laws in their behalf be made void; and that the government, according to God's Word, may be rightly placed among us."¹¹ This petition—"the Root and Branch" petition—and others like it, were received by the House without any astonishment or indignation. In January "the Ministers' Petition" was presented.¹² It was signed by seven hundred clergymen. Their petition did not propose to abolish the Episcopacy, but prayed that bishops might be removed from the House of Lords; that the clergy might be deprived of the magistracy and other secular offices; that the cathedral chapters might be reformed; and that the ordinary clergy might be associated with the bishops in ordinations and in various acts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. What they wanted was a modification of Episcopacy in the direction of Presbyterianism.

The excited temper of the common people began to show itself in riot and tumult. The clergy could not walk the streets in their clerical habit without being insulted. They

¹⁰ C. J., ii. 49.

¹¹ *Parliamentary History*, ix. 154-162.

¹² C. J. (January 19, 1640-1), ii. 72. Rushworth, iii. (1), 152-153. The reference sometimes given to Nalson, ii. 764-766, is incorrect: that petition was presented nearly a year later, and differs in substance from this.

were interrupted while celebrating religious services according to the directions of Convocation. The altar-rails were pulled down at St. Saviour's, Southwark. The officiant's surplice was torn at Halstead in Essex. Even in St. Margaret's, Westminster, when the House of Commons was assembled for divine worship, the congregation broke out into a Psalm as soon as the officiating clergyman began to read the communion service at the communion table. It became necessary to check these disorderly proceedings, and the two Houses of Parliament issued an order, "That Divine Service shall be performed as it is appointed by the *Acts of Parliament* of this Realm; and that all such as shall disturb that wholesome Order shall be severely punished, according to law." But, to strike at the innovations introduced by Laud, it was added, "that the Parsons, Vicars, and Curates in [the] several Parishes, shall forbear to introduce any Rites or Ceremonies that may give Offence, otherwise than those which are established by the Laws of the Land."¹³

Early in February, petitions for church reform, and especially the two principal petitions—"the Ministers' petition" and "the Root and Branch petition"—came on for discussion in the Commons. The House was practically unanimous in the judgment that sweeping reforms were necessary: the only question at issue was, how far should they go? Lord Digby declared that there was no member of the House more sensible of "the heavy grievances of church government" than himself, or "whose affections were keener to the clipping of those wings of the Prelates whereby they have mounted to such insolence"; but he was against the "Root and Branch petition," which seemed to him "a comet or blazing star raised and kindled out of the stench, out of the poisonous exhalation of a corrupted hierarchy."¹⁴ He wanted to reform Episcopacy, not to destroy it. Lord Falkland took the same side. The bishops, he said, "under pretence of uniformity [have] brought in superstition; and scandal under the titles of reverence and decency"; they have "defiled our Church by adorning our Churches"; and have separated us from foreign Protestants, "an action as unpolitick as ungodly."

¹³ L. J. (January 16, 1640-1), iv. 134. Repeated, for the County Palatine and City of Chester, April 22, 1641. *Ibid.*, iv. 225.

¹⁴ Nalson, i. 748-749.

They had let the Romanists celebrate their mass in security, and made it a crime for Puritans who objected to the ceremonies to frequent a conventicle : they were more eager that men should conform to ceremonies than that they should conform to Christianity ; and while men had been ruined for scruples, they had been only admonished for the grossest vices. He charged the bishops with betraying the civil and political rights of the nation, and of causing all the recent troubles between England and Scotland. They had been " like the hen in Æsop," fattened with barley till it could lay no more eggs ; they had been—some of them—so absolutely, directly, and cordially Papists, that it was all that fifteen hundred pounds a year could do to keep them from confessing it ; in short, their work had been " to try how much of a Papist might be brought in without Popery, and to destroy as much as they could of the Gospel, without bringing themselves in danger of being destroyed by the law." ¹⁵ But, like Lord Digby, he wished to limit the powers of the bishops, not to abolish the episcopal office. At the close of the debate it was resolved by a majority of thirty-five to refer all the petitions to one of the Committees of Religion, to which the names of several of " the Root and Branch " members were added. ¹⁶

While the House was engaged in this exciting discussion there was equal excitement outside. That the advisers of the King should have allowed him to remove the treaty with the Scots from Ripon to London, and to consent " upon any terms " that the Scottish commissioners should reside there before a peace was concluded, appeared to Lord Clarendon one of the gravest errors in the conduct of the King's affairs. ¹⁷ The Commissioners were lodged in the very heart of the city, near London Stone. The Church of St. Antholin—" a place at all times made famous by some seditious lecturer "—was assigned to them for the conduct of services after the form of the Scotch Kirk. Sunday after Sunday the church was thronged with an eager, curious, and excited congregation. Those who were fortunate enough to get a place in the morning remained in their seats to make sure of a place in the afternoon ;

¹⁵ Nalson, i. 768-769.

¹⁶ The numbers were 180 to 145. C. J. (February 9, 1640-1), ii. 81.

¹⁷ He describes it as " the last and most confounding error " of the King and his advisers. *History*, i. 233.

and from the first appearance of daylight on Sunday till night the church was never empty.¹⁸ Henderson was a great preacher, and at St. Antholin's he had the chance of making a strong impression on the City of London in favour of Presbyterianism. He was not a man to let the chance slip, or to use it unwisely. Nor was this all. He and the other Commissioners, in private conference with leading men who were impatient of the oppression of the bishops, were able to add strength and definiteness to the growing conviction that the only effectual cure for the religious grievances from which the nation was suffering was to be found in the abolition of Episcopacy and the establishment of Presbyterianism. Now that the controversy had begun, and that there seemed some danger that the House of Commons might take a middle course and limit the powers of the bishops instead of abolishing them, Henderson issued a tract entitled *The Unlawfulness and Danger of Limited Prelacie, or Perpetual Presidencie in the Church* (1641). Baillie, another Commissioner, put forth a tract with a similar title. Henderson also published an account of *The Government and Order of the Kirk of Scotland*; and G. Gillespie, another Scotchman, stated *The Grounds of Presbyterial Government in an Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*. There appeared on the other side, *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament by a dutifull Sonne of the Church* (Bishop Hall)—a defence of Episcopacy and the Liturgy. To Hall's pamphlet there was published a reply bearing a title which indicates its Presbyterian origin, *An Answer to a Booke entituled "An Humble Remonstrance," in which the Originall of Liturgy (and) Episcopacy is discussed. And Queries propounded concerning both. The Parity of Bishops and Presbyters in Scripture demonstrated. The occasion of their Imparity in Antiquity discovered. The Disparity of the Ancient and our Modern Bishops manifested. The Antiquity of Ruling Elders in the Church vindicated. The Prelaticall Church Bounded. Written by Smectymnuus.*¹⁹

The pamphlet was the production of five Puritan divines—

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, i. 266.

¹⁹ Masson (*Milton*, ii. 219) quotes the lines of Cleveland "on the appearance of the pamphlet, expressing the half-comic wonder with which the name of Smectymnuus was everywhere greeted."

"Smectymnuus! The goblin makes me start.
I' the name of Rabbi Abraham, what art?"

Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow; and the amazing name under which it was published is composed of the initials of its five authors.²⁰

On March 9 the Committee of the Commons submitted their Report, and on the next day, March 10, the House resolved, "That the legislative and judicial power of bishops, in the House of Peers in Parliament, is a great hindrance to the discharge of their spiritual function, prejudicial to the Commonwealth, and fit to be taken away, by bill." On March 11, it was further resolved, that for bishops or other clergymen to act as magistrates, or as judges in any civil courts, or to be members of the Privy Council was equally objectionable.²¹ A Bill embodying the substance of these resolutions, and entitled *A Bill to restrain Bishops, and others in Holy Orders, from intermeddling with secular affairs*, was brought in on March 30 and read a second time on April 1.²² The progress of the Bill was delayed by Strafford's trial, and it was not read a third time till May 1. On May 14, two days after the execution of Strafford, it came on for the second reading in the Lords.

During the six weeks which had passed since it was introduced into the Lower House, a large number of petitions had been sent up praying for the reform of the polity of the Church and remonstrating against its destruction. Williams, Bishop of Lincoln and Dean of Westminster,²³ had on March 1

²⁰ Young, one of the Smectymnuans, had, twenty years before, been private tutor to John Milton. Masson (*Milton*, ii. 238, 260) is of opinion that Milton contributed "rough notes or material" for about twenty pages of the pamphlet. Immediately after its appearance, Milton himself wrote a pamphlet on the controversy—*Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it: Two Books, written to a Friend* (1641). This was immediately followed by another in reply to a pamphlet of Usher's: the second pamphlet was entitled *Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and whither it may be deduc'd from the Apostolical times, by vertue of those Testimonies, which are alleg'd to that purpose in some late Treatises*. Milton issued a third pamphlet in the course of the same year under the title *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus*. This was in answer to Bishop Hall. (Masson, *ibid.*, ii. 251, 257.)

²¹ C. J. (March 10, 11, 1640-1), ii. 101, 102.

²² The title of the Bill varies slightly in form. C. J. (March 30, and April 1, 1641), ii. 114, 115.

²³ At the instigation of Laud, Williams, who was friendly to the Puritans, was suspended by the High Commission court from all his

obtained the appointment of a Committee of the House of Lords, consisting of ten bishops and thirty lay peers, to consider and report to the House on the means of restoring peace to the Church. This Committee, described as "a Committee for Innovations in religion," had invited a large number of eminent Puritans—Marshall, Calamy, and Young, three of the Smectymnuans, among them—to a conference. Many reforms were proposed by this Committee, which, had they been offered earlier, would have alleviated or prevented Puritan discontent. Ussher had a scheme for what he termed a "reduced Episcopacy."²⁴ Williams had another. The Lords were disposed to make large changes in the Church, but were not prepared to accept the revolutionary scheme of the "Root and Branch" men. Williams himself was firmly opposed to depriving the bishops of their seats in the House of Lords. On June 8 (1641) the Bishops' Exclusion Bill was rejected.²⁵

A week later, June 15, the Commons made a vigorous reply to the vote of the Upper House by resolving that "all Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Chanters, Canons and Petty Canons, and their Officers, be utterly abolished and taken away out of the Church," and "That all the Lands taken by this Bill . . . shall be employed to the Advancement of Learning and Piety; Provision being had and made, that his Majesty be no Loser in his Rents, First-Fruits, and other Duties: and a competent maintenance shall be made to the several Persons concerned, if such Persons appear not peccant and Delinquents to this House."²⁶

A still more sweeping proposal was already before the House in the form of a Bill. In the course of the month of May it became certain that the Bishops' Exclusion Bill would be thrown out in the Lords; and a Bill—for which Sir Arthur Haselrig, Sir Harry Vane, and Oliver Cromwell were responsible—was read a first time on May 27, described in its title as intended *For the utter Abolishing and Taking away of all Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans,*

offices, heavily fined, and committed to the Tower during the King's pleasure. He was kept in close imprisonment for four years. He was liberated and restored to his offices immediately after the opening of the Long Parliament.

²⁴ See Note A, pp. 404-406.

²⁵ L. J., iv. 269,

²⁶ Rushworth, iii, (1), 285; C. J., ii, 176,

Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Chanters, and Canons, and all other their under-officers out of the Church of England. On the same day it was read a second time, by a majority of 139 to 108.²⁷ The Bill was referred to a committee; and Hyde (Lord Clarendon) who was resolutely opposed to it, did his best to delay its progress. In this he was successful, and before the Bill could come on for a third reading Parliament broke up for the vacation. But the "Root and Branch" party were resolved to strike another blow at the bishops; and on August 4, Serjeant Wilde appeared before the House of Lords, and in the name of the Commons of England demanded that Curle, Bishop of Winchester, Wright of Coventry and Lichfield, Goodman of Gloucester, Hall of Exeter, Owen of St. Asaph, Pierce of Bath and Wells, Wren of Ely, Roberts of Bangor, Skinner of Bristol, Warner of Rochester, Towers of Peterborough, and Owen of Llandaff—twelve bishops in all—should be forthwith put to answer for the crimes and misdemeanours of which they had been guilty in common with Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the illegal acts of the late Convocation.

On August 7, three days after the impeachment of the bishops, the treaty with Scotland was signed and the whole position of the popular party was changed. While the Scottish army held the north of England, the King was at the mercy of the Commons; as soon as it recrossed the border he was free. On the very day that the treaty was signed the King informed the Lords that he intended to visit Scotland; this created the keenest alarm. What new scheme against the liberties of England was in the mind of the King? Did he intend to make terms of his own with the Scottish leaders? Was it even possible that the Scottish army, which during the past twelve months had been the most powerful weapon in the hands of the House of Commons in its struggle for freedom, might be seized by the King and used for his own purposes? The House was so anxious that it sat on Sunday to consider the King's announcement. It endeavoured to induce him to delay his visit; but he was immovable. On August 10 he started for the north.²⁸

²⁷ Nalson, ii. 257; C. J. (May 27, 1641), ii. 159.

²⁸ C. J. (*Die Dominico*, August 8. 164), ii. 245-246. L. J., iv. 350-353. For the King's answer, *ibid.*, 352.

On August 27—partly on account of a terrible epidemic of plague and smallpox from which London was suffering—it was resolved that there should be a recess of Parliament from September 8 to October 20. But before the Houses separated, the House of Commons thought it necessary to resolve that in all cathedral and parish churches and in all college chapels the communion table should be removed to the place in which it had stood before the recent innovations. It also ordered “that the Lord’s day shall be duly observed and sanctified; all dancing, or other sports, either before or after divine service, be forborn and restrained; and that the preaching of God’s Word be permitted in the afternoon, in the several churches and chapels of this kingdom”; “that all crucifixes, scandalous pictures of any one or more Persons of the Trinity, and all images of the Virgin Mary, shall be taken away and abolished; and that all tapers, candlesticks, and basons be removed from the communion table.” It was also ordered that bowing towards the east end of the church, or towards the communion table, and at the name of Jesus, should cease.²⁹ Some unknown member suggested that alterations should be made in the Book of Common Prayer; he was supported by Cromwell, who said that there were passages in the book to which grave and learned divines could not submit. But this was too large a question to be opened in a thin House at the close of the session, and nothing came of it. The House also declared it to be lawful for parishes to establish lectureships at their own expense.³⁰

The Lords were willing to agree to several of these orders, but objected to others; bowing at the name of Jesus, they thought, should be left to each man’s conscience, and neither prohibited nor enjoined. The orders, as a whole, were rejected in the Lords by eleven against nine. On the resolution about the lectureships the Lords were not consulted. The House of Commons published its orders on its own authority, and charged the country to wait quietly for “the Reformation intended, without any tumultuous disturbance of the worship of God and peace of the kingdom.”³¹

²⁹ Nalson, ii. 482. C. J. (September 1, 1641), ii. 279.

³⁰ Nalson, ii. 477. C. J. (September 7, 1641), ii. 280.

³¹ Nalson, ii. 482-483; and Rushworth, iii. (1), 386-387.

The two Houses rose on September 9, a day later than had been determined.

III

For a time the King was in high spirits. He was doing his best to create a party in Scotland on which he could rely to sustain his authority against the Parliamentary movement in England; and he thought that he had succeeded. He wrote to the Queen that in future troubles he could count on having a Scottish army behind him of 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse. At the same time he was scheming to secure Catholic support in Ireland. Ormond, a Protestant, and Antrim, a Catholic, were to bring together the disbanded Irish army and seize Dublin castle. It is hardly possible that the Parliamentary leaders should have had no suspicion of the royal plot against the liberties for which they had already dared and ventured so much, and for which they were ready to dare and to venture still more.

Towards the middle of October news came from the north which suggested that the King was capable of even a baser deed than conspiring with Irish Catholics against his Protestant subjects in England. The King's policy in Scotland had been checked by Argyle, who was regarded by the mass of the Scottish people as the great representative of the national cause against the tyrannical encroachments of the English advisers of the Crown. The Marquis of Hamilton had also incurred the King's displeasure. The Earl of Crawford organised a conspiracy for seizing these two great nobles and carrying them out of the country; if they were driven to it, the conspirators were not to shrink from assassinating them. One of the band betrayed the plot. There is no reason to believe that Charles was a party to this monstrous crime. But his guilt was suspected in Scotland; and when the news of the "Incident," as it was called, reached England, the Parliamentary leaders must have felt that if it was possible for Charles to have been an accomplice in the conspiracy against Argyle and Hamilton their own lives were not safe.

On November 1 news of a still more startling kind reached London, and the whole country was suddenly kindled into a passion of alarm and indignation. "While the King was in

Scotland," writes Mrs. Hutchinson, recording the popular impression of the time—

" that cursed rebellion in Ireland broke out, wherein above 200,000 were massacred in two months' space, being surprised, and many of them most inhumanly butchered and tormented; and besides the slain, abundance of poor families stripped and sent naked away out of all their possessions; and, had not the providence of God miraculously prevented the surprise of Dublin Castle the night it should have been seized, there had not been any remnant of the Protestant name left in that country." ³²

Mr. Gardiner thinks that the number slain in cold blood at the beginning of the rebellion could hardly have exceeded four or five thousand, whilst about twice that number may have perished from ill-treatment.³³ Popular rumour and excitement exaggerated the number of the victims of that appalling outbreak of wild revenge; but exaggeration of the inhuman outrages they suffered was hardly possible.

It was believed that the massacres in Ireland were to be followed by similar massacres in England. The report that there was a plot to murder more than a hundred members of the two Houses, and that the day had been fixed for a general rising, was regarded as sufficiently serious to require investigation by the Lords: for there were men still living who could remember Catesby and Guy Fawkes, and the discovery of the gunpowder concealed in the cellars under the Houses of Parliament. This investigation led to nothing; but there was conclusive evidence submitted to the House of Commons that the King had initiated a petition in which the soldiers were to express their detestation of the leading members of the House, and to declare that they were ready to march on London to suppress the tumults which those leaders had raised. The House declared by vote that it was proved " that there was a second design to bring up the Army against the Parliament, and an intention to make the Scottish army stand as neutral." ³⁴

It was in the stormy temper created by these alarms that the Commons entered on the final debate upon what has been

³² *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson* (1885), i. 133.

³³ S. R. Gardiner, *History*, x. 65, 69, and *note*.

³⁴ S. R. Gardiner, *ibid.*, x. 73-74; C. J. (November 17, 1641), ii.

called "the Grand Remonstrance." This terrible indictment of the policy of the Crown had been prepared by a Committee appointed six days after the meeting of Parliament on the motion of Lord Digby, "to draw out . . . such a Remonstrance as may be a faithful and lively representation to His Majesty of the deplorable estate of this Kingdom, and such as may happily discover unto his clear and excellent judgment the pernicious authors of it."³⁵

The Remonstrance declares that "the Root of all the evils which had not only assaulted but even overwhelmed and extinguished the Liberty, Peace and Prosperity of this Kingdom, the comfort and hopes of all His Majesty's good subjects, and exceedingly weakened and undermined the foundation and strength of his own regal throne," was "a malignant and pernicious design of subverting the Fundamental Laws and Principles of Government, upon which the Religion and Justice of this Kingdom are firmly established." It declares that—

"(1) the Actors and Promoters hereof have been the Jesuited Papists who hate the Laws, as the obstacles of that Change and subversion of Religion, which they so much long for.

"(2) The Bishops, and the corrupt part of the Clergy, who cherish formality and superstition as the natural effects and more probable supports of their own ecclesiastical tyranny and usurpation.

"(3) Such counsellors and courtiers as for private ends have engaged themselves to further the interests of some foreign Princes, or States, to the prejudice of His Majesty and the State at home."

Their policy, it was alleged, was (1) to provoke and maintain continual differences and discontents between the King and the people, upon questions of the extent of the royal prerogative, that by taking the side of the King against the men who asserted the ancient liberties of the nation they might obtain from the Crown the places of greatest trust and power in the kingdom. (2) To corrupt the purity of

³⁵ C. J. (November 10, 1640). Lord Digby's motion, as finally passed by the House, was more moderate in form. The committee was instructed "to draw out . . . some such way of Declaration, as may be a faithful Representation to this House of the Estate of the Kingdom." But the effect of his resolution and speech was not lessened by the amendment.

religious doctrine and religious worship, and to discourage and oppress those who were loyal to the true Protestant faith. (3) To unite all those parties in the kingdom that were most favourable to their designs, and to divide the friends of Protestantism and public freedom,—that is, “to cherish the Arminian part in those points wherein they agree with the Papists; to multiply and enlarge the difference between the common Protestants and those whom they call Puritans; to introduce and countenance such opinions and ceremonies, as are fittest for accommodation with Popery; to increase and maintain ignorance, looseness, and profaneness in the people.” “Papists, Arminians, and Libertines” were to be drawn into a confederation against the liberties and religion of England. (4) To create in the mind of the King hostility to Parliaments, and to incline him to obtain supplies by unconstitutional methods.³⁶

The “malignant” party had been active—according to the Remonstrance—in the time of King James; it had been checked by the quarrel with Spain which followed the failure of the scheme for marrying Charles to a Spanish princess and by his marriage with Henrietta—“the interests and counsels of (France) being not so contrary to the good of Religion and the prosperity of this Kingdom as those of Spain”; but as soon as Charles came to the throne, the party recovered strength and renewed their attempts to destroy Protestantism both in England and in France, and to ruin the civil liberties of the people of England.

Then in 206 paragraphs, beginning with the dissolution of Parliament at Oxford in the first year of the King’s reign, the document recites the crimes of which the King’s Government had been guilty, the misfortunes which his policy had brought upon his nation, and the patriotic endeavours of Parliament to punish the King’s evil advisers and to reassert the ancient rights of the nation. The “venemous” counsels of the men about the King had, however, been directed to the undoing of the good work which Parliament had effected, both for the King and the people; they had “laboured to seduce and corrupt some of the Commons’ House, to draw them into conspiracies and combinations against the liberty of Parliament”;³⁷ there

³⁶ Rushworth, iii. (1), 438–439; and Nalson, ii. 694–695.

³⁷ *Remonstrance*, 171; Rushworth, iii. (1), 449.

had been army plots, by which they had endeavoured to engage the army “for the maintenance of their wicked and traitorous designs”; they were responsible for the war with Scotland, and after the war was over they had tried to secure the neutrality of the Scottish army while the English army executed their “malice to the subversion of our religion and the dissolution of our government”; above all they had planned and provoked the insurrection and massacres in Ireland; “and in general, have kindled such a fire, as nothing but God’s infinite blessing upon the wisdom and endeavours of this State will be able to quench it.”³⁸

The principal grievances relating to religion of which the Remonstrance complained were:—

1. That “the Bishops and the rest of the clergy did triumph in the Suspensions, Excommunications, Deprivations, and Degradations of divers painful, learned and pious ministers.”³⁹

2. That the High Commission, assisted by the King’s Council, “grew to such excess of sharpness and severity as was not much less than the Roman Inquisition.”⁴⁰

3. That by the tyranny of the Bishops and their courts, in every part of the country tradesmen and working people were impoverished and large numbers of them driven either to New England or to Holland.⁴¹

4. That the clergy who most readily obtained preferment were those who were most active “in promoting superstition, most virulent in railing against godliness and honesty.”

5. That the sermons delivered before His Majesty on great and solemn occasions were devoted to exalting the royal prerogative and diminishing the authority of the Law.

6. That the men who were endeavouring to maintain the religion, laws, and liberties of the kingdom were, in this way, made odious, and were also removed from the Commission of the Peace and all other public employments.⁴²

7. That an attempt had been made to introduce “Popish Superstitions and Innovations,” the “new Canons and a new Liturgy,” into Scotland.⁴³

³⁸ *Remonstrance*, 172-179; Rushworth, iii. (1), 449.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 51; Rushworth, *ibid.*, 442.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 52; Rushworth, *ibid.*, 442-443.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 53-54; Rushworth, *ibid.*, 443.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 56-58; Rushworth, *ibid.*, 443.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 65-66; Rushworth, *ibid.*, 443.

8. That Convocation, "by an unheard-of presumption," had continued to sit after the dissolution of Parliament, and had passed canons which contained "many matters contrary to the King's prerogative, to the fundamental laws and statutes of the realm, to the right of Parliaments, to the property and liberty of the subject, and matters tending to sedition, and of dangerous consequence." That this same Convocation "had imposed a new Oath upon divers of His Majesty's subjects . . . for maintenance of their own tyranny."⁴⁴

9. That (1) "the Popish party enjoyed such exemptions from Penal Laws, as amounted to a Toleration, besides many other encouragements and Court favours." (2) "They had a Secretary of State, Sir Francis Windebank, a powerful agent for speeding all their desires." (3) They had "A Pope's Nuncio residing here, to act and govern them according to such influences as he received from Rome, and to intercede for them with the most powerful concurrence of the foreign Princes of that religion." (4) "By his authority the Papists of all sorts, Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy, were convocated after the manner of a Parliament." (5) "New Jurisdictions were erected of Romish Archbishops, Taxes levied, another State moulded within this State, independent in government, contrary in interest and affection, . . . in this posture waiting for an opportunity by force to destroy those whom they could not hope to seduce," and that for effecting this end "they were strengthened with arms and munition," and "encouraged by superstitious prayers, enjoined by the Nuncio to be weekly made for the prosperity of some great Design." (6) "And such power had they at Court, that secretly a Commission was issued out, or intended to be issued, to some great men of that profession, for the levying of soldiers, and to command and employ them according to private instructions, which we doubt were framed for the advantage of those who were the contrivers of them."⁴⁵

Again and again the Remonstrance declares that the Commons had no desire to limit the ancient powers of the Crown. Nor was it their intention, as their enemies alleged—

"to abolish all Church Government, and leave every man to his own fancy, for the service and worship of God, absolving him

⁴⁴ *Remonstrance*, 85-86; Rushworth, iii. (1), 444-445.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 88-94; Rushworth, *ibid.*, 445.

of that obedience which he owes under God unto his Majesty ; whom we know to be intrusted with the Ecclesiastical Law as well as with the Temporal, to regulate all the members of the Church of England, *by such Rules of Order and Discipline as are established by Parliament ; which is his great Council, in all affairs both in Church and State.*"

" We do here declare that it is far from our Purpose or Desire to let loose the golden Reins of Discipline and Government in the Church, to leave private Persons or particular Congregations to take up what Form of Divine service they please, for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the Realm a conformity to that Order which the Laws enjoin according to the Word of God. And we desire to unburthen the Consciences of Men of needless and superstitious Ceremonies, suppress Innovations, and take away the Monuments of Idolatry."

" And the better to effect the intended Reformation, we desire there may be a General Synod of the most grave, pious, learned and judicious Divines of this Island ; assisted with some from Foreign Parts, professing the same Religion with us ; who may consider of all things necessary for the Peace and good Government of the Church, and represent the Results of their Consultations unto Parliament, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the Stamp of Authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the Kingdom."⁴⁶

At midnight on November 22, after an excited debate which had lasted from noon, the vote was taken : the Ayes were 159 ; the Noes 148. The great reforms which had been carried in the earlier months of the Long Parliament had been supported by the whole strength of the House ; the party that was resolved, at all costs, to break the power of the " malignants " could now command a majority of only eleven.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Remonstrance*, 183, 185-186 ; Rushworth, iii. (1), 450.

⁴⁷ C. J., ii. 322. " In the general debate the speeches of the Royalist-Episcopalian party are disappointing to the reader. Hyde positively declared that the narrative part of the Remonstrance was true, and in his opinion modestly expressed, but that he thought it a pity to go back so far in the history of the reign. Falkland complained of the hard measure dealt out to the bishops and Arminians. Dering took the same line. Many bishops, he said, had brought in superstition, but not one idolatry. Culpepper . . . argued that the Commons had no right to draw up such a Remonstrance without the concurrence of the Lords, and no right at all to send it abroad amongst the people. Such a course, he said, was ' dangerous to the public peace.' Such arguments were effective enough as criticism ; but they were not the arguments of statesmen. Not one of these speakers even sketched out a policy for the future. Not one of them took any comprehensive view

The House also adopted a petition to the King, praying for redress of the grievances recited in the Remonstrance, and especially beseeching him to preserve in a Parliamentary way "the peace and safety of the Kingdom from the malicious designs of the Popish party." The petition went on to ask that the bishops might be deprived of their votes in Parliament, that their immoderate power over the clergy might be abridged, and that unnecessary ceremonies might be abolished in order that loyal subjects who held "the same fundamental truths against the Papists" might be united. It also prayed the King to dismiss his evil counsellors, and to take such men to be near him in places of trust as Parliament could confide in. Finally it begged his Majesty not to alienate any of the forfeited lands that would come to the Crown on account of the insurrection in Ireland, but to retain them that they might increase the royal revenue and give some satisfaction to his Majesty's English subjects for the cost of the Irish war.⁴⁸

On December 1, a committee of members presented the Remonstrance and the petition to the King.⁴⁹ A fortnight later, before the King had made his formal reply, the Commons resolved that the Remonstrance should be printed. It was meant to be an appeal, not to the Crown, but to the nation.⁵⁰

IV

The publication of the Remonstrance was deeply resented by the King, and during the month of December he had still graver reasons for regarding with bitter hostility the leaders of the country party. One of the clauses of the Bill, as passed by the Commons, authorising the impressment of soldiers for Ireland, denied the right of the King to compel men to military

of the difficulties of the situation, or gave the slightest hint of the manner in which he proposed to deal with them. Against such speakers as these Pym's defence was easy. 'The honour of the King,' he said, 'lies in the safety of the people, and we must tell the truth. The plots have been very near the King, all driven home to the Court and the Popish party.' S. R. Gardiner, *History*, x. 75. The text of the *Remonstrance* is given in his *Constitutional Documents* (1625-1660), 202-232.

⁴⁸ The King had already promised to give to the City of London the forfeited estates in the north of Ireland. For the petition, see Rushworth, iii. (1), 437-438.

⁴⁹ C. J., ii. 330.

⁵⁰ C. J. (December 15, 1641), ii. 344.

service beyond the limits of their own county, except to resist foreign invasion. The clause was challenged in the Lords as a limitation of the ancient prerogatives of the Crown: the leaders of the Commons met the challenge by introducing a Bill taking the command of the militia out of the hands of the King and transferring it to a Lord General to be appointed by Parliament; the Lord General was to have power to raise men, to levy money to pay them, and to execute martial law. The navy was to be under the command of a Lord Admiral similarly appointed and with similar powers.⁵¹

At last the King resolved to strike an effective blow at the men who were limiting his power and thwarting his policy. On January 4 (1641-2) he went down in person to the House of Commons, followed by three or four hundred armed men, with the intention of arresting Hampden, Pym, Holles, Haselrig, and Strode for high treason. But "all the birds had flown." "I assure you," he said, "on the word of a King, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other."⁵² But Pym, Hampden, and their party had learnt long before this the true worth of "the word of a King." A peaceful settlement of the quarrel between the Commons and the Crown had now become hopeless. After the Remonstrance it was hardly possible for the King to trust the House of Commons; after the attempt to seize the Five Members it was hardly possible for the House of Commons to trust the King.

V

One important ecclesiastical measure was passed in the usual constitutional manner before the outbreak of the Civil War. On October 21, a few days after the reassembling of Parliament, a new Bill was brought in for excluding bishops from the House of Lords and removing the clergy of all ranks from the Commission of the Peace and other positions of temporal authority. It was not seriously opposed; but if it had gone up to the peers at once, it would probably have been

⁵¹ L. J. (December 4 and 6, 1641), iv. 462-463. C. J. (December 7, 1641), ii. 334. S. R. Gardiner, *History*, x. 95-96,

⁵² Rushworth, iii, (1), 478.

rejected like the similar Bill of the previous summer. But its progress was delayed, and the bishops themselves by an act of singular indiscretion secured its success. The neighbourhood of the two Houses had been filled for some days with a turbulent mob, and members of both Houses belonging to the court party were exposed to insult. On December 28, one of the Royalist peers moved a resolution declaring that, in consequence of the peril of popular violence, Parliament was not free. The motion was plainly a very dangerous one. If Parliament was not free, the King might declare that none of its recent proceedings were valid; he might be liberated from the Act which protected it against dissolution, or he might adjourn it to Oxford or to some other place where it would no longer be protected by popular enthusiasm and support. The motion was rejected by a majority of four. On December 30 a protest signed by twelve of the bishops was presented to the Lords, declaring that they could not attend the House without danger to their lives, and protesting that all laws, orders, votes, and resolutions made in their absence were "null and of none effect."

After their vote two days before, the Lords regarded the action of the bishops as an intolerable insult, and at once sent the protest to the Commons as "containing matters of high and dangerous consequence . . . and [such as] requires a speedy and sudden resolution; the Petition extending to the deep intrenching upon the fundamental Privileges and Being of Parliament."⁵³

The "resolution" taken by the Commons was sufficiently "speedy and sudden" to satisfy the peers. It was resolved the same day to impeach the twelve bishops of high treason for endeavouring to subvert the fundamental laws and being of Parliament. The same night ten of them were in the Tower, and the other two, "in regard of their age, and indeed of the worthy parts of one of them, the learned bishop of Durham," were committed to the custody of the Black Rod.⁵⁴

On February 6 the Bishops' Exclusion Bill passed the Lords. On February 13 it received the royal assent by commission. The King was travelling with the Queen to

⁵³ L. J., iv. 496-497. Only eleven signatures appear in this place; Williams's (Peterborough) signature is given in C. J., ii. 363.

⁵⁴ L. J., iv. 498-499; Rushworth, iii, (1), 468.

Dover, from which port she was to cross to France. Sir John Colepepper told her that unless she could induce the King to give his assent to the Bill, there was reason to fear that she might be prevented from leaving the kingdom. This so terrified her that she entreated the King to give way, and, as usual, the Queen was successful with him after he had resisted the counsel of Parliament and of his own trusted advisers.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Clarendon, *Life*, i. 94-95.

CHAPTER VI

CONGREGATIONALISTS IN THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

THE KING'S STANDARD SET UP AT NOTTINGHAM—HIS SPEECH AND PROTESTATION—A CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE BECOMES A RELIGIOUS WAR—EPISCOPACY ABOLISHED BY PARLIAMENT—WHAT IS TO TAKE ITS PLACE?—HENDERSON IN SCOTLAND ADVISES DELAY—THE KING REFUSES TO SUMMON A SYNOD OF DIVINES—PARLIAMENT, AS SUPREME AUTHORITY, CONVENES THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY—ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND UNITE IN THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT—CHURCH PARTIES IN THE ASSEMBLY—THE ASSEMBLY DIRECTED TO DEAL WITH THE DISCIPLINE AND LITURGY OF THE CHURCH—CHURCH OFFICERS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS—RULES OF ORDINATION—NATURE OF THE CHURCH—PURITY OF COMMUNION—INDEPENDENTS AND PRESBYTERIANS DIVIDED—THE RISE OF STRANGE SECTS LEADS TO REACTION IN FAVOUR OF AUTHORITY—DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN UNLIMITED TOLERATION—TRIUMPH OF PRESBYTERIANISM—THE "FIVE DISSENTING BRETHREN" APPEAL TO PARLIAMENT—THEIR "APOLOGETICALL NARRATION"—THEIR PRINCIPLES AND POLICY—CONGREGATIONALISM AND RECALCITRANT CHURCHES—PHILIP NYE AND THE SUPREMACY OF THE CIVIL POWER—THE STATE ENDANGERED BY A HIGHLY ORGANISED CHURCH WITHIN IT—THE PRESBYTERIAN SCHEME CARRIED—THE DIRECTORY FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP COMPLETED, AND PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT.

ON August 22, 1642,¹ Charles set up his standard at Nottingham, and the herald-at-arms read a Proclamation requiring the aid and assistance of the King's loving subjects

¹ This is the date given in Rushworth, iii. (1), 783, and generally adopted. Clarendon says: "According to the proclamation, upon the twenty-fifth day of August, the standard was erected, about six of the clock in the evening of a very stormy and tempestuous day. . . . A general sadness covered the whole town, and the King himself appeared more melancholique than he used to be. The standard itself was blown down the same night it had been set up, by a very strong and unruly wind, and could not be fixed again in a day or two, till the tempest was allayed. And this was the melancholique state of the King's affairs when the standard was set up." *History*, ii. 318. S. R. Gardiner (*History*, x. 219) thinks that the standard was blown down a week later, and that "Clarendon ante-dated the story for the sake of effect."

to enable him to suppress the rebellion of the Earl of Essex, who, under the orders of Parliament, was raising forces against his authority. What temper Charles desired to encourage in the Royalist party is shown by a speech which he delivered a month later at the head of the army. He said :—

“ Your conscience and your loyalty hath brought you here to fight for your religion, your king, and the laws of the land. You shall meet with no enemies but traitors, most of them Brownists, anabaptists, and atheists ; such who desire to destroy both church and state and who have already condemned you to ruin for being loyal to us.”²

In a “ Protestation ” made at the same time, the King began by saying :—

“ I do promise in the presence of Almighty God, and as I hope for his blessing and protection, that I will, to the utmost of my power, defend and maintain *the true reformed protestant religion established in the church of England*, and by the grace of God, in the same will live and die.”

Having made this solemn vow to defend the Church, he added in less impressive terms :—

“ I desire to govern by the known laws of the land, and that the liberty and property of the subject may be by them preserved with the same care as my own just rights. And if it please God, by a blessing upon the army, raised for my necessary defence, to preserve me from this rebellion, I do faithfully and solemnly promise to maintain the just privileges of parliament, and to govern by the known laws of the land to my utmost power ; and particularly, to observe inviolably the laws consented to by me this parliament.”³

The principal object of Pym and Hampden and the other leaders of the country party had been to limit the arbitrary power of the Crown, and to secure adequate guarantees for public freedom. They also cared for the reformation of religion ; but when they came to Westminster in November, 1640, they would have been satisfied with very moderate changes in the government and the liturgy of the English Church. They soon discovered that the bishops and the episcopal

² Between Stafford and Wellington, September 19, 1642. Clarendon, *ibid.*, ii. 339.

³ Clarendon, *ibid.*, ii. 339-340.

party were the main strength of the King, and that religious "grievances" had created even a deeper and more passionate resentment than the levying of ship-money, or the long suspension of Parliamentary government. Only by an alliance with Puritan discontent—with which, however, they honestly sympathised—was it possible for the Parliamentary leaders to check the encroachments of the Crown on the civil liberties of the nation. Charles, on the other hand, determined to place the throne under the shelter of the Prayer-Book and the bishops. Tens of thousands of Englishmen, who shared the dissatisfaction which he had provoked by his civil policy, loved the Church more than they loved civil freedom, and condoned all the crimes of which the King had been guilty, because they believed—and rightly believed—that Charles was honestly loyal to the Church of England, as established by law, and was resolved, at all costs, to defend it against Presbyterians, Brownists, Anabaptists, and all the frightful hordes of sectaries and heretics that an evil time had brought forth. A constitutional struggle had become a religious war.

II

For a long time the English Church had been in a condition of chaos. The High Commission Court, the most powerful instrument for maintaining conformity, had sat for the last time ten days or a fortnight before the meeting of the Long Parliament. Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been in prison since the end of December, 1640. Twelve of the bishops had been in prison since December, 1641. The only effective church discipline was being administered by Parliament, principally by a Committee of the House of Commons, which was removing from their livings clergymen found guilty of moral offences.⁴ Indeed, within three weeks after the King's standard was set up outside the walls of Nottingham Castle, Parliament, in both Houses, had pronounced an emphatic condemnation of Episcopacy, and had declared for its abolition. On September 1, the House of Commons, in answer to the Declaration of the General Assembly of Scotland

⁴ Fuller's "cautious account" of this "great and general purgation of the clergy" (vi. 267-273) carefully distinguishes the various grounds reasonable and unreasonable, for such expulsion.

about church government, *resolved* "that the government of the Church of England by Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers, hath been found, by long experience, to be a great impediment to the perfect reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and government of this Kingdom: and this House doth resolve that the same shall be done away."⁵ And on September 10, the House of Lords, in dealing with the same business, added words that strengthened the force of the original draft submitted to them.⁶ But if the government of the Church by archbishops and bishops was to be swept away, it was necessary to establish some other form of church polity to take its place.

III

What steps should be taken in order to reorganise the ecclesiastical establishment had been declared by the House of Commons in the Grand Remonstrance. "A General Synod" was to be convened "of the most grave, pious, learned, and judicious divines of this island; assisted with some from foreign parts, professing the same religion with us; who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church, and represent the results of their consultations unto the Parliament, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the stamp of authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the kingdom."⁷ In Scotland this determination of the English Parliament had created a strong hope that the two kingdoms might accept a common order of religious worship and church government. The Scottish Assembly, in the autumn of 1641, on the motion of Henderson, adopted a motion for "drawing up a Confession of Faith, a Catechism, a Directory for all parts of the Public Worship, and a Platform of Government, wherein possibly England and we might agree."⁸ In April of the following year, Henderson, with characteristic sagacity, had come to the conclusion that the scheme for bringing the Churches of

⁵ C. J. (Sept. 1, 1642), ii. 747-748.

⁶ L. J. (Sept. 10, 1642), v. 350.

⁷ Remonstrance, § 186. Rushworth, iii. (1), 450.

⁸ R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, i. 365.

the two nations together might be set back by hasty action on this resolution. He argued that England would not be likely to accept a Scheme of Church Government, a Confession of Faith, and a Liturgy or Directory, drawn up by Scottish divines, and that it would be well for representatives of both countries to meet and do the work together. Or, if such a meeting was not soon secured, it would be wise to wait until England had adopted her scheme of reformation, and then to consider whether it was possible for Scotland to accept it.⁹

At the very time when Henderson was showing the reason for delay on the side of Scotland, the English Parliament was taking the first step for calling the "Synod" proposed in the Grand Remonstrance; and on May 9, 1642, a Bill was brought into the House of Commons "for calling an Assembly of godly and learned Divines, to be consulted with by the Parliament, for the settling of the Government and Liturgy of the Church, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from false aspersions and interpretations."¹⁰ Before the Bill was introduced, it had been ordered that "the names of such divines as shall be thought fit to be consulted with concerning the matter of the Church" should be laid before the House. The members for each English county—including the members for the boroughs in the county as well as the members for the county itself—submitted two names; the members for each Welsh county submitted one; names were also proposed for London, and for Oxford and Cambridge. A list of 105 was approved by the House and inserted in the Bill. The Lords added fourteen; and the Bill passed both Houses on June 3, 1642.¹¹

The King at this time was at York, preparing for war; but negotiations were still going on between him and Parliament. In "the Humble Petition and Advice" of the two Houses, sent to Charles on June 2, they prayed that he would consent to the calling of the proposed Assembly; but this

⁹ Henderson to R. Baillie; *ibid.*, ii. 2; and his letter in *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1642.*

¹⁰ C. J., ii. 565, and (May 19, 1642), ii. 579.

¹¹ L. J., v. 101. It is not necessary to attempt to adjust the lists of members as printed with the total here given, 119. Fuller, vi. 247, is content to say "about 120."

was accompanied with other propositions which were wholly intolerable to him.¹² He replied at great length to the petition ; but the substance of all that he had to say was contained in four words—*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*. He is willing to govern by the ancient laws, but refuses to surrender any of the prerogatives of his ancestors ; it is Parliament—not he—that is violating the Constitution. As to the Assembly of Divines,—if Parliament should advise him to call “ a national synod which may duly examine such ceremonies as give just cause of offence to any,” he is ready to take the advice into consideration, and he is quite willing to deal gently with tender consciences ; but he discourages all hope that he concurs with Parliament in any large scheme for reforming the Church.¹³ The Bill did not receive the royal assent.

A second Bill calling an Assembly of Divines was passed by the two Houses in October, 1642 ; and a third in January, 1642--3 ;¹⁴ and while the King was at Oxford in the winter, another attempt was made, but without success, to induce him to allow it to become law. In the early summer of 1643 the two Houses resolved to act in this business without the concurrence of the Crown, and to convene the Assembly by Ordinance, on their own authority. The Ordinance is dated June 12, 1643. It recites the names of 119—or rather 120 divines—who, with few exceptions, were the men that had been nominated a year before ; and also the names of ten peers nominated by the House of Lords, and twenty commoners nominated by their own House. They are directed to meet at Westminster, in Henry VII.'s chapel, on July 1, 1643. They are to “ confer and treat among themselves of such matters and things touching and concerning the Liturgy and discipline and Government of the Church of England, or the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the same from all false aspersions and misconstructions *as shall be proposed to them by both or either of the said Houses of Parliament, and no other* ; and to deliver their

¹² This petition contained the famous “ nineteen propositions.” Clarendon, *History*, ii. 209–213. Section 8 refers to the proposed Assembly, but includes other matters of church reformation. Given by S. R. Gardiner, in *Constitutional Documents* (1625–1660), 249–254.

¹³ Rushworth, iii. (1), (*Propositions*), 722–724 ; (*The King's Answer*), 725–735.

¹⁴ C. J. (October 15, 1642), ii. 809 ; (January 6, 1642–3), *ibid.*, 916. L. J. (October 19, 1642), v. 406 ; (Jan. 20, 1642–3), *ibid.*, 564.

opinions or advices of or touching the matters aforesaid, as shall be most agreeable to the word of God, to both or either of the said Houses from time to time, in such manner and sort as by either or both of the said Houses of Parliament shall be required." The Ordinance appoints William Twisse, Doctor in Divinity, to sit in the chair, as prolocutor of the Assembly. If he dies or is prevented by illness or any other cause from discharging his duty, Parliament is to appoint his successor. And if any vacancies occur in the Assembly from any cause, they are to be filled up by Parliament.¹⁵

The Ordinance is a striking illustration of the firmness with which Parliament had grasped the central principle which had been established at the English Reformation. Pym and the Parliamentary leaders followed in the steps of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth. The polity of the English Church, its Articles, its Liturgy, its Canons, derived all their authority from the Crown as the supreme power in the English State. The Church might have power to decree rites and ceremonies ; but the Church was a body of which the Sovereign was the supreme Governor—not a separate and independent organisation—and the Sovereign acted with the consent of Parliament. The clergy might be consulted on questions of doctrine, ritual, and ecclesiastical regulation ; but they had exhausted their power when they had given their advice. Ecclesiastical legislation was the work of the Crown and of Parliament.

Now that Parliament had broken with the King, it assumed the supremacy which inhered in the Sovereign. It named the members of the Assembly—adding thirty laymen to the 120 divines. It named the prolocutor.¹⁶ The Assembly was to consider only those matters which from time to time might be submitted to it by Parliament ; and on such matters it was simply to give advice which Parliament would be at liberty to accept or to reject. To prevent the possibility of mistake, the document creating and calling the Assembly closed with these peremptory words—" Provided

¹⁵ Rushworth, iii. (2), 337-339. Scobell, 42-44.

¹⁶ When the Assembly met, Parliament further directed it to choose two assessors who were to be associated with the prolocutor and to preside in his absence ; it named the " scribes " or secretaries who were to keep the minutes ; and it also laid down a series of bye-laws by which the meetings of the Assembly were to be regulated. Lightfoot, *Works*, xiii. 3-4.

always, that this Ordinance, or anything therein contained, shall not give unto the persons aforesaid, or any of them, nor shall they in this Assembly assume to exercise, any jurisdiction, power, or authority ecclesiastical whatsoever, or any other power than is herein particularly expressed."¹⁷

IV

As nearly all the divines named in the Ordinance were nominated at a time when there was some faint hope of an arrangement with the King, several of them were bishops and several more were favourable to Episcopacy. By the authority of the Lords, according to Clarendon, "a few very reverend and worthy men" were added to those chosen by the Commons, but "there were not above twenty who were not declared and avowed enemies to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England."¹⁸ Among the twenty were some very eminent men—Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh; Brownrigge, Bishop of Exeter; Westfield, Bishop of Bristol; Featley, Hacket, Hammond, Holdsworth, Morley, Nicholson, Saunderson, and Ward. But only two or three of them ever appeared in the Assembly. The Bishop of Bristol was one of the very few that attended at all, and for his recognition of the authority of the Ordinance of Parliament he was allowed to retain the income of his see till his death. He did not retain it long; he died June 25, 1644.¹⁹ Dr. Featley was the only episcopal divine who remained in the Assembly after the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant. He was expelled and imprisoned on the charge of revealing the proceedings in a correspondence with Archbishop Ussher, who was at Oxford. The "Ordinance" obliged the members of the Assembly "not to divulge by writing, or printing, or otherwise," their "opinions and advises" touching the matters proposed to them by Parliament, "without the consent of both or either Houses of Parliament."²⁰

The great majority of the Assembly were Presbyterians. The most eminent of their leaders before the arrival of the

¹⁷ Rushworth, iii. (2), 339. The members of the Assembly were allowed the sum of four shillings for every day of attendance, and for ten days before and after each period of attendance (*ibid.*).

¹⁸ Clarendon, *History*, ii. 88.

¹⁹ Masson, *Milton*, ii. 522.

²⁰ Rushworth, iii. (2), 338.

Scotch commissioners were the Smectymnuans—Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow; Cawdry, Ash, Arrowsmith, Burgess, Seaman, and Herle.

Oliver Cromwell, Arthur Hazelrig, and a considerable number of other persons of distinction had endeavoured to secure a real and effective representation of the Congregationalists. They tried, but without success, to induce the Churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut to send over some of their more eminent ministers. Against nearly a hundred Presbyterian divines there were five conspicuous Congregationalists—Philip Nye, Thomas Goodwin, William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughs, and Sidrach Simpson. These were, however, occasionally supported by William Greenhill of Stepney,²¹ William Carter, Peter Sterry, and Joseph Caryl. They had also strong allies in Sir Harry Vane, Oliver St. John, and Lord Saye and Sele.²²

There was a third party in the Assembly, of which Selden and Whitelock among the laymen, and Coleman and Lightfoot among the divines, were the leaders. These were called Erastians. Erastus was an eminent physician, born in Switzerland in 1524. He held the chair of physic, first at Heidelberg, then at Basle. He was also a learned theologian. He believed and taught that the Church has no authority to excommunicate, suspend, or censure its members; that all ecclesiastical sentences must involve *civil* penalties, and that civil penalties ought to be inflicted only by the civil magistrate. The Erastians in the Assembly believed with Hooker that every Englishman is necessarily a member of the English Church; and they insisted that in the Church, as in the nation, the magistrate is supreme.

V

On Saturday, July 1, the members of the Assembly and an immense congregation met in Westminster Abbey, and

²¹ Jeremiah Burroughs preached at Stepney in the morning at seven o'clock; Greenhill preached in the afternoon at three. Burroughs was called "the Morning Star of Stepney," and Greenhill "the Evening Star." Masson, *Milton*, ii. 516, 518.

²² For a brief account of the "Five Dissenting Brethren," see Note A, pp. 287-288.

Dr. Twisse preached a sermon on John xiv. 18: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." "He much bemoaned that one thing was wanting, namely, the royal assent to give comfort and encouragement to them. Yet he hoped that by the efficacy of their fervent prayers it might in due time be obtained, and that a happy union might be procured betwixt him [the King] and the Parliament."²³ When the roll was called in Henry VII.'s chapel after the sermon, sixty-nine of the clerical members answered to their names. Fuller remarks that most of them appeared in "coats and cloaks, of several forms and fashions," so that the Bishop of Bristol and a few other Episcopalians who wore their gowns and canonical habits seemed to be "the only nonconformists among them."²⁴

By the direction of the two Houses of Parliament the Assembly began its work with a revision of the Thirty-nine Articles; and the first fifteen were discussed before the end of September. Then the Assembly was directed to take in hand questions which were certain to occasion much controversy and trouble.

VI

During the spring and summer of 1643 the fortunes of the war had been favourable to the King, and the Parliamentary leaders had resolved to appeal to Scotland for help. Commissioners from Parliament and from the Westminster Assembly reached Edinburgh early in August, and had a cordial reception both from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and from the Scottish Convention of Estates. It was the wish of the English commissioners to form a league with the Scotch for the defence of the civil liberties of both nations; but the Scottish leaders insisted that the national movement of Scotland against the King had been religious in its origin, and was directed to the protection of the Scottish Church against the tyranny of prelacy. Sir Harry Vane, who was one of the English commissioners, suggested that the two countries should unite for the defence both of their civil liberties and of the purity of the Gospel. The suggestion was

²³ Fuller, vi. 250.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

accepted, and Alexander Henderson drew up the “Solemn League and Covenant.” England and Scotland were to be confederated in a civil *League* against the encroachments of the Crown upon their constitutional rights and liberties ; and in a religious *Covenant* for the maintenance in the Churches of both countries of the supreme authority of the Word of God. This memorable document was described as—

“ A SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT for Reformation and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Happiness of the King, and the Peace and Safety of the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. . . . ”

It ran in the following terms :---

“ We, noblemen, barons, knights, gentlemen, citizens, burgesses, ministers of the Gospel, and commons of all sorts, in the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland, by the providence of God living under one king, and being of one reformed religion ; having before our eyes the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the honour and happiness of the King’s Majesty and his posterity, and the true public liberty, safety and peace of the kingdoms, wherein every one’s private condition is included ; . . . have . . . after mature deliberation, resolved and determined to enter into a Mutual and Solemn League and Covenant, wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself, with our hands lifted up to the Most High God, do swear,—

“ I. That we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavour, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies ; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches ; and we shall endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confessing of Faith, Form of Church-Government, Directory for Worship and Catechising ; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

“ II. That we shall in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is, Church-government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy), superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness ; lest we partake in other men’s sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their

plagues; and that the Lord may be One, and His Name One, in the three kingdoms.

“III. We shall, with the same sincerity, reality and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour, with our estates and lives, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms; and to preserve and defend the King’s Majesty’s person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion, and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty’s just power and greatness.”

The document closes with an affecting acknowledgment of national and personal sins.

“And because these kingdoms are guilty of many sins and provocations against GOD, and his SON, JESUS CHRIST, as is too manifest by our present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof: we profess and declare, before God and the world, our unfeigned desire to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of these kingdoms; especially, that we have not, as we ought, valued the inestimable benefit of the Gospel; that we have not laboured for the purity and power thereof; and that we have not endeavoured to receive Christ in our hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in our lives; which are the causes of other sins and transgressions, so much abounding amongst us; and our true and unfeigned purpose, desire, and endeavour, for ourselves, and all others under our power and charge, both in publick and private, in all duties we owe to GOD and man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of a real reformation; that the Lord may turn away his wrath and heavy indignation, and establish these Churches and kingdoms in truth and peace. And this Covenant we make in the presence of ALMIGHTY GOD, the Searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at that Great Day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; most humbly beseeching the LORD to strengthen us by his HOLY SPIRIT for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with such success, as may be a deliverance and safety to his people, and encouragement to the Christian Churches groaning under, or in danger of the yoke of antichristian tyranny, to join in the same or like association and covenant, to the glory of God, the enlargement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the peace and tranquillity of Christian kingdoms and commonwealths.”²⁵

The Solemn League and Covenant was submitted to the General Assembly of the Scotch Church and to the Scottish

²⁵ Rushworth, iii. (2) 478-479, Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly*, 122-125. Also in S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents* (1625-1660), 187-190.

Convention of Estates on August 17. It was received with a passion of enthusiasm which spread rapidly through all Scotland. A copy was sent to the English Parliament and to the Westminster Assembly. Commissioners were appointed to explain the document, and also to take part with the Westminster divines in considering what alterations should be made in the English Church. The commissioners who actually attended the Assembly were Lord Maitland and Johnston of Warriston, both of them elders of the Church of Scotland, and four ministers, Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford, and Baillie. They took part in the debates, but did not vote. The terms of the League and Covenant were discussed for several days in Henry VII.'s chapel, and a few verbal changes were made which were afterwards accepted by the Scotch commissioners. On September 25, the House of Commons, the divines of the Westminster Assembly, and the commissioners from Scotland met in St. Margaret's, Westminster. After prayer had been offered by Mr. White of Dorchester, Philip Nye and Alexander Henderson delivered suitable and impressive speeches. The Covenant was then read by Mr. Nye from the pulpit, "slowly and aloud, pausing at the close of every article, while the whole audience of statesmen and divines arose, and, with their right hands held up to heaven, worshipped the great name of God and gave their sacred pledge." Then 228 members of the House of Commons—Oliver Cromwell among them—put their names to the Covenant on one roll of parchment, and the members of the Assembly of Divines on another; and when the signing was over, the great ceremonial closed with prayer and praise.²⁶

On October 9 the King, who was at Oxford, issued a Proclamation, in which he describes the Covenant as making "specious expressions of piety and religion," but as being "in truth nothing else but a traitorous and seditious combination against us, and the established Religion and Laws of this Kingdom, in pursuance of a traitorous design and endeavour to bring in Foreign Force to invade this Kingdom." All the King's loving subjects are therefore charged to refuse to take it; and those who "impose, administer or tender" it are

²⁶ Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly*, 120-121; from Rushworth, iii. (2) 475; and for the names of the Commons that then took the Covenant, *ibid.*, 480-481.

warned that they will answer for it "at their utmost and extremest perils."²⁷

On October 15, notwithstanding the King's proclamation, the Covenant was taken by the Lords, and on the following Sunday by the congregations in and around London. In February, 1643-4, an order was issued by Parliament requiring the Covenant to be taken throughout England by all persons over eighteen years of age. The Covenant was now the test of loyalty to Parliament. All who refused it were "malig-nants."

VI

On October 12, 1643, when the Assembly was "very busy upon the sixteenth of the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and upon that clause of it which mentioneth *departing from grace*, there came," says Lightfoot, "an order to us from both Houses of Parliament enjoining our speedy taking in hand the discipline and liturgy of the Church." This Order required the Assembly "to confer and treat among themselves, of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other reformed churches abroad." It also required the Assembly to consider "the Directory of worship or liturgy to be hereafter in the Church."²⁸

Goodwin, on behalf of the Independents, pressed the Assembly to begin with discussing the question whether the Scriptures contain a rule of church government. Lightfoot, on behalf of the Erastians, moved that, first of all, they should agree upon a definition of a Church. Both these questions were likely to split the Assembly at once into hostile and irreconcilable parties, and after long debate it was resolved to begin with the consideration of *Church Officers and their Functions*. This subject occupied nearly three months.²⁹

¶ In discussing the functions of *apostles*, Lightfoot contended that "the power of the Keys" meant nothing more than the authority to declare Christian doctrine; the Independents, while

²⁷ Rushworth, iii. (2), 482.

²⁸ Lightfoot, *Journal of the Assembly of Divines, Works*, xiii. 17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

insisting that the power included authority to exercise church discipline, maintained that this authority was not committed to the apostles officially, but as officers of the Church.³⁰

When the functions of the *pastor* were discussed, nearly three days were spent in considering whether it was part of the pastor's official duty to read the Scriptures in the Church, or whether this duty should be entrusted to an official Reader, or whether it might be performed by any private member of the Church. It was concluded that the reading of the Scriptures in public worship is one of the official duties of the pastor. There was another long discussion on the questions whether, according to the Congregational theory, the office of doctor or teacher, as distinct from that of pastor, was of divine institution, and whether the two offices should exist in every Church. The decision went against the Congregationalists. A still longer discussion—lasting from November 22 to December 14—was raised by the proposition, “That besides those presbyters that rule well and labour in the word and doctrine, there be other presbyters who especially apply themselves to ruling, though they labour not in the word and doctrine.”³¹ The Erastians, who had no belief in ecclesiastical rulers of any kind, were joined in their resistance to this proposition by many English divines, to whom “ruling divines” had an unfamiliar and foreign aspect. The Congregationalists in the Assembly regarded the institution with doubt; there was danger that “ruling elders” would usurp the authority that belonged to the whole Church; and yet Philip Nye, considering “the weight of the work of ruling and preaching, both, impossible for one to bear,” was inclined to allow that government of the Church might be shared between pastor and lay elders. The question was at last laid aside in order that the Assembly “might hasten the material things that tend to settlement.”³²

³⁰ Lightfoot, *ibid.*, 31–33; and Hetherington, *l.c.*, 157.

³¹ Lightfoot, *ibid.*, xiii. 60.

³² Lightfoot, *Journal*, etc., xiii. 83. On December 7, Henderson, who showed singular skill in controlling and directing the debates, had moved that a committee should “draw up how far we agree.” On the next day the committee submitted three propositions: “(I) Christ hath instituted a government, and governors ecclesiastical in the church. (II) Christ hath furnished some in his church with gifts for government, and with commission to exercise the same, when called thereunto. (III) It is agreeable and warranted by the word of God, that some others beside the ministers of the word or church-governors should

Then the Assembly discussed whether *deacons* are permanent officers, some appearing to think that they are unnecessary in a Christian state where the civil magistrate, as in England, provides for the relief of the poor; but the Assembly pronounced in favour of the permanence of the diaconate. It refused to affirm that "widows" (1 Tim. v. 2) are comprehended under the name of deacons, and are to be regarded as holding an office intended to be permanent in the Church.

The question of *Ordination* was pressed on the Assembly by the House of Commons in the month of October. The question was an urgent one. There were many vacant churches; "scandalous" ministers and "malignant" ministers had been deprived. Who was to ordain their successors? Who was to authorise the settlement in particular Churches of ministers who had already received some kind of ordination? Were the congregations competent to call a minister? Or was it necessary that the congregational call should be confirmed by the "preaching ministers" in the neighbourhood? These questions occasioned heated and prolonged debates which began early in January (1643-4), and continued till the twenty-second of that month, when it was recommended, and, on the next day, agreed, "that in extraordinary cases something extraordinary may be done, until a settled order be had"; and that to meet the immediate difficulty certain ministers of the city [of London] should be desired to ordain ministers in London and the neighbourhood "*jure fraternitatis*."³³

In April, 1644, the Assembly submitted to the two Houses a *Directory* and *Rules for Ordination*, and a statement of the Doctrine of Ordination and the Scriptural grounds by which the Doctrine was sustained. It was declared that "preaching presbyters, orderly associated either in cities or neighbouring villages, are those to whom imposition of hands doth appertain, for those congregations within their bounds respectively"; and that to these preaching ministers belongs the authority to "examine and approve" the minister to be ordained.³⁴ This cut at the very roots of Congregational Independency. The

join with the ministers in the government of the church." But these propositions concluded nothing. Even Lightfoot could accept them, for he believed that the civil magistrates are joined with ministers of the Word in the government of the Church (*Ibid.*, 75-76).

³³ *Ibid.*, xiii. 116.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 234-235.

two Houses determined to omit the "Doctrine" and the "Scripture grounds," and to keep only that part of the Directory which provided for "extraordinary cases"; but this was firmly resisted by the Scotch commissioners and by the Assembly.

On September 16 the *Directory for Ordination* in its original form was sanctioned by Parliament. On October 2, in order to provide for immediate exigencies, Parliament also sanctioned the appointment of a Committee for ordaining ministers. The Committee consisted of ten members of the Assembly and thirteen ministers having churches in the City of London.

But during nearly the whole of the year 1644 the principal subject of discussion was the future polity of the English Church. In the middle of January, Dr. Stanton, on behalf of his committee, submitted a proposition affirming that by the institution of the Lord Jesus Christ the Church has "power to inquire and judge . . . who are to be excommunicated or absolved from that censure."³⁵ This opened the whole controversy between the Presbyterians and the Independents. *What is the Church* to which Christ has given this august power? Has He given it to every company of His disciples, meeting in His name for worship, communion, and discipline? Can every such company rely upon the presence of the great Head of the Church to guide its decisions and to invest them with His own authority? Or does the power belong to the elders of confederated congregations, meeting in Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and National Assemblies? And must every minister and every congregation submit to this hierarchy of ecclesiastical authorities?

Between "the Five Dissenting Brethren" and the rest of the Assembly there was perfect agreement in relation to the doctrines of the Christian faith. There were no serious differences between them in relation to the offices that Christ has instituted in the Church; or in relation to the conduct of public worship and the administration of the Sacraments. But the Independents believed that every company of Christian men and women, regularly organised for mutual fellowship and the maintenance of the institutions of worship, is a Church, and stands in immediate relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ; is responsible to Him alone; and is under the most solemn

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

obligation to allow no authority—Pope or bishop, council, assembly, or synod—to come between Christ and itself. As every Christian man is directly responsible to Christ for his own faith and conduct, and cannot recognise in any Church or any ecclesiastical officers the power to determine either his creed or his practice, so, according to the Independents, every company of Christian men is directly responsible to Him for its common life, for its methods of worship, for its doctrinal belief, for its acceptance or rejection of those who desire to enter its fellowship, for the manner in which it deals with the sins of those who are in its fellowship already. It is a Church, with all the powers and duties of a Church. It may rely on the great words of Christ, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” From the decisions of an assembly in which Christ is present there can be no appeal.

The Independents admitted, indeed, that there are times when such a company of the faithful may be uncertain about the will of Christ, and that His will may be more perfectly revealed to one company than another—just as it may be more perfectly revealed to one Christian man than another. They therefore acknowledged that occasional synods might be desirable in cases of difficulty; but to such synods they denied all authoritative jurisdiction. A Christian man may read the writings of great theologians and saints, to discover more perfectly the mind of Christ, either in matters of doctrine or in matters of conduct; he may receive with great respect the counsel and judgment of living men, whose knowledge is larger than his own, and in whom he recognises a higher sanctity,—but neither in the living nor the dead can he recognise any authority to determine what doctrines he shall believe or what laws he shall obey. The light that reaches him from above may be dim and uncertain, but such as it is he must walk in it. His conscience may be imperfectly informed; but such as it is he must obey it. He cannot escape from his immediate responsibility to Christ, with all its glories and all its perils. Nor can a company of Christian men and women, associated together in Christ’s name as a Christian Church. They can receive instruction, counsel, warning from Christian brethren wiser than themselves; but they can receive laws from Christ only.

The Presbyterians acknowledged that *in cases of necessity* the smallest society of Christian men might organise themselves into a Church; elect their own pastor, elders, and deacons; determine their own modes of worship, and exercise discipline. Such a company—if no other similar company was within reach—might ordain its own minister without the concurrence of any pastor who had been previously ordained. The sacraments administered by its minister would be true sacraments; and its church decisions would be authoritative. But according to the Presbyterian contention, this isolation and independence were abnormal, and should cease as soon as the necessity which created them ceased.

In the Presbyterian system congregations in the same neighbourhood are associated together; their pastors and elders form a presbytery, or “classis,” of the district; the presbyteries are confederated and represented in a Provincial Synod; and above the Synod there is a National Assembly. No decision of a particular congregation is final, either in relation to the appointment of its officers or their removal; either in relation to worship or discipline; either in relation to the faith of the Church or its practice. There is always an appeal to a higher court; and the decision of the highest court is authoritative. “The Five Dissenting Brethren,” on the other hand, maintained the independence of every separate Church.

“It was a necessary consequence of this essential principle,” says a recent Presbyterian historian, “that the Independents held the theory of admitting none to be members of their Churches except those whom they believed to have been thoroughly and in the highest sense regenerated, or, in the language of the time, “true saints,” and consequently, perfectly qualified to exercise rightly all the high and sacred functions, which they asserted to belong to the congregation, as in itself a complete Church.”³⁶ On what is described as “purity of communion” the Presbyterians of the seventeenth century were divided from the Congregationalists—the Presbyterians who were conscious hypocrites, and many more who mistook fanatical excitement for the power of the Spirit of God. According to the Presbyterian practice of those times, it was regarded as sufficient if those who desired to enter

³⁶ Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly*, 191.

communion lived a moral life, and gave a satisfactory account of their religious belief.³⁷

But there was another and perhaps more serious ground of antagonism between the two parties. Immediately after the opening of the Long Parliament, grave, learned, devout, and orthodox men were shocked and terrified by the appearance of innumerable pamphlets propagating the wildest religious opinions, and often charged with profanity. They were still more alarmed by the equally sudden appearance of a swarm of strange sects—Anabaptists, to whom were attributed all kinds of dangerous heresies; Brownists, who were fierce and intolerant in their hostility to all Churches except their own; Antinomians; Seekers, to whom all existing systems and Churches seemed to fall short of the truth of Christ and of the power of the Holy Ghost, and who were waiting therefore for a possible “Church of the Future”; Anti-Sabbatarians, who denied that Christians were under any obligation to regard any one day in the week as holier than another; Traskites, who believed that the Fourth Commandment was still binding, and that, according to Jewish practice, the Sabbath should be kept on Saturday;³⁸ Arians, Socinians, and other deniers of the doctrine of the Trinity. There were also people who denied the natural immortality of the soul; others who were excited by an enthusiastic belief that the second coming of Christ was at hand, and that “the reign of the saints was about to begin”; others that denied all authority to the Holy Scriptures; others that “questioned everything in matters of religion, holding nothing positively or certainly, saving the doctrine of pretended liberty of conscience for all, and liberty of prophesying.”³⁹

³⁷ On the question of “purity of communion,” the great unestablished Presbyterian Churches of England and Scotland are no longer separated by any serious differences from the Congregationalists. Modern Congregationalists have abandoned the close investigation into the history of the personal religious life of applicants for membership which prevailed among their ecclesiastical ancestors; nor do they insist as a condition of church membership on that maturity of religious experience which was formerly demanded. Modern Presbyterians—those at least who are not in the Scottish Assembly—earnestly insist on the necessity of being “in Christ” as a condition of being in the Church.

³⁸ For an account of John Traske, the founder of this sect, see Fuller, v. 459-461.

³⁹ Free use has been made of the interesting account of these sects in Masson, *Milton*, iii. 143-159.

To the members of the Westminster Assembly the *opinions* of these various sects were very alarming; but they were probably still more alarmed by the kind of person by whom the opinions were preached. Most of the Westminster divines were not only men of vigorous intellect; they were scholars; they were familiar with the vigorous, massive, and stately structure of the Calvinistic theology; they had meditated deeply on the awful mysteries of human life and human destiny; they had given their strength for many years to the building up of their theological creed. When they heard that scores of illiterate people—weavers and brewers and blacksmiths and leather-sellers, and wild women—were preaching strange doctrines, gathering congregations, offering what seemed to them profane worship, founding new sects, they were terrified. They believed that if the country was to be saved from ruin, these ignorant and presumptuous preachers must be silenced and their congregations broken up. The bishops and the ecclesiastical courts had disappeared; to revive them would only revive the tyranny which had cruelly oppressed generation after generation of learned and godly men. Presbyterianism, if it were only accepted by Parliament and established throughout the kingdom, would solve all difficulties. It would secure for the whole nation a true Confession of Faith, a form of worship free from superstition, and a devout and orthodox ministry. But no other preaching or worship must be tolerated. The civil magistrate, having established a Protestant Church, must refuse to allow the sects to corrupt the religious faith and the religious life of the people.

But the fundamental principle of “the Five Dissenting Brethren” was fatal to this hopeful scheme. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughs, and Sidrach Simpson might have been allowed by their brethren in the Assembly to “gather” Churches after their own mind; they were godly men, able men, learned men, and admirable theologians. But if the “Five” were tolerated, how was it possible to suppress the heresies and schisms which were rising like a flood of turbid waters and threatening to submerge the country? If every company of men and women that chose to form themselves into a Church had a right to elect its own pastor and to worship as it pleased, every

illiterate and fanatical preacher in England might found a "Church," and be elected as its pastor, and preach his perilous doctrine without hindrance. Every parish, even though it might have one of the most famous and most learned divines in the Assembly for its minister, might be invaded by Anabaptists, by Brownists, by Antinomians, by Seekers, and half the population might be drawn away from the parish church which had such a man as Twisse, or Calamy, or Marshall for its preacher, to listen to the ravings and heresies of a ploughman or a brewer, who knew nothing of Greek or Hebrew, and who read even his English Testament with difficulty. In resisting the establishment of Presbyterianism—and in claiming toleration for themselves, even if Presbyterianism were established—the "Dissenting Brethren" were resisting the creation of a strong national Church with effective power for the suppression of heresy and schism. Whether they meant it or not, they were the allies and defenders of every form of religious error in the kingdom.

There can be little doubt that these considerations weighed heavily with the Assembly. It is true that from the very beginning of Elizabeth's reign the Puritans had always been inclined to Presbyterianism. They suffered severely from the bishops; and their reverence for the doctrinal authority of Calvin was naturally associated with a disposition to accept the form of church government which he had established in Geneva, and which had been adopted by the Calvinists of France. But during the greater part of the reign of James I., and the first twenty years of Charles I., they had been chiefly occupied in resisting the innovations of Laud, and the growing strength of the Arminian theology. Cartwright's controversy with Episcopacy ceased with his retirement to Warwick several years before the death of Elizabeth, and had never been renewed with any vigour. There is no reason to believe that when the Westminster Assembly met in the autumn of 1643 the majority of the Puritan clergy believed in the divine right of the Presbyterian form of church polity; they would have been satisfied with a limitation of the power of the bishops, and with the abolition of the objectionable ceremonies. Nor is there any reason to believe that the Assembly was "packed," and that in selecting the "divines" the House of Commons had given a preference to those who

were known to be strongly inclined to Presbyterianism. Baillie, the Scotch commissioner, was not very confident what the Assembly would determine. He seems to have dreaded the possibility of a triumph of Independency. When he came to Westminster, he saw that the "Dissenting Brethren" were formidable. "Many of them," he says, "[are] very able men, as Thomas Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Bridge, Carter, Caryll, Philips, Sterry. . . . Theyspake much and exceeding well. . . ." ⁴⁰ ["With] Independency we purpose not to meddle in haste, *till it please God to advance our army, which we expect will much assist our arguments.*" ⁴¹ But after twelve months' discussion, and before the Scotch army had done any great service, the overwhelming majority decided in favour of the divine authority of the Presbyterian polity. It is only just to attribute this decision, in part, to the learning, vigour, and eloquence with which the case for Presbyterianism was stated; in part, to a natural and honourable desire to draw the English Church into nearer alliance with the Protestant Churches of Scotland, France, and Holland; but it was also very largely due to the terror created by the Anabaptists, Brownists, Seekers, Socinians, and the rest of the sects that had suddenly sprung into activity on the destruction of the power of the bishops. Independency meant toleration; and to tolerate these intolerable heresies would, in the judgment of many of the best men of those times, have been treason against both God and the nation.

In January, 1643-4, the "Five Dissenting Brethren" appealed from the Assembly to Parliament. In a short pamphlet of thirty-two pages, ⁴² they informed the two Houses that they had been driven into exile by "the sinful evil of those corruptions in the public worship and government of this Church" ⁴³ which were now generally acknowledged and deplored; that during their exile they had endeavoured "to search out what were the first apostolic directions, patterns and examples of

⁴⁰ R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ii. 110.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁴² *An Apologeticall Narration of some Ministers formerly exiles in the Netherlands: now Members of the Assembly of Divines. Humbly submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament.* By Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge (1643).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

those Primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament, as that sacred pillar of fire to guide us." ⁴⁴

Primitive practice they lay down as "the supreme rule." ⁴⁵ This is their first principle.

"Our consciences," they say, "were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulness of the Scriptures, that there is therein a complete sufficiency, as to make the *man of God perfect*, so also to make the Churches of God perfect, (mere circumstances we except, or what rules the law of nature doth in common dictate,) if the directness and examples therein delivered were fully known and followed." ⁴⁶

Their second principle was :—

"Not to make our present judgment and practice a binding law unto ourselves for the future. . . . We had too great an instance of our own frailty in the former way of our conformity; and therefore in a jealousy of ourselves, we kept this reserve (which we made open and constant professions of) to alter and retract (though not lightly) whatever should be discovered to be taken up out of a misunderstanding of the rule: which Principle we wish were (next to that most supreme, namely, to be in all things guided by the perfect will of God) enacted as the most *sacred* law of all other, in the midst of all other Laws and Canons Ecclesiastical in Christian States and Churches throughout the world." ⁴⁷

Their third principle was that, in matters of controversy, it was the safe course to adopt those practices which all, or the greater part, of the Reformed Churches acknowledged to be warrantable. For example: all the Reformed Churches acknowledged that it was the will of Christ that those who are faithful to Him should be received into communion: whether any others should be received was matter of doubt. The safe course was to receive the "faithful" only. All the Reformed Churches acknowledged that it was lawful that the prayers which were offered in the Church "should be framed by the meditations and study" of ministers "out of their own gifts (the fruits of Christ's Ascension) as well as their sermons": ⁴⁸ whether "set forms prescribed" by public authority were lawful was matter of doubt. If they offered extemporaneous prayer only, they could not be wrong. All the Reformed

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10, 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

Churches were agreed that in every particular congregation there should be a "Presbytery of the Elders." Whether the Elders should be associated in "Presbyterial and Provincial Assemblies, as the proper refuge for appeals and for compounding of differences amongst Churches," was a disputed question.⁴⁹ Until the controversy was settled beyond doubt, it was the prudent course to leave every particular congregation under its own Presbytery.

The statement of their case was exceedingly ingenious, and was likely to be very effective. The Assembly was moving rapidly towards a declaration of the divine right of Presbytery, but the mind of the country was quite unsettled. The "Five Dissenting Brethren" virtually said, "We are clearly in the right *as far as we go*; our membership may be too narrow; our church organisation may be incomplete; our worship might perhaps be lawfully supplemented with 'prescribed forms' of prayer: but it is lawful to admit the 'faithful' to communion; it is lawful for every particular congregation to be under the government of its own elders; it is lawful to offer free prayer. *As far as we go*, we are safe. We can sustain our position by the authority of Scripture and by the example of the Reformed Churches. *We are willing to go farther*, as soon as proof can be given that our polity or worship is defective. Show that we ought to admit the 'unfaithful' as well as the faithful to communion, and we will do it. We already have elders for particular congregations; show that these elders ought to be associated in a presbytery, and we will not hold ourselves bound by our past conclusions against an association. No one disputes that our ministers may offer free prayer: we will accept a Liturgy as soon as you can produce authority from the New Testament in favour of it. In reorganising the National Church, let us make sure of our ground step by step. Let us do nothing that may afterwards require to be undone."

There is perhaps equal ingenuity in dealing with the objection that a closer and more elaborate form of church organisation was necessary in order to prevent or suppress scandals and heresies.

They complain that their "opinions and ways" were "enviored about with a cloud of mistakes and misapprehensions"; that "that proud and insolent title of Independency" was

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

affixed to them—"the very sound of which conveys to all men's apprehensions the challenge of an exemption of all Churches from all subjection and dependence, or rather a trumpet of defiance against whatever Power, Spiritual or Civil, which we do abhor and detest."⁵⁰

They protest against the common prejudice that in the "congregational government" there is no remedy for the injustice of which a particular Church may be guilty.⁵¹ If a grave charge is brought against any particular Church, the Churches in the neighbourhood are under a solemn obligation to make inquiry into the alleged offence; the Church against which the charge is brought is under an equal obligation to allow the inquiry. This had been the practice in the Congregational Churches in the Low Countries; and a narrative is given of a case in which, as the result of the intervention of a neighbouring Church, a minister who had been unjustly deposed had been restored to office.⁵²

But what is to happen if a Church against which a very grave offence has been proved remains impenitent? In that case, say the "Five Dissenting Brethren," the neighbouring Churches are to withdraw and renounce all communion with them. If in a particular Church a church member is found guilty of flagrant sin and shows no sign of repentance, he is excommunicated. This is all that can be done; but the penalty is a terrible one. If a Church is guilty of a flagrant sin and shows no penitence, it can be excluded from the fellowship of other Churches. This, under the Congregational system, is all that can be done. But what more is possible under the system of Presbyteries and Synods? If an offending congregation is not convinced of its sin, and refuses to accept the decision of the superior court, how is the decision to be enforced? The Synod can excommunicate the Churches which resist its authority; but "the offending Churches will slight all such *Excommunications* as much as they may be supposed to do our way of protestation and sentence of *Non-communication*." If the excommunication does not "take hold of men's consciences" it will be ineffective, and their consciences are just as likely to be affected by the Congregational method of withdrawing from communion.⁵³ Nor can it be made clear from the New Testament that Churches have any authority to deliver

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15, 16. ⁵² *Ibid.*, 16, 20, 21. ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

whole Churches and their elders unto Satan ; and it is this *delivering unto Satan* which distinguishes excommunication from withdrawal of communion.⁵⁴

If, indeed, the magistrate enforces the decision of a Synod, the decision may have effect upon the most obstinate and impenitent Church ; but the magistrate might also enforce the decision of Churches organised on the Congregational system.

“ If the Magistrates’ power (to which *we give as much, and* (as we think) *more than the principles of the Presbyterian government will suffer them to yield*) do but assist and back the sentence of other Churches denouncing this *Non-communication* against Churches miscarrying, according to the nature of the crime, as they judge meet, and as they would the sentence of Churches excommunicating other Churches in such cases, *upon their own particular judgment of the cause* ; then, without all controversy this our way of Church proceeding will be every way as effectual as their other can be supposed to be ; and we are sure, more brotherly and more suited to that liberty and equality Christ hath endowed his Churches with. But without the Magistrates interposing their authority, their way of proceeding will be as ineffectual as ours ; and more liable to contempt, by how much it is pretended to be more authoritative ; and to inflict a more dreadful punishment, which carnal spirits are seldom sensible of.”⁵⁵

They conclude with two very keen, effective strokes. They say that “ we differ as little from the Reformed Churches and our Brethren—yea, far less—than *they do from what themselves were three years past* ” ;⁵⁶ and they inform Parliament that, having already suffered exile because they could not submit to those evils and superstitions which the whole kingdom had found to be intolerable, they were now threatened with another banishment, and they ask to be suffered to enjoy in their own country “ the ordinances of Christ . . . with the allowance of a latitude to some lesser differences, with peaceableness, as not knowing where else with safety, health, and livelihood, to set our feet on earth.”⁵⁷

The “ Apologeticall Narration ” provoked great resentment, and a large number of pamphlets appeared in reply. Its style was much more free, vigorous, and popular than that of most of the cumbrous and laborious pamphlets of the time, and

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

complaints were made that it was "rhetorical" rather than argumentative. To the strong Presbyterians it was a grave offence to appeal from an Assembly of Divines to an Assembly of Laymen on questions of church government. And there were a few suggestive sentences in the appeal which created special alarm. The "Five Dissenting Brethren" told Parliament that they were prepared to "yield more" to the civil magistrate than was allowed by the principles of Presbyterianism. They say that in each particular case the magistrate ought to form his own judgment as to what ecclesiastical decisions should be enforced by the civil power—whether the decisions are made by a Presbyterian General Assembly or by particular Churches organised on the Congregational system. Whenever the magistrate uses his power, the magistrate himself must determine whether the offence he punishes deserves punishment, and how much punishment it deserves; whether the heresy to be repressed is really heresy, and whether it is sufficiently serious to require suppression by the civil power. This suggestion cut up by the roots the Presbyterian ideal. Even in those days earnest Presbyterians believed in "the crown rights of the Redeemer." Christ was supreme in His Church; His will was expressed in the church courts; the office of the magistrate was not to review and amend the decisions of those to whom the government of the Church had been entrusted by Christ Himself, but, wherever necessary, to give them effect by the support of the civil power. The "Five Brethren" knew very well that Parliament would never willingly surrender its own supremacy; and the few brief phrases in which this supremacy was acknowledged were perhaps the most effective part of the pamphlet. They certainly provoked the most angry criticism.

It was so clear that this line of argument was producing a powerful impression outside the Assembly, that Philip Nye, the keen politician among the "Five Brethren," determined to press it a little further. On February 21 (1643-4) he made a speech in the Assembly which created the most passionate excitement and indignation. Many members of both Houses were present, and he saw that his opportunity had come. The substance of his speech was as follows:—

"Under the system of Presbyterianism you have several parishes placed under the authority of a presbytery; several

presbyteries under the authority of a provincial synod ; the provincial synods under the authority of a General Assembly. The General Assembly has supreme control over a system of ecclesiastical government extending over the whole kingdom and including all ranks and conditions of men. It is ' commensurate ' to the civil government of the State.

“ The true polity of the Church of Christ should give no cause of jealousy or suspicion to the civil magistrate ; but this hierarchy of ecclesiastical authorities is a rival force which the magistrate has reason to regard with dread. ‘ It is inconvenient to nourish such a vast body in the commonwealth ’— a body over which Parliament can have no direct and effective control. The power of this great ecclesiastical system is as great as that of the civil government itself : it covers the whole nation ; it is armed with a force even greater than that which defends the prerogatives of thrones or Parliaments ; for it is a spiritual authority and binds the consciences of men. If it is unsafe for a great commonwealth to have within it so great and formidable a power, it is neither for this Assembly nor Parliament to lay the foundation of it. The safety of the commonwealth is the supreme law.

“ If Presbytery is set up as of divine authority, the General Assembly will become as powerful as Parliament ; the Church as powerful as the State ; and when you have two great and equal powers in the kingdom, there will be grave danger whether they agree or whether they quarrel.”⁵⁸

At this point Nye made a quotation from Rutherford. But the Assembly would bear no more. His comments on Rutherford were “ sharply prohibited.” There were cries that he was “ disorderly and dangerous.” “ Mr. Henderson cried out that he spake like Sanballat, Tobiah, or Symmachus ; and Mr. Sedgwick wished that he might be excluded out of the Assembly ; and here was great heat, and it was put to the question and voted that he had spoken against order.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ For the “ Notes ” on which this account of Philip Nye’s famous speech is founded, see the extract given in Note B, p. 289. This was the occasion represented in a well-known painting, engravings of which were a few years ago very popular. But Nye was not, as the painter supposed, asserting Liberty of Conscience ; he was asserting that established Presbyterianism would be dangerous to civil liberty and to the authority of the State.

⁵⁹ Lightfoot, *Works*, xiii. 169.

But the speech was not forgotten. Outside the Assembly there were men who began to think that the rule of a Presbyterian synod and assembly, allied with the civil power, might be as unendurable as the rule of the bishops and the Star Chamber. In the Assembly itself the "Five Dissenting Brethren" maintained the struggle with an extraordinary fertility of resource, and a patience and vigour which nothing could subdue, contesting every Presbyterian proposition, challenging every Scripture proof, and dividing day after day and week after week, though they were always in a minority. At last, at the end of October (1644) the work was done; the Presbyterians carried their scheme, and it was submitted to Parliament.

A few weeks later the Assembly completed "The Directory for the Public Worship of God," which included sections on Preaching, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Sanctification of the Sabbath, Marriage, Burial, Singing Psalms, and some other matters. Instead of the prescribed forms of prayer, such as are given in the English Liturgy, which was judged to have been "a great means, as, on the one hand, to make and increase an idle and unedifying ministry . . . so, on the other side, it hath been (and ever would be, if continued) a matter of endless strife and contention in the Church, and a snare . . . to many godly and faithful ministers who have been persecuted and silenced on that occasion"⁶⁰—the Directory suggests the various topics which should have a place in public prayer, and the order in which they should stand, but leaves the minister to vary this order if he thinks it expedient.⁶¹ The only definite words imposed are the Baptismal Formula and the words in the Marriage Service in which the man and the woman take each other for husband and wife.⁶²

About "The Directory for Public Worship" there was no serious division between "The Five Dissenting Brethren" and the Presbyterian divines; Goodwin, Nye, and Bridge were on the Committee entrusted with the preparation; and the proposition—which was submitted on November 21—to lay

⁶⁰ *Preface to the Directory*. P. Hall, *Reliquiæ Liturgicæ*, iii. 16.

⁶¹ See the closing paragraph on *Public Prayer before Sermon*, *ibid.*, 34-35.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 50, 64. In the order for the administration of the Lord's Supper, though words are suggested, the minister is free to use "other the like." *Ibid.*, 57.

it before Parliament was carried by the unanimous vote of the Assembly.

On November 14 the Congregationalists laid before the Assembly a statement of their objections to the *Form of Church Government*. It was signed by William Carter and William Greenhill as well as by the "Five." After being debated at length in the Assembly the statement was laid before Parliament.

NOTE A

The Five Dissenting Brethren

(1) Philip Nye, who was born in 1596 and was therefore about forty-seven when the Assembly met, was educated at Brasenose College and Magdalen Hall, Oxford. In 1630 he was curate at St. Michael's, Cornhill. Three years later, to escape from Laud and the ecclesiastical courts, he fled to Holland, and there became a moderate Congregationalist. He returned to England about the time of the meeting of the Long Parliament, and through the friendship of the Earl of Manchester became minister of Kimbolton, in Huntingdonshire. At the Restoration he was ejected from the living of St. Bartholomew, near the Exchange; and he was so active a politician that after the Restoration he, with John Goodwin, of Coleman Street, and Hugh Peters, was in danger of being excluded from the Indemnity. He was a man of extraordinary vigour, versatility, and courage. He died in 1672.

(2) Thomas Goodwin was born in 1600 at Rollesby, in Norfolk, and was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, graduating when he was only sixteen. In 1628 he was chosen to the lectureship of Trinity Church, Cambridge, and in 1632 was presented to the vicarage. In 1634, being troubled by the terms of conformity, he resigned his living and left the university. He crossed to Holland in 1639, and became pastor of the English Church at Arnheim. In the early months of the Long Parliament he returned to England, and became pastor of a Church in the parish of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East. In 1650 Cromwell made him President of Magdalen College, Oxford. His theological writings show that he was a man of large theological learning and of great robustness and keenness of intellect. He died in 1680.

(3) William Bridge—born about 1600—was for several years a

Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. In 1631 he was elected "general lecturer of the town" of Colchester; in 1633 he was delivering "Friday sermons" at a church in Norwich—St. George's, Tombland. Three years later he was deprived by Bishop Wren. He then fled to Holland, and became one of the ministers of the Congregational Church at Rotterdam. In 1642 he returned to England, and settled in Yarmouth. In 1643 he became pastor of the Norwich and Yarmouth Congregational Church. His works have been published in five volumes. He died in 1670.

(4) Jeremiah Burroughs was born about 1599, and was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was for some time the colleague of Edmund Calamy at Bury, and afterwards rector of Tivetshall in Norfolk. Like Bridge he was deprived by Bishop Wren; and like Bridge he became one of the ministers (teacher) of the Congregational Church at Rotterdam. He was chosen Lecturer to the congregation of Cripplegate. He is described as "a divine of great candour, modesty, and charity," as an excellent scholar, and a popular preacher. He died in 1646. He was greatly distressed by the divisions which separated those who shared the same faith in Christ, and one of his last works was his *Irenicum*, an attempt to restore unity among Christians. "Mr. Baxter used to say that if all the Presbyterians had been like Mr. Marshall, and the Independents like Mr. Burroughs, their differences might easily have been compromised."⁶³

(5) Sidrach Simpson, born about 1600, like Bridge and Burroughs was a member of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. After leaving the university, he became an eminent preacher in London. He was appointed curate and lecturer of St. Margaret's, Fish Street. He was silenced by Laud, and went to Holland. For a time he was a member of the Church at Rotterdam. Here he was anxious to revive in a new form the "prophesyings" which had been popular among the earlier Puritans; he thought that after the sermon on Sunday there should be a free conference, and that the people should have the opportunity of questioning the preacher, and of expressing any doubts they might have about the soundness of his teaching. This proposal, and some other occasions of difference, led him to separate from the existing Church and found a new one, of which he appears to have been the pastor. He returned to England when the troubles between Parliament and the King were beginning. He was a member of the parliamentary committee of fourteen, appointed in 1653, to draw up "fundamentals," and in the following year was chosen as one of the "triers." His hostility to Cromwell, expressed from the pulpit, got him into trouble; and he was imprisoned for a time in Windsor Castle, and when released forbidden to preach within ten miles of London. In 1650 he was appointed master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. He died in 1655.

⁶³ Neal, iii. 318.

NOTE B

Nye's Speech in the Westminster Assembly, February 21, 1643-4

“*Mr. Nye.* ‘1. By “Ecclesia” is (meant) a particular congregation; or else there is power over power, and a presbytery over a presbytery. But there is not a power over a power. *Ergo.*’

“And here he was stopped again, and called to conclude against the propositions; and yet could he not be brought to it: but run over the heads of those things he spake yesterday: because he can find but one name, but one nature, and but one operation of a presbytery.

“‘2. If a power over a power, then there is one over that, and another over that: till you come to subdue all the people unto an ecclesiastical government commensurate to the civil.

“‘3. The ordering of the church by Christ is such as may be without jealousy and suspicion: now power over power in the church extends itself equal with the civil; for it is inconvenient to nourish such a vast body in a commonwealth. Now this is, (1) As great as the civil. (2) It is spiritual. (3) It is so immediately upon the conscience.

“‘If it cannot stand well for a great commonwealth to have so great a body grow within it, then is it not to be endured: but *ergo.*

“‘1. Look abroad, and nothing troubles men more than to think whether the presbytery shall be set up *jure divino*. (2) That if it be, it will grow as big as the civil.

“‘2. Where two vast bodies are of equal amplitude, if they disagree it is nought; if they agree, it will be worse, one will closely be working against the other.’”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Lightfoot, *Journal of the Assembly of Divines, Works*, xiii. 168-169.

CHAPTER VII

PARLIAMENT AND THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

CROMWELL AND LIBERTY OF OPINION—PARLIAMENT OPPOSED TO RIGID UNIFORMITY—PRAYER-BOOK SUPERSEDED BY THE DIRECTORY—RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SYSTEM, BUT FINAL ACTION DEFERRED—TERMS OF AGREEMENT REJECTED BY THE KING—THE POWER OF EXCLUSION FROM THE SACRAMENT—CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENT—COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO ACT AS JUDGES OF RELIGIOUS OFFENCES—PROTEST OF THE ASSEMBLY RESENTED BY PARLIAMENT—THE ASSEMBLY REQUIRED TO DEFINE THE DIVINE RIGHT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN POLITY AND ITS CLAIM TO SUPREME AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION—THE KING ENTRUSTS HIMSELF TO THE SCOTTISH ARMY—PRESBYTERIANS READY TO MAKE TERMS WITH HIM IN CASE OF NEED—PARLIAMENT FORCED TO COMPROMISE—THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONS ABOLISHED—SCHEME OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT SET UP—THE ASSEMBLY COMPLETES ITS WORK—THE CONFESSION OF FAITH PRESENTED AND ACCEPTED—THE INFLUENCE OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AND CATECHISM—THE ASSEMBLY DISPERSED, BUT NOT DISSOLVED—IT CONTINUES TO SIT AS A COMMITTEE FOR EXAMINING MINISTERS.

I

IN what a spirit the House of Commons might be expected to deal with the Form of Presbyterial Church Government submitted to them by the Westminster Assembly may be inferred from an Order of the House passed in September, 1644.

The Battle of Marston Moor (July 2) had been mainly won by Cromwell and the Independents, and Cromwell at once became a great power in the State. He had been provoked to great anger by the Scottish Major-General Crawford, who, as Cromwell thought, had treated an Anabaptist colonel unjustly.

“Sir,” wrote Cromwell, “the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to

serve it—that satisfies. I advised you formerly to bear with different minds from yourself: if you had done it when I advised you to it, I think you would not have had so many stumbling-blocks in your way. It may be you judge otherwise, but I tell you *my mind*.”¹

He came to London in September, resolved to use all his authority to prevent the Presbyterians from establishing an intolerant uniformity; and on the thirteenth of that month he and Vane and St. John induced the House of Commons to *order*—

“That the Committee of Lords and Commons appointed to treat with the Commissioners of Scotland, and the Committee of the Assembly, do take into Consideration the Differences in Opinion of the Members of the Assembly in point of Church Government, and do endeavour a Union if it be possible; and, in case that cannot be done, do endeavour the finding out some ways how far tender Consciences, who cannot in all Things submit to the common Ruie which shall be established, may be borne with, according to the Word, and as may stand with the public Peace, that so the Proceedings of the Assembly may not be so much retarded.”²

In obtaining this Order Stephen Marshall,³ one of the Presbyterian leaders, gave his aid “without consulting any of his brethren of the Assembly.” Baillie describes it as “a high and unexpected Order,” and says it “has much affected us.”⁴

During November and December (1644) and the early part of January (1644–5), the two Houses discussed chapter by chapter *The Form of Church Government*, and the various

¹ Carlyle, *Cromwell*, i. 187.

² C. J. (13 Sept. 1644), iii. 626. “Although no accommodation resulted from the deliberations of this committee, there is every reason to think that Cromwell and Nye obtained the end they had in view when it was proposed. The progress of both Parliament and Assembly towards the ratification of the propositions respecting church government was suspended, and time was obtained for adopting another course. Accordingly, on the 7th of November, the Independents began to talk of giving in to the Assembly their reasons of dissent from the Assembly’s propositions respecting Church government.” Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly*, 212.

³ Marshall was Nye’s father-in-law. Was this one reason why he resisted the accommodation order?

⁴ R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ii. 226, 230. “Without the least advertisement to any of us.” And see Masson, *Milton*, iii. 169

sections of the *Directory*.⁵ On January 4, 1644-5, an Ordinance from the Commons passed the Lords, abolishing the use of the Book of Common Prayer, and confirming the *Directory*.⁶ This Order simply repeals the statutes enforcing the use of the Book of Common Prayer; but in August (1645) the use of the Prayer-Book was forbidden, under penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten for the second, and a year's imprisonment for the third. And any person saying anything to the disparagement of the *Directory* was liable to a fine of not less than five pounds and not more than fifty.⁷ Fines and imprisonment had for a hundred years been the legal penalties of worshipping God in any other way than that prescribed by the Prayer-Book; fines and imprisonment were now the legal penalties for worshipping God in the way the Prayer-Book prescribed.

On January 23, 1644-5, the House of Commons adopted the following Resolutions:—

“*Resolved*: (1) That there shall be fixed Congregations; that is, a certain Company of Christians, to meet in one Assembly, ordinarily, for Public Worship: When Believers multiply to such a Number that they cannot conveniently meet in one Place, they shall be divided into distinct and fixed Congregations, for the better Administration of such Ordinances as belong unto them, and the Discharge of mutual Duties.

“*Resolved*: (2) That the ordinary Way of dividing Christians into distinct Congregations, and most expedient for Edification, is by the respective Bounds of their Dwellings.

“*Resolved*: (3) That the Minister, and other Church Officers; in each particular Congregation, shall join in the Government of the Church, in such manner as shall be established by Parliament.

“*Resolved*: (4) That these Officers shall meet together at convenient and set Times, for the well Ordering of the Affairs of that Congregation, each according to his Office.

“*Resolved*: (5) That the Ordinances in a particular Congregation are, Prayer, Thanksgiving, and singing of Psalms; the Word read, though there follow no immediate Explication of what is read; the Word expounded and applied; Catechising; the Sacraments administered; Collection made for the Poor; Dismissing of the People with a blessing.

⁵ The *Directory* for *Ordination*, which is now printed as part of *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government and of Ordination of Ministers*, had been approved by the two Houses in September. See *ante*, pp. 272-273.

⁶ L. J. (Jan. 4, 1644-5), vii. 125.

⁷ *Ibid.* (Aug. 21, 1645), vii. 551-552. Rushworth, iii. (2), 839-840, and iv. (1), 205-207.

“*Resolved* : (6) That many particular Congregations shall be under one Presbyterial Government.

“*Resolved* : (7) That the Church be governed by Congregational, Classical, and Synodical Assemblies, in such Manner as shall be established by Parliament.

“*Resolved* : (8) That Synodical Assemblies shall consist both of Provincial and National Assemblies.”

Resolutions (3), (6), (7), and (8) were reported to the Lords, and on January 28 the Lords approved them.⁸

By adopting these Resolutions the two Houses declared that the national Church was to be made a Presbyterian Church. But the Resolutions themselves did not establish the new order ; and it was many months before the necessary steps were taken to establish it.⁹ Nor did the Resolutions preclude the possibility of tolerating those who objected to be brought under the rule of the Presbyteries and Synods ; and the omission, in the report to the Lords, of half of the Resolutions may, perhaps, have been suggested by the desire not to determine at once against the Congregationalists.¹⁰

II

On January 30, 1644-5, Commissioners from the King and Commissioners from Parliament met at Uxbridge to attempt to bring the war to a close. On behalf of Parliament it was proposed, among other conditions of peace, that the King should (1) Take the Covenant ; (2) Give the royal assent to the Bill abolishing Episcopacy ; (3) Approve the ordinances of the two Houses directing the use of the Directory instead of the Book of Common Prayer ; (4) Accept the resolutions

⁸ C. J. (Jan. 23, 1644-5), iv. 28. L. J. (Jan. 27, 1644-5), vii. 158.

⁹ Resolutions (1), (4), and (5) were approved by the Lords on Feb. 6, 1644-5. L. J., vii. 179.

¹⁰ This is Masson's opinion, whose account of the ecclesiastical affairs of these troubled times is invaluable, and has been freely used here and elsewhere (*Milton*, iii. 175). Resolutions (1) and (2) were in favour of Parochialism as against "gathered churches," though (2) was more explicit than (1). Resolution (4) gave larger power to the officers of particular congregations than the Congregationalists would have allowed. Resolution (5) determined the "ordinances" of particular congregations, which, on the Congregational theory, should be determined by the congregation itself. It is possible that by omitting these Resolutions in its report to the Lords, the House of Commons may have intended to leave it an open question whether congregations of another kind might not be permitted.

adopted by the two Houses in relation to the establishment of Presbyterianism. All these proposals were declined; but the Parliamentary Commissioners were informed that the King was willing to concede "That the Bishop shall exercise no act of jurisdiction or ordination, without the consent and counsel of the Presbyters, who shall be chosen by the Clergy of each Diocese, out of the learnedest and gravest ministers of that Diocese."¹¹ The King was willing to limit the power of the bishops; but he believed that there had been bishops in the Church ever since apostolic times, and refused to abolish them. The conference came to nothing.

Other great matters were occupying the two Houses during the early part of the year. On February 15 the Lords passed the ordinance for the *New Modelling of the Army*; and on April 3 the *Self-denying Ordinance*, which removed members of both Houses from offices civil or military to which they had been appointed since November 20, 1640.

While these grave and difficult questions were being debated in Parliament, the Assembly could hardly complain that nothing was done for giving effect to the resolutions which secured a Presbyterian polity to the Church, and the Assembly worked steadily at the Confession of Faith. But there was one point of ecclesiastical discipline that seemed urgent. On March 6, 1644-5, the Assembly complained to Parliament that the Lord's Supper was being profaned because no one had authority to exclude "scandalous and ignorant" persons from communion. The House of Commons asked what the Assembly included in the terms "ignorant and scandalous." The Assembly replied that by "ignorant" they meant "not having a competent understanding" of such truths as the Trinity, the State of Man by Creation, and the results of the Fall; the nature and effects of the Redemption by Jesus Christ, and the means to apply Christ and His benefits to the individual soul; the necessity of faith, repentance, and a godly life; the nature and use of Sacraments; and the condition of man after this life. Still the House was not satisfied. On April 1 it ordered that "The Assembly . . . set down in particular what they conceive to be such a competent measure of understanding, concerning the State of Man by Creation, and by his Fall; the Redemption by Jesus Christ; the Way and Means to apply

¹¹ L. J. (Feb. 13, 1644-5), vii. 197. Rushworth, iii. (2), 873.

Christ, and his Benefits ; the Nature and Necessity of Faith, Repentance, and a Godly Life ; the Nature and Use of the Sacraments ; and the condition of Man after this Life, without which none shall be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." The Assembly had the courage to reply to this perplexing question, which was evidently intended to provoke protracted debates. It also gave a list of offences which justified describing the offenders as "scandalous."¹²

Still the House of Commons came to no decision. The Erastian members were resolved to delay the settlement of the question as long as possible. There were debates in June and July, but nothing was concluded. On August 1 a deputation from the Assembly presented a petition to urge "that a speedy course might be taken about those who should be thought not fit to be admitted to the Sacrament, namely, the ignorant, scandalous, and profane : it being a thing that, if effected exactly to the rule, would tend much to the glory of God and the good of this whole Kingdom." The Speaker replied, "That the House was in debate of the same business long before their coming, and that they would expedite it with as much conveniency as could be."¹³ A week later (August 8) the Assembly presented a petition to the Commons, and, on August 11, to the Lords, in which they "petitioned and advised" Parliament "that in every Presbytery or Presbyterian Congregation, the Pastors and Ruling Elders may have the power of Excommunication and the power of suspending such as they shall judge ignorant or scandalous persons from the Sacrament" ; and they asserted that this power was theirs by divine appointment.¹⁴

Selden and Whitelock spoke strongly against granting the petition. After a long debate it was referred to the Grand Committee which had already been considering the subject of Excommunication and Suspension from the Lord's Supper.

The Assembly secured a decision at last, though the decision was not altogether to its mind. On October 20 an Ordinance passed both Houses of Parliament. Power was given to pastors and elders to suspend from the Lord's Supper all ignorant and scandalous persons "within the rules and directions

¹² C. J. (April 1 and 17, 1645), iv. 95, 113-114.

¹³ C. J. (Aug. 1, 1645), iv. 226 ; and Whitelock, 158.

¹⁴ Whitelock (Aug. 8 and Sept. 3, 1645), 165, 169-170.

hereafter mentioned." The Rules for suspension in case of ignorance require a knowledge and belief of the great truths which had been enumerated in the reply of the Assembly to the House of Commons in March. The Rules for suspension in case of scandal recite a long list of gross moral offences; and they also authorise the exclusion from the Lord's Supper of "worshippers of images, crosses, crucifixes, or reliques"; "all that shall make images of the Trinity, or of any Person thereof"; "all religious worshippers of saints, angels, or any mere creature"; such as profane the Lord's Day by dancing, etc.; such persons as "shall consent to the marriage of their children to Papists, or any person that shall marry a Papist"; "any person that shall repair for any advice unto any witch, wizard, or fortune-teller." The several Elderships are to have power to suspend all ministers duly convicted of any of these crimes from giving or receiving the Lord's Supper.¹⁵

But Parliament did not intend to surrender its supremacy over the Church to ministers and elders. It therefore added:

"[Provided always], that if any person suspended from the Lord's Supper shall find himself [ag]grieved with the Proceedings before the Eldership of any Congregation, he shall have Liberty to appeal to the Classical Eldership, and from thence to the Provincial Assembly, and from thence to the National, and *from thence to the Parliament.*"¹⁶

This provision created great indignation among the zealous defenders of the divine right of Presbytery. It subordinated the Church Courts to the civil magistrate.

On March 14 (1645-6) an Ordinance passed both Houses recapitulating the substance of their previous enactments in reference to Presbyteries, and containing regulations for the election of elders, and for the full establishment of the Presbyterian polity. This Ordinance contained a clause still more offensive to the high Presbyterian party than anything that had been enacted before.

"That in every Province, Persons shall be chosen by the Houses of Parliament, that shall be *Commissioners* to judge of scandalous

¹⁵ C. J. (Oct. 15, 1645), iv. 309-310. L. J. (Oct. 20, 1645), vii. 649-651. The Rules are given in full by Neal, iii. 245-246, and Rushworth, iv. (1), 211.

¹⁶ L. J., vii. 650. The Commons Journals are defective for the corresponding day (October 15).

Offences (*not enumerated in any Ordinance of Parliament*) to them presented: and that the Eldership of that Congregation, where the said Offence was committed, shall, upon Examination and Proof of such scandalous Offence (in like manner as is to be done in the Offences enumerated), certify the same to the Commissioners, together with the Proof taken before them. And, before the said Certificate, the Party accused shall have Liberty to make such Defence as he shall think fit before the said Eldership, and also before the Commissioners, before any Certificate shall be made to the Parliament: And if the said Commissioners, after Examination of all Parties, shall determine the Offence, so presented and proved, to be scandalous, and the same shall certify to the Congregation, the Eldership thereof may suspend such Person from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in like manner as in Cases enumerated in any Ordinance of Parliament." ¹⁷

This was intolerable to the majority of the Assembly, to the Scotch Commissioners, and to the Presbyterian clergy of the City of London. They all protested against it. The Assembly, with Stephen Marshall at its head, appeared before the two Houses on March 23, with a petition and remonstrance in which they declared that Parliament had transferred to Commissioners the power which Christ had entrusted to the Church, to judge of the fitness of persons to receive the Lord's Supper, and that the provision was contrary to the Solemn League and Covenant.

The Commons met the action of the Assembly with an imperious Resolution declaring that the petition was a grave political offence, for which every man that had signed it was liable to fine or imprisonment, or both. In a paper adopted by the House a few days later, it was declared that the Assembly had no authority on its own motion to consider whether any vote or act of Parliament was agreeable to the Word of God or to the Covenant; that its only duty was to deliver its opinion on matters submitted to its judgment; and that since the order concerning the Commissioners had been passed, its judgment on that matter had never been required.¹⁸

The House also adopted a Declaration concerning its intentions in reference to the settlement of the Church. The Declaration was to the effect that Parliament had adopted most of the Assembly's recommendations as to the frame

¹⁷ C. J. (March 5, 1645-6), iv. 464.

¹⁸ C. J. (April 11 and 21, 1646), iv. 506, 518.

of church government to be set up, with no exception of moment but that of the Commissioners; in which exception Parliament had only performed its bounden duty, seeing that it could not "consent to the granting of an arbitrary and unlimited power and jurisdiction to near 10,000 judicatories to be erected within this kingdom." Further it was announced that Parliament reserved the question of the amount of toleration to be granted under the new Presbyterian rule "to tender consciences that differ not in fundamentals of Religion."¹⁹

The claim of divine right for the Presbyterian polity was met by nine questions "propounded to the Assembly of Divines," who are required not only to reply to them, but to sustain their replies by "proofs from Scripture, and to set down the several texts of Scripture in the express words of the same." The name of every divine present at the debate of any of the several questions is to be attached to the replies, "with the affirmative or negative, as he gives his vote." Those who dissent are to "set down their positive opinions, with the express text of Scripture upon which their opinions are grounded."²⁰ The questions were the following:—

"Questions propounded to the Assembly of Divines by the House of Commons, touching the point of *Jus Divinum* in the matter of Church Government.

"Whereas it is resolved by both Houses, that all persons guilty of notorious and scandalous offences shall be suspended from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the House of Commons desires to be satisfied by the Assembly of Divines in the questions following:—

"(1) Whether the parochial and congregational elderships appointed by ordinance of Parliament, or any other congregational or presbyterial elderships, are *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ? And whether any particular church government be *jure divino*? And what that government is?

"(2) Whether all the members of the said eldership, as members thereof, or which of them, are *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

"(3) Whether the superior assemblies or elderships—viz. the classical, provincial, and national, whether all or any of them, and which of them, are *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

"(4) Whether appeals from the congregational elderships to the classical, provincial, or national assemblies, or any of them, and

¹⁹ C. J. (April 17, 1646), iv. 513. Masson, *Milton*, iii. 410.

²⁰ C. J. (April 22, 1646), iv. 519-520.

to which of them, are *jure divino*? And are their powers upon such appeals *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

“(5) Whether œcumenical assemblies are *jure divino*? And whether there be appeals from any of the former assemblies to the said œcumenical, *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

“(6) Whether by the Word of God the power of judging and declaring what are such notorious and scandalous offences, for which persons guilty thereof are to be kept from the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and of convening before them, trying, and actually suspending from the sacrament such offenders accordingly,—is either in the congregational eldership or presbytery, or in any other eldership, congregation, or persons? And whether such powers are in them only, or in any of them, and in which of them, *jure divino*, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

“(7) Whether there be any certain and particular rules expressed in the Word of God, to direct the elderships or presbyteries, congregations or persons, or any of them, in the exercise and execution of the powers aforesaid? And what are those rules?

“(8) Is there anything contained in the Word of God, that the supreme magistracy in a Christian State may not judge and determine what are the aforesaid notorious and scandalous offences, and the manner of suspension for the same? And in what particulars, concerning the premises, is the said supreme magistracy by the Word of God excluded?

“(9) Whether the provision of commissioners to judge of scandals not enumerated (as they are authorised by the ordinance of Parliament) be contrary to that way of government which Christ hath appointed in his Church? And wherein are they so contrary?”²¹

The replies of the Assembly to these questions were never submitted to Parliament; but a proposition was agreed upon which was conceived to cover the whole ground—“The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the Civil Magistrate.”²²

III

The haughty resistance of the House of Commons to the Scotch Commissioners and the majority of the Assembly in the spring and early summer of 1646, was due to the success

²¹ C. J. (April 22, 1646), iv. 519–520. Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly*, 266–267. Rushworth, iv. (1), 260–261.

²² Hetherington, *ibid.*, 268.

of the *New Model* against the King's forces in the West. The victorious army was full of Independents, who were resolved that when war was over Independency should be tolerated.

For a few weeks it seemed as if there would be an immediate and final break between Parliament and the Presbyterians ; but at the end of April (1646) Charles left Oxford in disguise, and on May 5 cast himself on the honour of the Scottish army which was besieging Newark. Eight days later, the army, with the King in their hands, retreated to Newcastle. This startling change in the political situation had an immediate effect on the church controversy.

The Scottish leaders were doing their best to induce the King to take the Covenant, and to promise to establish Presbyterianism in England. Alexander Henderson left London for Newcastle, to assist the negotiations. Letters came from Charles to the City of London, and to the two Houses of Parliament, making large promises, though in very general terms, and the hopes of the Presbyterians rose high. If Parliament refused to crush the Anabaptists, the Brownists, the Antinomians, and the Seekers, the King, they knew, was willing enough to crush them ; and now that he was with the Scots, it was likely that he would take the Covenant and establish Presbytery.

It was necessary for Parliament to make some concessions, and on June 3 an Ordinance was passed abolishing the "Commissioners" in each province, and naming a central Commission for all England, consisting of about 180 Lords and Commoners. To these Commissioners, or to any nine of them, there was to be an appeal from the Congregational Elderships against a sentence of excommunication or of suspension from the Lord's Supper, on account of any scandalous offence not specified in the previous Ordinance ;²³ and the list of scandalous offences for which the Elderships were to be authorised to excommunicate, or to suspend without reference to the Commissioners, was enlarged.

Under this settlement there were two classes of offences which might be punished with excommunication or suspension : (1) The offences specified in the original Ordinance ; (2) other offences not formerly enumerated. If a person found guilty of any offence belonging to the first class believed

²³ *Ante*, p. 296.

that he had been condemned unjustly, he had an appeal from the Congregational Eldership to the "Classis," or Presbytery, of the District; from the "Classis" to the Provincial Synod; from the Provincial Synod to the National Assembly; and from the Assembly there was an appeal to Parliament.

If the offence belonged to the second class he could appeal at once from the Congregational Eldership to the general Commission for all England, and the Commission might declare that the offence was not one that justified either excommunication or suspension from the Sacrament. In all cases the aggrieved person might appeal to Parliament.²⁴

The power granted to the central Commissioners to revise and quash the decisions of Congregational Elderships was, in principle, as grave a violation of the independence which the Presbyterians claimed for church courts as the similar power granted by the cancelled Ordinance to provincial Commissioners. But, in practice, there were likely to be fewer appeals to Commissioners sitting in London than to Commissioners more easily accessible in every part of the country.

On June 9 and 12 (1646) an Ordinance passed both Houses directing that the scheme of Church Government agreed upon by Parliament should be immediately set up.²⁵ In July and August (1646) the London Congregations elected their elders; on May 3 (1647) the Provincial Assembly, or Synod, of London held its first meeting.

The first meeting of the Manchester *classis* was held on February 16, 1646-7; and in the same year Oliver Heywood's father, who had been excluded from the Lord's Supper for refusing to obtain his communion "ticket" from the elders, appealed from the Bolton Eldership to the Classical Presbytery at Bury; and from the Classical Presbytery at Bury to the Provincial Assembly at Preston, which revoked the sentence and exhorted both sides to a mutual accommodation.²⁶

²⁴ C. J. (June 3, 1646), iv. 562-563. L. J. (June 5, 1646), vii. 359-360. In some cases there was a right of reference to justices of the peace, with a final appeal to the Parliament.

²⁵ C. J., iv. 569-570; L. J., vii. 371.

²⁶ Joseph Hunter, *Life of Oliver Heywood*, 65-66. Whether the Provincial Assembly met for the first time in 1647 or 1648, does not appear from Oliver Heywood's MSS. Nor is the date given in Dr. Halley's *Lancashire, its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, i. 437-438.

IV

The work for which the Assembly of Divines was called together was now nearly finished. On April 29, 1647, the *Confession of Faith*, with Scriptural Proofs, was laid before Parliament, and 600 copies were ordered to be printed for the use of members of the two Houses and of the Assembly. The debates in Parliament on the Confession were interrupted by the political troubles of the year, and no conclusion was reached till March 22, 1647-8. On that day the Commons at a Conference with the Lords presented the Confession of Faith as passed by them, with some alterations, and it was resolved—

“That they do agree with their Lordships and so with the Assembly, in the Doctrinal Part, and desire the same may be made Public, that this Kingdom, and all the Reformed Churches of Christendom, may see the Parliament of England differ not in doctrine.”

Rushworth adds :—

“In some Particulars there were some Phrases altered, as in that of Tribute being due to the Magistrate, they put *Dues*; to the degree of Marriage they refer to the Law established; Particulars in Discipline are re-committed; and for the Title, they make it not; *A Confession of Faith*, because not so running, *I confess*, at the beginning of every Section; but *Articles of Faith agreed upon by both Houses of Parliament*, as more suitable to the former Title of the Thirty-Nine Articles.”²⁷

The sections on Discipline were therefore neither rejected nor confirmed by Parliament, but re-committed; and the report of the Committee was never made. The Assembly's revised copy of Rous's *Metrical Version of the Psalms* for Public Worship had been sanctioned by the Commons, with some amendments, on April 15, 1646; the Lords were inclined to favour a version by William Barton, but never came to a decision.²⁸

The *Longer* and *Shorter Catechisms* were sanctioned by both Houses on September 15, 1648.

²⁷ Rushworth, iv. (2), 1035. And see Neal, iii. 320-321, for a statement of what was included.

²⁸ C. J., iv. 509. L. J. (March 26, 1646), viii. 236; and (April 25, 1646), viii. 283-284.

V

All these documents drawn up by the Assembly—the *Directory for Public Worship*, the *Form of Presbyterian Church Government and Ordination of Ministers*, the *Confession of Faith*, and the two *Catechisms*—were approved and ratified by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and by the Scottish Estates, and they are still the authorised “Standards” of the Scotch Church. For many generations after the restoration of Episcopacy in England, the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms retained great authority among English Evangelical Nonconformists. The doctrinal parts of the Confession were not infrequently referred to in the trust deeds of Independent chapels; and the Catechisms, within the memory of living men, were learnt by the children of Independent families. As text-books of Calvinistic theology the Catechisms are of incomparable value for the clearness and precision of their definitions; they are penetrated with a spirit of noble, manly, and fervent devotion, and contain a large amount of most admirable practical teaching.

Those members of the Assembly who lived in the country now went home, and rarely attended its meetings; those who lived in London met for the examination of ministers who desired to be ordained or to be appointed to vacant churches. In one of the papers sent by the King to Parliament in the course of the negotiations with him, he proposed to sanction the Presbyterian settlement for three years, and to add twenty Episcopalian divines to the Assembly, that the whole subject of the polity and worship of the national Church might be reconsidered.²⁹ This proposal was not accepted by Parliament, but it may have been a reason for not dissolving the Assembly as long as there remained any hope of a pacific arrangement with the King.

On Thursday, February 22, 1648–9, three weeks after the death of the King, the Assembly met for the last time as an Assembly, and held its one thousand one hundred and sixty-third session. It had sat for five years and six months.

²⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xv. 368–374 (dated from Holdenby, May 12, 1647), and xvii. 347–352 (dated, Isle of Wight, November 17 1647).

It continued to meet every Thursday morning for rather more than four years as a Committee for examining ministers, and was never formally dissolved; but Cromwell's dismissal of the "Rump" of the Long Parliament on April 20, 1653, was the beginning of a new order, both in the State and the Church, and the Committee never met again.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CHURCH UNDER THE PARLIAMENT, THE COMMONWEALTH, AND THE PROTECTORATE.

PARLIAMENT REDUCES AND REORGANISES THE ARMY—THE SECTS AND THE SOLDIERS—THE ARMY LEADERS AN INDEPENDENT POWER IN THE STATE—PARLIAMENT FAVOURS PRESBYTERIAN UNIFORMITY : THE ARMY AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—VOTE OF THE COMMONS FOR LIMITED TOLERATION—SECRET TREATY BETWEEN THE KING AND THE SCOTTISH COMMISSIONERS—ROYALIST PLOTS AND RISINGS—ORDINANCE FOR SUPPRESSION OF HERESY AND BLASPHEMY—SECOND CIVIL WAR ENDS IN VICTORY FOR CROMWELL—FRESH BUT FUTILE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE KING—THE KING ARRESTED—PRIDE'S PURGE—TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF CHARLES I.—CHARLES II. PROCLAIMED KING—ROYALIST DEFEAT AT WORCESTER—THE "AGREEMENT OF THE PEOPLE"—PROPOSALS OF THE INDEPENDENTS FOR A SETTLEMENT OF RELIGION—CROMWELL EXPELS "THE RUMP"—THE "BAREBONES" PARLIAMENT—CROMWELL LORD PROTECTOR—THE INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT—THE "TRIERS"—TOLERATION AND FUNDAMENTALS OF FAITH—CROMWELL REFUSES THE CROWN—THE "HUMBLE PETITION AND ADVICE"—ARTICLES DEALING WITH RELIGION—CROMWELL'S RELIGIOUS POLICY—THE EXTENT OF TOLERATION—EXCEPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS.

I

ON Saturday, January 30, 1646-7, the Scottish army marched out of Newcastle, and left Charles in the hands of the Commissioners of the English Parliament. Rather more than a fortnight later (February 16), he was lodged at Holmby House in Northamptonshire.

The war was over ; all that remained was to make the best possible settlement with the King. Parliament determined that the time had come for giving security to its own authority, and to the Presbyterian settlement, by reducing and reorganising the army. After many debates extending through February, March, and the early part of April, it was resolved :

(1) That all the Foot not required for garrison duty should be disbanded. (2) That the Horse under Fairfax should consist of nine regiments of 600 each. (3) That all members of the two Houses of Parliament should be deprived of their commands. (4) That all officers should be required to take the Covenant and conform to the Presbyterian form of church government. Colonels for the nine regiments were nominated. Cromwell's regiment was to be commanded by Huntingdon, a staunch Presbyterian. Fairfax was so distrusted that he almost lost the appointment of Commander-in-Chief. An army for Ireland was to be recruited as far as possible from the existing English army; and Sir William Waller was appointed to the command instead of the Lord Lieutenant—Lord Lisle—who was a friend of Cromwell's.¹

For the army which had broken the power of the King had theories about the Church, and the duty of the civil magistrate in relation to the affairs of the Church, which were wholly irreconcilable with the theories of the Presbyterian majority in the House of Commons. "Never under the sun had there been such an army before."² It was largely composed of men who had a grave belief that they had been called of God to rescue the nation from the tyranny of the King, and to secure for the "saints" liberty to worship God according to the will of God, and not according to the commandments of men. At the root of their religious life was an intense faith in the illumination granted by the divine Spirit to every Christian man, and in the direct responsibility of every Christian man to Christ for the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Christian Church. They saw, or thought they saw, that the usurpation by the clergy and the civil magistrate of the powers and responsibilities which Christ had entrusted to all godly men, had been the cause of immeasurable evils. By the authority of the bishops, sustained by the Crown, superstitious ceremonies had been forced on the nation. Godly ministers who refused to submit were silenced, and subjected to cruel persecution, while men of scandalous lives, who knew nothing of the power and glory of Christ, were suffered to retain their pulpits and

¹ C. J. (March 5, 8, 1646-7), v. 107-108. L. J. (May 27, 1647), ix. 207-208. *Parliamentary History*, xv. 377-378.

² For an account of the religious condition of the army, see Masson, *Milton*, iii. 522-529.

their tithes. It was not clear to them that Presbytery, with its hierarchy of courts, was very much better than Episcopacy. The Spirit of God, given to all that are "in Christ," was not to be fettered by "Confessions," "Covenants," and "Directories" of worship. Freedom must be left for the devout and adventurous soul to follow the guidance of the Spirit wherever the Spirit might lead.

The army was full of men who held these convictions, and who, in their revolt against that church authority which they regarded as an encroachment on the supremacy of Christ and the Spirit of Christ, had adopted an infinite variety of opinions about church doctrine and church government. From morning to night the camp was excited by theological debates. Officers and common soldiers held prayer-meetings and preached sermons every day of the week.

Baxter, who spent two years with the army, describes it as it would appear to a man who regarded the sectaries with no friendly feeling. He says :—

" I found that many honest Men of weak judgments and little acquaintance with such Matters, had been seduced into a disputing vein, and made it too much of their Religion to talk for this Opinion and for that ; sometimes for State Democracy, and sometimes for Church Democracy ; sometimes against Forms of Prayer, and sometimes against Infant Baptism (which yet some of them did maintain) ; sometimes against Set-times of Prayer, and against the tying of our selves to any Duty before the Spirit move us ; and sometimes about Free-grace and Free-will, and all the Points of Antinomianism and Arminianism. So that I was almost always, when I had opportunity, disputing with one or other of them ; sometimes for our Civil Government, and sometimes for Church Order and Government ; sometimes for Infant Baptism, and oft against Antinomianism and the contrary Extream. But their most frequent and vehement Disputes were for Liberty of Conscience, as they called it ; that is, that the Civil Magistrate had nothing to do to determine of anything in matters of Religion, by constraint or restraint, but every Man might not only *hold*, but *preach*, and *do* in matters of Religion what he pleased : That the Civil Magistrate hath nothing to do but with Civil things, to keep the Peace, and to protect the Churches' Liberties."

It was Cromwell who had brought together in the *New Model* all these dangerous materials.

³ Baxter, *Life*, i, (1), 77 (i. p. 53),

“ He first made *Ireton* Commissary General ; and when any Troop or Company was to be disposed of, or any considerable Officer’s place was void, he was sure to put a Sectary in the place ; and when the brunt of the War was over, he looked not so much at their Valour as their Opinions. So that by degrees he had headed the greatest part of the Army with Anabaptists, Antinomians, Seekers, or Separatists at best : and all these he tied together by the point of Liberty of Conscience, which was the Common Interest in which they did unite. Yet all the sober party were carried on by his Profession that he only promoted the Universal Interest of the Godly, without any distinction or partiality at all. But still, when a place fell void, it was twenty to one a Sectary had it, and if a Godly Man of any other Mind or temper had a mind to leave the Army, he would secretly or openly further it.”⁴

Such an army was not likely to allow itself to be disbanded in order that the Presbyterian party might be at liberty to bring all England under the yoke of a new religious Uniformity. This would be to sacrifice all the results of the war, and to betray the cause of God and His saints. The army refused to submit to the orders of Parliament, and Parliament had to give way. From that time—April, 1647—the army and its leaders became an independent power in the State.

Parliament did not at once discover that its strength was broken. In its negotiations with the King it still insisted on Presbyterian uniformity ; while the army leaders demanded the abolition of “ *all coercive power, authority, and jurisdiction of Bishops and all other ecclesiastical officers whatsoever, extending to any civil penalties upon any* ” ; and also the repeal of all acts . . . enforcing the use of the Book of Common Prayer, or attendance at church, or prohibiting meetings for worship apart from the regular Church ; and they expressly stipulated for non-enforcement of the Covenant on any. In other words, the army, as a whole, neither advised an Established Church, nor objected to one ; nor would they indicate a preference for Presbytery or Episcopacy in the rule of such a Church, but stood out, in any case and all cases, for Liberty of Religious Dissent.⁵

⁴ Baxter, *Life*, i. (1), 82 (i. p. 57).

⁵ Summary of Articles xi.–xiii. of *Heads of Proposals*. See *Parliamentary History*, xvi. 212–221. The words in italics are from xi. See also xii., xiii. In Rushworth, iv. (2), 732, and in S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 257–258. The substance of these *Proposals* was submitted to the King about July 24, and they were laid upon the table of the House of Commons by Sir Henry Vane, on August 6, 1647.

On October 14, in a small House, and in the absence of many of the Presbyterian members, Cromwell secured a vote for a limited Toleration. The King was to be asked to consent that the Presbyterian settlement should not be disturbed till the end of the next Parliament; separate worship was to be allowed for Nonconformists of tender consciences; but there was to be no toleration of Roman Catholics, nor of the use of the Book of Common Prayer, nor of any preaching contrary to the main principles of the Christian religion; and every one was to be present on the Lord's Day at some kind of Christian worship.⁶

In November Charles escaped from Hampton Court. There were wild, revolutionary spirits in the army encamped at Putney, and Charles thought that his life was in peril. He placed himself under the protection of Colonel Hammond, who held Carisbrooke Castle for the Parliament. While at Carisbrooke, the negotiations with the army and with Parliament were continued; but on December 26 Charles made a secret treaty with the Scottish Commissioners who had been allowed to visit him, in which he bound himself to confirm the Presbyterian settlement in England for three years, and to suppress the Independents and all other sects. In return for this, a Scotch army was to march into England, to deliver him from his enemies, and to restore him to the full possession of his royal power. The substance of the treaty was communicated to the Scottish Committee of Estates on February 15, 1647-8; and a few days later it was known all over England that a Scottish army, fighting under the authority of the King, was to force a Presbyterian uniformity on the English nation.⁷

The Royalist plot was deeply laid, and was carried out with great vigour. Royalist insurrections broke out in Wales, in Cornwall, in Essex, in Yorkshire, in Kent. In London, which was passionately eager in support of Presbyterianism, there was a formidable riot: the Trainbands were overpowered; arms were seized; the rioters took possession of some of the city gates; and it was not till the riot had lasted forty hours that it was suppressed by a desperate charge of

⁶ C. J. (Oct. 14, 1647), v. 333. For the Act presented to the King for signature, *Parliamentary History*, xvi. 417-419.

⁷ In S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 259 foll.

cavalry.⁸ Worse than all, the fleet went over to the King ; nine ships drove out all their Parliamentary officers and placed themselves under the command of the Prince of Wales.

Presbyterian members of the House of Commons who had been for many months absent from their places suddenly returned, and the attendance at the House, which had ranged from 70 to 190, rose to 250 and 300. They seem to have thought that the time had come for a heavy blow at their enemies, and on May 1—the day that Cromwell was ordered to go off to South Wales to suppress the insurrection—an *Ordinance* was submitted to the House of Commons for the suppression of Blasphemies and Heresies. It had been under discussion for some time in Committees of the House, but had been resisted and destroyed by the Independents and the supporters of Toleration. Resistance was now so hopeless that it passed without a division.⁹ “For the preventing of the growth and spreading of Heresy and Blasphemy,” it was ordained that all persons denying the existence of God, or the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, or that Christ ascended to heaven bodily, or that the death of Christ is “meritorious in the behalf of believers,” that the canonical Scriptures are the Word of God, or that the bodies of the dead will rise again, or that there is a Day of Judgment after death,—and who, on being found guilty of denying these doctrines, whether by preaching, teaching, printing or writing, refuse to abjure their errors, “*shall suffer the pains of Death, as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy.*”¹⁰

It was further ordained that all persons who by preaching, teaching, printing, or writing maintain that God may be worshipped by images or pictures, or that there is a Purgatory, or “that man by nature hath free-will to turn to God,” or “that the baptizing of infants is unlawful,” or that the observance of the Lord’s Day is not obligatory, or “that man is bound to believe no more than by his reason he can comprehend,” or that the church government by Presbytery is anti-Christian or unlawful, shall, if they refuse to renounce their error or errors in public congregation, “*be committed to Prison.*” The second provision of this ordinance would have imprisoned half, or

⁸ *Parliamentary History*, xvii. 92–94.

⁹ The Lords’ assent was received on the next day, May 2. C. J., v. 548–549.

¹⁰ Scobell, 147–148.

a third, of both the officers and the private soldiers in the army which Parliament was using to suppress the insurrection.

But the Presbyterian triumph was soon checked. On July 8 the Scotch under Hamilton crossed into England, twenty thousand strong. They were joined near Kendal by three thousand Scots brought over from Ireland. The English Royalists in the north added their strength to the Scotch army—Episcopalian gentlemen, many of them, but willing to fight for Presbytery and the King. Cromwell and Lambert, with nine thousand men in all, flung themselves upon the invading army at Preston, and, in a battle lasting three days (August 17-19), and extending from Preston to Wigan and Warrington, utterly destroyed it. Three thousand of the Scotch were killed, and ten thousand were taken prisoners. On August 28 the fleet, under the Prince of Wales, which had been hanging about the south-east coast for some time, hoping to relieve Colchester, sailed to Holland. On the same day, Colchester, after sustaining with great gallantry a siege of six weeks, during which the inhabitants endured cruel sufferings, surrendered to Fairfax. The second Civil War was over.

Parliament was still anxious to come to a settlement with the King, and sent a large commission down to Newport, to agree upon the terms of a treaty. Religion was the great difficulty. Charles was willing that Presbyterianism should be undisturbed for three years; he was willing that the Episcopacy of the Anglican Church should be modified; that archbishops, chancellors, and deans should be abolished; that bishops should not ordain without the counsel and assistance of presbyters; but diocesan bishops were, in the King's belief, sanctioned by primitive usage, and he still insisted on retaining them. Nor would he consent to the perpetual alienation of the bishops' lands.

But the army had for some months come to the conclusion that the King was a man whom no treaties or oaths would bind, and that his duplicity was the real cause of all the troubles from which the nation was suffering. A remarkable prayer-meeting, lasting for three days, was held at Windsor in March or April, 1648, at which Cromwell and many of the army leaders were present. Adjutant-General Allen wrote *A Faithful Memorial* of the proceedings. He says that on the third day—

“we were . . . enabled then, after serious seeking His face to come to a very clear and joint resolution, on many grounds at large there debated amongst us, That it was our duty, if ever the Lord brought us back again in peace,¹¹ to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for that blood he had shed, and mischief he had done to his utmost, against the Lord’s Cause and People in these poor Nations.”¹²

On November 16, 1648, a *Grand Army Remonstrance* was drawn up at a general Council of Officers, which demanded that “the capital and grand author of our troubles, the Person of the King,” should be “speedily brought to justice for the treason, blood and mischief” of which he had been guilty.¹³ On November 30, by a warrant from Fairfax and the Army Council, two officers took possession of the King at Newport, and lodged him the next day at Hurst Castle. On December 2 the army was in London, and Fairfax had his headquarters at Whitehall. On December 4 the House of Commons carried a Resolution by 136 to 102, that the King had been seized “without the knowledge or consent of the House,” and the Presbyterians protested against the “insolency” of the act. The next day—December 5—after a debate carried on through the whole night, it was resolved by 129 to 83, “That the answers of the King to the Propositions of both Houses are a ground for the House to proceed upon for the settlement of the Peace of the Kingdom.”¹⁴ On December 6, the entrance to the House was blocked by two or three regiments of soldiers, and Colonel Pride with two other officers arrested forty-one members who were known to be in favour of continuing negotiations. On the next day a few others were arrested, and a still larger number—ninety-six in all—prevented from entering the House. A paper, described as *Humble Proposals and Desires*, from Fairfax and his Council of Officers, was laid before the House, demanding that about ninety members who were alleged to have been more or less in complicity with the recent Scotch invasion, should be disabled from further attendance, and that the vote for proceed-

¹¹ This was just before Cromwell went off to Wales to suppress the Royalist insurrection there.

¹² See the account of this prayer-meeting at Windsor Castle in Carlyle, *Cromwell*, i. 335-339, from *Somers’ Tracts* (second edition), vi. 498-504.

¹³ *Parliamentary History*, xviii. 228. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xviii. 295-302.

ing with the Treaty of Newport should be repealed.¹⁵ On December 7, Pride's Purge having cleared the House of the Royalist and Presbyterian members, the Proposals of the army were accepted; and on December 12 and 13 all former votes tending to a personal treaty with the King were revoked.

On January 1, 1648-9, the House resolved, "That by the fundamental laws of this Realm, it is Treason in the King of England, for the time to come, to levy War against the Parliament and Kingdom of England"¹⁶; and on the same day an Ordinance was passed appointing a High Court of Justice for the King's trial. The trial began on January 20, and on the 27th the Clerk of the Court read out the sentence that "*this Court doth adjudge that . . . the said Charles Stuart, as a Tyrant, Traitor, Murderer, and public Enemy, shall be put to death by the severing of his Head from his Body.*"¹⁷ Charles was beheaded at Whitehall on January 30.

II

The supreme executive power was now vested, by consent of the House of Commons, in a Council of State consisting of forty-one persons, with no permanent President.

Prince Charles was immediately proclaimed at Edinburgh under the title of "Charles II., King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland." Ireland rose for the new King; and when Cromwell landed in August (1649), the whole country was lost to the Commonwealth except Dublin and Londonderry. Within two months he had stormed Waterford and Wexford. The fierce resolution with which he suppressed the insurrection struck terror into the heart of the Irish nation; in April, 1650, he was able to leave the country in other hands.

In July, 1650, he was in Scotland. On September 3 he fought the Battle of Dunbar, and before the end of the year all Scotland south of the Forth and the Clyde was in his power. On July 31, 1651,—Cromwell being at Perth—the King with a Scotch army left Stirling for the south; on August 6 they were at Carlisle; on August 22 at Worcester; and there, on September 3, Cromwell fell upon them, killing two thousand,

¹⁵ *Parliamentary History*, xviii. 458-461.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xviii. 489. Whitelock, 366.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 367.

and taking ten thousand prisoners. His own loss was about two hundred. This was Cromwell's "crowning mercy."

In the *Agreement of the People of England*¹⁸—a scheme for the government of the Commonwealth drawn up by the Council of Officers before the King's execution—Parliament was left free to establish and endow any form of religion except Popery or Prelacy; Dissenters from the Established Church are to be protected in their separate worship, but "it is not intended to be hereby provided that this liberty shall necessarily extend to Popery or Prelacy."¹⁹ The *Agreement of the People* had not been confirmed by Parliament, with the exception of the provision for the creation of a Council of State;²⁰ but it is clear that the Council of Officers, the real founders of the Commonwealth, were willing that England should have a national Church, provided that it was a Protestant Church, and a Church without bishops, and provided that Dissenters were tolerated and protected. Presbyterianism was established and endowed in Scotland; Congregationalism was established and endowed in the great Puritan colony of Massachusetts; either of them—or some third form of church polity—might be established and endowed in England. In February, 1651-2, John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, William Greenhill, William Carter, Adoniram Byfield, John Dunn, John Goodwin, of Coleman Street, and other leading Independent ministers, submitted to the House of Commons a petition for the *Propagation of the Gospel*. The ministers made the following fifteen proposals:—

"1. Persons of godliness and gifts, though not ordained, to be allowed to preach, and to 'receive the public maintenance,' when approved and called.

"2. None to be admitted to trial but those who bring a testimonial from six godly persons, met for the purpose, of whom two at least to be ministers.

"3. A committee of ministers and others in every County for examining and approving candidates.

"4. Residue of scandalous ministers and schoolmasters throughout England to be removed.

¹⁸ *An Agreement of the People of England, and the Places therewith incorporated, for a secure and present Peace, upon Grounds of Common Right, Freedom, and Safety.* *Parliamentary History*, xviii. 519-536.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xviii. 534 (ix. § 3).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xix. 9-12. C.J. (Feb. 13, 1648-9), vi. 138-139.

"5. A roving Commission to be appointed by Parliament for this purpose.

"6. Said Commission to split itself, the parts going in six circuits.

"7 & 8. Other powers to said Commissioners, including that of dividing and uniting parishes.

"9. All ministers 'so sent forth and established' to be enjoined to pray, read, preach, visit the sick, instruct from house to house, etc.

"10. No person to be required to take the Sacraments, nor any minister to administer them where he does not see fit.

"11. A law to be passed requiring all persons whatsoever within the nation 'to attend to the public preaching of the Gospel every Lord's Day in places commonly allowed and usually called churches, except such persons as through scruple of conscience do abstain from these assemblies.'

"12. Explanation to be made to those who scruple to attend *consecrated* places of worship that such places are used merely for conveniency.

"13. 'That all persons dissenting from the doctrine and way of worship owned by the State, or consenting thereunto and yet not having advantage or opportunity of some of the public meeting-places commonly called churches, be required to meet (if they have any constant meetings) in places publicly known, and to give notice to some magistrate of such their place of ordinary meetings.'

"14. 'That such as do not receive, but oppose, those principles of the Christian Religion without acknowledgment of which the Scriptures do clearly and plainly affirm that Salvation is not to be obtained . . . may not be suffered to preach or promulgate anything in opposition unto such principles.' Having been required by the Committee to be more precise under this head, the ministers had given in a list of Fifteen Christian Fundamentals, the public preaching against which was to be illegal.

"15. Parliament to take some speedy course for the utter suppressing of that abominable cheat of Judicial Astrology."²¹

That John Goodwin should have been associated with Owen and the rest in these proposals is remarkable. His more natural place would have been with those outsiders who sent in "many and several papers" to the Committee declaring against the right of the civil magistrate to assume any authority to pronounce a judgment in matters of religion, and against the necessity of any endowment for the Christian ministry.²² More than a year passed before the House could

²¹ Summary of the *Humble Proposals of Mr. Owen and other Ministers*, in Masson, *Milton*, iv. 391-392. C. J. (Feb. 10, 1651-2, Dec. 6-10, 1652), vii. 86, 362-363.

²² See details in Masson, *Milton*, iv. 392-393.

arrive at any judgment on the Proposals. But at last the question on which the whole scheme rested was discussed, and it was resolved—" *That the Magistrate hath power, in matters of Religion, for the Propagation of the Gospel.*"²³ Those who had already discovered the ideal relations between the Church and the State were definitely defeated. In March and April, 1653, the House approved the first three Proposals, and then their deliberations were violently and finally brought to a close.

In the *Agreement of the People* it had been proposed that a new Parliament should be elected every two years; but in April, 1653—four years after the King's death, and more than eleven years after its original election—the "Rump" of the Long Parliament was still sitting. It had been resolved in November, 1651, "that the time for the continuance of this Parliament, beyond which they resolve not to sit, shall be the 3rd day of November, 1654";²⁴ and at the close of 1652 and the beginning of 1653, the House was occupied with a Franchise and Distribution Bill, assigning to the various constituencies the number of representatives which they were to send to the new Parliament, and determining the qualifications of electors. But the Bill contained nothing that would exclude the Presbyterian party; and it provided that all the existing members should retain their seats without re-election, and that a Committee of the existing members should superintend the elections, and should be authorised to judge whether the new members were proper persons to sit in the Parliament of the Commonwealth.²⁵ Cromwell and the officers made the

²³ C. J. (Feb. 25, 1652-3), vii. 262.

²⁴ *Parliamentary History* (Nov. 14 and 18, 1651), xx. 77-78.

²⁵ That the Bill, no copy of which is known to be in existence, contained these provisions is disputed. (But see Masson, *Milton*, iv. 409, *note*.) It is clear from Cromwell's speech to the "Little Parliament," that he and the officers objected to the Bill because the Franchise clauses did not disqualify any of the Presbyterian party, which was largely Royalist and wholly in favour of a Presbyterian uniformity. "We could not tell how to send out an Act . . . Until we first knew who the persons were that should be admitted to elect. And, above all, whether any of the qualifications reached so far as to include the Presbyterian Party. And we were told to tell them, That none of that judgment who had deserted this Cause and Interest (*None of your Royalists, Hamilton-Invasion Presbyterians.*" Note by Carlyle) should have any power therein. We did think . . . That we had as good deliver up our Cause into the hands of any as into the hands of

most earnest appeals to arrest the progress of the measure. On April 20, 1653, he learnt that it was being hurried through the House, and he went down to the House in his "plain black clothes, with grey worsted stockings," listened for some time to the debate; and when the question for passing the Bill was put, rose and spoke, according to Ludlow, "with so much passion and discomposure of mind as if he had been distracted." Sir Peter Wentworth was answering him, when Cromwell stepped "into the midst of the House," spoke again with great violence, and said, "You are no Parliament: I say you are no Parliament: I will put an end to your sitting; call them in, call them in." Two files of musketeers marched in, and in a few minutes the House was cleared, and Cromwell went away to Whitehall.

In the afternoon some of the members of the Council of State had met for business. Cromwell came in and told them that after what had happened that morning they were a Council of State no longer.²⁶

"Thus," says Whitelock, "was this great parliament, which had done so great things, wholly at this time routed by those whom they had set up, and that took their commissions and authority from them; nor could they in the least justify any action they had done, or one drop of blood they had spilt, but by this authority."²⁷ But the nation in general looked with indifference upon the extinction of this mere phantom of a House of Commons, and waited to see what would be the next movement of the army, which ever since Pride's Purge had really exercised supreme authority in England.

III

Cromwell, as "Captain General and Commander-in-Chief of all the Armies and Forces raised or to be raised within this Commonwealth," now assumed for a time supreme executive power. He issued a Declaration in his own name announcing

those who had deserted us, or who were as neuters. For it's one thing to love a brother, to bear with and love a person of different judgment in matters of religion; and another thing to have anybody so far set in the saddle on that account, as to have all the rest of his brethren at mercy" (Carlyle, *Cromwell*, iii. 244).

²⁶ Ludlow, *Memoirs* (1771), 193, 195.

²⁷ Whitelock (April 20, 1653), 554-555.

that till the meeting of a new Assembly, which was to be constituted of carefully chosen persons, the management of affairs would be in the hands of a Council of State consisting of nine officers and four civilians; but by the side of this Council of State there was the Council of Officers which still retained considerable power.

How the Assembly was constituted is shown in the summons issued by Cromwell on June 8, 1653, to its members:—

“Forasmuch, as upon dissolution of the late parliament, it became necessary that the peace, safety and good government of this commonwealth should be provided for, and in order thereunto, divers persons, *fearing God and of approved fidelity and honesty*, are by myself, with the advice of my council of officers nominated, to whom the great charge and trust of so weighty affairs is to be committed. And having good assurance of your love to, and courage for God, and the interest of his cause and (that) of the good people of this commonwealth;

“I Oliver Cromwell, captain general and commander-in-chief of all the armies and forces raised or to be raised within this commonwealth, do hereby summon and require you (being one of the persons nominated) personally to be and appear at the Council Chamber commonly known and called by the name of the Council Chamber at Whitehall within the city of Westminster upon the 4th day of July next ensuing the date thereof, then and there to take upon you the said trust; unto which you are hereby called and appointed to serve as a member for the County of — and hereof you are not to fail.

“Given under my hand and seal

“the 8th day of June, 1653

“O. CROMWELL.”²⁸

The Assembly originally consisted of 139 members.²⁹ They were summoned as representatives of constituencies, but were selected by Cromwell and the Council of Officers after consultation with Puritan ministers—most of them, probably, Independent ministers—in different parts of the kingdom. The forty counties of England were represented by 115 members; London by 7; Wales, as a whole, by 6; Scotland, as

²⁸ *Somers' Tracts* (second edition), vi. 246–251. Whitelock, 557–558.

²⁹ This is the number given in the list contained in *Somers' Tracts*, v. *sup.* Clarendon (*History*, v. 309) says, “About one hundred and forty.” Carlyle (*Cromwell*, iii. 229), “A hundred and forty of the summonses were issued; and of all the Parties so summoned ‘only two’ did not attend.” Whitelock (559), however, states that “about 120” were present at the first meeting on July 4,

a whole, by 5; Ireland, as a whole, by 6. The Assembly itself added Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison, Desborough, and Tomlinson. The English Royalists nicknamed it "the Barebones Parliament"—a prominent member was a London leather-merchant named Barbone, a Baptist; the Scotch Presbyterians named it the "Daft Little Parliament." It was really an assembly of strong and able men, some of whom afterwards achieved distinction.

It began by attacking large questions of law reform, and made some progress; when it discussed the settlement of the Church it was wrecked. On November 17, 1653, it resolved by 58 to 41, "That the power of Patrons to present to benefices shall from henceforth be taken away, and that a Bill be brought in for that purpose." On December 2 a Report was submitted dealing with the main principles by which the future relations of the State to the Church were to be governed.³⁰ The Report proposed:

(1) That seven Commissions should be constituted, each to consist of three persons; that each Commission should have charge of a definite circuit, within which, in association with selected persons residing in the circuit, it should have power to unite or divide parishes, to eject unfit ministers, and to fill up vacant livings.

(2) That twenty-one eminent persons, some of them distinguished Independent ministers, others distinguished Presbyterian ministers, and others laymen, should be appointed Commissioners.

(3) That all ministers approved as public preachers should enjoy the maintenance already settled by law, and have even farther encouragement.

(4) That measures should be adopted for meeting the scruples of those who hesitated to pay tithes—but the tithes were to be paid.

(5) That Parliament should declare that Incumbents, Rectors, and others in receipt of tithes, had legal property in the same.³¹

The question at issue was whether England should continue to have an endowed and established Church. The report was rejected on December 10, 1653, by 56 to 54. Rather more than half of the members of this select Assembly were

³⁰ C. J., vii. 361.

³¹ Masson, *Milton*, iv. 514.

in favour of Disestablishment and Disendowment. The division was taken on Saturday. On Monday, December 12, the leader of the defeated minority made a speech in which he said that he and others could have no comfort in remaining members of the House, and moved that the House should resign its trust. The motion does not seem to have been put to the vote; but the Speaker left the chair, told the Serjeant-at-Arms to follow him with the mace, and with a large number of members—one report says 80, which would have been a clear majority of the House—went to Cromwell and handed him their resignation.³² The House had existed for five months.

IV

The Council of Officers now resolved that the supreme executive power must be vested in a "Single Person," and on December 16, 1653, Oliver Cromwell was solemnly sworn as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The instrument³³ which determined the future constitution, created a Council of State consisting of fifteen persons, who were named in the instrument itself. Parliaments were to be elected every three years. All persons who had fought on the Royalist side since January, 1641-2, were to be disabled both as electors and candidates for the first five Parliaments, unless they had given subsequent proof of their loyalty to the Commonwealth; Roman Catholics and all persons implicated in the Irish rebellion were to be disabled for ever.

Candidates were to be men "of known integrity, fearing God, and of good conversation"; electors were to be men having real or personal estate of the value of £200. The first Parliament was to meet on September 3, 1654, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester.

There was to be a National Church—or rather a National Establishment of Religion: "the Christian religion, as contained in the Scriptures," was to be "held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations"; but all

³² *Somers' Tracts* (second edition), vi. 255-256, 280-283. Whitelock Dec. 13, 1653), 570.

³³ Whitelock (Dec. 16, 1653), 571-577; *Somers' Tracts*, vi. 284-296.

persons professing "faith in God by Jesus Christ" were to have freedom and protection in their ministry and worship so long as they did not disturb the public peace or endeavour to promote Popery or Prelacy.

While Parliament was not in session, the Protector and the Council had authority to make whatever Laws and Ordinances might be necessary for carrying on the government of the country and securing its safety. In the exercise of this power a Court of 43 Commissioners³⁴ was created on March 20, 1653-4, consisting of 33 divines and 10 laymen, who were to examine all ministers presented to livings and to certify their fitness for ministerial service.³⁵ These Commissioners were commonly called *Triers*. Among the thirty-three divines were a considerable number of Independents, several Presbyterians, and a few Baptists. If any minister living at a distance from London found it difficult to appear in person before the Commissioners, ministers in his own neighbourhood were authorised to examine him, and the Commissioners acted on their report. On August 29, 1654, another Ordinance was passed appointing Lay Commissioners in all the counties of England and Wales with power to eject "scandalous, ignorant and insufficient [incompetent] ministers and schoolmasters." Each County Committee consisted of from fifteen to thirty laymen, with from eight to ten divines as assessors.³⁶ On September 2, ten Trustees were appointed for the better maintenance and encouragement of Preaching Ministers. The revenues arising from the alienated cathedral and episcopal lands were placed under their management; they had power to unite and divide parishes, to augment poor livings, and to provide for the support of lecturers.³⁷

Under this settlement, which was Cromwell's own, Patrons retained their right of presentation; Cromwell himself as Head of the State had half the livings in England as his gift: but the minister presented could not enter into his living until he had been approved by the *Triers*. On their certificate of fitness he received the tithe, glebe, and other ecclesiastical revenues of the parish; and he might also receive an augmentation from

³⁴ The original members were 38; five more were added in the October following. Scobell, 279, 280, 366.

³⁵ All ministers presented since April 1, 1653, were also to be examined by these Commissioners, and before a fixed date.

³⁶ Scobell, 335-347. ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 353-356.

the Trustees for the better Maintenance and Encouragement of Preaching Ministers.

There was no Creed or Confession of Faith to which the clergy were required to subscribe ; but the Triers insisted no doubt on an acceptance of the substance of the Calvinistic theology. Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists were appointed to livings, and were left to organise their Churches and to conduct their services as they pleased. Episcopalians were not excluded ; but they were not allowed to use the Book of Common Prayer.

Outside the Church, according to the Constitution, there was perfect freedom for the ministry and worship of all that professed "faith in God by Jesus Christ," with the exception of those who might be attempting to set up Romish or prelatical Churches.³⁸

This settlement, in its larger outlines, remained unaltered through the Protectorate ; but several attempts were made—and these were at last successful—to narrow the legal limits of toleration. There was also a proposal to draw up a Confession of Faith, but this failed through the death of Cromwell.

V

The Protector's First Parliament was convened, according to the provision of the Instrument of Government, on September 3, 1654. It began by discussing the question, "Whether this House shall approve that the Government shall be in one Single Person and Parliament." Violent language was used about Cromwell.³⁹ On September 12 the doors of the House were locked and surrounded by soldiers, and the members were directed to meet the Lord Protector in the Painted Chamber. He spoke to them in terms of great severity

³⁸ § 37. "That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others, and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts; provided this liberty be not extended to popery nor prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness." *Somers' Tracts* (second edition), vi. 295.

³⁹ *Parliamentary History*, xx. 348 (September 7, 1654).

about the perils with which their policy menaced the State, and required them to sign an engagement "to be true and faithful to the Lord Protector and the Commonwealth."⁴⁰ Nearly one hundred refused to sign, and were excluded from the House—among them Bradshaw, Hazelrig, and other leaders of the Republicans. Their exclusion diminished the strength of the resistance to the "moderate" party.

The House discussed the question of Toleration with great earnestness. It was alleged that the article in the Constitution which secured Liberty of Ministry and Worship to "such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ," was vague and required to be more closely defined. A committee had been appointed, which included Baxter and other divines outside the House,⁴¹ to consider what were the "fundamentals" of the Christian religion which were not to be denied by those who claimed the protection of the State for their preaching and religious services. Baxter would have been content with the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; but his opinion was overborne by Owen, Thomas, Goodwin, Nye, and Marshall.⁴² Early in December the committee submitted their scheme to the House. The "principles of faith" were enumerated in the following terms:—

"1. That the Holy Scripture is that Rule of knowing God and living unto Him, which whoso does not believe cannot be saved.—2 Thess. ii. 10-12, 15; 1 Cor. xv. 1-3; 2 Cor. i. 13; John v. 39; 2 Peter ii. 1.

"2. That there is a God, who is the Creator, Governor, and Judge, of the world, which is to be received by faith, and every other way of the knowledge of him is insufficient.—Heb. xi. 3, 6; Rom. i. 19-22; 1 Cor. i. 21; 2 Thess. i. 8.

"3. That this God, who is the Creator, is eternally distinct from all his creatures in his being and blessedness.—Rom. i. 18, 25; 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

"4. That this God is one in three persons or subsistences.—1 John v. 5-9, compared with John viii. 17-19, 21; Matt. xxviii. 19, compared with Eph. iv. 4-6; 1 John ii. 22, 23; 2 John 9, 10.

"5. That Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man, without the knowledge of whom there is no salvation.—1 Tim. ii. 4-6; 2 Tim. iii. 15; 1 John ii. 22; Acts iv. 10, 12; 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xx. 370.

⁴¹ John Owen sat as member for the University of Oxford.

⁴² Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 52, 53, [i. pp. 198-199].

“6. That this Jesus Christ is the true God.—1 John v. 29; Isaiah xlv. 21-25.

“7. That this Jesus Christ is also true man.—1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7.

“8. That this Jesus Christ is God and man in one person.—1 Tim. iii. 16; Matt. xvi. 13-18.

“9. That this Jesus Christ is our redeemer, who by paying a ransom, and bearing our sins, has made satisfaction for them.—Isaiah liii. 11; 1 Peter ii. 24, 25; 1 Cor. xv. 2, 3; 1 Tim. ii. 4-6.

“10. That this same Lord Jesus Christ is he that was crucified at Jerusalem, and rose again, and ascended into heaven.—John viii. 24; Acts iv. 10-12; Acts x. 38-43; 1 Cor. xv. 2-8; Acts xxii. 2; Acts ii. 36.

“11. That this same Jesus Christ, being the only God and man in one person, remains for ever a distinct person from all saints and angels, notwithstanding their union and communion with him.—Col. ii. 8-10, 19; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

“12. That all men by nature are dead in sins and trespasses; and no man can be saved unless he be born again, repent, and believe.—John iii. 3, 5-7, 10; Acts xvii. 30, 31; Acts xxvi. 17-20; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts xx. 20, 21; John v. 24, 25.

“13. That we are justified and saved by grace, and faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works.—Acts xv. 24, compared with Gal. i. 6-9; Gal. v. 2, 4, 5; Romans ix. 31-33; Romans x. 3, 4; Romans i. 16, 17; Gal. iii. 11; Ephes. ii. 8-10.

“14. That to continue in any known sin, upon what pretence or principle soever, is damnable.—Romans i. 32; Romans vi. 1, 2, 15, 16; 1 John i. 6, 8, and iii. 3-8; 2 Peter ii. 19, 20; Romans viii. 13.

“15. That God is to be worshipped according to his own will; and whosoever shall forsake and despise all the duties of his worship cannot be saved.—Jer. x. 15; Psalm xiv. 4; Jude 18-21; Romans x. 13.

“16. That the dead shall rise; and that there is a day of judgment, wherein all shall appear, some to go into everlasting life, and some into everlasting condemnation.—1 Tim. i. 19, 20, compared with 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18; Acts xvii. 30, 31; John v. 28, 29; 1 Cor. xv. 19.”⁴³

Baxter tells us that Owen took the most active part in drawing up the statement; that Owen was supported by the members of the Committee named above, and that the others, “the sober orthodox men,” “said little, but suffered the heat of the rest to carry all.” He, and those who were of his mind, could do no more than hinder the majority “from doing harm, and thrusting in their own opinions or crude conceits” among the fundamentals. He was in a minority, and was less

⁴³ Neel, iv. 89-91.

vigorous than usual, as he was suffering from an affection of the head that made him drowsy and dizzy.⁴⁴

The Sixteen Articles, as we have them, are taken from a copy licensed by Scobell, the official printer.⁴⁵ But the copy seems to be incomplete. For the House of Commons received twenty Articles from the Committee empowered to confer with the divines, and ordered three hundred copies of the document to be printed.⁴⁶ It does not appear that the Articles were discussed; and Parliament was dissolved before they could be passed. But if the scheme of Owen and his friends had been successful, the Protector would have had no power to refuse assent to a Bill punishing persons who denied any of the Articles of this elaborate Creed.

The House had spent a great part of its time in a measure for *Declaring and Settling the Government of the Commonwealth*, which deprived the Protector and the Council of authority to legislate when Parliament was not sitting, and limited in other ways the power which had been entrusted to the Protector by the Instrument of Government. This measure, which consisted of sixty Articles, was to be accepted or rejected by the Protector as a whole; and, to force his acceptance, the House postponed supplies until he should give his assent to it. Cromwell disliked the measure itself, and thought it likely to prove injurious to the safety of the Commonwealth; he disliked still more the spirit in which it had been carried. Under the Instrument of Government Parliament was to sit for five months at least before it could be dissolved, prorogued, or adjourned, except by its own consent. Cromwell chose to interpret this provision as meaning five *lunar* months of twenty-eight days each, and dissolved the House on January 22, 1654-5. No Bill had been sent up by this Parliament for the Protector's assent.

VI

For about a year and nine months England was without a Parliament. In the early weeks of 1655 the condition of the country was alarming. A large number of republican leaders—bitterly hostile to the authority of a "Single Person"

⁴⁴ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 53-54 [i. pp. 198-199]. ⁴⁵ Neal, iv. 91.

⁴⁶ C. J. (Dec. 12, 1654), vii. 399.

—were placed under arrest for conspiring against the Commonwealth ; and in the west and north there were risings of the Royalists ; Charles was waiting at Middelberg to cross to Hull. In meeting these perils Cromwell and the Council of State acted with characteristic energy. They divided England into twelve districts under twelve Major-Generals, who represented the executive government and were armed with extensive powers of police. The Major-Generals levied the tax of ten per cent. on the incomes of Royalists for the support of the army, and it was part of their duty to sustain the authority of the County Commissioners for ejecting scandalous and inefficient ministers and schoolmasters. The scheme was effective. Conspiracies and insurrections were at once suppressed, and public order was maintained in every part of the country.

The Second Parliament of the Protectorate met on September 17, 1656, and sat till June 22, 1657. Ninety-three of the members, who were not “ approved by His Highness’s Council,” were prevented from entering the House. When their exclusion was challenged in the House, the Council replied that by the Twenty-first Article of the Instrument of Government it was empowered to admit those members whom it regarded as duly qualified and to exclude others ; and that the Seventeenth Article required that the persons elected should be “ of known integrity, fearing God, and of good conversation.” Some of the excluded members were subsequently admitted.⁴⁷

On February 23, 1657, Sir Christopher Pack, one of the members for the City of London, submitted to the House of Commons a scheme for reconstructing and settling the form of government. Cromwell was to be King, with the power of naming his successor ; there were to be two Houses of Parliament ; Parliament was to meet at least every three years ; no members duly returned by the constituencies were to be prevented from taking their seats ; and the power which had been granted to the Protector and Council to make Ordinances and Laws on their own authority while Parliament was not sitting was to cease. The scheme, described at first as *The Humble Address and Remonstrance*, etc., was afterwards called *The Humble Petition and Advice of the Knights, Citizens, and*

⁴⁷ Whitelock, 651–653. C. J. (Sept. 22, 1656), vii. 426. Clarendon, *History*, vi. 20–21.

*Burgesses now assembled in the Parliament, to His Highness the Lord Protector, etc.*⁴⁸ The Article proposing the Kingship was strenuously opposed by the Republicans, but was carried in a slightly amended form by 123 to 62. Cromwell declined the title, and the House consented that the "Chief Magistrate of these nations" should still be known as the Lord Protector. He accepted the whole scheme on May 25, 1657.

The important articles of the Petition and Advice in relation to the religious affairs of the nation are Articles X., XI., XII. Article X. contains a general recognition and approval of the existing religious settlement, but asks for more effective protection of the Ministers of Religion against those who "openly revile them" or disturb their worship.

"And whereas your Highness, out of your zeal to the glory of God, and the propagation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, hath been pleased to encourage a godly ministry in these nations, we earnestly desire, that such as do openly revile them or their assemblies, or disturb them in the worship or service of God, to the dishonour of God, scandal of good men, or breach of the peace, may be punished according to law; and where the laws are defective, that your Highness will give consent to such laws as shall be made in that behalf."

Article XI. contains a more elaborate account of the National Religious Establishment and a definition of the Limits of Toleration. The substance is as follows:—

(a) "That the true Protestant Christian religion, as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and no other, *be held forth and asserted for the public profession of these nations.*"

(b) "*A Confession of Faith,*" to be agreed upon by the Lord Protector and Parliament, "according to the Rule and Warrant of the Scriptures," is to "be asserted, held forth and recommended to the people of these nations"; and no persons are to be allowed "by opprobrious words or writing, maliciously or contemptuously to revile or reproach" this Confession.

⁴⁸ Whitelock, 657-661, gives the document in full. For a detailed account of the development of the scheme, see Ludlow, *Memoirs*, 246-250; and for a report of the Conference between Cromwell and a Committee of the Commons, *Somers' Tracts (second edition)*, vi. 351-401.

(c) Ministers and Public Preachers agreeing with the *Confession*—"although in their judgment and practice they differ in matters of worship and discipline"—are to be capable of holding any benefice; they may be presented to any livings, or elected to any lectureships, and may receive the tithes and other endowments which constitute "the public maintenance appointed for the Ministry."

Laymen agreeing with the *Confession*, whatever their judgment and practice in matters of worship and discipline, are to be capable, "being otherwise duly qualified," of any civil trust and employment; but no "ministers, public preachers, or pastors of congregations" are to hold any civil office.

(d) Those who believe in the Trinity, and in the divinity of our Lord, and who acknowledge the Scriptures as the revealed will and word of God, though they may differ from the *Confession* "in doctrine, worship, or discipline," are not to be "compelled thereunto by penalties," but are to be "protected from all injury and molestation in the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, whilst they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others or the disturbance of the public peace"; but this liberty is not to be "extended to popery or prelacy, or to the countenancing such who publish horrible blasphemies or practise or hold forth licentiousness or profaneness under the profession of Christ."

Article XII. confirms the Acts and Ordinances of Parliament, abolishing Episcopacy and authorising the sale of Episcopal and Cathedral Estates.

The settlement of the religious affairs of the nation under these Articles of *The Humble Petition and Advice* may be regarded as fairly representing the policy which was approved by Cromwell himself during his later years. There had been times when those who strenuously contended that all questions relating to religious faith and worship lie beyond the province of the civil magistrate, looked to him as a probable ally and comrade; but the troubles of the time, the rise of startling forms of heresy and fanaticism, and above all the immense difficulty, as it seemed to him, of securing adequate provision for ministers if the "public maintenance" were withdrawn from them, led him to regard the absolute exclusion of the civil magistrate from the province of religion with dismay. "For

my part," he said in his speech at the opening of the Second Parliament of the Protectorate (Sept. 17, 1656)—

"I should think I were very treacherous if I took away Tithes, till I see the Legislative Power settle Maintenance to Ministers another way. But whoever they be that shall contend to destroy Tithes,—it doth as surely cut their [the Ministers'] throats, as it is a drift to take Tithes away before another way of maintenance or way of preparation towards such, be had. Truly I think all such practices and proceedings should be discountenanced."⁴⁹

John Owen, the great Independent, who had been one of Cromwell's trusted friends, had incurred his displeasure by the vehemence of his opposition to the Kingship. He joined with the army leaders, who regarded the proposal with strong hostility, and drew up the petition which was presented to the House of Commons. But it is probable that the three articles on religion in *The Humble Petition and Advice* were satisfactory to Owen, and to Nye and Thomas Goodwin, the leading Independent divines of the Westminster Assembly.

In its general outlines the religious settlement of *The Humble Petition and Advice* corresponds with the policy which Cromwell had followed from the beginning of his Protectorate in 1653. Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Episcopalians held livings, and received the "public maintenance" appropriated to the support of the ministry. The Presbyterians in Lancashire and in London had their Presbyteries and Synods. Congregationalists and Baptists formed their "gathered churches." Since Prelacy was abolished there was no provision for the perpetuity of an Episcopalian clergy; but those Episcopalians who were willing to continue their ministry although bishops were abolished, could be presented to livings or could retain them; and they had as legal a claim to their tithes and the rent of their glebes as their predecessors before the execution of Strafford and Laud. Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Episcopalians were not only included among the clergy of the Establishment; they could conduct worship and administer the Sacraments as they pleased. Cromwell, when the Commonwealth was threatened by Royalist conspiracies and insurrections, had published an

⁴⁹ Carlyle, *Cromwell*, iv. 235-236.

Ordinance forbidding the use of the Book of Common Prayer ; but—

“ no one was prosecuted under it ; and, though it was not recalled, it was understood that it was suspended by the pleasure of his Highness, and that chaplains, teachers and preachers of the Episcopalian persuasion might go on as before, and reckon on all the toleration accorded to other Dissenters. . . . ‘ The Protector,’ says one [of the Royalist authorities], ‘ indulged the use of the Common-Prayer in families and in private conventicles ; and, though the condition of the Church of England was but melancholy, yet it cannot be denied that they had a great deal more favour and indulgence than under the Parliament.’ ”⁵⁰

In *The Humble Petition and Advice* the Ordinance forbidding the use of the Prayer-Book is not confirmed ; and for anything that appears in that document, the Episcopalian clergy were to be as free to use the Prayer-Book as the Presbyterian clergy to use the Directory.

Comparing the constitution of the national Establishment under Cromwell with its constitution *after* the Toleration Act of 1689,⁵¹ Cromwell’s settlement was much more liberal. The Toleration Act did nothing to widen the entrance into the ministry of the national Establishment. After the Toleration Act, as before, every clergyman was required to declare his unfeigned assent and consent, not only to the Thirty-nine Articles, but to everything contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer ; he was required to submit to Episcopal ordination ; and in celebrating worship and administering the Sacraments he was bound to use the forms of the Prayer-Book with all the ceremonies prescribed by the rubrics. Under *The Humble Petition and Advice*, the clergyman was required to agree to the Confession of Faith. This Confession was never drawn up, but there is no probability that it would have been more stringent than the Thirty-nine Articles. Nor is it probable that any more definite or comprehensive profession of belief than that contained in the Thirty-nine Articles was required by the “ Triers.” And this—in addition to testimonials to character and religious earnestness—was the only test that Cromwell imposed.

With one flagrant exception the toleration granted to those

⁵⁰ Masson, *Milton*, v. 60.

⁵¹ 1 W. and M. cap. 18.

outside the Establishment by Cromwell and by *The Humble Petition and Advice* was more generous than that which was granted by the Toleration Act. Roman Catholics were excluded from the benefits of the toleration clause in *The Humble Petition and Advice*; they were also excluded from the benefits of the Toleration Act.⁵² In the seventeenth century the Papacy was regarded as a permanent menace to the civil and religious liberties of all Protestant nations. On the same ground—and this was the dark blot in the Cromwellian policy—no toleration was granted to bishops: with the bitter memories of more than a hundred years the Puritans regarded Episcopacy as the ally of superstition and tyranny, and they believed that to permit the restoration of the Episcopal order would be to bring back the evil days of Charles and Laud, and to sacrifice all that had been won by the war. But other forms of separation from the national Establishment were treated far more liberally by Cromwell than by the Toleration Act. Neither Cromwell nor the Toleration Act gave protection to the Unitarians. But under the Toleration Act no Nonconformist minister could obtain protection in the discharge of his ministry until he had subscribed thirty-five of the Thirty-nine Articles; ⁵³ under *The Humble Petition and Advice* it was sufficient that he declared his faith in the Trinity, and in the Holy Scriptures as the revealed will and Word of God. It was not till 1779 that the simple declaration that he was a Nonconformist minister released a man from the obligation to subscribe the Articles, and allowed him to declare that he was a “Christian and a Protestant,” that as such he believed “that the Holy Scriptures do contain the revealed will of God,” and that he received the same “as the rule” of his “doctrine and practice.” ⁵⁴ Nor was it till 1813 that an Act was passed, repealing the statutes which made it a penal offence to deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and extending the benefits of the Toleration Act to Unitarians.⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibid.*, § 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, § 8. The Articles excepted were 34, 35, 36, and part of 20: viz. “The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith.” Exemptions were allowed also to Baptists and Quakers in respect of infant baptism (27), and the taking of oaths (10, 13).

⁵⁴ 19 Geo. III. cap. 44.

⁵⁵ 53 Geo. III. cap. 160.

CHAPTER IX

THE EJECTION OF THE EPISCOPALIAN CLERGY

1640—1658

CONDITION OF THE CHURCH—COMMITTEES TO DEAL WITH SCANDALOUS AND WITH PLUNDERED MINISTERS—COUNTY COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO EXAMINE AND EJECT—THEIR PROCEEDINGS—PROVISION FOR EJECTED CLERGY—CLERGY AND THE COVENANT—POLITICAL AND MORAL GROUNDS OF EJECTION—BAXTER'S EVIDENCE—EPISCOPALIAN CLERGY NOT EJECTED—THEIR PROBABLE NUMBER DURING THE PROTECTORATE—STATISTICS OF EJECTION—WALKER'S ESTIMATE EXAMINED—NEAL'S ESTIMATE CONFIRMED.

I

ON November 6, 1640, three days after the meeting of the Long Parliament, the House of Commons, following the example of previous Parliaments, appointed a Grand Committee of the whole House to deal with grievances of religion. Petitions, in such large numbers, began to pour in from all parts of the country charging the clergy with immorality, heresy, incompetency, and superstition, that in December a large sub-committee consisting of about a hundred members was appointed "to consider how there may be *preaching ministers* set up, where there are none; how those preaching ministers may be maintained, where there is no Maintenance; and when they are in how they may be kept and continued; and to receive all other petitions of that nature"; also to "inquire of the true Grounds and Causes of the great Scarcity of preaching Ministers through the whole Kingdom, and to consider of some way of removing *scandalous ministers*, and putting others in their Places."¹ The House was resolved, not only to reform the laws of the Church, but to exercise the discipline which the bishops had neglected.

¹ C. J. (Nov. 6 and Dec. 19, 1640), ii. 21, 54.

White, who was Chairman of the Grand Committee of the whole House, was also Chairman of the Sub-Committee, which was sometimes described as "the Committee for Preaching Ministers" and sometimes as "the Committee for Scandalous Ministers." By its enemies it was called "the Scandalous Committee."

Complaints against the clergy continued to be so numerous, that this Committee was subdivided into several smaller Committees which were named after their Chairmen—White's Committee, Corbet's Committee, Sir Robert Harlow's Committee, Sir Edward Dering's Committee."² According to Walker, the historian of the Sufferings of the Episcopalian Clergy, "within a short space, above two thousand Petitions were brought in against the clergy; and within some months after, Mr. Corbet . . . boasted that he had (before his single Committee, as I understand it) no less than nine hundred Petitions against scandalous Ministers."³

The articles of inquiry were (1) Scandalous immorality, such as drunkenness, swearing, blasphemy, and other gross vices; (2) False or scandalous doctrine, especially Popery and Arminianism; (3) Profanation of the Sabbath, by reading and countenancing the Book of Sports; (4) Practising the recent innovations in divine service; (5) Neglect of ministerial duty, and especially neglect of preaching; (6) Malignancy—active hostility to Parliament.⁴ The witnesses were to be examined in the presence of the accused. When one of the Committees concluded that charges against a clergyman had been proved which justified sequestration, they reported to the Grand Committee; the Grand Committee, if it approved the sentence, reported to the whole House. Before the breaking out of the war, the final decision was referred to the House of Lords; afterwards the House of Commons acted on its own authority.

In December, 1642, the House appointed a Committee "to consider of the fittest way for the relief of such godly and well-affected Ministers as have been *plundered*, and . . . what malignant persons have Benefices herein and about this town, whose Livings being sequestered, these may supply their Cures, and receive the profits." This was "the Committee for

² *Persecutio Undecima*, § 5, p. 22.

³ Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 65.

⁴ Neal, iii. 27.

plundered ministers," and was called by the Royalists and Episcopalians "the Committee for *plundering* ministers.⁵ Large numbers of the clergy who were favourable to Parliament were driven from their homes by the King's troops, and came to London with their wives and children in great destitution. Parliament concluded that those who were loyal to itself should hold the livings of those who were loyal to the King.

In July, 1643, this Committee was empowered to deal with ministers who were charged with immorality, or false doctrine, and other *scandalous* offences, as well as with *malignant* ministers—ministers charged with hostility to Parliament.⁶ From this time the two Committees were united.

On September 6, 1643, the House ordered that county committees, formed of the deputy-lieutenants and of country gentlemen who were loyal to Parliament, should have power to examine petitions against the clergy in their several counties; and that when they found a clergyman guilty of grave charges, they should report their decision to the Committee for plundered ministers, with the evidence on which it rested. The accused clergyman had the right of appeal to the two Houses of Parliament.

It was not till these county committees were appointed that the work of ejectment became very vigorous. It appears to have gone on throughout the whole time of the Long Parliament, and large numbers of the Episcopalian clergy lost their livings. It was ordered that they should retain a fifth of their former income; but in the case of small livings this would be miserably inadequate, and was probably rarely claimed; in the case of large livings the confusion of many parts of the country was so great that it is probable that the claim, if

⁵ C. J. (Dec. 31, 1642), ii. 909. "Plunder," so Fuller tells us (vi. 241), was a word newly brought into use about this time. He is uncertain whether it comes of a "Latin original," from *planum dare*, "to level" or plane all to nothing; or whether it is "of Dutch extraction, as it were to plume or pluck the feathers of a bird to the bare skin." "Sure I am," he adds, "we first heard thereof in the Swedish Wars, and if the name and thing be sent back from whence it came, few English eyes would weep thereat." Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary*, s.v., connects it with Low German *plunnen*, "rags," and says that the verb meant "to strip a household even of its least valuable contents." Cf. Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 73.

⁶ C. J. (July 27, 1643), iii. 183. Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 74.

resisted, could not be enforced. Those of the clergy who were dismissed from their livings because they were found guilty of gross immorality suffered no wrong ; it would have been only just to provide for the rest from some more secure source than the income of their successors.⁷

But the most fatal weapon against the Episcopalian clergy was the order of Parliament issued in February, 1643-4, requiring all persons above the age of eighteen to take the Solemn League and Covenant. As this included a promise to "endeavour the extirpation of . . . Prelacy (that is, Church Government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy)," every clergyman that regarded Episcopacy as the divinely appointed polity of the Church, or even as the polity which experience had shown to be most favourable to the peace of the Church and the maintenance of the true faith, was obliged to refuse it. According to Walker, "more suffered by the Covenant, than by any one invention of the times besides."⁸

Under Cromwell scandalous, ignorant, and incompetent ministers were ejected by county commissioners."⁹

II

About the manner in which these various Committees and Commissioners discharged their office, and the offences for which the Episcopalian clergy were ejected, there have been bitter controversies.

⁷ This Ordinance of 1644 was made more precise on November 11, 1647, when it was resolved that "the wives and children of all such persons as are, or have been, or may be sequestered, . . . shall be comprehended within the ordinance that alloweth a fifth part for wives and children, and shall have their fifth part allowed unto them." All the Committees concerned were required to take notice of the ordinance and to carry its provisions into effect. Walker, in his *Sufferings of the Clergy* (i. 103), says that hardly one in ten ever had their allowance in full or without trouble ; and Fuller (vi. 330-333) gives a long list of the pleas used to evade and frustrate the order, and to abuse "the pitiful and pious intentions of the Parliament."

For the Ordinances see Scobell (1644, cap. 45), 344 (1646, cap. 29), 511 ; and C. J. (Nov. 11, 1647), v. 356.

⁸ Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 107. For the Ordinance (2 Feb. 1643-4) see Husband, *Collection*, 420-421.

⁹ See *ante*, p. 321.

It is certain that under the Order for enforcing the Solemn League and Covenant large numbers were ejected for no other reason than their loyalty to the Episcopal form of church government: they could not swear "to endeavour the extirpation" of the church polity which they earnestly desired to restore. They were expelled from their livings for believing in bishops, just as the Romish clergy under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were expelled for believing in the Pope. The Solemn League and Covenant was an instrument of precisely the same kind as the Oath of Supremacy. Parliament, in the seventeenth century, claimed and exercised the same authority to regulate the national Church that had been claimed and exercised in the sixteenth century by Parliament and the Crown—the Crown commanding the greater measure of authority.

It is also certain that before the Covenant was enforced, and after the Order enforcing it had become effective, the Committee and Commissioners ejected many of the clergy from their livings because they took the side of the King. The clergy that left their livings and went to Charles while he was at Oxford were ejected.¹⁰ The clergy that denounced the Parliament from their pulpits, menaced the Parliamentary leaders and all their adherents with the divine wrath, or encouraged and aided their parishioners in resisting the Parliamentary armies, were ejected. While the war lasted and Parliament had to struggle hard to maintain its hold on many parts of the country, it was impossible to leave its open enemies in possession of their churches and their pulpits. It was as necessary to eject the Royalist clergy¹¹ from their parishes as to eject the King's garrisons from Colchester and the other strong places in the kingdom. During the war the ejection of "malignants" was a military as much as an ecclesiastical measure; and after the war had ceased it was an almost equal source of peril to public order to leave the open enemies of the Commonwealth among the clergy undisturbed. The authority, first of Parliament, then of the Protector, was precarious: it was constantly menaced by conspiracy and insurrection. The clergy, as the ministers of the national Church, were the

¹⁰ "Some were merely outed for their affections to the King's cause, and what was malignity at London was loyalty at Oxford." Fuller, vi. 269.

¹¹ "The strongest militia, as they were truly called, of the King." J. S. Brewer in his edition of Fuller, *ibid.*, vi. 269, *note*.

natural guardians and supporters of the supreme authority in the State ; if they were its declared and active foes, their influence was a perpetual source of danger. When the war was over, the ejection of the "malignants" was a measure of police.

Many, probably, were ejected because they were unable to preach ; many because they were ignorant ; and many because they insisted on practising the "ceremonies" which Parliament had condemned. But many were ejected for gross immorality. In November, 1643, White published a quarto pamphlet by authority of Parliament, vindicating the Committee of which he was a chairman, under the title of *The first century of scandalous malignant Priests made and admitted into benefices by the Prelates*, etc. It contains a record of the offences for which a hundred of the clergy had been removed from their livings, or deprived of their clerical office. "So much ignorance, insufficiency, drunkenness, filthiness, etc., was charged on them," says Baxter, "that many moderate men could have wished that their Nakedness had been rather hid, and not exposed to the World's derision, and that they had remembered that the Papists did stand by, and would make sport of it."¹² What happened at Kidderminster is an illustration of what happened in large numbers of parishes all over England. Baxter says :—

"Among all these Complainers, the Town of Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, drew up a Petition against their Ministers : the Vicar of the place they Articled against as one that was utterly insufficient for the Ministry, presented by a Papist, unlearned, preached but once a quarter, which was so weakly, as exposed him to laughter, and persuaded them that he understood not the very Substantial Articles of Christianity ; that he frequented Alehouses, and had sometimes been drunk ; that he turned the Table Altar-wise, etc., with more such as this. The Vicar had a Curate under him in the Town whom they also accused ; and a Curate at a Chapel in the Parish, a common Tippler and a Drunkard, a railing Quarreller, an ignorant insufficient Man, who (as I found by Examining him) understood not the common Points of the Children's Catechism, but said some good words to them sometimes out of *Musculus's 'Common Places' in English*, which was almost the only Book he had ; and his Trade in the Week-days was unlawful Marriages. . . . The Vicar knowing his insufficiency, and hearing how two others in his Case had sped, desired to compound the

¹² Baxter, *Life*, i. (1), 29 [i. p. 19].

Business with them; and . . . it was brought to this, That he should instead of his present Curate in the Town allow £60 *per annum* to a Preacher whom fourteen of them nominated should choose; and that he should not hinder this Preacher from preaching whenever he pleased, and that he himself should read Common Prayer, and do all else that was to be done.”¹³

The Vicar kept his living, and Baxter became Lecturer, receiving £60 a year out of the Vicar’s £200.

With regard to the general action of the Committees of Parliament Baxter bears this testimony:—

“I must needs say, that in all the Counteys where I was acquainted (the Midland Counties of England), six to one at least (if not many more) that were Sequestered by the Committee, were by the Oaths of Witnesses proved insufficient, or scandalous, or both; especially guilty of Drunkenness or Swearing: and those that being able, godly Preachers, were cast out for the War alone, as for their Opinions’ sake, were comparatively very few.”¹⁴

What he says of Cromwell’s “Triers” is equally favourable.

“Because this Assembly of Triers is most heavily accused and reproached by some Men, I shall speak the truth of them, and suppose my word will be the rather taken, because most of them took me for one of their boldest Adversaries, as to their Opinions, and because I was known to disown their Power, insomuch that I refused to try any under them upon their reference, except a very few, whose importunity and necessity moved *me* (they being such as for their Episcopal Judgment, or some such Cause, the Triers were likely to have rejected). The truth is, that though their Authority was null, and though some few over-busy and over-rigid Independents among them were too severe against all that were Arminians, and too particular in enquiring after Evidences of Sanctification in those whom they Examined, and somewhat too lax in their admission of Unlearned and Erroneous Men, that favoured Antinomianism or Anabaptism; yet to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the Church: They saved many a Congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken Teachers: that sort of Men that intended no more in the Ministry, than to say a Sermon, as Readers say their Common Prayers, and so patch up a few good words together to talk the People asleep with on *Sunday*; and all the rest of the Week go with them to the Alehouse, and harden them in their Sin: and that sort of Ministers that either preacht against a holy Life, or preacht as Men that never

¹³ Baxter, *Life*, i, (1), 29 [i, pp. 19-20]. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, i, (1), 117 [i. p. 74].

were acquainted with it; all those that used the Ministry but as a Common Trade to live by, and were never likely to convert a Soul; all these they usually rejected; and in their stead admitted of any that were able serious Preachers, and lived a godly Life, of what tolerable opinion soever they were. So that though they were many of them somewhat partial for the Independents, Separatists, Fifth-Monarchy-men, and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, yet so great was the benefit above the hurt, which they brought to the Church, that many thousands of Souls blest God for the faithful Ministers whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterward cast them out again."¹⁵

Baxter was not the only eminent divine among those afterwards ejected from the Church who now secured for clergymen of "episcopal judgment" a place in the Church of the Commonwealth. Dr. Edward Pocock, the great Orientalist, held the living of Childrey in Berkshire, twelve miles from Oxford. He was charged by his parishioners with using the Prayer-Book and other similar offences. When his trial came on before the County Commissioners, John Owen interfered and saved him.¹⁶

Thomas Fuller had been an energetic Royalist; had preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey on March 27, 1642, which created great resentment among the adherents of the Parliament, on the text, "Yea, let him take all, so that my lord the King return in peace"; had joined Charles at Oxford; had been a chaplain in the royal army and to the Princess Henrietta Maria; had been with the royal garrison at Basing House in 1644, and had been vigorous and resolute in counselling them to resist Sir William Wallis, who was compelled to raise the siege. He was not unnaturally apprehensive that the "Triers" would refuse to confirm him in his living, and appealed to the kindly influence of John Howe. "You may observe, Sir," he said, "that I am a somewhat corpulent man, and I am to go through a passage that is very strait; I beg you would be so kind as to give me a shove, and help me through." When he appeared before his examiners, he was asked the usual question, "Whether he had ever had any experience of a work of grace in his heart." He replied—probably as the result of Howe's advice—that "he could appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that he made conscience of his very

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, i. (1), 116 [i. p. 77].

¹⁶ Wood, *Ath. Oxon.*, ii. 869.

thoughts.”¹⁷ The “Triers” were satisfied; Fuller retained his living, and at the Restoration recovered his prebend at Salisbury.

A very considerable number of conspicuous Episcopalians are known to have retained their benefices through the Protectorate. Bull, afterwards Bishop of St. David's, who had a living near Bristol, kept it and used to recite the prayers from memory. Rainbow, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, adopted the same practice. Hacket, who had the living of Cheam, was disturbed by the Surrey Committee for reading the Book of Common Prayer, and “found himself under the necessity of omitting such parts as were most offensive to the Government”; then he was allowed to remain. William Parsons, Rector of Birchanger, was in jail for nineteen weeks for his loyalty to the King, but returned to his living during the Protectorate and usually read the Common Prayer. Though an Episcopalian, he was created Doctor of Laws at Oxford while Owen was Vice-Chancellor. Thomas Adams continued to use the Liturgy and to administer the Sacraments according to the Offices in the Prayer-Book at St. Bennet's, Paul's Wharf, and there were many distinguished persons in his congregation. The daughter of Cromwell attended similar services conducted by Dr. Hewitt. “Lewis Atterbury (father of the bishop), remained incumbent of Milton, Pocock of Childrey, Sanderson of Boothby Pagnell, Stillingfleet of Sutton . . . Ussher preached almost within a stone's throw of Whitehall.”¹⁸

Some well-known Episcopalians held office in the Church, but did not use the Prayer-Book. Pearson, the author of the Lectures on the Creed, was Lecturer at St. Clement's, Eastcheap. Farindon, a famous preacher whose sermons still command the admiration of many of the students of that age, was minister of St. Mary Magdalene, Milk Street; he was compelled for a short time to give up his benefice, but soon recovered it. During his enforced retirement some unknown friend preached for him on two occasions, and after these sermons collections amounting to more than £400 were made for the ejected Episcopalian clergy. Nathaniel Hardy, author of a well-known exposition of the First Epistle of John, retained a Church in Fenchurch Street, preached a “loyal lecture” every year in

¹⁷ E. Calamy, *Memoirs of Howe* (1724), 20-21.

¹⁸ Overton, *Life in the English Church, 1660-1714*, 5. See also 3-6.

commemoration of the "martyrdom" of the King, and made collections on behalf of the deprived clergy.¹⁹

It is apparent, indeed, that a large number of Episcopalian clergymen must have held livings during the Protectorate. The highest estimate of the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists ejected after the Restoration is below 3,000; between 6,000 and 7,000 clergymen retained their benefices. The Act of Uniformity disqualified all ministers who had not received Episcopal ordination; and as there is no proof that any considerable number of the clergy in actual possession of livings at the Restoration had to be reordained, the inference is clear that there must have been at least 6,000 clergymen, out of about 9,500 holding parish livings under the Protectorate, who had been episcopally ordained and who were willing to continue in an Episcopal Church.²⁰

III

The number of the Episcopal clergy ejected from the Church after the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640 was very large, but has been enormously exaggerated. Dr. Gauden, according to Walker, estimated the number at 6,000 or 7,000; Walker adds that he "seems to have taken into account the Rectors and Vicars only," and that if curates and private chaplains who were silenced, and "such Scholars who were prepared and intended for the Ministry," but were prevented from entering it, are added to the list, the number must be largely increased. Walker also thinks that the clergy who "*would have suffered had not death prevented,*" ought also to be included in the list; and by this method of calculation he raises the estimate to 10,000.²¹

Hallam, who describes Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy* as characterised by "all the virulence and partiality of the high-church faction" at the end of the reign of Queen Anne, pronounces his estimate of the ejected as "a palpable overstatement on his own showing, for he cannot produce near

¹⁹ For a fuller account of the Episcopalian clergy referred to in the two preceding paragraphs, see Stoughton, *Religion in England*, ii. 280-287.

²⁰ On the number of the Episcopalian clergy ejected, see Neal, iii. 111-114.

²¹ Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 199-200.

2,000 names after a most diligent investigation.”²² The Rev. J. G. Miall gives the following criticism of Walker’s figures :—

“ Walker, after speaking of 8,000 ejections, furnishes a list, to complete which letters were sent to every part of England, and ten years consumed, and the whole number (of the parochial clergy) he is able to furnish amounts to 2,399. But in this list are included many pluralists, and many cathedral clergy who held livings, deducting which, a very considerable abatement from the total number must be made. It is certain that there are to be found a few which Walker has not included in his list, but the number represented by him must be pronounced to be a fable. He produces a list of Hampshire, in which and the Isle of Wight there were 289 parishes, but only 88 ejections, less than one-third. In Suffolk, 575 parishes; 134 sequestrations. In Norfolk, 660; 78 sequestered. In Cambridgeshire, 168; 41 sequestered. So that in these counties the sequestrations amounted to only one-fifth of the number of parishes. Even in Devonshire, where Walker resided, and where he may be supposed to know almost every case, where, also, the loyalists were very abundant, he only mentions 139 sequestrations out of 394 parishes.”²³

Neal’s estimate of 1,600—or about one-fifth of the whole number of the beneficed clergy—is probably nearer the truth. Dr. Stoughton finds “ no ground for believing that much less than 2,000, or much more than 2,500 Episcopal clergymen were expelled from the Establishment.”²⁴

That Neal’s estimate is fairly accurate appears from a statement presented by the Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference in 1661. The Convention Parliament of 1660 passed an Act for restoring to his living every sequestered minister that had not “ justified the late King’s murder, or declared against infant baptism.”²⁵ The measure was to take effect before the 25th of December, and the actual incumbent was to give peaceable possession to the ministers that had been ejected during the Commonwealth or the Protectorate, and was to be accountable for the dilapidations and for any arrears of “ fifths ” which he had failed to pay during his incumbency. Under this Act all the ejected Episcopalians would at once recover

²² Hallam, *Constitutional History*, ii. 166.

²³ *The Ejection of the Episcopalians* (Bicentenary Papers), 18.

²⁴ Neal, iii. 111–114. Stoughton, *History of Religion in England*, i. 426.

²⁵ C. J. (Aug. 27 and 31, and Sept. 10, 1660), viii. 138, 144, 161–163, 164–165.

possession of their churches and parsonages ; indeed, many of them had recovered possession as soon as the King returned. And yet the Presbyterians in their statement speak of only “ *many hundreds* ” of ministers as having been “ displaced or removed ” at that time.²⁶ If only “ some hundreds ” were “ cast out ” to make room for the clergy ejected during the troubles, there were only “ some hundreds ” to claim the livings—600 or 700 is a high estimate. Half of those who had been ejected during the twenty years between 1640 and 1660 were likely to be alive at the end of that time ; and this calculation would make the whole number of the ejected Episcopalians 1,200 or 1,400.

²⁶ *A Petition for Peace* (1661), 2.

CHAPTER X

PRESBYTERIANISM RE-ESTABLISHED

OLIVER CROMWELL'S DEATH—RICHARD CROMWELL'S ACCESSION—DISSATISFACTION OF THE ARMY AND THE REPUBLICANS—THE COUNCIL OF OFFICERS IN OPPOSITION TO THE PARLIAMENT—PARLIAMENT DISSOLVED—OWEN AND THE INDEPENDENTS UNFRIENDLY TO RICHARD—THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT SUMMONED TO RETURN—RICHARD ABDICATES—COMMITTEE OF SAFETY APPOINTED—MONK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF—THE NEW PARLIAMENT—MONK'S POSITION—PRESBYTERIANISM SUPREME.

CROMWELL died on September 3, 1658,—“a day very memorable,” says Lord Clarendon, “for the greatest storm of wind that had ever been known, for some hours before and after his death, which overthrew trees, houses, and made great wrecks at sea; and the tempest was so universal that the effects of it were terrible both in France and Flanders, where all people trembled at it.”¹ It was the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, “a day he thought always very propitious to him,” and on which he had been accustomed to commemorate, in the devout Puritan way, God's mercy to him and the Gospel in giving him his two famous victories. And now came what was really God's “crowning mercy” for Cromwell himself, if not for his country. The great man, after a tumultuous life, entered into rest. The storm which raged when Oliver Cromwell was dying might have been regarded as an omen of the public troubles by which his death was likely to be followed. Yet, at first, it seemed as if he had succeeded in founding a dynasty, and as if his son Richard was about to be peaceably accepted by the whole country. For three months loyal addresses came pouring in from all parts of the country. The armies in England, Scotland, Ireland, and

¹ Clarendon, *History*, vi. 102-103.

Flanders, and the officers of the fleet, assured him of their fidelity. And he received the congratulations of foreign powers.²

But there were elements of danger to which Richard could not be blind. There was a great deal of talk about a sealed paper, written a year before Oliver's death, in which it was commonly supposed that Fleetwood, who had married one of Oliver's daughters, was nominated his successor. When the great Protector died the document could not be found, and it was said that on his death-bed he had nominated Richard. Fleetwood was probably disappointed.³ This was not all. There was a general feeling among the officers that since the deliverance of England from the prelates and the King had been wrought by the army, its chiefs had a clear right to a considerable share in the government of the State. The men who had crushed the Cavaliers on so many battle-fields were not mere mercenary troops. They had left their farms and their homes under the inspiration of a profound religious enthusiasm. They believed that they were elect of God to redeem their country from vice and irreligion, from prelatical usurpation, Papal superstitions, and royal tyranny. The victories they had won they were in the habit of attributing to the divine hand. The ancient Psalms celebrating the triumphs of the chosen nation over the heathen were always on their lips. As yet, their work was incomplete ; and what they had actually achieved was in peril. They felt that they could not part with their power until the liberties of the godly among the English people were absolutely secure. Richard they regarded with suspicion. He had taken no part in the glorious and terrible conflict in which the enemies of God had been overthrown. Soon after his accession there was a demand that he should surrender to one of the generals the supreme command of the army. He refused the demand, taking his stand on the Petition and Advice—the instrument which had given form to the government of his father—and maintaining that he had no right to vary the terms on which the Protectorate had been settled. This was the earliest and most ominous sign of the danger which menaced him. If he could not rely on the army, the foundations of his authority were threatened.

² Clarendon, *ibid.*, vi. 112.

³ For details see Baker's *Chronicle* (continued by Phillips), 563-564.

There was another quarter from which he had reason to fear trouble. Through the personal ascendancy of Cromwell—an ascendancy derived partly from his own genius, partly from the national disorders which made his supremacy necessary to the State—the Republicans had been defeated in their attempts to establish their ideal polity. Many able and daring men had bitterly resented the vesting of supreme executive power in “a single person”; and now that Cromwell was dead they thought that their chance had come.

The first step taken by Richard and his advisers was to call a Parliament. The Exchequer was heavily in debt, and it was necessary to raise money; it was also thought desirable that a Parliament should recognise Richard’s title. His father, with a true instinct for constitutional freedom, had omitted to send writs to many small boroughs; had summoned Leeds and Manchester and some other great towns which had not been previously represented in the House of Commons, to elect members; and had also increased considerably the representatives of the counties. Richard returned to the old methods—perhaps because he was Conservative in his tendencies; perhaps because he thought that the smaller boroughs could be more easily managed.

The new Parliament met on January 27, 1658-9. A quarrel broke out at once with the army. A Council of Officers held daily meetings at Wallingford House, the residence of Fleetwood. They passed resolutions and printed them, complaining that the pay of the soldiers was in arrears, that among the men in power were some who treated the army and the good old cause with insolence and contempt, and some, even, who wanted to bring back the enemies of the Gospel and of the nation.⁴ The Commons voted that “during the Sitting of the Parliament, there shall be no General Council or Meeting of the Officers of the Army, without the direction, leave, and Authority of His Highness the Lord Protector, and both Houses of Parliament.”⁵ The officers met the vote with a demand that Parliament should be dissolved; Richard consented, and his fall was now inevitable.

It was not the army alone that regarded the dissolution as a triumph. It was clear that the House of Commons was,

⁴ Whitelock (Ap. 14, 1659), 677. Clarendon, *History*, vi. 114-115.

⁵ C. J. (Ap. 18, 1659), vii. 641.

on the whole, resolved to stand by Richard, and by the constitution which placed supreme power in the hands of a single person. The triumph of Fleetwood and of the officers was, therefore, the triumph of the Republicans. The Congregationalists, and the larger party included under the general name of "Independents," also regarded the dissolution with satisfaction. In reply to a charge made against him some years later, Owen, the most powerful of the Congregationalist leaders, denied that he had any part either in setting Richard up or in pulling him down; but there can be no doubt that he was in constant communication with Fleetwood and his allies during the months immediately succeeding Richard's accession; ⁶ and it is certain that his sympathies were with the men who were opposed to government by "a single person." He was not on very friendly terms with the Cromwell family. It was known that he had drawn up the army address against Oliver's taking the crown, and from that time he appears to have had less of Oliver's favour. ⁷ When Richard was made Chancellor of the University of Oxford, a short time before Oliver's death, Owen was removed from the Vice-Chancellorship in favour of Dr. Conant, a Presbyterian. ⁸

The Congregationalist Churches had joined in congratulating Richard on his accession; and, indeed, Baxter says that in the county of Worcester they were the only people that meddled in the matter; ⁹ but they regarded with uneasiness the increased power which Richard was certain to give to the Presbyterians, and they were likely to believe that to check Richard, or even to depose him, would be favourable to religious freedom. The Congregationalists shared Milton's dread of Presbyterian ascendancy.

On the demand of the Republicans and the officers, those members of the Long Parliament who had continued to sit till April 20, 1653, were called to resume their places at Westminster. ¹⁰ The constitutional theory underlying this

⁶ Baxter, *Life*, i. (1), 145 [i. p. 101], says that Owen had a Church at Wallingford House. Orme shows that this is a mistake. *Memoir of Owen (Works)*, i. 214-216.

⁷ Orme, *ibid.*, 125; Ludlow, *Memoirs* (1771), 248.

⁸ Wood, *Ath. Ox.*, ii. 739.

⁹ Baxter, *Life*, i. (1), 145, [i. 100].

¹⁰ Clarendon, *History*, vi. 118-119. Whitelock (May 6, 1659), 677-678.

extraordinary proceeding is very simple, but very pedantic. The Long Parliament—or rather the members of it who had survived the purging process to which the House had been subjected—had been dismissed by violence. No legal authority had dismissed the House which had done such memorable things for the nation; an Act provided that it should not be dissolved without its own consent; the consent had never been given; and therefore, though it had been elected in 1640, eighteen years before, it was still the lawful Parliament of England. Owen had obtained a list from Ludlow, and laid it before the officers at Wallingford House, of about a hundred and sixty persons who had been members of the House between 1648 and 1653, and who were believed to be still alive.¹¹ On Saturday, May 7, 1659, forty-two of them met, made a House, drew up a Declaration for the public, and appointed several Committees. On the next day, Sunday, May 8, they held special religious services, and Owen preached the sermon.

On May 21, just three weeks after it met, it voted for a free Commonwealth, without “a single Person,” Kingship, or House of Peers.¹² Four days later Richard signed his abdication.

That the Congregationalists were heartily favourable to the restoration of the Rump was shown by an offer made to the House early in August by the Congregational Churches to raise three regiments in support of its authority; the offer was accepted, but it does not appear that the regiments were actually raised.¹³

The House needed support. To secure its own power and to prevent the Council of Officers from directing the government of the kingdom, it claimed absolute control over the army. The officers resented the claim. The quarrel became fierce, and on October 12 the House cashiered Lambert, Desborough, Berry, and six others of the recalcitrant officers, and vested the government of the army in a commission of seven, which included Fleetwood, Ludlow, and Monk. The next day, Lambert posted several regiments round the House, and its meetings were suspended. The Rump was dismissed for a second time. A committee of twenty-three persons

¹¹ Orme, *Memoir of Owen (Works)*, i. 216; and Ludlow, *Memoirs* (1771), 272–273.

¹² Whitelock, 679.

¹³ *Idem* (Aug. 9, 1659), 682.

appointed by the officers assumed the control of national affairs under the title of a Committee of Safety.¹⁴

The army in Edinburgh was not well pleased with the political authority which was being exercised by their comrades in London, and Monk declared that he would come to London and restore the Rump. A Council of State, which had been appointed by Parliament before the sudden and violent interruption of its sittings, sent him a Commission making him Commander-in-Chief of the armies of England, Scotland, and Ireland. John Owen wrote him a letter in the name of the Congregational Churches. The letter was carried to him by Caryl and Barker, two Congregational ministers, who, as representatives of the Churches, entreated him to use his power for the cause of liberty and godliness.¹⁵ Lambert attempted to stop his march southward, but failed.

All over the country rose cries for a free Parliament, and the officers, who found that they could not rely on their own men, recalled the Rump on December 26. Now that the House was at Westminster again, it would have been glad to send Monk back to Scotland; but he continued to move towards London, and also continued to be very silent about his own ultimate views, though he was willing to take any number of oaths. He was in favour of a free Parliament; and he was ready to swear that he abjured Charles Stuart, that he would be faithful to the Commonwealth, would resist the appointment of "a single person" and the restoration of the House of Lords.

On February 6, 1659-60, Monk addressed the House of Commons, and said that he had received many addresses praying that the present Parliament might soon be dissolved and a new Parliament called, with freedom to make a national settlement. He told them that no Parliament admitted new

¹⁴ Whitelock (Oct. 26, 1659), 685.

¹⁵ Baker, *Chronicle (continued by Phillips)*, 587-588, describes the commissioners as commissioners of the Independent Churches, mentioning Caryl. But Caryl and Barker, with Whaley and Goffe, were sent officially by the Committee of Safety, and carried letters from that body to Monk. Whitelock [Nov. 1, 1659], 686. That they should have taken a letter from Owen as well, suggests the importance of his political position. But Monk was supposed to be an Independent in religion. See Orme, *Memoir of Owen (Works)*, i. 217-218; and Neal, iv. 216-218, for Monk's reply, addressed to Owen, Greenhill, and Hook, and by them to be communicated to the Churches.

members without taking some oath or engagement from them, but that in his judgment the fewer the oaths and engagements imposed the sooner a settlement would be attained, although he hoped that neither the Cavaliers nor the Fanatics would have a share as yet in the civil or military power.¹⁶

It was determined that the members of the new Parliament should take a solemn pledge to be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, and to the government thereof in the way of Commonwealth and Free State, without a King, Single Person, or House of Lords.¹⁷

The members who had been excluded in 1648 now began to return to their seats, but without taking the "engagement" to be faithful to the Commonwealth, which was to be imposed only on the members of the new Parliament. They were Presbyterians, and their presence completely changed the character and constitution of the House. The change was made more decisive by the retirement of many of the members who had been active in the proceedings of the Rump but now saw that their power had gone. In a few weeks the Presbyterians were supreme. On March 2 the Westminster Assembly's Confession—with the exception of the chapters (30, 31) on Church Censures, and Synods and Councils, which were postponed—was adopted as the national Confession of Faith.¹⁸ Three days later, it was ordered "That the Solemn League and Covenant be printed and published, and set up and forthwith read in every church, and also read once a year according to former Order of Parliament, and that the said Solemn League and Covenant be also set up in this House."¹⁹ This was followed by a Bill for reorganising the Church on the Presbyterian model. Owen was removed from the Deanery of Christ Church, Oxford, in favour of Reynolds, a distinguished Presbyterian. Owen and Goodwin had already been excluded from the pulpit of St. Mary's.²⁰

The Rump Parliament had become the Parliament of "the *secluded members*." On March 13, the Engagement to be taken by the members of the next Parliament to be faithful to the Commonwealth without "a Single Person,"

¹⁶ Whitelock, 695.

¹⁷ *Idem* (Feb. 13, 1659–60), 696.

¹⁸ *Idem*, 697.

¹⁹ C. J. (March 5, 1659–60), vi. 862.

²⁰ Kennet, 76, 78, 81; and Woodrow, *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. *Introd.*, 10, 12.

King, or House of Lords, was repealed.²¹ The way was now clear for the restoration of the old constitution and the return of Charles. "The secluded members" had done their work, and on March 16 they dissolved. The new Parliament was to meet in April.

The affairs of the nation were now in the hands of a Council of State consisting of thirty-one persons, the majority of whom were favourable to the Presbyterian interest. Indeed, at this time the Presbyterian party was in possession of the whole power of the kingdom. In the army and navy a considerable number of the inferior officers were Independents and Baptists, but the military leaders of the Independents had been removed from the chief commands. Presbyterians were governors of all the garrison towns; they held the principal offices in the universities; and the authority of Parliament had just been given to the Solemn League and Covenant.

The Independents were alarmed. They feared that Monk was either plotting to secure supreme power for himself by a close alliance with the Presbyterians, or plotting to bring back Charles. In either case their religious freedom was in imminent danger. Owen and Philip Nye are said to have held frequent consultations with Whitelock and St. John about raising an Independent army.²² There was a rumour of a fresh offer from the Congregational Churches to raise troops and money—four regiments and £100,000. But it was too late. Monk commanded the army, and Monk was in correspondence with Charles. Presbyterians and Independents were to be overtaken by a common calamity.

²¹ Whitelock, 698.

²² Neal, iv. 220.

CHAPTER XI

THE FALL OF THE COMMONWEALTH

MONK AND CHARLES II.—DECLARATION OF BREDA—THE RESTORATION—PRESBYTERIANS AND THE KING—THE STATE OF POPULAR FEELING—THE RESTORATION DUE TO THE WEAKNESS OF RICHARD, AND THE UNWISDOM OF THE INDEPENDENTS AND THE PRESBYTERIANS—PRESBYTERIANS AND THE RESTORATION.

I

IF public declarations often repeated, if solemn oaths, could have bound him, it would have been impossible for Monk to restore the King. Under Cromwell he had sworn to resist the return of the Stuarts; he had sworn it again after Cromwell's death; and yet he had permitted Charles to tamper with him before he left Scotland; and on March 19, 1659-60, three days after the dissolution of Parliament, when he privately received Sir John Grenvil, who brought him a letter from Charles, he said, "I hope the King will forgive what is past, both in my words and actions; . . . for my heart was ever faithful to him, but I was never in a condition to do him service till this present; and you shall assure his Majesty, that I am not only ready to obey his commands, but to sacrifice my life and fortune in his service."¹

The new Parliament met on April 25, 1660. All who had been in arms against the Long Parliament were legally disqualified for election, but the House was full of the King's friends. On May 1 Sir John Grenvil delivered to both Houses of Parliament a Letter and Declaration from Charles,

¹ This is Price's account, given in his *Mystery and Method of His Majesty's Happy Restoration*, 133. The book was dedicated to Grenvil, then Earl of Bath; and, as Kennet points out, Price probably got the facts from Grenvil, and would certainly say nothing without his approval. Clarendon (*History*, vi. 216-219) says nothing of any letter from the King to Monk at this stage.

written at Breda, and dated April 14; he had come to Breda that he might be ready, on the shortest notice, to cross to England.

In the Declaration there is a memorable passage. Charles says :—

“ Because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other; which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed, or better understood; we do declare a liberty to tender consciences; and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such an act of parliament, as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to us, for the full granting that indulgence.”²

The Houses listened with rapture to the declaration of Charles, and at once, on the same day, resolved to recall him. They reasserted and confirmed the instruments and usages which constitute the principal guarantees of the ancient constitution of England—the Great Charter, the Petition of Right, and the Privileges of Parliament; but the new securities for civil freedom and the moderate provisions for the extension of religious liberty to which the late King had been willing to consent, and which the exiled prince, longing for a throne, would have accepted at a word, were sacrificed without an attempt to secure them. Monk insisted that there was peril in delay, and that if Charles were not invited back at once there might be an outbreak of the old troubles.³ All that had been won by the agonies of the civil war was flung into the sea, except the memory of the three great events—the execution of Strafford, of Laud, and of the King. These could never be forgotten; and they remained as perpetual warnings to succeeding Kings and statesmen that the submission of the English nation to the tyranny of the Crown and of the Church had its limits, and that if these limits were exceeded the nation might inflict a terrible vengeance on its oppressors.

² Clarendon, *History*, vi. 233.

³ Burnet, i. 161–162. For such discussion as took place on conditions, see Clarendon, *History*, vi. 245; and Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. 54–57 foll.

II

While the King waited at Breda, the Lords and the Commons sent deputations to assure him of the national loyalty, and they were accompanied by representatives of the Presbyterian ministers of London. It is a striking proof of the confidence of the Presbyterians in the strength of their position that they asked Charles not to use, immediately on his return, the whole of the Book of Common Prayer even in his own chapel, and to discountenance the use of the surplice by his chaplains. He gave them a spirited reply, telling them that as for the surplice he thought it "a decent habit"; and that as for the service of the Book of Common Prayer, "he thought it the best in the world"; and "that while he gave them liberty he would not have his own taken away."⁴ But Charles did his best to win their confidence. There is a story to the effect that while the Presbyterian clergy were waiting in an ante-room for an audience with this shrewd, frivolous, unbelieving, licentious prince, they heard him praying in the adjoining room, thanking God that he was a covenanted King; hoping that the Lord would give him a humble, meek, forgiving spirit; and praying that he might have forbearance towards his offending subjects as he expected forbearance from offended Heaven; that he might have "a heart constant in the exercise and protection of Thy [God's] true Protestant religion"; and that he might never "seek the oppression of those who, out of tenderness to their consciences, are not free to conform to outward and indifferent ceremonies." Case, one of the Presbyterian deputation, out of curiosity "would needs go and lay his ear to the Closet-door. But, Heavens! how was the good old man ravished to hear the pious ejaculations that fell from the King's lips." Quite overcome with his emotion, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and blessed God who had given to the English people "a saint of Paradise for their Prince."⁵

⁴ Clarendon, *History*, vi. 262-263.

⁵ *The Secret History of the Reign of Charles II. and James II.* (1690), 21. Neal (iv. 232) gives the story in a somewhat different form.

III

On May 25 the King landed at Dover. Neither bishop nor royal chaplain appeared to receive him. Barwick, the bishops' messenger, who had been sent to Breda, had been instructed to ask whether his Majesty wished any of the bishops to pay their duty to him on his landing, and whether they should appear in their episcopal habits; also how many of his Majesty's chaplains should meet him. The messenger had learnt that the best service that the bishops could render to his Majesty at present was to keep out of the way. The King was received by the Mayor and Corporation; and the Mayor's chaplain placed a Bible in the King's hands. The chaplain was in all probability a Presbyterian minister, and may have been one of the two clergymen at Dover who were subsequently ejected for Nonconformity.

On the 28th, the King's birthday, he entered London with great pomp. Twelve Presbyterian ministers, in their Genevan gowns, had a place in the procession. Old Arthur Jackson, in the name of the ministers of London, presented Charles with a richly bound Bible, and Charles declared that it should be the rule of his life.⁶

All ranks and descriptions of men began to declare their loyalty. The Independent ministers of London and Westminster expressed their gratitude for the Breda declaration, and their desire to live as peaceable and loyal subjects of his Majesty.⁷ The Presbyterians, who assumed the position of the King's patrons and friends, assured him not only of their zeal for his authority, but of their prayers for his spiritual welfare.⁸ The Roman Catholics approached him with professions of faithful allegiance and with denunciations of what they called "that impious, damnable, and most unchristian position, that Kings or absolute princes, of what belief soever, who are excommunicated by the pope may be deposed, killed or murdered by their subjects."⁹ But the Episcopalians

⁶ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 82 [i. p. 218].

⁷ Cal. State Papers (*Domestic*), Charles II. (May), i. 4.

⁸ Clarendon, *History*, vi. 261-262.

⁹ Butler, *Historical Memoirs of the English, Irish, and Scottish Catholics*, iii. 24; and for other addresses, *ibid.* 24-34.

were still kept quiet. As yet it was not safe for them to speak. Had the lawn sleeves of the Bishops been visible when the King and his friends crossed Blackheath on their way to London, the grim soldiers of the Commonwealth, who looked upon him gloomily enough as it was, would have been ready—with or without a word from their officers—to close swiftly and firmly round the gay procession and to send him back to Holland.

IV

Cromwell died on September 3, 1658, and the reign of the saints was over. On May 29, 1660, Charles slept at Whitehall, and the reign of the gamblers, the drunkards, and the harlots began. It was a tragic change for England, abroad as well as at home. No English prince had ever carried himself so loftily among the great powers of Europe as Oliver. Within a few months after his return from exile, Charles became the pensioner of France. Who was responsible for this tremendous transition? Looking at the enthusiasm with which Charles was received, it is easy and natural to reply that the nation was impatient of the Puritan rule, and wanted the King back again. But when Cromwell died, the Cavaliers seemed altogether crushed; all hope had died out of them; they had been beaten in succession, as M. Guizot says, by the Presbyterians, by the Republicans, by Cromwell. They made no sign; and to some it is by no means clear that any strong and general desire for the King's return would ever have sprung up but for a succession of disastrous mistakes committed by the men who had the fortunes of the country in their hands.

Richard was at fault. He never apprehended the grandeur of that conception of the national life which his father had been endeavouring, in the face of enormous difficulties, to fulfil. He was indolent, self-indulgent, incapable of enthusiasm. When he was urged to give effect to the vote of the House of Commons dissolving the Council of Officers, to break up their meetings by force, and to put Fleetwood, Desborough, and Lambert under arrest, he said that he would not have a

drop of blood shed on his account.¹⁰ “ On *his* account ”—these words revealed his true temper. As the chief magistrate of a great nation he had ceased to have personal interests ; he was the representative of the national authority ; he had charge of the national safety ; and it was for him to vindicate constitutional freedom against military violence. But he showed he was unimpressed with the solemnity and magnitude of the duties which he was called to discharge for the nation and for posterity. He had not the spirit and courage required for the duties of a great position ; he betrayed his trust.

Not to speak of the Republicans and the army leaders, the Independents also deserve serious blame. The experience of the previous ten or twelve years ought to have taught them the immense peril of disturbing any settlement in which there was a chance that the nation would peaceably acquiesce. Had the leading Independent ministers firmly resisted the efforts of Fleetwood and his party to disturb Richard ; had they insisted that any moderately good government was better than possible anarchy ; had they fully recognised the value of the results which had been won by the Civil War, and which, in substance at least, were certain to remain while Richard was surrounded by the statesmen who had been the friends of his father ; had they been less jealous of Presbyterian ascendancy ; had they remembered that amongst the Presbyterians there were men who, whatever their zeal for their own polity, might be trusted, in the long-run, to deal generously with their Independent brethren ; had they resolved to subordinate the immediate interests of their party to the interests of the nation,—the first Parliament of Richard might have run out its natural course ; a second might have been elected which would have represented more completely the mind of the nation ; and so the country might have returned to constitutional paths. The authority of the Independent leaders with the army chiefs was a great trust ; they should have used it for the whole nation. Had they used it wisely, they might have averted from the nation the political and religious calamities which followed the return of the King.

¹⁰ “ I shall be very much troubled if any one is injured upon my account, and instead of taking away the life of the least person in the nation . . . I would not have a drop of blood spilt.” Noble, *Memoirs of the Protectoral House of Cromwell*, i. 331.

The Presbyterians were at fault. They were too eager, as soon as Cromwell was dead, to recover the position which they had lost by his accession. The spirit which they began to show during the early weeks of Richard's government alarmed and alienated the Independents and the soldiers. The alarm and alienation were increased after the return of the secluded members to Parliament in 1660. Divisions were created amongst those who had a common interest in resisting the return of prelatical tyranny and in promoting the cause of true religion in the country. Much as many of the Presbyterians disliked the loose ecclesiastical polity of the Independents; much as they dreaded the protests against the interference of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, and the demands for a large religious freedom; they might surely have felt a stronger confidence in men like John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, and John Howe. They thought too much of asserting ecclesiastical supremacy when the chief concern of every Englishman should have been to secure the political safety of the country and a moderate measure of religious liberty.

In judging the part which was taken by the Presbyterians in restoring the King, it is, however, necessary to remember that they always regarded with abhorrence the execution of Charles I. When, in 1648, the Council of Officers decided that Charles should be "brought to justice for the treason, blood and mischief," of which he had been guilty, they were filled with dismay and horror. They accepted the concession of Charles at Newport as a basis of peace. A hundred and forty members were violently expelled by the soldiers, before the House consented to the trial of Charles and the appointment of Commissioners to judge him. These were all members of their party. They had fought the King to recover and enlarge their liberties, but to put him to death seemed an appalling crime. After his execution they believed that, had he lived, Charles would have consented to all those limitations on his own power, and to all those changes in the ecclesiastical organisation, which seemed to them necessary for the prosperity of religion and the security of constitutional freedom. And during the years of Cromwell's ascendancy they never forgot that the army, in which the Independents had absolute power, had baffled their policy. They never forgave the violence which ejected them from the House. They never recovered

from the shock produced by the King's death. Most of them were still filled with awe by "the divinity which doth hedge a King." This sentiment of loyalty was reinforced by the oath which they had taken in the Solemn League and Covenant, in which they swore, "We shall with the same reality, sincerity, and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour with our estates and lives, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences, of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty's just power and greatness."¹¹ The solemnity of this oath weighed on their consciences. Charles II. was the legitimate heir of all the royal authority and prerogative of his father. Their first concern, indeed, was to stand by the cause of the true religion; to this the Covenant pledged them. But if the young prince would give liberty and protection to the servants of Christ, they regarded him as having just claims on their allegiance, and claims which, in the Solemn League and Covenant, they had themselves sworn to recognise. They thought that they could trust him—or, at least, they hoped they could trust him. Twice he had taken the covenant oath—first, at Spey, on June 23, 1650, eighteen months after his father's execution; and then at Scone, on January 1, 1650-1. Foreign Protestants, Presbyterians like themselves, were induced to send to England glowing accounts of the young King's zeal for Protestantism. And further, the Presbyterian leaders, conscious of the service they were rendering to the young King, believed that gratitude would restrain him from treating with harshness and injustice those who had restored him to his throne, and that even if he were base enough to forget their claims, they were strong enough to enforce them. But that they should have consented to Charles's return without firm guarantees for constitutional and ecclesiastical freedom was an enormous error. They ought to have known the Stuarts too well to trust any prince who bore the name.

¹¹ Solemn League and Covenant, Art. 3. Rushworth, 3. (ii), 478. See *ante*, p. 268.

CHAPTER XII

GENERAL REVIEW OF CONGREGATIONALISM FROM THE MEETING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT (1640) TO THE RESTORATION (1660).

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN LONDON, A.D. 1640—WORSHIPPERS AT DEADMAN'S PLACE ARRESTED, EXAMINED, AND GENTLY DEALT WITH—OTHER SEPARATIST ASSEMBLIES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LONDON—GROWTH OF CONGREGATIONALIST INFLUENCE—THEY BECOME A RELIGIOUS ARISTOCRACY—EXILES RETURN—NEW CHURCHES FOUNDED—COVENANT OF THE CHURCH AT YARMOUTH AND NORWICH—BURTON, BASTWICK, AND PRYNNE, BARBAROUSLY TREATED BY THE STAR CHAMBER, ARE BROUGHT BACK BY THE PARLIAMENT—THEIR RECEPTION BY THE PEOPLE—BURTON'S "PROTESTATION PROTESTED"—KATHERINE CHIDLEY'S "JUSTIFICATION" OF INDEPENDENCY—LORD BROOKE ON EPISCOPACY AND THE APOSTOLIC ORDER—JOHN COTTON ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH—IMPRESSION PRODUCED BY THE FIVE DISSENTING BRETHREN—CONGREGATIONALISM REPRESSED, NOT WITHOUT PROTEST—CONGREGATIONALISM SUPPORTED BY INDEPENDENTS—THE TERMS NOT EQUIVALENT: THEIR DISTINCTION AND RELATION—"GATHERED" AND "REFORMED" CHURCHES—THEIR PLACES OF MEETING—PETITION FROM BURY ST. EDMUNDS FOR JOINT OCCUPATION OF PARISH CHURCH—CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS AS PARISH CLERGY—PAROCHIAL SYSTEM INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR PRINCIPLES—JUSTICE WINDHAM ON THE RIGHTS OF PARISHIONERS—STATE OF THE UNIVERSITIES DURING THE CIVIL WAR—VISITED BY PARLIAMENT—RESISTANCE AT OXFORD—CONGREGATIONALISTS IN THE UNIVERSITIES—THEOLOGICAL BELIEF OF THE CHURCHES—THE SAVOY DECLARATION OF FAITH AND ORDER.

I

AT the close of 1640 there were two Congregational Churches in London.

The Southwark Church, founded by Henry Jacob in 1616,¹ had lived through all the severities with which Laud endeavoured to suppress the Separatists. The congregation had sometimes been broken up by the officers of the bishops, and many of its members carried off to prison; but it had held

¹ See pp. 217-218, 220-221.

together, and, at the meeting of the Long Parliament, had for its pastor Henry Jessey, a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, a man of great learning, especially in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac, and the rabbinical literature.²

A second Church had been formed in Deadman's Place about the year 1621, its first pastor being John Hubbard, or John Herbert. Under the stress of persecution he and his Church crossed over to Ireland, where he died. After the return of the Church to England, John Canne became its pastor; but he was soon compelled to escape to Holland, where he became pastor of the Church of the exiles at Amsterdam.³ He was succeeded by Samuel How, a Baptist, who is described by Roger Williams as "that eminent Christian witness, and prophet of Christ, . . . who being by calling a cobbler, and without human learning, which yet in its sphere and place he honoured, who yet, I say, by searching the Holy Scriptures, grew so excellent a textuary, or scripture learned man, that few of those high Rabbis that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly or readily from the Holy Scriptures out-go him."⁴ In reply to John Goodwin, of Coleman Street, who had insisted on the necessity of learning for the Christian preacher, How published a sermon under the title of *The Sufficiency of the Spirit's Teaching without Human Learning: or a Discourse tending to prove that Human Learning is no help to the Spiritual Understanding of the Word of God*. How died in prison early in 1640. As he had been excommunicated, he could not be buried in consecrated ground, and was therefore buried in the highway.⁵ Stephen More, a deacon of the Church and a wealthy London citizen, was elected to the vacant pastorate. He was a Pædobaptist. The majority of the members were also Pædobaptists, but from its foundation the Church had made the question of

² He afterwards became a Baptist.

³ Canne, like Jessey, became a Baptist. He is said to have been the first to illustrate the text of Scripture with marginal references. Brook, iii. 333-334, and 340; Dexter, 347-348.

⁴ Williams's *Hiveling Ministry none of Christ's* (1652), 11-12, in Brook, ii. 457, who also quotes (*ibid.* 456) the following lines prefixed to How's sermon:—

"What *How*? how now? Hath *How* such learning found,
To throw Art's curious image to the ground?
Cambridge and Oxford may their glory now
Veil to a cobbler, if they know but *How*."

⁵ *The Brownists Synagogue*, 2.

Baptism an open question both for its members and church officers.⁶

The vigour with which Parliament was attacking the men who had been chiefly responsible for the civil and ecclesiastical tyranny of the previous fifteen years, encouraged the congregation to dispense with the precautions which they had usually observed to ensure the secrecy of their meetings, and on a Sunday afternoon in January, 1640-1, while meeting with open doors at the house of Richard Sturges in Deadman's Place, they were disturbed by the officers of the King's Bench, and more than sixty of them were taken to the Clink. Six or seven of them were brought before the House of Lords on the charge of denying the King's ecclesiastical supremacy, and violating the statute of the 35th of Elizabeth enforcing attendance at the parish churches. They answered :—

“(1) That the law of Elizabeth was not a true law, for it was made by the bishops ; and that they would not obey it. (2) That they would not go to their parish churches ; that these churches were not true churches ; and that there was no true church but where the faithful met. (3) That the King cannot make a perfect law, for that he was not a perfect man. (4) That they ought not to obey him but in civil things.”

They were dismissed with a gentle reprimand, and on the next Sunday several of the Lords went to Deadman's Place to see how the church conducted its worship.⁷

Besides these two regularly organised Congregational Churches there were at this time a large number of miscellaneous Separatist assemblies in and near London ; many of them, no doubt, holding fast to the traditions of Robert Browne, and distinguished by the spirit of bitter hostility to the English Church that animated the Brownists. In 1631 Bishop Hall had written with alarm to Laud to tell him that there were *eleven* Separatist congregations in or near London ;⁸ he now told the House of Lords that in London and its immediate

⁶ Brook, ii. 458.

⁷ L. J. (Jan. 16, 17, 1640-1), iv. 133-134 ; and Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, i. 163. Fuller (vi. 180) wrongly describes the congregation as Anabaptists. See Neal, ii. 375, and Dexter, 648-649, n. 97. Waddington, following Neal, represents this Church as being that of which Henry Jacob was the founder ; but this is a mistake, as shown by Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iv. 121-123.

⁸ *Ante*, p. 219.

neighbourhood there were no fewer than eighty of these congregations of "sectaries," "instructed by guides fit for them, cobblers, tailors, felt-makers, and such like trash: which all are taught to spit in the face of their mother, the Church of England, and to defy and revile her government."⁹

II

Congregationalism was now about to take a wholly new position in the ecclesiastical life of England. There can be little doubt that most of the members of the Brownist Churches were mechanics and working people, joiners, shipwrights, and serving men. Their leaders, indeed, were drawn from another class: Browne, Barrowe, Greenwood, Francis Johnson, Penry,³ Brewster, Robinson, Smyth, Henry Jacob, Henry Jessey,⁷ were, all of them, university men; and Henry Ainsworth was famous for his Hebrew learning.¹⁰ And among the private members of the Brownist Churches there had been a considerable number of fair social position and good education. But with the exception of Robert Browne, who went back to the English Church, those of their leaders who had not been sent to the scaffold in the time of Elizabeth had been driven to Holland or to New England, and the ablest and the best educated among the members of their Churches accompanied or followed them. Some of the pastors of the two London Churches were learned men, but they stood alone; and most of the Congregationalists left in England after the sailing of the Mayflower were obscure and illiterate people.

But Baillie, the Scotch commissioner, writing in 1645, says:—

“Of all the by-paths wherein the wanderers of our time are pleased to walk, this [Independency] is the most considerable; not for the number, but for the quality of the erring persons therein. There be few of the noted Sects which are not a great deal more numerous; but this Way, what it wants in number, supplies by the weight of its followers. . . . But setting aside number, for other respects they are of so eminent a condition, that not any nor all of the rest of the Sects are comparable to them; for they

⁹ Joseph Hall, *Works* (1863), viii. 277.

¹⁰ See R. W. Dale, *The Early Independents (Jubilee Lectures)*, i. 26.

have been so wise as to engage to their party some of chief note, in both Houses of Parliament, in the Assembly of Divines, in the Army, in the City and Countrey-Committees; all of whom they daily manage with such dexterity and diligence, for the benefit of their Cause, that the eyes of the world begin to fall upon them more than upon all their fellows.”¹¹

The Independents had become a kind of religious aristocracy, distinguished for their learning and for their intellectual vigour and acuteness as well as for their zeal.

The writings of John Robinson and Henry Ainsworth had been exerting for twenty years a considerable influence on devout and cultivated men; but those who had been most deeply impressed by the ideal greatness of the Congregational polity had seen that while Strafford and Laud were masters of the nation it was hopeless to attempt to found Congregational Churches in England, and they had fled to New England and to Holland. From the time of the meeting of the Long Parliament the exodus was arrested. Some of the exiles returned from New England to describe the success of the Congregational experiment in Massachusetts, and the story gave new force to the arguments of Robinson and Ainsworth.

New Congregational Churches were founded by Congregationalists who returned from Holland. In 1637 and 1638, Bridge and Ward, Puritan clergymen, crossed from Norwich to Rotterdam to escape the power of the bishops. “They went with their wives, children, estates, friends; knights, gentlemen and citizens.”¹² Soon after the meeting of the Long Parliament, several of them began to return; and in 1642, having obtained the consent of the Church at Rotterdam of which they were members, they constituted themselves an Independent Church by entering into the following Covenant:—

“First: That we will for ever acknowledge and avouch God to be our God in Jesus Christ.

“Secondly: That we will always endeavour, through the grace

¹¹ R. Baillie, *A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time* (1645), 53.

¹² Edwards, quoted by Browne, *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 208. The whole account of the organisation and early history of the Norwich and Yarmouth Church, as given by Mr. Browne, is extremely interesting. Dr. Stoughton tells the story admirably in a chapter on the East Anglian Churches in his *Spiritual Heroes*.

of God assisting us, to walk in His ways and ordinances, according to His written word, which is the only sufficient rule of good life for every man.

“Thirdly: Neither will we suffer ourselves to be polluted by any sinful ways, either public or private, but will abstain from the very appearance of evil, giving no offence to the Jew or to the Gentile, nor to the churches of Christ.

“Fourthly: That we will, in all love, improve our communion as brethren, by watching over one another, and, as need shall be, to counsel, admonish, reprove, comfort, relieve, assist, and bear with one another, humbly submitting ourselves to the government of Christ in His churches.

“Lastly: We do not promise these things in our own, but in Christ His strength; neither do we confine ourselves to the word of this covenant; but shall account it our duty at all times to embrace any further light or truth that shall be revealed to us out of God’s word.”¹³

Bridge—one of the Five Dissenting Brethren of the Westminster Assembly—was called and ordained to the office of pastor. For a year the Church met at Yarmouth, though many of its members were living at Norwich. In 1644, with the concurrence of the Yarmouth brethren, the Norwich members were constituted an Independent Church.¹⁴ The Yarmouth Church had in its membership a considerable number of persons of distinction, and its advice on questions of difficulty was sought by Churches at a distance as well as by Churches in its own neighbourhood. From 1650 it worshipped in the chancel of the noble Church of St. Nicholas: the Presbyterians met in the nave; and the two congregations were divided by a temporary wall.¹⁵

Congregational Churches, organised on the same principles, were founded in many other parts of England; and where their members had the true ideal of a Christian Church, and believed that it was possible that an earthly society should be a society of saints, Congregationalism won many adherents.

III

But there were large numbers of devout and educated men in England in 1640 who knew nothing of the writings

¹³ Records of the Church, in Waddington, ii. (1567—1700), 451.

¹⁴ Neal, ii. 689, *note*; and Waddington, *ibid.*, 444—451.

¹⁵ See p. 378, *note* 43.

of Robert Browne, Henry Barrowe, John Robinson, Henry Ainsworth, or Henry Jacob, and who had never seriously considered the fundamental differences between the polity of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.¹⁶ A tract of twenty-one pages, published in 1641 by Henry Burton, in which the central principles of Congregationalism were clearly and definitely stated, broke upon the Puritans of that generation with all the force of a startling discovery.

In 1633, Burton, who was minister of a Church in Friday Street in the City of London, Bastwick, a physician at Colchester, and Prynne, a well-known barrister, had been flung into prison by the Star-Chamber for publications offensive to the court and the bishops. Prynne, who had already provoked the resentment of Laud by writing against Arminianism and the jurisdiction of the bishops, was brought before the Star Chamber for his *Histrionomastix*, a thick quarto of a thousand and six pages, in which he fiercely attacked stage-plays, masques, and dancing.¹⁷ The information against him set forth that he had railed against these diversions, though he knew that the Queen and the lords of the council were frequently present at them; that he had also attacked Maypoles, the keeping of Christmas, decorating houses with ivy, and similar practices; that he had aspersed the Queen, and commended factious persons; and that his book was of dangerous consequence to the realm and state. Bastwick had written a book against Romanism in which he had denied that bishops were by divine right, or of a higher order than presbyters. Burton had published two sermons against the recent innovations in the ritual of the Church. In 1637 the three prisoners were again prosecuted in the Star Chamber for writing and publishing seditious books against the Church and to the scandal of the Government; some of the books on which the prosecution was rested were anonymous. They

¹⁶ Richard Baxter, for instance, says: "Till Mr. Burton published his *Protestation Protested*, I never thought what Presbytery or Independency were, nor ever spake with a man that seemed to know it. And that was in 1641, when the war was brewing." *True History of Councils*, etc., 90. John Owen said much the same. Orme, *Memoirs of Owen (Works)*, i. 29.

¹⁷ This "Whip of stage-players" was "A Whip so held and used by his hand, that some conceived the lashes thereof flew into the face of the Queen herself, as much delighting in masques." Fuller, vi. 113.

were found guilty, and the court pronounced the following sentence : That Burton should be deprived of his living and degraded from his ministry, as Prynne and Bastwick had been degraded from their professions of law and physic ; that each of them should be fined £5,000 ; that Burton and Bastwick should stand in the pillory at Westminster, and have their ears cut off ; that since Prynne had already lost his ears by sentence of the court in 1633, the remainder of the stumps should be cut off, and that he should be branded in both cheeks with the letters *S. L.*, signifying seditious libeller ; and that all three should suffer perpetual imprisonment in the remotest prisons in the kingdom. On June 20, 1637, they actually stood in the pillory, and suffered these barbarous tortures in the presence of many thousands of people. The three prisoners were then sent to solitary confinement in the castles of Launceston, Lancaster, and Carnarvon. When Burton left London, a crowd of 100,000 persons assembled to bid him farewell and to show their indignation against the cruelty of the court ; and a considerable amount of money was thrown into the coach of his wife, who followed him. The other prisoners received similar demonstrations of popular sympathy.¹⁸ Before long, to prevent all access to them, they were removed to Jersey, Guernsey, and the Scilly Islands. There they remained till the meeting of the Long Parliament.¹⁹

On November 7, 1640, four days after it met, the House of Commons ordered that they should be sent for forthwith by warrant of the House, and “made to certify by whose warrant and authority” they had been mutilated, branded, and imprisoned.²⁰ Within a month they all returned to London. Lord Clarendon tells us how they were received :—

“Prynne and Burton being neighbours (though in distinct islands)²¹ landed at the same time at Southampton ; where they were received and entertained with extraordinary demonstration of affection and esteem ; attended by a marvellous conflux of company ; and their charges not only borne with great magnificence, but liberal presents given to them. And this method and ceremony kept them company all their journey, great herds of people meeting them at their entrance into all towns, and waiting upon them out

¹⁸ Strafford, *Letters and Dispatches* (1739), ii. 99 and 114.

¹⁹ Fuller, vi. 112–124. Rushworth, ii. (1), 380–382. Whitelock, 26.

²⁰ C. J. ii. 22.

²¹ Prynne had been confined in Jersey ; Burton in Guernsey.

with wonderful acclamations of joy. When they came near London, multitudes of people of several conditions, some on horseback, others on foot, met them some miles from the town; very many having been a day's journey; and so they were brought, about two of the clock in the afternoon,²² in at Charing-Cross, and carried into the city by above ten thousand persons, with boughs and flowers in their hands; the common people strewing flowers and herbs in the ways as they passed, making great noise, and expressions of joy for their deliverance and return; and in those acclamations mingling loud and virulent exclamations against the bishops 'who had so cruelly persecuted such godly men.' In the same manner, within five or six days after, and in like triumph, Dr. Bastwick returned from Scilly, landing at Dover; and from thence bringing the same testimonies of the affections and zeal of Kent, as the others had done from Hampshire and Surrey, was met before he came to Southwark by the good people of London, and so conducted to his lodging likewise in the city."²³

It was six months after Burton had been received with this enthusiasm that he published his Tract. Parliament had been alarmed in the spring of 1641 with rumours of plots, and, to protect itself, required a "Protestation" to be taken by the members of the two Houses and by all persons bearing office in the Church or Commonwealth. The "Protestation" began with these words—"I, A B, do, in the presence of Almighty God, promise, vow, and protest, to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may, with my Life, Power, and Estate, the *true, reformed, Protestant Religion, expressed in the Doctrine of the Church of England*, against all Popery, and Popish innovations within this Realm, contrary to the same Doctrine." The House subsequently explained that by the words in italics was meant "only the public Doctrine professed in the said Church, so far as it is opposite to Popery, and Popish innovations; and that the said Words are not to be extended to the Maintaining of any Form of Worship, Discipline, or Government; nor of any Rites or Ceremonies of the

²² November 28, 1640.

²³ Clarendon, *History*, i. 283-284. Dr. Leighton, father of the Archbishop of Glasgow, who, for writing his *Zion's Plea against Prelacy*, had been in prison since 1630, and had suffered the most horrible barbarities, was also set free by Parliament. For his trial, see Rushworth, ii. (1), 55-58. The House of Commons cancelled the sentences in each case, reinstated the man in his position, and condemned those who had been concerned in these illegal acts to make such reparation as was possible. C. J. (Feb. 22; March 2, 12, 24, 1640-1; Ap. 20; June 11, 1641), ii. 90, 95, 102, 112, 125, 173.

said Church of England.”²⁴ Burton was not satisfied with this explanation. He maintained in his *Protestation Protested: or a Short Remonstrance, showing what is principally required of all those that have or do take the last Parliamentary Protestation*, that—

“We hold communion with Popery so long as we do publicly retain and maintain any of the doctrines of Popery. And the doctrines of Popery which we retain and maintain are these. First, The imposition of the Liturgy. Secondly, the Discipline. Thirdly, The Government. Fourthly, The Ceremonies.”²⁵

In effect, he insisted that there was so much of Popery in the English Church, that if the Popery were taken away very little of the Church of England would be left.

In other parts of the tract he maintained that—

“Understanding the Church of England to be none other than a national Church, it will be very difficult, if not rather impossible, to constitute it so as is agreeable in all points to a true and visible Congregation of Christ: for a particular Church or Congregation, rightly collected and constituted, consists of none, but such as are visible living members of Christ the Head . . . but so is it not with a National Church. . . . Surely in the new forming of a Church, such as God requireth in His word, Christ’s voice must first be heard, to call forth His sheep and to gather them into their flocks and folds. For *Ecclesia, the Church*, is properly a congregation of believers, called out from the rest of the world.”²⁶

If, under the pressure of necessity, the State must set up a national Church in which many things are tolerated that are not after the mind of Christ, it ought, he contends, to allow those who desire to be perfectly loyal to Christ to form Churches of another kind. To the objection that “Independency is too strict and cannot be content with a mediocrity, but aspires to such a perfection of purity, as men are not capable of,”²⁷ Burton replies:—

“As if all true Christians were not exhorted everywhere, and so bound, to strive for perfection, so much as is possible, as we read Matt. v. 20, 48, etc. . . . and everywhere in the Scripture is perfect holiness required.”²⁸

²⁴ C. J. (May 3 and 12, 1641), ii. 132, 144–145; L. J. (4 May, 1641), iv. 233–234. Clarendon, *History*, i. 352–356.

²⁵ *The Protestation Protested*, 2. The book, published anonymously in 1641, is in the form of objection and answer.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

But the great objection of the Presbyterians was to the impossibility of correcting even the gravest and most flagrant errors which an Independent Church might commit. In answer to this he says :—

“ First, they have Christ’s law to regulate them. Secondly, they have the law of Christ, which is by love to serve one another. They have the law of association and confederation with other Churches, to consult, advise, and confer with, in matters of doubt or question. And if after all other remedies, any be obstinate in his, or their error, they are liable to excommunication, either in the same Congregation, if it be a particular person, and the error great ; or from other Churches, if the whole Congregation have offended, and do stiffly maintain a dangerous error ; which yet is rarely seen in a well-constituted Congregation, consisting of meet members.”²⁹

Parliament imprisoned the printer of the pamphlet for six weeks.³⁰

Among the writers who took part in the controversy which followed, the most remarkable was Katherine Chidley. She was a member of some obscure Church in London, and her pamphlet of eighty-two pages is a keen, vigorous, and amusing defence of Congregationalism. She called it *The Justification of the Independant Churches of Christ. Being an Answer to Mr. Edwards his Book, which he hath written against the Government of Christ’s Church and the Toleration of Christ’s Public Worship : Briefly declaring, That the Congregations of the Saints ought not to have Dependency in Government upon any other, or Direction in Worship from any other, than their Head and Lawgiver.* By Katherine Chidley. 1 Sam. xvii. 45 ; Judges iv. 21. 1641.

In the same year Congregationalism was defended by a person of much higher authority in *A Discourse opening the Nature of that Episcopacie which is exercised in England. Wherein, with all Humility, are represented some Considerations tending to the much desired Peace, and long expected Reformation, of This our Mother Church.* By the Right Honourable Robert Lord Brooke, 1641. A second edition appeared in the following year. He says :—

“ It is not the *look*, much less the *name* of a Bishop that I fear or quarrel with ; it is his *Nature*, his *Office*, that displeaseth me.

²⁹ *The Protestation Protested*, 21. Hanbury, *Historical Memorials*, ii. 73-77, gives the passages quoted, but not always accurately.

³⁰ C. J. (July 10 and Aug. 24, 1641), ii. 205-206, 269-270.

Nor yet his Nature, or Office in general ; but *Such*, and so clothed, or rather veiled, with such and such adjuncts. For, to me the word '*Bishop*' signifies, either—

“(1) One that is to Preach, Administer the Sacraments, Exhort, Reprove, Convince, Excommunicate, etc., not only in some one distinct Congregation, his own Parish, but in many, several Congregations crowded up together in one strange (and, for long, unknown) word, a *Diocese*.

“Or (2) one who hath to all this added, not only the name of a Civil Lord, (with which bare name, or shadow, I fight not,) but also a vast unwieldy (I had almost said unlimited) Power in *Civil Government* ; which must needs draw on a mighty Train, and clothe itself with glorious Robes of long extended and magnificent styles, scarce to be marshalled by a better Herald than Elihu, who could give no Titles.

“Or (3) in the last place, (which should be first,) a true faithful *Overseer*, that, over one single Congregation, hath a joint care with the Elders, Deacons, and rest of the Assembly, who are all fellow-helpers, yea servants each to others' faith.

“This *last* is a *Bishop*, of the *first* Institution ; of Christ's allowance : settled in divers Churches, even in the Apostles' times.

“The *first* is of the *second* Century, when Doctrine, Discipline, all Religion, began to wane. For even then, *Mysterious Antichrist* was not only *conceived*, but began to *quicken*.

“The *second* rose *last*, (though *first* intended by the Church's Enemy.) Rising up while the world was busy, looking all one way ; as amazed at the new Beast, successor to the Dragon.

“This is now our *adversary* : One monstrously compounded, of different, yea opposite Offices ; and those the greatest, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil* : for which he seems no way able, no way fit.”³¹

Nor is he satisfied with attacking Episcopacy : he sums up his account of the apostolic order of Christian Churches in the following decisive words :—

“If you will be bound either by *text* or *context*, or the *common acceptance* of the word in the Scripture ; by *Church* must be understood the *whole Congregation*” (*i.e.* all the church members as distinguished from the church officers). “Again, for excommunication of members, 1 Cor. v. 13, St. Paul commandeth Them (*scil.* the whole Church) to put away that wicked person, and to deliver up such a one to Satan : 2 Cor. ii. 6-8, *They* restore him ; they forgive him.

“Thus we see everywhere, That in election of Officers, in decision of Controversies, in cases of Conscience, in excommunication, the

³¹ *A Discourse*, etc. (i. 2), 2.

whole Church disposeth everything; not the Bishops, not the Presbyters alone.³²

Several leading members of both Houses of Parliament had appealed to John Cotton, of Boston, Massachusetts, to return to England that he might support with his experience of the practical working of Congregationalism the few scholars and divines who were maintaining the struggle for ecclesiastical freedom. He declined the invitation, but sent over a manuscript which was published in 1642, under the title of *The True Constitution of a Particular Visible Church, proved by Scripture: Wherein is briefly Demonstrated by Questions and Answers, What Officers, Worship and Government Christ hath ordained in His Church*. This pamphlet of thirteen pages soon ran into a second edition and produced a wide and deep impression. John Owen examined it with the intention of writing a reply, but it converted him to Congregationalism.³³

But what contributed most of all to attract the attention of the most intelligent and devout men in England to the "Congregational way" was the manner in which "the Five Dissenting Brethren" maintained their position in the Westminster Assembly. Their moderation lessened the alarm with which their principles were regarded; their courage, their intellectual vigour, their ingenuity, and their learning, commanded universal admiration and respect. During the great debates the Jerusalem Chamber was crowded with members of both Houses of Parliament, and the controversy was followed with eager interest in every part of the country. In 1640 the differences between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism were almost unknown even to learned Puritans; five years later a large number of Puritans had already become Congregationalists, and a still larger number were gradually drifting towards Congregationalism.

But even in 1645 Congregationalism was regarded with such dread by the Presbyterian party which had supreme power in Parliament, that it seemed doubtful whether the Congregationalists would be tolerated. In the course of that year John Goodwin, Vicar of Coleman Street, was ejected by the Committee for Plundered Ministers on the ostensible ground that he would neither allow his parishioners to come

³² *A Discourse*, etc. (ii. 4), 85; and cf. *ibid.* (i. 6), 32.

³³ Owen, *Works*, xix. 274, and in Orme, *Memoirs, ibid.*, i. 55-56.

to the Lord's Table, nor baptize their children, unless he was satisfied that they were living a Christian life. His hostility to Calvinism was probably one of the real reasons for his ejection.³⁴ Henry Burton was ejected at the same time. "Blessed be God," writes Baillie, in July, 1645, "all the ministers of London are for us. Burton and Goodwin, the only two that were Independent, are by the Parliament removed from their places. Seven or eight preachers that are against our way are only lecturers in the city, but not ministers."³⁵

At the close of the year 1646, the House of Commons at one sitting passed two important resolutions,—the first forbidding all persons not regularly ordained "either here or in some other reformed church" to preach or expound the Scriptures in any church or chapel, or any other public place; the second stating that they "do dislike and will proceed against all such ministers or others as shall *publish or maintain, by Preaching, Writing, Printing, or any other way, any thing against or in Derogation of the Church Government, which is now established* by the authority of both Houses of Parliament"; and "all justices of the peace, sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, and other head officers of corporations, and all officers of the army," are directed "by all lawful ways and means to prevent offences of this kind, and give notice hereof unto this House; that thereupon course may be speedily taken for a due punishment to be inflicted upon them." An amendment to the first resolution, limiting the prohibition to preaching and leaving exposition free, was lost by 105 votes to 57: the second resolution passed without a division.³⁶

In parts of the country where the Presbyterians were strong, the Congregationalists appear to have suffered some temporary inconvenience from this repressive policy. But the leading Independents firmly protested against it. Jeremiah Burroughs, preaching before the House of Peers in Westminster

³⁴ Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 406; and T. Jackson, *Life of John Goodwin*, 84-85. Goodwin was accused of "Socinianism," and also of wishing to give "a full liberty of conscience to all sects, even Turks, Jews, and Papists." R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ii. 111, 181, 192.

³⁵ R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ii. 299, cf. 296. (To the Earl of Lauderdale and Mr. George Young, July 8, 1645.)

³⁶ C. J. (Dec. 31, 1646), v. 34.

Abbey, warned the House that the attempt to force their polity on the nation would be defeated. "Consider," he said, "you have to deal with English consciences; there is no country so famous for firm, strong oaks as England. You will find English consciences to be so."³⁷

These appeals, however, would have been ineffective had they not been supported by a powerful party which included a great variety of opinions on questions both of doctrine and of church polity.

In addition to those who were convinced—or partly convinced—that the Congregational polity was the polity of the apostolic Churches, and that for all ages it is the noblest organisation of the common life of those that are in Christ, there were men of all ranks and descriptions who shared the Congregational hostility to Episcopacy and Presbyterianism. The tyranny of the bishops had been intolerable; the tyranny of Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies might be equally intolerable. The contention that every congregation should be free to regulate its own affairs, elect its own officers, and conduct its own worship in whatever way seemed to its own members most in harmony with the will of God, was a contention for Freedom. It was supported by politicians who dreaded the political power of the great organised Churches; by the "sectaries," who knew that they were likely to suffer as much from Presbytery as from Episcopacy; by men who cared a great deal for practical godliness, but who had been unable to reach any settled conclusions on questions relating to ecclesiastical government; and by men who had broken new ground in religious speculation, and wanted to be left free to follow what they believed to be the teaching of the Spirit of God, without the interference of any ecclesiastical authorities. These men were not Congregationalists, in the true historic sense of the word; but they were "Independents," and when Episcopacy was abolished they did very much to prevent the effective establishment of Presbyterianism.

"Congregationalism" denotes a *positive* theory of the organisation and powers of Christian Churches. This theory maintains (1) That Churches are not in the strictest sense of the words "voluntary societies," but societies founded by

³⁷ *A Sermon preached at a late Fast before the Right Honourable the House of Peers* (Nov. 26, 1645), 45.

Christ Himself, to which it is His will that all those who believe in Him should belong. (2) That in every Christian Church the will of Christ is the supreme authority, and that in the reception and exclusion of members, in the election of officers, in the conduct of worship, and in every other church act, it is to be implicitly obeyed. (3) That there is an infinite contrast between those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the human race, and those who do not ; and that only those who have so received Him should be members of Christian Churches. (4) That by the will of Christ all the members of a Christian Church—not the officers only—are directly responsible to Him for maintaining His authority. And (5) That as an inference from the last principle, every society of Christians organised for Christian worship, instruction, and fellowship is a Christian Church and is *Independent* of external control.³⁸

But “Independency” has only a *negative* sense. It simply affirms the right of any society of private persons to meet together for worship and religious instruction and exhortation without being interfered with by any external authority. The right may be asserted—not on the Congregational theory, that since Christ is present in the assembly, guiding its decisions, inspiring and controlling its whole life, loyalty to Christ compels its members to resist the intrusion of bishops, synods, and the civil magistrate—but on quite other grounds. The societies claiming “Independence” may not be organised on the principles which are of the essence of Congregationalism ; and their members may deny the great Christian truths in which the Congregational polity is rooted. Like “Protestantism,” which is also a negative term, and includes many forms of doctrinal opinion and many forms of ecclesiastical polity, “Independency” may include religious societies differing very widely from each other in their organisation and their creed.

Historically the two terms have been used interchangeably. For the last two hundred years most “Independents” have been Congregationalists—or, at least, the Churches describing themselves as “Independent” Churches have preserved

³⁸ See for illustration and proof of these principles, R. W. Dale, *Manual of Congregational Principles*, 9–89.

the traditions of the Congregational polity. But under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate many Congregationalists objected to be described as Independents; and there were many Independents who were not Congregationalists. In a word, the "Independents"—sometimes called "political Independents"—were agreed on the one point, that every separate congregation should be free from all external ecclesiastical control, and that the power of the civil magistrate should be altogether withdrawn from the province of religion, or should be subjected to limitations that would leave "tolerated" congregations a very large freedom; the "Congregationalists" were not only agreed in asserting the independence of every separate congregation, but held a very definite theory on the manner in which every separate congregation claiming to be a Christian Church ought to be organised.

IV

Under the Cromwellian settlement the Congregational Churches may be divided into two classes—(a) the *Gathered* Churches and (b) the *Reformed* Churches.³⁹

The *Gathered* Churches were formed, as Congregational Churches are formed now, without any reference to the parishes to which the members belonged. Some of them had existed for several years; many more were founded after the execution of the King. If a Congregationalist minister was appointed to the vicarage or rectory and the Gathered Church was without a pastor, it sometimes elected him to the pastorate, and he received his ministerial support from the tithes and other ecclesiastical revenues of the parish. In other cases the Congregational pastor was still supported by the free contributions of the church members. In other cases, again, a minister who was already pastor of a Gathered Church was made vicar, rector, or lecturer at the parish church, and received the income of the office.

The *Reformed* Churches were founded as the immediate result of the appointment of a Congregationalist to a parish living. He induced those of his parishioners who in his judgment were relying on Christ for eternal salvation, and

³⁹ See Browne, *Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*, 164-165.

trying to keep His laws, to constitute themselves a Congregational Church; and after they had done it, they elected him as their pastor.

In London, even under Cromwell, the power of Presbyterianism continued to be considerable, and only a few Congregationalists held livings in the city or its immediate neighbourhood; but these were men of great eminence. Caryl was rector of St. Mary Magnus; Nye of St. Bartholomew by the Exchange; Greenhill held the living of Stepney, and after the death of Jeremiah Burroughs, Matthew Mead was associated with him as morning lecturer; Thomas Brooks was rector of St. Margaret's, Fish Street Hill.⁴⁰

John Owen had held the living of Coggeshall in Essex from 1646, and resigned it in 1651 for the Deanery of Christ Church, Oxford. John Howe, who had been parish minister of Torrington in Devonshire, became chaplain to Cromwell in 1656, and lived at Whitehall. William Bridge, the pastor of the "Gathered Church" at Yarmouth, received £50 a year from the Corporation as town lecturer. Theophilus Gale was a regular preacher in Winchester Cathedral.⁴¹

The "Gathered Churches," even when they had elected a parochial incumbent to the pastorate, sometimes continued to meet in private houses for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and for church fellowship. Even "Reformed Churches" followed the same practice. But William Strong, a Fellow of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, was pastor of a Congregational Church that met in Westminster Abbey,⁴² and Job Tookey was pastor of a Church that met in the Abbey of St. Albans. The Independent Church at Exeter met in the cathedral. At Hull, at Yarmouth, and at many other places, the Congregational Church met in one of the parish churches; where the building was large, a wall was sometimes erected to divide the chancel from the nave; and Presbyterians and Independents met for worship at the same time and under the same roof.

In 1658 the "Congregational or Gathered Church" at Bury, in Suffolk, addressed a petition to Richard Cromwell,

⁴⁰ For fuller details, see Stoughton, *Religion in England*, ii. 207-211.

⁴¹ But he probably had no official relation to any Church in that city.

⁴² Calamy, *Account of Silenced Ministers*, ii. 41. A volume of Strong's sermons, published after his death, describes him as "lately of the Abbey of Westminster."

the Lord Protector, and to the Lords of his Privy Council, complaining that the Presbyterians of the town were not treating them fairly. They say :—

“ [We] do greatly rejoice that we live under such a government as in its fundamental constitution hath taken such prudent and tender care for the due liberties of its poor saints, as many in former days have not, and other nations do not even to this day. . . . Your petitioners, through the prevalency of a party in the said town of different principles, have been for divers years together overshadowed, discountenanced, and shut up into a corner ; where we meet in an obscure way, and that to the hazard of our health and lives in the winter season, by reason of the coldness of the place. . . . And whereas the other party by whom we are oppressed are but one society, known by the name of the Presbyterian, and have two minister-officers to that particular people, who enjoy the advantages of both the parish meeting-places, whilst your petitioners have none but the Shire House, a place very uncomfortable to ourselves, and very offensive unto others, and yet we are also daily threatened by our brethren of the contrary party to be turned out of that also, to the daily grief and wounding of our spirits, and, as we conceive, to the disadvantage of the gospel, there appearing a whiteness to the harvest in the willingness of the people, could our pastor be admitted to the exercise of his gifts more publicly, as is much desired. . . . ”

They, therefore, ask for the use of one of the “ meeting-places ” or parish churches ; or, “ if that be not thought meet,” they will be content if “ the chancel of Mary’s parish may be parted from the body of the meeting-house for your petitioners to meet in ; which place is so large that there is room enough for two congregations to meet in, being parted, without any disturbance to each other, the chancel being a superfluity, and useless to the parish as it is now.”⁴³ What was the result of this petition, and whether the pastor of the “ Gathered Church ” was “ admitted to the exercise of his gifts more publicly,” as was “ much desired,” does not appear.

The principles of Congregationalism required the Congregational rector of a parish church to refuse to administer the Lord’s Supper to any persons of whose faith in the Lord Jesus Christ he was not assured, and also to refuse baptism

⁴³ *State Papers : Interregnum (Domestic Series)*, clxxxiii. (85), Nov. 4, 1658. The Journals of the House of Commons during this period contain other petitions for a “ division ” of churches. But in most cases it is clear that the “ division ” proposed was a division of the parish and not of the building.

to their children.⁴⁴ The refusal was sometimes resented, and in some cases the parishioners tried to enforce what they believed to be their rights by an appeal to the law. On July 19, 1658, at the Lincoln Assizes, Mr. Justice Windham gave his charge both to the laity and clergy.

“The laics he exhorted to a reverent esteem of their pastors, to vindicate them from the reproach and contempt of the world, to afford them that maintenance which by law is due to them. The clerics he did solemnly charge to be at unity amongst themselves, and to be diligent in performing their offices toward their people, as preaching and administering the sacraments, especially the Lord’s Supper.”

“Neglect of this,” he said, had been “a chief means to divert men from religion to popery and other erroneous and fanatic ways of worship. He said that the sacrament was due from the Rector to his people by the first law that was ever made for the settlement of . . . Religion, namely 1 of Edward VI., which law they never repealed.” . . . “He declared it was a tyranny (beyond that of Prelacy), for every minister to make his own articles, and to deny the sacrament to all those who will not subscribe them, and pin their faith on his sleeves.”

The grand jury, so encouraged, presented several ministers who had refused the sacraments—amongst others both the ministers of Boston. Those of Lincoln, we are told, escaped “only because they were lecturers and not curates.” On the Western Circuit, the same Judge took the same line. He said :—

“That in any case ministers did not do the duties of their office, as particularly to baptize their children, and to administer the Sacrament to all but such as were ignorant and scandalous, they might refuse to pay them their dues, and they should present such ministers, which was agreeable to the law, and if they were by them presented, they should be dealt withal.”

The details of another case that came before him at Derby assizes in the same summer, have been recorded at some length.

Thomas Palmer of Aston-upon-Trent was charged at the

⁴⁴ The Congregationalists of that age refused baptism to the children of those who were not church members. See *ante*, pp. 126, 180. . . . :

Derby Assizes in July, 1658, by Robert Houlden and others of his parishioners with refusing to allow them to receive the Sacrament. When asked by Mr. Justice Windham why he did not administer the Sacrament to his parishioners, Palmer replied that he did not administer holy ordinances to unholy men. The judge then asked him if he did not know that he was bound by law to administer the Sacrament to all his parishioners; Palmer replied that there was no such law in force, and that if there were it ought to be repealed. When the clerk of the court, at the Judge's order, was about to read an extract from a statute of Edward VI., Palmer asked whether the statute obliged him to administer the Sacrament to the "scandalous and ignorant." The judge admitted that he was not, but denied that Palmer had the right to "exercise an arbitrary power over other men's consciences." "You and such as you," he went on to say, "are the causes of the divisions in the nation. But, I say, if I be upon my journey, and coming to an inn, if the inn-keeper refuse to lodge me, I have my action against him, and I know not but the like will hold in this case." "But, my lord," asked Houlden, "what must I do?" "I know not," answered Windham, "but if you will bring it before us, we will do you right." Finally, the judge advised the complainants to withhold their tithes so long as the minister withheld the Sacraments; and they combined together for that purpose.

But the ministers were not without support. The papers that record the Judge's charges also include "a petition of sundry gentlemen, ministers of the gospel, and others in the County of Lincoln," signed by John Tooley, Mayor of Boston, and others, stating that "some of our godly and reverend brethren, preachers of the gospel," had been presented for refusal to admit all to the Sacrament, referring to Palmer's case and to Mr. Justice Windham's utterances, and praying that ministers might be protected against the effects of the Judge's action.⁴⁵

The theory of the English Establishment that every baptized parishioner is a member of the English Church, could not be made to work easily when Congregationalists were parish ministers.

⁴⁵ *State Papers: Interregnum (Domestic Series)*, clxxxiii. (136), Nov. 25, 1658. And for a similar case, *ibid.*, clxxxiv. (24), Dec. 9, 1658.

V

Very few eminent Congregationalists held considerable positions in the University of Cambridge, during either the Commonwealth or the Protectorate. Cambridge was visited by the Earl of Manchester under the authority of an ordinance of Parliament passed early in the Civil War, when the Westminster Assembly and the Presbyterian party were in the fulness of their power.⁴⁶ The scholars and divines who were appointed to the offices of ejected "delinquents" were therefore Presbyterians or moderate Episcopalians: the Covenant was imposed only on those persons who were known to be disaffected to Parliament. Eleven heads of colleges were removed; the most distinguished of their successors were Cudworth, Whichcote, and Lightfoot, all of whom conformed at the Restoration, and Lazarus Seaman, Anthony Tuckney, and Thomas Young, who were Presbyterians.⁴⁷

At Oxford the Congregationalists were very numerous. For many years after the war had begun, the city had been the head-quarters of the King. When it fell into the hands of the Parliament the condition of the university was "sad and deplorable."

"The colleges and halls were gone to ruin, five of them perfectly deserted, and the rest in a very shattered condition. The public acts had been discontinued for some years, the schools turned into magazines for the king's army, and the chambers filled with officers and soldiers, or let out to townsmen: there was little or no instruction for youth, nor hardly the face of a university; poverty, desolation, and plunder, the sad effects of war, were to be seen in every corner; the bursaries were emptied of the public money, the plate melted down for the king's service, and the colleges involved in debts which they were not able to satisfy."⁴⁸

An ordinance of two Houses of Parliament, passed on May 1, 1647, empowered a body of twenty-four visitors—fifteen lawyers and nine divines—to inquire into the "crimes, offences, and disorders" that they might find in the University; "to inquire by oath concerning those that neglect to take the Solemn League and Covenant," and who opposed

⁴⁶ C. J. (Dec. 12, 1643; Jan. 22, 1643-4), iii. 338, 373. Fuller, *History of the University of Cambridge*, 235.

⁴⁷ Neal, iii. 94-107; and Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 124.

⁴⁸ Neal, iii. 360-361.

the execution of the ordinance of Parliament concerning Church Discipline and the Directory of Worship. The Commission was to report to a Committee of both Houses consisting of twenty-six peers and fifty-two commoners.⁴⁹

The Visitors were met with a most strenuous resistance extending over two years; but at last—on July 5, 1649—they ordered “a serjeant (attended with some files of musketeers), to publish by beat of drum, before the gates of the several colleges, that if any of those who had been expelled by the Visitors should presume to continue any longer in the University, they should be taken into custody, and be made prisoners by the Governor.” Four days later, they again sent the serjeant, the musketeers, and the drummer, to the gates of every college to announce that “if any one who had been expelled, did presume to tarry in the town, or should be taken within five miles of it, he should be deemed as a spy, and punished with death.”⁵⁰ This cleared the University of the Royalists, and left the Visitors free to carry out their reforms. Seven of the heads of colleges, and three professors were undisturbed. Twelve heads of colleges and seven Professors were ejected. Most of the men who were appointed to the vacant offices were Presbyterians, but several of them were Episcopalians who were willing to submit to the authority of Parliament. A few years later some of the most important positions in the University were held by Congregationalists. John Owen was Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Christ Church; Thomas Goodwin was President of Magdalen; Thankful Owen, President of St. John’s; Thomas Cole, Principal of St. Mary’s Hall; Francis Howel, Principal of Jesus; Francis Johnson, Master of University. Among the distinguished Fellows were John Howe, Theophilus Gale, and George Porter of Magdalen; Ralph Button of Merton; Stephen Charnock of New; Samuel Lee of Wadham. Owen did very much to restore the glory of Oxford, and many of the most eminent scholars of the latter half of the century were educated there during his Vice-Chancellorship.⁵¹

⁴⁹ L. J. (May 1, 1647), lx. 169–170. Before the ordinance was passed in its final form, much discussion and many conferences took place between the two Houses.

⁵⁰ Neal, iii. 384. Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, i. 138. Wood, *Antiquities*, i. 387 foll.

⁵¹ Orme, *Memoirs of Owen (Works)*, i. 133–135.

VI

The theological belief and the ecclesiastical theory of the Congregationalists of the Commonwealth are set out with great fulness in *A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England: Agreed upon and consented unto by their Elders and Messengers in their Meeting at the Savoy. October 12th, 1658.*

Some months before the death of Cromwell the leading Congregationalists petitioned him for liberty to hold an Assembly of the ministers and "messengers" of the Congregational Churches, for the purpose of agreeing upon a Confession that might be published as an authoritative statement of the theology and ecclesiastical order of English Congregationalists. The circulars, issued to the Congregational Churches in different parts of the kingdom, directing them to hold meetings to appoint their "messengers" had an official character; they were signed by the Clerk to the Council.⁵² The Assembly was held in the Palace of the Savoy, in the Strand, on September 29, 1658, rather more than three weeks after the death of Cromwell. It consisted of about two hundred delegates, representing a hundred and twenty Churches; the majority of the delegates were laymen. Thomas Goodwin, John Owen, Nye, Bridge, Caryl, and Greenhill were appointed a Committee to draw up the Confession. On October 12 the whole Confession was finally accepted.⁵³ In their Preface they say: "The whole of days in which we had meetings about it—set aside the two Lord's days, and the first day's meeting, in which we considered and debated what to pitch upon—were but eleven days; part of which also was spent by some of us in prayer, others in consulting, and in the end all agreeing."⁵⁴ That "so numerous a company of Ministers, and other principal brethren, should so readily, speedily, and jointly, give up themselves unto such a whole body of Truths that are after

⁵² Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa* (xiii. 15), ii. 501-502. Hanbury (*Memorials*, iii. 515) is mistaken in supposing that the Assembly was to draw up a national Confession of Faith such as was suggested in *The Humble Petition and Advice, vide sup.*, p. 261.

⁵³ For Preface and Text of Savoy Declaration, see Hanbury, *Memorials*, iii. 517-548. The original text (1659) has been restored in the passages quoted.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 522.

godliness," seemed to them "a great and special work of the Holy Ghost." ⁵⁵

They were equally impressed by the discovery that so many separate and independent Churches had preserved, in such troubled times, so close a uniformity of faith.

"We confess, that from the first, every, or at least the generality of our Churches, have been, in a manner, like so many ships (though holding forth the same general colours) launcht singly, and sailing apart and alone in the vast Ocean of these tumultuating times; and they exposed to every wind of Doctrine, under no other conduct than the Word and Spirit, and their particular Elders and principal Brethren, without Associations among our selves, or so much as holding out common lights to others, whereby to know where we were.

"But yet whilst we thus confess to our own shame this neglect, let all acknowledge that God hath ordered it for his high and greater glory, in that his singular Care and Power should have so watcht over each of these, as that all should be found to have steered their course by the same Chart, and to have been bound for one and the same Port, and that upon this general search now made, that the same holy and blessed Truths of all sorts, which are current and warrantable amongst all the other Churches of Christ in the World, should be found to be our Lading." ⁵⁶

They describe their Confession as being nothing more than a declaration of the faith of the persons who have drawn it up and agreed to it: it is not "to be made use of as an imposition upon any. Whatever is of force or constraint in matters of this nature, causeth them to degenerate from the name and nature of Confessions; and turns them, from being Confessions of Faith, into Exactions and Impositions of Faith." ⁵⁷

While complaining that under "the pretext—which hath some degree of justice in it—That all should not be bound up to the traditions of former times, nor take religion upon trust," men have assumed "the freedom—notwithstanding what Authority hath interposed to the contrary—to vent and vend their own vain and accursed imaginations, contrary to the great and fixed truths of the Gospel," they declare, "That we have, all along this season, held forth—though quarrelled with for it by our brethren—this great principle of these times, That amongst all Christian States and Churches,

⁵⁵ *Memorials*, iii. 522.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 523.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 517.

there ought to be vouchsafed a forbearance and mutual indulgence unto Saints of all persuasions, that keep unto, and hold fast the necessary Foundations of Faith and Holiness, in all other matters, extra-fundamental, whether of Faith or Order.”⁵⁸ They were against a compulsory religious uniformity; but they were a long way as yet from desiring perfect religious liberty.

Their labour in preparing the doctrinal part of the Declaration was greatly lessened by their agreement with the substance of the Confession which had been drawn up by the Westminster Assembly, of which several of the principal Savoy theologians had been members. They therefore adopted, with some slight additions and modifications, the whole of the doctrinal articles of the Westminster divines, omitting the chapters on Church Censure, Synods and Councils, and some other passages which seemed out of place in a Confession of Faith. The clause in the Westminster Confession ascribing to the civil magistrate the authority and duty “to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire,” and “all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed,” was also omitted. There are some important changes in the chapters on Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but the substance of the Calvinistic theory of the two Sacraments is preserved, and is expressed with great clearness and vigour.⁵⁹

Appended to the Declaration of Faith is a series of thirty propositions, “Of the Institution of Churches, and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ.” These contain a full and authentic statement of the principles of the Congregational polity as held by the most illustrious Congregationalists of the Commonwealth—men of great theological learning, of keen and robust intellect, and of a deep and earnest spiritual life. They represent the results at which English Congregationalists had arrived after a hundred years of controversy. In substance, they are identical with the principles which Robert Browne and Henry Barrowe had maintained against Whitgift and Cartwright, which John Robinson and Henry Ainsworth had maintained against Bernard and Bishop Hall; but the grave and protracted discussions of the Westminster Assembly, and the experience which had been gained of the practical

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 519-520.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 527-528.

working of Congregationalism in Holland, in New England, and in England itself during the preceding fifty years, as well as the great eminence of the men who met at the Savoy, give to the "Declaration" an exceptional value. In its fulness and precision it is, perhaps, the most admirable statement of the ecclesiastical principles of English Congregationalism.⁶⁰

NOTE A

THE SAVOY DECLARATION

Of the Institution of Churches and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ.

" I. By the appointment of the Father, all power for the Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested, in a supreme and sovereign manner, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head thereof.

" II. In the execution of this Power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the World into Communion with himself those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience which he prescribeth to them in his Word.

" III. Those thus called (through the ministry [of] the Word by his Spirit) he commandeth to walk together in particular Societies or Churches, for their mutual edification and the due performance of that publique worship, which he requireth of them in this world.

" IV. To each of these Churches thus gathered, according unto his mind declared in his Word, he hath given all that Power and Authority which is any way needfull for their carrying on that Order in Worship and Discipline which he hath instituted for them to observe, with Commands and Rules for the due and right exerting and executing of that Power.

" V. These particular Churches thus appointed by the Authority of Christ, and entrusted with Power from him for the ends before expressed, are each of them as unto those ends the seat of that Power which he is pleased to communicate to his Saints or Subjects in this World, so that as such they receive it immediately from himself.

" VI. Besides these particular Churches, there is not instituted by Christ any Church more extensive or catholique, entrusted with power for the administration of his Ordinances, or the execution of any authority in his Name.

" VII. A particular Church gathered and compleated according

⁶⁰ See Note A immediately following.

to the mind of Christ, consists of Officers and Members : the Lord Christ having given to his called ones (united, according to his appointment, in Church order) Liberty and Power to choose Persons fitted by the Holy Ghost for that purpose, to be over them, and to minister to them in the Lord.

“VIII. The Members of these Churches are Saints by Calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their Obedience unto that Call of Christ, who being further known to each other by their confession of the Faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themselves, or otherwise manifested, do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.

“IX. The Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church so called and gathered, for the peculiar administration of Ordinances and execution of Power or Duty which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the World, are Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons.

“X. Churches thus gathered and assembling for the Worship of GOD, are thereby visible and publique ; and their Assemblies (in what place soever they are, according as they have liberty or opportunity) are therefore Church or Publique assemblies.

“XI. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person fitted and gifted by the Holy Ghost unto the Office of Pastor, Teacher, or Elder, in a Church, is that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the Church itself, and solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer with Imposition of Hands of the Eldership of that Church, if there be any before constituted therein : and of a Deacon, that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by Prayer and the like Imposition of Hands.

“XII. The Essence of this Call of a Pastor, a Teacher, or Elder, unto Office, consists in the Election of the Church, together with his acceptation of it, and separation by Fasting and Prayer : and those who are so chosen, though not set apart by Imposition of Hands, are rightly constituted ministers of Jesus Christ, in whose Name and Authority they exercise the Ministry to them so committed. The Calling of Deacons consisteth in the like Election and acceptation, with separation by Prayer.

“XIII. Although it be incumbent on the Pastors and Teachers of the Churches to be instant in Preaching the Word, by way of Office, yet the work of Preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Ghost for it, and approved (being by lawful ways and means in the Providence of God called thereunto) may publicquely, ordinarily and constantly perform it, so that they give themselves up thereunto.

“XIV. However, they who are engaged in the work of publique Preaching, and enjoy the Publique Maintenance upon that account,

are not thereby obliged to dispense the Seals to any other than such as (being Saints by Calling, and gathered according to the Order of the Gospel) they stand related to, as Pastors and Teachers; yet ought they not to neglect others living within their Parochial Bounds, but besides their constant publique Preaching to them, they ought to enquire after their profiting by the Word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether young or old) the great Doctrines of the Gospel, even personally and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit.

“XV. Ordination alone without Election or precedent consent of the Church, by those who formerly have been Ordained by virtue of that Power they have received by their Ordination, doth not constitute any person a Church-Officer, or communicate Office power unto him.

“XVI. A Church furnished with Officers (according to the mind of Christ) hath full power to administer all his ordinances; and where there is want of any one or more Officers required, that Officer or those which are in the Church, may administer all the Ordinances proper to their particular Duty and Offices; but where there are no Teaching Officers, none may administer the Seals, nor can the Church authorise any so to do.

“XVII. In the carrying on of Church-administrations, no person ought to be added to the Church, but by the consent of the Church itself; that so love (without dissimulation) may be preserved between all the Members thereof.

“XVIII. Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted as a means of Edification, that those who walk not according to the Rules and Laws appointed by him (in respect of Faith and Life, so that just offence doth arise to the Church thereby) be censured in his Name and Authority: Every Church hath power in itself to exercise and execute all those Censures appointed by him, in the way and Order prescribed in the Gospel.

“XIX. The Censures so appointed by Christ, are Admonition and Excommunication: and whereas some offences are or may be known only to some, it is appointed by Christ, that those to whom they are so known do first admonish the offender in private; in publique offences where any sin before all, and in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offence being related to the Church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duly admonished, in the Name of Christ, by the whole Church, by the Ministry of the Elders of the Church; and if this Censure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by Excommunication with the consent of the Church.

“XX. As all Believers are bound to join themselves to particular Churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do, so none are to be admitted unto the Privileges of the Churches, who do not submit themselves to the Rule of Christ in the Censures for the Government of them.

“XXI. This being the way prescribed by Christ in case of offence,

no Church members upon any offences taken by them, having performed their duty required of them in this matter, ought to disturb any Church-order, or absent themselves from the publique Assemblies or the administration of any Ordinances, upon that pretence, but to wait upon Christ in the further proceeding of the Church.

“XXII. The Power of Censures being seated by Christ in a particular Church, is to be exercised only towards particular members of each Church respectively as such; and there is no power given by him unto any Synods or Ecclesiastical Assemblies to Excommunicate, or by their publique Edicts to threaten Excommunication or other Church censures, against Churches, Magistrates, or their people, upon any account; no man being obnoxious to that Censure, but upon his personal miscarriage, as a member of a particular Church.

“XXIII. Although the Church is a Society of men, assembling for the celebration of the Ordinances according to the appointment of Christ, yet every Society assembling for that end or purpose, upon the account of cohabitation within any civil Precincts or Bounds, is not thereby constituted a Church; seeing there may be wanting among them, what is essentially required thereunto; and therefore a Believer living with others in such a Precinct, may join himself with any Church for his edification.

“XXIV. For the avoidance of differences that may otherwise arise, for the greater Solemnity in the Celebration of the Ordinances of Christ, and the opening a way for the larger usefulness of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost, Saints, living in one City or Town, or within such distances as that they may conveniently assemble for divine Worship, ought rather to join in one Church for their mutual strengthening and edification, than to set up many distinct Societies.

“XXV. As all Churches, and all the members of them, are bound to pray continually for the good or prosperity of all the Churches of Christ in all places, and upon all occasions to further it; (every one within the bounds of their Places and Callings, in the exercise of their Gifts and Graces): so the Churches themselves (when planted by the providence of God, so as they may have opportunity and advantage for it) ought to hold communion amongst themselves for their peace, increase of love and mutual edification.

“XXVI. In Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in point of Doctrine or in Administrations, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church, in their Peace, Union and Edification; or any Member or Members of any Church, are injured in, or by, any proceeding in Censures not agreeable to Truth and Order; it is according to the mind of Christ, that many Churches holding communion together do by their Messengers meet in a Synod or Council, to consider and give their advice in or about, that matter in difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned: Howbeit these Synods so assembled are not entrusted with

any Church-Power, properly so called, or with any Jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any Censures, either over any Churches or Persons, or to impose their determinations on the Churches or Officers.

“XXVII. Besides these occasional Synods or Councils, there are not instituted by Christ any stated Synods in a fixed Combination of Churches or their Officers, in lesser or greater Assemblies; nor are there any Synods appointed by Christ in a way of Subordination to one another.

“XXVIII. Persons that are joined in Church-fellowship, ought not lightly or without cause to withdraw themselves from the communion of the Church whereunto they are so joined. Nevertheless, where any person cannot continue in any Church without his sin, either for want of the Administration of any Ordinances instituted by Christ, or by his being deprived of his due Privileges, or compelled to anything in practice not warranted by the Word, or in case of Persecution, or upon the account of conveniency of habitation; he, consulting with the Church, or the Officer, or Officers thereof, may peaceably depart from the communion of the Church wherewith he hath so walked, to join himself with some other Church, where he may enjoy the Ordinances in the purity of the same, for his edification and consolation.

“XXIX. Such reforming Churches as consist of Persons sound in the Faith, and of Conversation becoming the Gospel, ought not to refuse the communion of each other, so far as may consist with their own Principles respectively, though they walk not in all things according to the same Rules of Church-Order.

“XXX. Churches gathered and walking according to the mind of Christ, judging other Churches (though less pure) to be true Churches, may receive, unto occasional communion with them, such Members of those Churches as are credibly testified to be godly, and to live without offence.”

BOOK IV

*FROM THE RESTORATION (1660) TO THE
REVOLUTION (1688)*

CHAPTER I

NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMPREHENSION AND TOLERATION

CHARLES'S PLEDGES, AND HOW HE KEPT THEM—PRESBYTERIAN CHAPLAINS—PRESBYTERIAN SCHEME OF RITUAL AND ORDER—WHAT WOULD HAVE SATISFIED THEM—BISHOPS MAKE NO CONCESSIONS—CONFERENCE OF PRESBYTERIANS AND EPISCOPALIANS—BAXTER'S ACCOUNT OF IT—THE KING TAKES MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS—HIS DECLARATION FAVOURABLE TO COMPREHENSION; BUT DOES NOT PROVIDE TOLERATION FOR ROMANISTS—PRESBYTERIAN DIGNITARIES—PARLIAMENT REJECTS THE DECLARATION—CAUSES THAT CHANGED THE KING'S POLICY—EJECTED CLERGY RESTORED TO THEIR LIVINGS AND PLACES.

IN the Declaration issued from Breda on April 14, 1660, Charles had assured the nation that he would grant liberty to tender consciences, and that under his reign no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion which did not disturb the peace of the kingdom.¹ These solemn pledges were the chief part of the price which he had paid for his crown. They were too recent to be forgotten. On May 29, when Charles returned to Whitehall, the Presbyterians still appeared so strong that unless he retained their confidence he might soon be driven from the throne.

I

He therefore began his reign by making ten or twelve Presbyterian ministers royal chaplains—among them Baxter, Reynolds, Calamy, Bates, and Spurstow.² In the middle of June the new chaplains were presented to the King by the Earl of Manchester, who was a strong supporter of the Presbyterian interest; Clarendon and other statesmen were present. Baxter delivered a very long speech. He had been a resolute

¹ Clarendon, *History*, vi. 233.

² Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 88.

opponent of Cromwell, but was too honest a man not to acknowledge that Cromwell had done a great work for the nation. He said that the late usurper had cared very much for the religious interests of the country, and had put godly ministers into the churches. He hoped that the King would follow this good example. Some of the other chaplains spoke with great frankness. Charles probably thought that the speakers were very tedious, and, but for his invariable good temper, he must have found the extreme fidelity of his new spiritual advisers very irritating. However, he gave them a gracious answer; told them that he was glad to hear of their inclinations to agreement with their Episcopalian brethren; that if there was to be reconciliation, concessions must be made on both sides; and that he himself would do his best to bring the reconciliation about. "Old Mr. Ash," says Baxter, "burst into tears with joy, and could not forbear expressing what gladness this promise of his Majesty had put into his heart."³ After Baxter's own account of his speech there is nothing surprising in his statement that only four of the chaplains were ever asked to preach at court at all, and that of these not one was asked to preach a second time. He adds: "I suppose never a man of them all ever received or expected a penny for the salary of their places."⁴

II

Either at this meeting, or shortly afterwards, the King requested his Presbyterian chaplains to prepare a scheme of church government which would satisfy themselves and might also satisfy the Episcopalians; and he promised that when their scheme was ready he would invite a few of both sides to consider it.⁵ The proposals which Baxter and his friends drew up were moderate and conciliatory.

1. They ask (*a*) that *godliness* should not be discouraged; (*b*) that care should be taken to secure for every congregation a *learned, orthodox, and godly resident minister*; (*c*) that no persons should be admitted to the Lord's Supper till they had a competent understanding of the principles of the Christian religion, and made a creditable *profession of their faith and*

³ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 90-91. ⁴ *Ibid.*, i. (2), 88. ⁵ *Ibid.*, i. (2), 92-93.

obedience; (d) and that effective measures should be taken for the *sanctification of the Lord's Day*.

2. In reference to *Church Government* they profess themselves willing to accept the scheme of modified Episcopacy drawn up by Archbishop Ussher.⁶

3. They admit the lawfulness of a *Liturgy*, provided it is not too rigorously enforced and does not prevent the ministers from offering extemporary prayers. In the *Book of Common Prayer* they think that there are some things which are offensive and need amendment; and they suggest that some learned, godly, and moderate divines of both persuasions should be commissioned to compile a new Prayer-Book, or at least to revise the present book, and to draw up alternative services which should be as much as possible in the words of Scripture.

4. In reference to *Ceremonies*, they say that they are willing that a proper authority should determine the mere circumstances of worship, by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of Holy Scripture. But they think that worship is most acceptable to God when it is most free from what they call "mere human admixtures in things of themselves confessedly unnecessary, adjoined and appropriated thereunto"; adding, with regard to certain ceremonies in the English Church which had occasioned bitter disputes, that "it is very needful and expedient, that things in themselves mutable be sometimes actually changed, lest they should, by perpetual permanency and constant use, be judged by the people as necessary as the substantial of worship themselves"—a true and profound principle of very wide application.

They then specify the particular ceremonies to which they object. They request that *kneeling at the Lord's Supper*, and the *Keeping of Holy Days* that are of human institution, be not enforced; and that *bowing at the name of Jesus*, the use of the *cross in baptism*, and the wearing of the *surplice*, be abolished. They further desire that certain *innovations*, which they conceive were not sanctioned by the Prayer-Book and the laws of the land, should be forbidden, such as the erecting of *altars*, and *bowing towards them*. They say that "these ceremonies have been imposed and urged upon such considerations as draw too near to the significance and moral

⁶ See Note A, pp. 404-406.

efficacy of sacraments themselves.”⁷ There lay the danger. Whether or not the minister should make the sign of the cross in baptizing a child, may seem a small matter; but if people imagine that the sign is necessary to the sacrament; that it has some real though mysterious effect; that, for example, it drives away the evil spirits from the child, or accomplishes some other purpose equally marvellous,—this is superstition; and the Puritans of the Restoration, like the Puritans under Elizabeth, regarded superstition with dismay.

To these proposals the bishops sent a written reply which showed that they were not in the mood to make concessions. They declined a Conference. On three points only were they willing to yield. They say that they find no reason why the surplice, the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus should be abolished; “nevertheless, how far forth in regard of tender consciences, a liberty may be thought fit to be indulged to any, his Majesty, according to his great wisdom and goodness, is best able to judge.”⁸

III

The King saw that it was too early to pursue the policy of the bishops, and to defy the men who had restored the monarchy. Parliament was full of Presbyterians, and had he refused at once to consider the position of the Presbyterian clergy his position might have been seriously imperilled.

The remedy was obvious. The King was the supreme Governor of the Church, and he resolved to issue a Declaration of Indulgence, making large and immediate concessions to the party which had given him the crown, and providing for a fair and reasonable settlement of all disputed questions. A draft of the document was shown to Baxter and his friends early in September (1660), and they suggested omissions, modifications, and additions, a considerable number of which were accepted.⁹ On October 22 representatives of the two parties met the King at Worcester House—Lord Clarendon’s—to listen to the revised document; several statesmen were present, and six bishops; the Presbyterians were represented by Baxter,

⁷ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 96, for *The First Address and Proposals of the London Ministers* (i. pp. 233–236); for *Ussher's Model*, *ibid.* (i. pp. 238–241).

⁸ *Ibid.*, i. (2), 100, for *The Bishops' Answer*, etc. (i. pp. 242–247).

⁹ *Ibid.*, i. (2), 107.

Calamy, Reynolds, Spurstow, Manton, Wallis, and Ash. Clarendon read the Declaration; and, as he read, the bishops and the Presbyterians offered their several objections.¹⁰ What happened towards the close of the meeting was of such critical importance in its effect on the policy of the King, and indeed on the ecclesiastical history of the last two centuries, that it is worth while to give the story in Baxter's own words.

He says :—

“ The most of the time being spent thus in speaking to the Declaration as it was read, when we came to the end, the Lord Chancellor drew out another Paper, and told us that the King had been petitioned also by the Independents and Anabaptists, and though he—(that is, Clarendon)—knew not what to think of (it) himself, and did not very well like it; yet something he had drawn up which he would read to us, and desire us also to give our Advice about it. Thereupon he read, as an Addition to the Declaration, That *others also be permitted to meet for Religious Worship, so be it, they do it not to the disturbance of the Peace: and that no Justice of [the] Peace or Officer disturb them.* When he had read it, he again desired them all to think on it, and give their Advice. But all were silent. The Presbyterians all perceived, as soon as they heard it, that it would secure the *liberty of the Papists*; and one of them (Dr. Wallis) whispered me in the Ear, and intreated me to say nothing, for it was an odious Business, but let the Bishops speak to it. But the Bishops would not speak a word, nor any one of the Presbyterians neither; and so we were like to have ended in that Silence. I knew if we consented to it, it would be charged on us, that we spake for a Toleration of Papists and Sectaries: (But yet it might have lengthened out our own). And if we spake against it, all Sects and Parties would be set against us, as the Causers of their Sufferings, and as a partial People that would have Liberty ourselves, but would have no others have it with us. At last, seeing the Silence continue, I thought our very Silence would be charged on us [as] a consent if it went on, and therefore I only said this, That ‘this Reverend Brother, Dr. Gunning, even now speaking against Sects, had named the Papists and the Socinians: For our parts we desired not favour to ourselves alone, and rigorous Severity we desired against none. As we humbly thanked His Majesty for his Indulgence to ourselves, so we distinguish the tolerable Parties from the intolerable. For the former, we humbly claim just lenity and favour; but for the latter, such as the two sorts named before by that Reverend Brother, for our part we cannot make their Toleration our request.

¹⁰ “ The Business of the Day was not to dispute, but as the Lord Chancellor read over [the] Declaration, each Party was to speak to what they disliked, and the King to determine how it should be, as liked himself.” *Ibid.*, i. (2), 108.

“To which His Majesty said, That ‘there were Laws enough against the Papists’: and I replied, That ‘we understood the Question to be whether those Laws should be executed on them, or not.’ And so His Majesty brake up the Meeting of that day.”¹¹

A small Committee, consisting of two Presbyterians—of whom Baxter was not one—and two Episcopalians, was appointed to revise the Declaration; and if they were equally divided, they were to consult the Earl of Anglesey and Lord Hollis.¹²

Baxter left the Conference “dejected,” being fully satisfied that the Declaration, as it stood, would fail to secure concord, and believing that there was no probability that any such changes would be made in it as would enable him to approve it. Three days later, October 25, 1660, the Declaration was issued. Baxter heard men crying it in the streets, bought a copy, and stepped into a house to read it. He found, to his astonishment, that some of the Presbyterian proposals had been accepted, and that such changes had been made in the document as rendered it possible for “sober, honest ministers” to submit to the royal conditions. He at once resolved to do his best to persuade all his friends to conform to the Establishment on the terms of the Declaration, and “cheerfully to promote the Concord of the Church and [the] Brotherly Love which this Concord doth bespeak.”¹³

The document is indeed a very remarkable one. It does not contain the additional clause suggested by Lord Clarendon, which would have allowed persons that did not conform to the Church to meet for religious worship, provided they did not disturb the public peace; its whole object is to make the Church itself wide enough to comprehend those Presbyterians who had no objection to a moderate Episcopacy, but who were troubled by the want of discipline in the English Establishment, by the exorbitant and autocratic powers of the bishops, and by the “ceremonies.”

1. It declares that no one shall be compelled to kneel at the reception of the Lord’s Supper; or to bow at the name of Jesus; or to use the cross in baptism; or to wear the surplice in ordinary parish churches.¹⁴

¹¹ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 110.

¹³ *Ibid.*, i. (2), 114.

¹² *Ibid.*, i. (2), 111.

¹⁴ Kennet, 289–293, viii.

2. It announces that a Royal Commission, consisting of an equal number of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, shall revise the Liturgy. The Commissioners are to be directed to make any alterations in the Prayer-Book that may seem necessary, and also to prepare additional and alternative forms of service; these are to be, as far as possible, in the language of Holy Scripture. Meanwhile the King requests that all ministers shall use as much of the unrevised Prayer-Book as their consciences will permit.¹⁵

3. It also promises that suffragan bishops shall be appointed in every diocese; ¹⁶ and, without accepting the whole of Ussher's scheme, gives an assurance that the bishops shall neither ordain nor exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction without the *advice* and assistance of the Presbytery. ¹⁷ Monthly meetings are conceded to the clergy of each rural deanery, though the powers which the meetings are to exercise are undefined. ¹⁸ No person is to be confirmed without the *consent* of the minister of the place to which he belongs. And no person is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper till he has made a credible profession of his faith and has promised to obey the will of God. ¹⁹

In fact, the Declaration follows very closely the Presbyterian proposals made in the summer as the result of the meetings held in Sion College, and in some sections it reproduces the very language in which the Presbyterians had stated their wishes. ²⁰

IV

It was a critical hour in the history, not only of Presbyterian Puritanism, but of the religious and political life of the whole nation. It seemed as if the Established Church was now likely, and indeed certain, to include the great Presbyterian party as well as the Episcopalians—the party which had beheaded Laud, as well as the party which revered Laud as a martyr and a saint. Reynolds was offered the bishopric of Norwich, and accepted it on the understanding that the King's Declaration was to be made the basis of the future discipline of the national Church. Baxter was offered the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ii.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, iii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iv.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, v.

²⁰ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 107, and 105.

bishopric of Hereford ; but before he accepted it he wanted to see the Declaration made into an Act of Parliament ; and he also thought that he would be more able to persuade scrupulous Puritans to conform, if he remained plain Richard Baxter than if he became Lord Bishop of Hereford. He was quite ready, however, to recommend other men for bishoprics, though he would not take one himself. The bishopric of Carlisle was kept open for Gilpin ; Lichfield was offered to Calamy. Bates, Manton, and Bowles were offered the deaneries of Lichfield, Rochester, and York.²¹

But there was a general conviction among the Presbyterians that before accepting the dignities which were offered them it would be wise to wait till the Declaration of Indulgence had been confirmed by Parliament. Parliament, however, seemed to be in the mood to confirm it. On November 9 both Houses thanked the King for his endeavours to restore peace to the Church. A week later (November 16), a deputation from the ministers of London appeared at Whitehall with a loyal and grateful address.²²

Suddenly the sky was overcast. On November 28 Sir Matthew Hale introduced a Bill into the House of Commons for giving the King's Indulgence the force of law. The technical objections against turning a document of that kind into an Act of Parliament might easily have been overcome ; and as Parliament had already thanked the King for the Declaration, it might have been expected that the Bill would pass without difficulty. But some speakers, who professed to approve of the Declaration, maintained that the whole proceeding was contrary to precedent ; that it was contrary to the intention and wish of the King that Parliament should take action in the business ; that the Bill would be regarded with discontent by the Roman Catholics. Morrice, who was one of the Secretaries of State, advised that the Bill should not pass. The Bill was lost by 157 to 183 votes.²³

It may be assumed that the King did not want the Declaration to become law. If the court had wanted the Bill to pass, a Secretary of State would not have spoken against it. The

²¹ Baxter. *Life*, i. (2), 118-127.

²² *Ibid.*, i. (2), 129.

²³ *Parliamentary History*, xxiii. 27-30. The vote of thanks was passed *nem. con.* ; but even at that stage some speakers drew a distinction between a declaration and a law.

surprising thing is that in a Parliament largely consisting of Presbyterians even the opposition of the King could have destroyed the measure.

V

What were the reasons for this sudden change in the royal policy ? At the end of October the King issued his Declaration ; at the end of November, when it was proposed to embody it in an Act of Parliament, the King opposed the measure and defeated it. The simplest explanation is suggested by the King's duplicity ; and it is possible that this may be the true one. Charles may never have meant that the Declaration should take effect. He wanted to keep the Presbyterians quiet by exciting their hopes of comprehension ; but he may have had no intention, no wish, that their hopes should be satisfied. But there are two considerations which may throw some light on this transaction, and on the whole policy represented by the Act of Uniformity which passed a few months later.

1. Charles wanted to tolerate the Romanists. His mother was a Romanist. His wife was a Romanist. He had lived very much among Romanists while in exile ; and they had shown him much more consideration than the Protestants. Among the Romanists of England there was a great deal of zealous loyalty, which if he could retain might some day be of use to him. He was relying on the French King for effective support in possible troubles with his Parliament ;²⁴ and that support would have to be purchased by proofs of his earnest desire to tolerate Romanism. About Charles's own religious faith it is not easy to speak seriously ; but if there was anything he preferred to the release from the restraints of virtue which he thought he found in infidelity, it was the easy mode of making compensation for vice which he thought he found in the Roman superstition.²⁵

²⁴ If Parliament refused supplies, he would obtain money from Louis. A definite promise to this effect was made by Villaret in a letter to the Chancellor. "The King of England may be sure of 1,800,000 French livres, or two millions, for these two or three years, and the King [Louis] would do more if the condition of his affairs would permit it." Clarendon, *State Papers*, iii. *App.*, xii.

²⁵ "His Religion was *Deism*, or rather that which is called so ; and if in his *Exile*, or at his Death, he went into that of Rome ; the first

If it had been clear that the Presbyterians, in return for the concessions which he made to them, would have consented to the toleration of the Romish worship, it is very possible that Charles would have allowed Parliament to legalise the Declaration of Indulgence ; but Baxter's protest at Worcester House against the additional clause, which would have covered Romanists as well as Independents and Anabaptists, showed the King that the Presbyterians were willing to risk all their own hopes rather than grant toleration to the Papists. This may have led to the change in the King's policy. For if once the Presbyterians were included in the Church, the Romanists could expect no relaxation of the penal statutes. But if the Presbyterians were dependent for the exercise of their ministry on the toleration of other forms of worship than those provided for in the national Establishment, it might be possible, sooner or later, to extend to the Romanists the liberty which the Presbyterians were certain to demand for themselves. The larger and the more powerful were the religious communities excluded from the national Establishment, the more imperative would be the necessity for a general toleration.

2. Charles cared a great deal for the royal prerogative. He had none of his father's illusions about the divine right of kings ; but he knew what large and undefined powers had been exercised by his predecessors, and he was not willing that his own authority should be less than theirs. Like all the Stuarts, he hated the limitations imposed by Parliament on the royal will. The lesson which had been given to English kings by the execution at Whitehall had been deeply impressed upon him during his exile, and his policy in defending the prerogative was very different from his father's ; but he was hardly less resolved to assert what he regarded as the ancient rights and powers of the Crown. Under Elizabeth one of the most remarkable and effective of the royal prerogatives consisted in the authority exercised by the Crown over the religious affairs of the nation. The great Queen resented any interference of Parliament with this high province of the national life. James I. and Charles I. assumed similar powers ;

was to be imputed to a Complaisance for the Company he was then oblig'd to keep, and the last to a lazy Diffidence in all other Religions, upon a Review of his past Life, and the near approach of an uncertain State." Welwood, *Memoirs* (1700), 148-149.

Charles II. wanted to assume them too, and for very substantial reasons. If the Presbyterians were compelled to rely on the King's indulgence, for freedom to maintain the Presbyterian worship, a large and powerful body of the people would be absolutely dependent upon him, and this dependence would add enormously to the power of the Crown. It might also add to the wealth of the Crown. The wealthy Presbyterian merchants of London might be willing from time to time to pay for renewed Acts of Indulgence with heavy subsidies. If the Presbyterian ministers remained in the Church, they and their adherents might be willing to purchase relaxation of the terms imposed by an Act of Uniformity on the clergy ; if they left the Church, they and their adherents might be willing to purchase exemptions from the penalties for celebrating an unauthorised worship. To have permitted Sir Matthew Hale's Bill to pass would have closed what might prove a source of large revenues to the Crown.

Perhaps, too, Charles may have hoped that the Presbyterians, who had been the firm champions of Parliament against the royal prerogative, might learn to regard the prerogative with greater favour if Parliament refused them the indulgence which had been offered them by the Crown.

Whatever may have been the objects of the King in inducing Parliament to reject the Bill, it is certain that the Bill was rejected through the King's influence.

VI

One important ecclesiastical measure was passed by this Parliament. All the clergy that had been ejected from their livings since the outbreak of the Civil War were restored, and the actual incumbents had to give place to them. All that had been presented to livings by lawful patrons since the outbreak of the Civil War were put into possession, and the actual incumbents had to give place to them. Some noble and saintly men had been ejected during those stormy years for refusing the Solemn League and Covenant, some for loyalty to the King and antagonism to the existing ecclesiastical authorities, some for continuing to celebrate public worship according to the Book of Common Prayer ; but many had been ejected because of their incompetency, their immorality,

and their irreligion. Good and bad were restored together in 1660.²⁶

The Parliament—the Convention Parliament, as it was called—was dissolved on December 29, 1660. It was one of the weakest and ignoblest Parliaments that ever sat in England. It had great and unexampled opportunities of rendering service to the nation, and it was wholly destitute either of the sense or the courage to use them.

NOTE A

Ussher's Model of Church Government

On March 12, 1640-1, the House of Lords appointed a Committee, consisting of ten earls, ten bishops, and ten barons, to report on the innovations recently introduced into the Church. They entrusted to a sub-committee, including Ussher, then Archbishop of Armagh, the task of devising a scheme of church government that might reconcile as far as possible the conflicting principles of church government held by Episcopalians and Presbyterians respectively. Ussher's scheme was offered as an alternative to one proposed by Williams, the Bishop of Lincoln.

The Archbishop begins by claiming for Presbyters their rightful place in the organisation of the Church. Their duty, he asserts, is not only "to minister the doctrine and sacraments," but also "to rule the congregation of God." At Ephesus, he points out, there were many Elders who ruled in common, under the headship of a President—"the Angel of the Church of Ephesus,"—and he quotes other precedents from primitive usage to sustain his contention. "In the Church of England," he admits, "this kind of Presbyterian government hath been long disused: but the restraint of the exercise of that right proceeds only from custom. It would be easy to accord synodical conventions of the pastors of every parish with the presidency of the bishops of each diocese and parish."

He then suggests the following methods of accommodating the two systems:—

(1) In each parish the pastor, churchwardens, and sidesmen, week by week, are to take notice of those who live scandalously, and are to admonish the offenders. If reproof is in vain, they are to present the guilty person to a monthly synod; and meanwhile he is to be debarred by the pastor from access to the Lord's Table.

²⁶ For the scandals so occasioned, see Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 146-147.

A system of parochial government is to take the place of the *Church Session*.

(2) The number of suffragans is to be increased, so that there shall be one in each rural deanery. In each a monthly meeting is to be held of all pastors within the precincts, to deal with impenitent persons presented to them, with the doctrine and conversation of parochial ministers, and with charges of heresy or schism.

This monthly synod is to correspond to the *Presbytery*.

(3) Once or twice a year a Diocesan Synod is to assemble, including all suffragans and all pastors (or a number selected out of each deanery) with whose consent the Bishop (or Superintendent) is "to conclude all things." This Synod is to deal with matters of greater moment, and to consider and revise the proceedings of the monthly meetings.

This Diocesan Synod is to correspond to the *Provincial Synod*.

(4) A Provincial Synod, including all bishops, all suffragans, and elected clergy from each diocese, with the Primate of the Province as Moderator, is to meet every third year. And at due intervals of time a National Synod is to be convened, in which both the Primates and both the Provincial Synods shall sit together, serving as a National Council, to receive appeals from inferior synods, to examine their acts, and to consider matters concerning the ecclesiastical constitution.

It was an ingenious scheme. But, like many other ingenious schemes, it had one serious defect: it did not satisfy even those whom it was meant to reconcile. The Independents, the Baptists, and all the other sects of varied types, were not in question. It was for the Presbyterians, and for them alone. And if it did not offer them terms on which they might agree with the Established Church, the plan was simply a piece of waste-paper. But the Presbyterian did not find in the clauses of the model what he hoped for. The scheme asserted the common responsibility of Presbyters: it was silent as to their equality. It was studiously vague in its statement of the restriction to be placed on Episcopal authority. While it provided that the bishop should "conclude all things" with the "consent" of the diocesan synod, it did not specify exactly what it meant by the phrase or by the word. It left it uncertain whether the bishop could ordain, present, or deprive, without the express concurrence of the synod. Above all, it was silent as to the validity of Presbyterian orders. These things were matters of moment; and it had no clear word to say about any of them. What the Presbyterian looked for was not the constitutional framework, but the spirit that the constitution embodied, the principles on which it was fashioned. And in the model of the Archbishop there was little to give him any real safeguard against the survival of Episcopal autocracy. Men like Baxter and his friends might accept the scheme: because it gave them, not all they wished for, but as much as they could hope for;

and their acceptance of it as a plan of church government involved concessions in ritual and in doctrine.

And if the plan was unsatisfactory and inadequate in the judgment of rigid Presbyterians, "it was," in the eyes of equally rigid churchmen, "little better than a disguised presbytery, and a real subversion of the Anglican hierarchy" (Hallam, *Const. Hist.*, ii. 318).

CHAPTER II

THE ACT OF UNIFORMITY

VENNER'S INSURRECTION—REPRESSIVE MEASURES—REACTIONARY LEGISLATION—BISHOPS REGAIN THEIR SEATS IN PARLIAMENT—CORPORATION ACT—ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS RESTORED—PRAYER-BOOK REVISED BY CONVOCATION—ACT OF UNIFORMITY—ITS PROVISIONS AND PENALTIES—DAY APPOINTED FOR SUBMISSION.

I

THE year 1660 closed ominously ; the year 1661 opened with menacing storm. On January 6 there was a mad outbreak in London of the Fifth Monarchy men—Venner's insurrection.¹ The Congregationalists, the Baptists, and the Quakers declared their loyalty to the Crown, and their abhorrence of the fanaticism which had occasioned the alarm ; but the insurrection was made the occasion of repressive ecclesiastical measures. Indeed, four days after the outbreak, an order in Council was issued forbidding meetings of Baptists, Quakers, and Sectaries in large numbers, and at unusual times, and placing other restrictions upon sectarian worship. Eight days later, a proclamation was issued declaring all meetings seditious which were not held in parochial churches or chapels, or in private houses by the persons living in them.² Men were flung into prison by hundreds ; in Newgate alone there are said to have been four hundred Quakers.

II

A new Parliament met on May 8, 1661. The House of Commons was a very different House from that which had

¹ Clarendon, *Life*, i. 404-406. Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. 186-188, and *notes*. And see *Secret History of the Court and Reign of Charles II.*, i. 346-347.

² January 2 and 10, 1660-1. Kennet, 352, 357-358.

invited the King back in the early summer of 1660. When the Parliament of 1660 was elected, the supreme power was in the hands of the Presbyterians; and though they did not show themselves very skilful in managing the elections, their authority in many of the constituencies was very great. Nor were the electors free to choose what members they liked. Every man that had been in arms against the Parliament was legally disqualified from serving; and the disqualification had its effect, although it was not very vigorously pressed.³ But the House which met at the beginning of May, 1661, was elected when the nation was intoxicated with the loyalty created by the King's return; and it was elected under the management of Clarendon, who took good care to fill it with men zealous for Church and King. Only about fifty Presbyterians found seats.

The House was in hot haste to restore to the Episcopalians all their lost splendour and power.

1. Charles I. had given the royal assent to a Bill excluding the bishops from the House of Lords; a Bill for repealing the Act which excluded them was introduced into the House of Commons by a gentleman "who had been always taken to be of a Presbyterian family," and it passed without discussion. In the Lords it was delayed for a time by the influence of the King, who thought that the measure would offend the Romanists; but Clarendon insisted that the Bill must pass, and the King yielded.⁴

2. The House also passed a Bill for regulating Municipal Corporations. The Bill required that all Mayors, Recorders, Bailiffs, Aldermen, Town Councillors, and other municipal authorities (*a*) should take the Oath of Supremacy; (*b*) should swear that it is not lawful, under any pretence, to take arms against the King; and (*c*) should swear that the Solemn League and Covenant was illegal. It was also required (*d*) that within a year before appointment they should have received the Lord's Supper according to the ritual of the Church of England. The Bill met with some resistance from

³ Clarendon, *Life*, i. 408. "But the spirit of the time had of itself elected many members, notwithstanding the injunctions sent out with the Writs, and expressly contrary to such [injunctions], of a very different ally."

⁴ 13 Car. II. cap. 2. Clarendon, *Life*, i. 529-532.

the Lords, but became law before the end of the year.⁵ The effect of this measure was not merely to exclude Nonconformists from all municipal offices. The Parliamentary representatives of some boroughs were elected by the Corporation; and in these boroughs the Corporation Act placed the Parliamentary elections wholly in the hands of members of the English Church.⁶

3. The House also restored the Ecclesiastical Courts which had been abolished by an Act which received the assent of Charles I. It had the sense, however, not to restore the Court of High Commission or the *ex-officio* oath.⁷

4. Even these achievements did not exhaust the religious zeal of the new Parliament. On June 29, 1661, a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons enforcing Uniformity of religious worship throughout England and Wales. The Book of Common Prayer was undergoing revision; what the revised Book might be the House did not know; whatever it might be, the House was resolved to compel all the ministers of the Established Church to use it, and to forbid all congregations that objected to it to worship God in any other way.

III

But as the revised Book of Common Prayer was to be the schedule of the "Bill for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of the Sacraments," it was impossible that the Bill should become law until the revision was completed.

In the Declaration of Indulgence Charles had promised that the Prayer-Book should be revised by a Commission representing "both persuasions"—Episcopalians and Presbyterians—which was to have power to prepare additional or alternative services. The Commission was duly appointed. It consisted of twelve bishops with nine "assistants," and of

⁵ 13 Car. II. stat. 2, cap. 1. In the House of Commons the motion to commit the Bill was carried by a majority of 49—185 to 136. C. J. (June 20, 1661), viii. 276. The final division was 182 to 77, *ibid.* (July 5, 1661), viii. 297.

⁶ Hallam, *Const. Hist.*, ii. 328. The Act was repealed in 1828, but a yearly Act of Indemnity relieving dissenters from the penalties both of the Corporation Act and of the Test Act began to be passed in 1727.

⁷ 13 Car. II. cap. 12, §§ 2, 4. The validity of the canons of 1640 was not recognised, *ibid.*, § 5.

twelve eminent Presbyterian divines with nine "assistants." No Independent or Baptist had a place on the Commission. Among the Presbyterians, Reynolds, Bishop of Norwich, Baxter, Calamy, Manton, Wallis, Conant, and Tuckney were the most distinguished; Lightfoot and Bates were among their "assistants."⁸

The meetings of the Commission were held in the Bishop of London's rooms at the Savoy; and the first meeting was held on April 15, (1661). The Bishop of London—Sheldon—shared with Hinchman, Bishop of Salisbury, and Morley, Bishop of Worcester, the management of the business on the Episcopalian side, though Sheldon was rarely present and Morley was the chief speaker. Baxter and Calamy were the leaders of the Presbyterians. It soon became apparent that the bishops were resolved to make no concessions, and on July 25, when the time for which the Commission had been appointed expired, nothing had been concluded.⁹

As the Savoy Conference had failed to agree on a revised Prayer-Book, the business of revision was taken up by Convocation at the command of the King, and the royal letter required "that all proposed alterations should be exhibited and presented for his majesty's further allowance and confirmation."¹⁰

Several of the bishops had probably gone over the Book before Convocation met, and the revision was finished in a month. A few additional prayers were inserted, the most remarkable being the General Thanksgiving written by the Presbyterian bishop, Dr. Reynolds, and the Prayer for all Sorts and Conditions of Men, written by Dr. Gunning. About six hundred slight alterations were made in the Book, and a few of these were concessions—but very worthless concessions—to the Presbyterians. Baxter maintained that the altera-

⁸ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 170. The assistants were to act in place of members who might be prevented from attending by age, infirmity, and other impediments.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i. (2), 171-241.

¹⁰ The King's letter was addressed to the Convocation of Canterbury. "Letters to the same purpose were sent to the Archbishop of York, to be communicated to the clergy of his province, who for the greater expedition sent proxies with procuratorial letters to those of Canterbury, and obliged themselves to abide by their votes under forfeiture of their goods and chattels." Neal, iv. 306. Kennet, 564-565, 573-574, 584-586. And for a full account of the proceedings, see Cardwell, *Conferences*, 369-391

tions made the Prayer-Book more objectionable than it had been before it was revised.¹¹

IV

The Bill for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of Sacraments was read a third time in the Commons on July 9, 1661, nearly six months before the Book of Common Prayer, the use of which the Bill was intended to enforce, had been revised by Convocation. It went up to the Lords on the following day, but was not read the first time till January 14, 1661-2. On the 28th of January the Commons sent a message to the other House urging their lordships to press forward the Bill with what "convenient expedition" might be possible.¹² On February 13, the Earl of Dorset reported, "That the Committee for the Bill for Uniformity of Worship have met oftentimes, and expected a *Book* of Uniformity to be brought in; but, that not being done, their Lordships have not made any progress therein." The Committee therefore wished to learn whether it was the pleasure of the House that they should "proceed upon the Book brought from the House of Commons, or stay until the other Book be brought in."¹³ Before their lordships passed a Bill compelling the English nation to accept a form of public worship, they thought it only decent to have the form in their hands.

Twelve days later the Lord Chancellor delivered to the House a message from the King. Charles informed the Lords that he had granted his commission under the great seal to several bishops and other divines "to review the Book of Common Prayer, and to prepare such Alterations and Additions as they thought fit to offer"; that he had afterwards authorised the Presidents, Bishops, and Clergy of the Convocations of Canterbury and York to do the same work, and also to—

"review . . . the Book of the Form and Manner of making and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons" [that the work

¹¹ "Care was taken that nothing should be altered, so as it had been moved by the Presbyterians; for it was resolved to gratify them in nothing." Burnet, i. 333. Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 276.

¹² L. J. (Jan. 14 and 28, 1661-2), xi. 364, 372. C. J. (Jan. 28, 1661-2), viii. 352.

¹³ L. J. (Feb. 13, 1661-2), xi. 383.

had been done, and the revised Book submitted to him]; "all which his Majesty having duly considered, doth, with the Advice of his Council, fully approve and allow the same; and doth recommend it to the House of Peers that the said Books of Common Prayer and of the Form of Ordination and Consecration of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, with those Alterations and Additions . . . be the Book which in and by the intended Act of Uniformity, shall be appointed to be used."¹⁴

The Commons were still impatient; early in March the King commanded the members to come to him at Whitehall, and complained that after being reproached as a Papist abroad he was suspected of being a Presbyterian at home. He assured them that he was as zealous for Uniformity as any member of the House, and begged them to trust him to get the Act carried "with all convenient speed."¹⁵

The Lords read the amendments made by Convocation in the Prayer-Book, and proposed some further "emendations or alterations" of their own, which Convocation accepted. The Bill was read a third time on April 9, and was then as amended referred to the Commons.¹⁶ In the Commons it was resolved that there should be no debate on "the amendments made by the Convocation in the Book of Common Prayer and sent down by the Lords to this House." This was carried by 96 to 90; but the question being put, "That the amendments made by the Convocation and sent down by the Lords to this House *might*, by the order of this House, have been debated," was resolved in the affirmative, apparently without a division. The House, though it did not want to exercise its right to revise the Prayer-Book, was careful to assert it.¹⁷

In discussing the amended Bill the Commons were more bitter than the Lords in their hatred of the Presbyterians, and more relentless in their determination to show the Presbyterian clergy no mercy. The Lords had inserted one amendment dispensing with the sign of the cross and with the surplice; and another which secured for the clergy who declined to conform an allowance of one-fifth of the revenues of their

¹⁴ L. J. (Feb. 25, 1661-2), xi. 393.

¹⁵ Clarendon, *Life*, i. 552. C. J. (March 3, 1661-2), viii. 377.

¹⁶ L. J. (March 13, 15, 17, 1661-2; Ap. 7, 1662), xi. 406, 408, 409, 423.

¹⁷ C. J. (Ap. 16, 1662), viii. 408.

livings. In the Commons both amendments were rejected.¹⁸ Additions were inserted in the Bill which made its operation more stringent.¹⁹ On May 19 the Bill received the royal assent as *An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers, and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies ; and for establishing the Form of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in the Church of England.*²⁰

V

The preamble of the Act refers to the Act passed in the first year of Elizabeth, to secure "uniformity of common Prayer and Service in the Church and administration of the Sacraments," which is described as "very comfortable to all good people desirous to live in Christian conversation, and most profitable to the estate of this realm."

"And yet this notwithstanding, a great Number of People in divers Parts of this Realm, following their own Sensuality, and living without Knowledge and due Fear of God, do wilfully and schismatically abstain and refuse to come to their Parish Churches, and other publick Places where Common Prayer, Administration of the Sacraments, and Preaching of the Word of God is used upon the *Sundays* and other Days ordained and appointed to be kept and observed as Holy-days."

This remarkable description of Nonconformists remains unchanged in the Statute Book ; it was not touched by the Toleration Act, or by any subsequent measure for the extension of religious liberty.

¹⁸ "A severity neither practised by Queen Elizabeth in the enacting her liturgy, nor by Cromwell in ejecting the royalists, in both which a fifth part of the benefice was reserved for their subsistence." Burnet, i. 335.

¹⁹ The Lords would have exempted schoolmasters, tutors, and teachers, from the provisions of the Act ; they would have applied the disabling clause only to livings with cure ; they would not have insisted on the use of the surplice, or on the sign of the cross in baptism. The Commons resisted and rejected all these efforts for compromise. L. J. (May 7 and 8, 1662), xi. 446-450, 450-457. C. J. (Ap. 19, 21, 22 and 26, 1662), viii. 410-412, 414.

²⁰ 13 and 14 Car. II. cap. 4.

The Act then recites what had been done for the revision of the Book of Common Prayer,²¹ and declares that—

“ In regard that nothing conduceth more to the Settling of the Peace of this Nation (which is desired of all good Men) nor to the Honour of our Religion, and the Propagation thereof, than an universal Agreement in the Publick Worship of Almighty God ; and to the Intent *that every Person within this Realm may certainly know the Rule to which he is to conform in Public Worship, and Administration of the Sacraments, . . .* Be it enacted . . . that all and singular Ministers in any Cathedral, Collegiate, or Parish Church or Chapel, or other Place of Public Worship within this realm of *England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed*, shall be bound to say and use the Morning-Prayer, Evening-Prayer, Celebration and Administration of both the Sacraments, and all other the Publick and Common-Prayer, in such Order and Form as is mentioned in the said Book annexed and joined to this present Act.”²²

The Act of Uniformity was, therefore, intended to regulate all public worship in England, and to secure perfect uniformity in the public religious services of all Englishmen. It excluded every kind of public worship not provided for in the Prayer-Book. It was passed “ to the intent that every person in this realm may certainly know the rule to which he is to conform in public worship.” This clause of the Act, like the passage quoted from the preamble, is still a part of the Statute Law of England.

“ Every Parson, Vicar, or other Minister whatsoever,” holding any church benefice or promotion, is required on or before “ the feast of St. Bartholomew ” (August 24, 1662) to read the morning and evening prayer in his church,²³ and to make the following declaration in the presence of his congregation :—

“ I, A B, do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Use of the Church of England, together with the

²¹ The Book of Common Prayer, and the Book containing the forms for the ordination and consecration of bishops, priests, and deacons, are, however, always described as two different books ; and both of them are enforced by the Act.

²² 13 and 14 Car. II., cap. 4, § 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, § 3.

Psalter or Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches; and the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”²⁴

Every clergyman failing to read the prayers and make the Declaration on or before the 24th of August, is to lose “all his spiritual promotions,”—his bishopric, deanery, canonry, arch-deaconry, or living. A month’s grace is to be allowed at the discretion of the bishop, in cases when compliance has been prevented by some “lawful impediment.”²⁵

Every clergyman that shall hereafter be appointed to any benefice is to be required to make the same Declaration within two months after he is in possession of his living.²⁶

Every holder of any ecclesiastical dignity or living, and every curate, every master, fellow, chaplain, and tutor of any college, every professor and reader in either of the universities, “every schoolmaster keeping any publick or private school, and every person instructing or teaching any youth in any house or private family,” is required to subscribe the following Declaration:—

“I, A. B., do declare, That it is not lawful, upon any Pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King: and that I do abhor that traitorous Position of taking Arms by his Authority against his Person, or against those that are commissioned by him; and that I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England as it is now by Law established: and I do declare, that I do hold, there lies no Obligation upon me or on any other Person, from the Oath commonly called, The Solemn League and Covenant, to endeavour any Change or Alteration of Government either in Church or State; and that the same was in itself an unlawful

²⁴ *Ibid.*, § 4. In 1865 an Act (28 and 29 Vict. cap. 122) was passed “to amend the Law as to the Subscriptions and Declarations to be made and Oaths to be taken by the clergy.” At ordination the following Declaration is required: “I assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the Doctrine of the United Church of England and Ireland, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the Form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except as shall be ordered by lawful authority.” An incumbent on appointment to a benefice, or a curate on being licensed, is required on the first Lord’s Day next ensuing, or on such other Lord’s Day as the Ordinary may appoint and allow, to read in the presence of the congregation the Thirty-nine Articles and to make the same declaration.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, § 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, § 6.

Oath, and imposed upon the Subjects of this Realm against the known Laws and Liberties of this Kingdom.”²⁷

Refusal to make this Declaration was to be punished by forfeiture of ecclesiastical benefices, and of college or university office.²⁸ Schoolmasters, or other teachers, failing to obtain a licence to teach from the bishop—“for which he shall pay twelve pence only”—and to make the Declaration, are to be imprisoned for three months for the first offence, and to pay a fine of five pounds in addition to three months’ imprisonment for the second. It was the zeal of the Commons that imposed this Declaration on schoolmasters, university professors, tutors, and other college authorities.²⁹

As most persons who had taken the Solemn League and Covenant were likely to be dead within the course of twenty years, the clause abjuring it was to be omitted after 1682.³⁰

Another clause deprives of their livings all clergymen that have not received Episcopal ordination, unless they receive it before St. Bartholomew’s Day, 1662; and from that date no person is to be admitted to any ecclesiastical promotion or dignity³¹—“*nor shall presume to consecrate and administer the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper before such time as he shall be ordained Priest according to the Form and Manner in and by the said Book prescribed, unless he have formerly been made Priest by Episcopal Ordination; upon pain to forfeit for every Offence the Sum of one hundred pounds.*”³²

The words in italics accomplished two purposes: (1) They prevented any clergyman from being appointed to a living until he had been ordained as a priest: (2) They prevented any minister who had not been ordained as a priest from administering the Lord’s Supper. Any minister—not a priest—administering the Lord’s Supper in a private house, or in a “conventicle,” was liable to the fine.

All “lecturers”—that is, clergymen appointed to preach,

²⁷ 13 and 14 Car. II., cap. 4, §§ 8, 9. It is with special reference to this part of the Act that Clarendon says: “Every man according to his passion thought of adding something to it [the Bill as it came down from the House of Lords], that might make it more grievous to somebody whom he did not love.” *Life*, i. 557.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, § 10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, § 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, § 12.

³¹ Till this Act passed, the law of the Church of England did not require that the clergy should have received Episcopal ordination.

³² *Ibid.*, §§ 13, 14.

but without charge of a parish—are required to read the Prayers before preaching, and to declare their “assent and consent” to everything contained in the Prayer-Book. They are to do this every month as long as they hold their lectureship. Failure to comply with the law is to be punished with three months’ imprisonment in a common gaol for every sermon.³³ From the time of Elizabeth to the outbreak of the Civil War, the Puritan clergy who had difficulties about conformity had evaded the authority of the bishops and of the ecclesiastical courts by holding “lectureships” instead of parish livings: they preached—often to great congregations—but were not required to use the services of the Prayer-Book; and by the preaching of the lecturers Puritanism had retained much of its strength in the worst times. Laud had done his best to suppress them; under the Act of Uniformity they were suppressed altogether.

The Act required the submission of the clergy on or before St. Bartholomew’s Day—August 24. As the tithes were commonly due at Michaelmas, the clergy that refused to conform would lose a year’s income.³⁴

³³ *Ibid.*, §§ 19, 21.

³⁴ Burnet (i. 335–336) says that this was done with intention.

CHAPTER III

THE EJECTION OF THE NONCONFORMIST CLERGY

BRIEF INTERVAL FOR DECISION—POSITION OF THE PRESBYTERIANS—
INDUCEMENTS TO CONFORM—THEIR DECISION—THE SETTLEMENT
DISASTROUS TO EVANGELICAL FAITH IN THE CHURCH—EJECTION
OF THE PRESBYTERIANS AND ITS AFTER-EFFECTS.

THE time within which the clergy had to make up their minds whether they would conform or not was very short—only three months; and it was shorter than it seemed. For copies of the revised Prayer-Book were hard to get. It was issued less than three weeks before August 24.¹ Some of the clergy who were willing to conform could get no sight of it till after the date for submission had passed by, and it was necessary to pass an Act in the following year to cover their default.²

That the Independents and the Baptists would have to surrender their livings was a matter of course; in the negotiations for comprehension that had taken place since Charles's return, it had been assumed that for them no place would be found in the national Church. But the Presbyterians had brought back the King, and they had confidently believed that the terms of conformity would be sufficiently relaxed to enable them to conform. Comparatively few of them believed that Presbyterianism was the only lawful polity of the church; but they accepted Presbyterianism, partly because it was the polity of most of the reformed Churches, and partly because it avoided both the tyranny of Episcopacy and the perilous freedom of the "Congregational way." Had the power of the bishops been lessened, there was nothing

¹ Burnet (i. 336) says "there were few books set out to sale when the day came." Kennet denies the statement: 837, *note*.

² L. J. (July 25 and 27, 1663), xi. 573, 579.

in the government of the English Church to compel them to leave it. Their objections were mainly to the Prayer-Book ritual. These objections varied with different men. Ceremonies and languages which some regarded as positively sinful, others regarded as simply inexpedient. Some men thought it unlawful to require all ministers of Christ to use ceremonies and language which they themselves could use without scruple. Some parts of the Book, however, were regarded by nearly the whole party with strong disapprobation.

But will they be loyal to conscience, and refuse to conform? If they conform, they will retain their parsonages and their stipends; some of them will have the chance of rich livings, of deaneries, of bishoprics. If they refuse to conform, they will be driven from their homes, and many of them will be plunged into poverty. If they conform—and when the devil pleaded this argument, he appeared as a very angel of light—they will remain with the men and women whom they have already taught to love and serve God, but who need their counsel, instruction, and warning to keep them in the way of righteousness; week by week they will know the blessedness and glory of pleading with men to submit to the august authority of God and to trust in His infinite love. If they refuse to conform, they will never more stand up in the pulpit, to console the sorrowful and the weary, to rejoice the hearts of saints by glowing words about the divine grace and about the glory, honour, and immortality which are the inheritance of the Church in Christ, or to warn the impenitent of judgment to come. They might have opportunities to speak to men in private on these great matters; but if they refuse to conform, their ministry will be over. For the Act of Uniformity silenced every preacher in England that refused to conform.

There were a few who bent to the storm; but there were fifteen hundred or two thousand who said: “We cannot so lie; no, not to save the homes of our wives and children; not to save ourselves from beggary; not to win deaneries and bishoprics;—no, nor even that we may still be able to bind up broken hearts, to sustain good men in righteousness, to rescue wicked men from sin and eternal death. First of all we must be honest men. God help us for the rest!”

Among those who came out there were crowds of Presbyterians—men like Baxter, Bates, and Calamy; and a large

number of Independents. Ivimey gives a list of nearly thirty Baptists who were among the ejected; but the list, as he himself suggests, is probably both incorrect and incomplete.³ It is probable that a very considerable number of Baptists occupied the pulpits of parish churches when Charles returned; but they were ejected by the Act of 1660.⁴ It is possible, however, that some of them were able to retain their positions till the great catastrophe came, and that then they were swept out of the Church with their brethren. Some distinguished names appear in Ivimey's list. John Tomber, of Leominster, Baxter's old opponent, and Henry Jessey—in some respects a still more eminent man—are among the most conspicuous.⁵

II

The ejectment was a great act of baseness. Charles was solemnly pledged to protect the men who gave him the throne, and his pledge imposed on the whole of the Royalist and Episcopalian party the most solemn obligations. It was a crime—less barbarous, less cruel, less tragic, than the massacre of the Huguenots in Paris ninety years before, but hardly less treacherous. There is, however, one great contrast between the French Bartholomew's Day and our own. The crime of the Guises almost crushed French Protestantism; and by crushing French Protestantism it rendered possible those enormous political and social wrongs which had to be swept away by the volcanic forces of the great Revolution. But the English ejectment was the salvation of the religious life of the nation and of its religious and civil liberties.

It is true that the ecclesiastical settlement under the Act of Uniformity was fatal to the evangelical element in the Establishment. The ascendancy of the Evangelical party in the first thirty or forty years of the nineteenth century was only temporary; and it was the result of the great evangelical revival which had been originated by Whitefield and the

³ Ivimey, *Baptists*, i. 328–329.

⁴ See pp. 403–404.

⁵ But it is possible that Jessey had to retire even before the Act of 1660, which was meant to dislodge the Baptists. Wilson (*Dissenting Churches*, i. 45) says that he was ejected and silenced in 1660. Cf. Palmer, *Nonconformists' Memorial*, i. 132.

Wesleys. The Evangelicals, even in the years of their greatest power, were an inconsiderable minority of the clergy; and the party was not sustained by that learning and intellectual vigour which it might have inherited, had the crime of 1662 never been consummated.

But it has not been sufficiently considered that if the very moderate demands of the Presbyterians had been conceded, the concessions would in all probability have been most disastrous to evangelical religion. The principal services contained in the Book of Common Prayer were originally drawn up when the nation was just emerging from the dark shadows of Romanism, and they are drawn in part from service-books which had been in use before the Reformation. They were intended to retain as large a number of Romanists as possible in the Establishment. They are constructed on a theory which connects human salvation with the Sacraments, instead of ascribing it to the infinite mercy of God, which through Christ has redeemed the human race from sin and eternal death—mercy which in the case of adults must be met by a personal faith, and by a personal faith which is manifested in a life of practical righteousness. The services are coherent from first to last. They require the clergy and adherents of the Establishment to give God thanks that infants are spiritually regenerated in baptism; and to give God thanks that all the baptized, if they have not been excommunicated and have not committed suicide, are received at death into everlasting rest and joy. No slight verbal changes, such as would have satisfied the moderate Presbyterians of 1662, could have changed the real character and genius of the English Prayer-Book. Had the Presbyterians remained in the Church, and used the book with the slight modifications which they demanded, their evangelical theology would gradually have been modified by the sacramentalism and sacerdotalism of the services. The free growth of their evangelical faith would have been hampered and restrained. When they were expelled from the Establishment, the true spirit and genius of their theology was liberated. The Church which they founded learned to abhor every sacerdotal pretension and every sacramental superstition. It was the salvation of Evangelicalism when the Evangelicals were ejected.

Further, the ejection of 1662 occasioned the rise of

religious communities which were certain to become too powerful to be refused toleration. When the Revolution came, twenty-six years later, their claims to freedom of worship could not be refused. If the great body of the Presbyterians had been included in the national Establishment, and the Baptists and Independents and the members of the Society of Friends had been left to fight the battle of freedom alone, the severity of the struggle would have been greatly intensified. From the hour when the fifteen hundred or two thousand were ejected, religious toleration became a political necessity.

CHAPTER IV

PERSECUTION AND THE FIRST INDULGENCE

SUFFERINGS AND LOSSES OF EJECTED MINISTERS AND THEIR CHURCHES—SERVICES CONTINUED IN SECRET—KING WILLING BUT UNABLE TO RELAX SEVERITY—LORD ROBERTS'S PROPOSALS—HOSTILITY OF PARLIAMENT TO COMPROMISE—CONVENTICLE ACT—ITS PROVISIONS AND PENALTIES—NONCONFORMIST MINISTERS DURING THE PLAGUE AND AFTER THE FIRE—FIVE MILE ACT—FRESH SCHEME OF COMPROMISE—PARLIAMENT STILL HOSTILE—PROCLAMATION AGAINST NONCONFORMITY—SECOND CONVENTICLE ACT—LESS STRINGENT, BUT MORE EFFECTIVE—SECRET TREATY WITH LOUIS—ATTACK ON THE DUTCH FLEET—DECLARATION OF INDULGENCE—ITS RECEPTION BY PRESBYTERIANS AND INDEPENDENTS—ITS LEGALITY CHALLENGED BY PARLIAMENT—ALDERMAN LOVE'S SPEECH—BILL TO RELIEVE PROTESTANT DISSENTERS—TEST ACT—DIRECTED AGAINST ROMAN CATHOLICS, BUT AFFECTS ALL NONCONFORMISTS—OTHER PROPOSALS AGAINST ROMANISTS AND THE DUKE OF YORK—BILL OF RELIEF PASSES BUT DISAPPEARS—RENEWED SEVERITY AGAINST ALL NONCONFORMISTS.

I

SOME of the ejected ministers, like John Owen, were fortunate enough to have private estates which enabled them, after the loss of their benefices, to live in ease and comfort; others, like John Howe, found a shelter in the homes of great Puritan families; others earned an honourable livelihood in various secular occupations; some were generously supported by members of their former congregations; very many suffered severe privations.¹

During the twenty-six years which passed between the Ejectment and the Revolution, all forms of Nonconformist worship were illegal; and, except during the brief periods covered by the "Indulgences," preachers and congregations were in danger of fine or imprisonment, or both. Non-

¹ See the elaborate details in Kennet, 888, foll., given to show that cases of hardship were rare. But his statements, as in Owen's case and John Howe's (*ibid.*, 911), are often inaccurate.

conformist historians acknowledge that "it is impossible to make an exact computation" of the sufferings endured for Nonconformity during these years of trouble;—"how many families were impoverished, and reduced to beggary; how many lives were lost in prisons and noisome jails; . . . how many industrious and laborious tradesmen were cut off from their trades; and their substance and household goods plundered by soldiers, or divided among idle and infamous informers."² One writer estimates that nearly eight thousand died in prison during the reign of Charles II.—their only crime being their Nonconformity,³—and that within three years Nonconformists lost, through their Nonconformity, not less than £2,000,000. A Mr. Jeremy White is reported to have collected a list of sixty thousand persons who suffered for dissent during the reigns of Charles II. and James II., five thousand of whom died in prison.⁴ It is evident that these figures are untrustworthy; but it is certain that the sufferings of the Nonconformists between the Restoration and the Revolution must have been severe; and it is also certain that they were sufficiently severe to diminish very seriously the number of those who openly rejected the discipline and ritual of the English Church.⁵

But ministers continued to preach, and congregations assembled to listen to them. There were parts of England where at times the magistrates were not disposed to enforce the law, and where popular sympathy sheltered those who violated it; and there were times when the fierce hatred with which the Nonconformists were generally regarded seems to have slumbered. But even when they were most hated, and when those who hated them were most vigilant, they still continued to meet. In the country, they held their illegal worship in the large kitchens and in the barns of solitary farm-houses, or in orchards, or in the neighbourhood of woods into which they fled, when surprised by the soldiers and the magistrates; in the towns, they met in private houses at night, and sometimes the prayers and the sermons lasted till dawn. The records of old church books are a blank between 1662 and 1672—the date of the first "Indulgence"; but there were

² Neal, v. 19.

³ Preface to Delaune's *Plea for the Nonconformists*, ii.

⁴ Neal, v. 19–20.

⁵ Kennet, 921 and 927.

many Churches that were not broken up, and as soon as the pressure of the persecuting laws was relaxed, they were ready to avail themselves of the brief months of freedom.

II

Charles was extremely anxious to have it believed that he had not forgotten the promises which he had made at Breda, and that he was doing his best to fulfil them. A few days after August 24, 1662, a petition signed by Calamy, Manton, and Bates, and by a large number of the London ministers, entreated him to take measures to enable them to continue in the ministry. Charles promised to comply with their prayers. A council was summoned, consisting of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London and Winchester, the Chief Justice, and other high dignitaries of state. The King told them of his promise, and asked "whether he could legally dispense with the observation of the Act for three months"; but they argued that he had no power to set aside an Act of Parliament, and that the ejected ministers must be left to their fate.⁶

But it was the policy of Charles to encourage the Non-conformists to rely on the prerogative for relief, and he was unwilling to lay it aside. On December 26 he issued a Declaration in which he affirmed that he was zealous to maintain the uniformity of the Church in discipline, ceremony, and government; that it was slanderous to charge him with relaxing the operation of the laws against the Papists; but that he intended to apply to Parliament in the next session to pass an Act that would enable him to exercise on behalf of tender consciences that dispensing power which he believed to be inherent in the Crown.⁷

In the speech from the throne at the opening of the next session of Parliament, the King again expressed his desire to relax the severity of the law. He referred to his Declaration, in which he said, "You see I am willing to set bounds to the hopes of some, and to the fears of others." He again asserted that he had no wish or intention "to favour Popery"; though

⁶ Baxter, *Life*, i. (2), 429. Clarendon, *Life*, i. 566-567, 568-570. Burnet, i. 349.

⁷ Kennet, 848-851. Burnet, i. 352-353.

there were "many of that profession" who had done good service to his father and to himself, and might "fairly hope for some part in that Indulgence I would willingly afford to others who differ from us." But any concession to Romanists, he saw, must be coupled with similar concessions to dissenting Protestants; and while asserting his "zeal for the Protestant religion," and his purpose to maintain "the uniformity of it as now established," and to keep the standard of it "free from all other mixtures," he went on to say,—“ Yet, if Dissenters will demean themselves peaceably and modestly under the Government, I could heartily wish I had such a power of indulgence, to use upon occasions, as might not needlessly force them out of the kingdom, or, staying there, give them cause to conspire against it.”⁸

On February 25, 1662-3, Lord Roberts submitted to the House of Peers the following proposal for an Act:—

“Whereas divers of His Majesty's Subjects, through Error of Judgment and misguided Consciences . . . do not conform themselves to the Order of Divine Worship and Service established by Law; and although His Majesty and both Houses of Parliament are fully satisfied that those Scruples of Conscience are ill-grounded, and that the Government of the Church with the Services thereof, as now established, is the best that is anywhere extant; . . . yet, notwithstanding that Clemency and Indulgence may in time wear out these Prejudices and reduce the Dissenters to the Unity of the Church; . . . and His Majesty being the best Judge when and to whom this Indulgence is to be dispensed. . . . Be it enacted . . . that the King's Majesty may . . . dispense with . . . “An Act for the Uniformity . . . (and with any other Laws or Statutes concerning the same or requiring Oaths or Subscriptions, or which do enjoin Conformity to the Order, Discipline, and Worship established in this Church) and the Penalties in the said Laws imposed . . . and may grant Licenses to such of His Majesty's Subjects of the Protestant Religion of whose inoffensive and peaceable Disposition he shall be persuaded, to enjoy the Use and Exercise of their Religion and Worship, though differing from the public rule. . . . No such indulgence . . . to extend to the tolerating . . . of the Popish or Roman Catholic religion in this realm.”⁹

This proposal, if accepted by Parliament, would have been inadequate for the King's purpose. It enabled him to lighten the grievances of Protestant dissenters, but left

⁸ L. J. (Feb. 18, 1662-3), xi. 478-479.

⁹ L. J., xi. 484.

him powerless to do anything for the Roman Catholics. But the Lords were unwilling to grant him even this amount of power, and struck out the clause in brackets, thereby restricting the operation of the Bill to breaches of the Act of Uniformity.¹⁰ The Bill was then sent to a committee of the House—and went no farther.

The House of Commons showed unmistakable hostility to any such scheme. In their reply to the speech from the throne they said :—

“(1) It will establish Schism by a law, and make the whole Government of the Church precarious, and the Censures of it of no Moment or Consideration at all. (2) It will no way become the Gravity or Wisdom of Parliament, to pass a Law at one Session for Uniformity, and at the next Session (the Reasons of Uniformity continuing still the same) to pass another Law to frustrate or weaken the execution of it. (3) It will expose your Majesty to the restless Importunity of every Sect or Opinion, and of every single Person also, who shall presume to dissent from the Church of England. (4) It will be a cause of increasing Sects and Sectaries . . . and in time, some prevalent Sect will at last contend for an Establishment, which, for ought can be foreseen, . . . may end in Popery. (5) It is a thing altogether without Precedent, and it will take away all means of convicting Recusants, and be inconsistent with the Methods and Proceedings of the Laws of England.”¹¹

III

Parliament and the Church were in no mood to relax the pressure of the persecuting laws. In 1664 a fresh blow was struck at the Nonconformists. Under an Act passed in the thirty-fifth year of Elizabeth, all persons present at any other service than that of the English Church incurred the penalty of imprisonment; and, if they did not make their submission within three months, they were liable to banishment from the kingdom.¹² Doubts had been raised whether this Act was still operative. In 1664 an Act was passed—the *Conventicle Act*—declaring it to be “very clear and evident” that the Act of Elizabeth was still in force and “ought to be put in due execution.” But to provide “further and more

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (March 5, 1662-3), xi. 489.

¹¹ C. J. (Feb. 27, 1662-3), viii. 442-443. Chandler, *Commons*, i. 62-63. Cobbett, *Parl. History*, iv. 262.

¹² 35 Eliz. cap. 1. See *ante*, pp. 165-166.

speedy remedies against the growing and dangerous practices of seditious sectaries and other disloyal persons," fresh legislation is declared to be necessary.¹³

The following are the principal provisions of the Act. Every person of sixteen years and upwards attending any Nonconformist service at which five or more persons are present, is liable to a fine of five pounds for the first offence, and, in default of payment, to imprisonment for three months.¹⁴ For the second offence there is to be a fine of ten pounds, or imprisonment for six months. For the third offence there is to be a fine of one hundred pounds, or, in case of default, transportation to one of his Majesty's foreign plantations for seven years.¹⁵

In the provision for giving effect to the sentence of transportation there is a curious and elaborate malignity. In the first place, the offender is not to be sent to Virginia or New England: the Nonconformists would have found some compensation for banishment, if they had been allowed to settle in any of the Puritan colonies on the other side of the Atlantic.¹⁶ In the second place, the cost of transporting them is to be obtained by distraining and selling the goods of the criminal: he is to bear the expense of his own banishment. In the third place, if the goods do not fetch enough to pay for the transportation of their owner, the sheriff is to contract with the master of a ship or a merchant "for the transporting of such offender at the best rate he can"; and the master of the ship or the merchant is to be authorised to detain and employ the offender as a labourer for five years; or he may transfer his right to any other person. This meant that if a Nonconformist who had been convicted of being present at a conventicle happened to be so poor that the sale of his goods did not yield enough to pay for transporting him, he was to be a slave for five years to any person who engaged to

¹³ 16 Car. II. cap. 4.

¹⁴ If the service was held in a private house, persons belonging to the household are not to be counted. A Nonconformist might have family prayers, with four of his friends present, without incurring the penalty of the Act; but if, in addition to his family and servants, *five* of his friends were present, he and his friends violated the law.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, §§ 1, 2, 3.

¹⁶ Even if they had been sent to Virginia, they could easily have found their way to Massachusetts or some other of the New England colonies.

convey him to a British colony. In the fourth place, if any person who had been sentenced to transportation escaped before the sentence was carried out, or if he returned before the end of seven years without his Majesty's licence, he was to suffer death as a felon.¹⁷

It had been usual for Puritan prisoners to meet together for religious worship in prison ; and sometimes a friend from outside was allowed to join them. Sometimes an imprisoned minister was allowed to leave gaol on the promise that he would return, and while he was out he conducted secret religious services with his congregation. The Conventicle Act inflicted a penalty of ten pounds on the gaoler who permitted any one "at large" to take part in the unlawful worship of his prisoners, or who permitted any of his prisoners to leave the gaol.¹⁸

Two classes of persons are to receive special treatment. (1) Peers of the realm are to pay ten pounds for the first offence against the Act, and twenty pounds for the second ; the fine is to be levied on their goods and chattels, if they refuse to pay. For the third, and every further offence, they are to be tried by their peers, and the penalty is left undefined. Their houses are not to be searched save under special conditions.¹⁹ (2) Persons that satisfy the magistrates that they have an income from land of five pounds a year, or personal estate to the value of fifty pounds, are not to be sent to the house of correction.²⁰

The Act was to continue in force for three years, and until the close of the first session of Parliament held after the expiration of the three years.²¹

IV

In 1665 London was filled with terror by the Plague. It made its appearance in the December of the preceding year, and during the spring and early summer the deaths gradually increased. In the first week of July they rose to 1,000 ; in one week in September to 10,000. The richer people fled into the country. Many of the clergy remained in their parishes, and showed great courage and zeal in caring for the sick and dying ; but some of them shared the general panic.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, §§ 4, 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, § 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, § 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, § 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, §§ 14, 19.

The ejected Nonconformists took possession of the vacant pulpits, and went from house to house to visit the people whose ministers had deserted them.²²

But these noble proofs of unselfish devotion did not touch the hearts of their enemies. While the Nonconformist clergy were imperilling their lives in London, Parliament, which, in consequence of the Plague, met at Oxford, was passing a fresh Act to harass and distress them.

The "Act for restraining Nonconformists from inhabiting Corporations"—commonly called the *Five Mile Act*—required all persons "in holy orders, or pretending to be in holy orders," who had not taken the oaths and made the declarations required in the Act of Uniformity, to take the following oath:—

"I, A B, do swear, That it is not lawful upon any Pretence whatsoever, to take Arms against the King; and that I do abhor that traitorous Position of taking Arms by his Authority against his Person, or against those that are commissioned by him, in Pursuance of such Commissions, and that I will not at any Time endeavour any alteration of Government, either in Church or State."²³

Every Nonconformist minister refusing to take this oath is forbidden to come, except on a journey, within *Five Miles* of any city or corporate town, or of any Parliamentary borough, or of any parish, town, or place in which he had formerly been "parson, vicar, curate, stipendiary, or lecturer," or had conducted any Nonconformist service. The penalty for violating the law is forty pounds.²⁴

Another section of the Act is intended to prevent Nonconformist ministers who may have scruples about taking the oath from earning their livelihood in almost the only way open to them. An ejected vicar or rector who hesitated to declare that "it is not lawful under any pretence whatsoever to take arms against the King," or who refused to swear that he would "not at any time endeavour any alteration of government either in Church or State," might find a modest home in some village more than five miles from his old parish, and from any city, or corporate town, or parliamentary borough, or from any place where he had conducted a Nonconformist

²² Baxter, *Life*, iii. 6; and Burnet, i. 411.

²³ 17 Car. II. cap. 2, § 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, § 3.

service; and to get an income, he might open a school for the children of the neighbouring gentry, or he might receive into his house a few of the children of his former congregation, or some young men who wished to be prepared for their studies in an English or foreign university: but the Act provided that unless he had taken the oath, and unless he frequented "divine service established by the laws of the Kingdom," and carried himself "reverently, decently and orderly there," he should be liable to a penalty of forty pounds.²⁵

In the following year (1666) a large part of London was destroyed by the Great Fire. Tens of thousands of unfortunate people were obliged to find what shelter they could among the ruins; but many of the clergy, whose churches and homes were destroyed, deserted them. Once more the ejected Nonconformists discharged the duties which their successors had forsaken. Temporary wooden buildings were constructed, or buildings that remained standing were hastily fitted up for public worship, and men like Jacomb, Annesley, Vincent, Owen, Goodwin, Nye, and Caryl, preached to large congregations.²⁶

V

The attempts to suppress the Nonconformists had failed; and after the fall of Clarendon in 1667 some of the advisers of the King, with the concurrence of the more moderate of the Episcopalian clergy, made a serious attempt to make room for the Presbyterians in the Establishment by relaxing the terms of conformity, and to grant "indulgence" to other orthodox Protestants.²⁷

The scheme, which was drawn up after conferences between Wilkins, the Bishop of Chester, and the Presbyterian leaders, was favoured by Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and Reynolds. It provided (1) that ministers who had been ordained by presbyters—not by bishops—might exercise their ministerial function in the English Church without admitting the invalidity

²⁵ *Ibid.*, § 4. "To deprive men of the means of subsistence implies more deliberate cruelty, though it does not excite so much horror as fire and faggots." *Secret History of the Reign of Charles II.*, ii. 171-172, note.

²⁶ Baxter, *Life*, iii. 39.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 62-78.

of the Presbyterian orders. A bishop was to lay his hands upon them, and to say such words as these—"Take thou [*legal*] authority to preach the Word of God, and administer the sacraments in any congregation of the Church of England, *when* thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereto."²⁸ (2) That clergymen and schoolmasters (after taking the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy) should be required to subscribe a declaration and promise to the following effect—"I, A B, do hereby profess and declare that I do approve the Doctrines, Worship, and Government established in the Church of England, as containing all things necessary to Salvation; and that I will not endeavour, by my self, or any other, directly or indirectly, to bring in any Doctrine contrary to that which is so established; and I do hereby promise, that I will continue in the Communion of the Church of England, and will not do anything to disturb the peace thereof." (3) That kneeling at the reception of the Lord's Supper, the use of the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus, should no longer be required. (4) That the Liturgy and Canons might be so revised as to remove Presbyterian objections. For example,—that lessons from the canonical Scriptures might be inserted in place of those from the Apocrypha; that parents might be allowed to make the promises required from godfathers and godmothers; that the clauses in the Baptismal Service affirming that spiritual regeneration is effected in baptism might be omitted; that the appeal in the Confirmation Service to the example of the apostles might also be omitted; that ministers should not be required to follow exactly the form for the Visitation of the Sick, or to give thanks in the Burial Service for the eternal salvation of every person they bury.

In the event of the Liturgy being so revised, every clergyman was to declare his belief in the lawfulness of using it, and to promise to read it at the appointed times.

Orthodox Protestants were to be at liberty to erect meeting-houses, and to worship in their own way on registering their names and making an annual payment graduated according to their social condition; but not exceeding forty shillings or

²⁸ Baxter, *Life*, iii, 66, omits "legal"; Collier, viii, 451, gives it. The insertion of the word suggests a compromise; the law of the land recognised the validity of ministers so ordained, though the canons of the Church might not. Collier, *ibid.*, reads *where* for *when*.

under ten for the master of a family ; and not exceeding eight or under two for any other person : the money was to be used for building churches. On the payment of a fine, Nonconformists were to be excused from holding the public offices for which they were legally disqualified.²⁹

A Bill to give effect to the scheme was drawn up by Sir Matthew Hale, who was Lord Chief Baron, and the new policy had the support of Sir Orlando Bridgman, the Lord Keeper ; but it was never submitted to Parliament. That the plan should have been seriously proposed is an indication of the more generous spirit both of some eminent Episcopalians and of some eminent statesmen.³⁰

In a speech from the throne to both Houses the King recommended Parliament to " think seriously of some course to beget a better union and composure in the minds of my Protestant subjects in matters of religion," whereby Government might ensure not only submission, but also support. The Commons answered this appeal by a petition to the King for a Proclamation against conventicles, and also discussed his recommendation in no friendly spirit.³¹

The majority of the members of the House of Commons, instead of being willing to show mercy to the Nonconformists, were as bitter as ever in their hatred of them. The Conventicle Act would expire at the close of the Session, and an attempt was made to renew the Act in a modified form. The progress of the Bill was delayed, and after successive adjournments Parliament was prorogued in March, 1668-9. The new Act had not passed, and the old Act had expired.³²

The Nonconformists, though still in danger of being prosecuted under the Five Mile Act and the Act of Elizabeth against Conventicles, made a vigorous use of the disappearance of the more effective instrument for repressing them. They also knew that the King and his Ministers were not anxious

²⁹ Baxter, *ibid.*, iii. 66. For a fuller account of the schemes of comprehension, see Stoughton, *Religion in England*, iii. 372-377 ; Neal, iv. 381-385 ; and Thorndike, *Works*, v. 302-308.

³⁰ Burnet, i. 476-477.

³¹ C. J. (Feb. 10, 1667-8), ix. 44, and see C. J. (Ap. 8, 1668), ix. 77, when a proposal contained in the King's Speech was thrown out by 176 votes to 70.

³² C. J. (Ap. 10, 24, 28, 1668), ix. 78, 87, 90. The Bill passed the third reading by 144 votes to 78.

that the laws against them should be enforced. In answer to a letter addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury on June 8, 1669, to the commissary of the southern province, reports came in from different parts of the country showing that large numbers of persons were attending Nonconformist worship.³³ In London, Calamy's congregation was estimated at one hundred; Manton's at one hundred; Caryl's at five hundred; the number of Owen's congregation in Moorfields is not given. In Canterbury itself there were said to be five hundred Independents.³⁴

With these reports to sustain him, Sheldon prevailed on Charles to issue a proclamation commanding that the laws against the Nonconformists, and especially the Five Mile Act, should be put in force.³⁵ Many congregations were broken up. Baxter was committed to Clerkenwell prison for preaching, but was released on the ground of some invalidity in the warrant for committing him.³⁶ Taverner, another eminent Nonconformist, was sent to Newgate for teaching a few children without having taken the oath.

The House of Commons thanked the King for his proclamation, and proceeded to pass the second Conventicle Act (1670). The second Act was in most of its provisions much less severe than the first; but it was likely to be more effective.

Like the former Act, it made every person over sixteen years of age present at a conventicle liable to a fine; but for the first offence the fine was to be only five shillings; and for the second and every subsequent offence ten shillings. Nothing is said about imprisonment.³⁷ The fine is to be levied on the offender's goods and chattels. If any person is so poor

³³ In Wilkins, iv. 588. See also the letter that follows, 589-590, recommending practical methods of suppression.

³⁴ Stoughton, *Religion in England*, iii. 385-387, from Tenison MSS., Lambeth, 639. And see the report to the House of Commons, C. J. (Nov. 18, 1669), ix. 108, stating that "there are divers conventicles and other seditious meetings in Westminster. . . . Where great numbers of evil-affected persons frequently meet."

³⁵ July 16, 1669. The Proclamation states that "Those who separate themselves from the established worship, do meet together in greater numbers than formerly, to such a degree as may endanger the *Publick Peace*." Echard, 859. This is a new point in the conflict: conventicles are to be put down, not to maintain uniformity of worship, but to prevent disorder.

³⁶ Baxter, *Life*, iii. 83, 128, 111-130.

³⁷ 22 Car. II. cap. 1, § 1.

that his goods and chattels are insufficient to meet the penalty, the fine is to be levied, at the discretion of the magistrate, upon *some other person who was present at the conventicle*, but the whole sum levied at one time on one person is not to exceed ten pounds.³⁸ Under this extraordinary provision a prosperous Nonconformist worshipping with a congregation of forty or fifty of his poorer neighbours might be required to pay the fines for nine-and-thirty of them in addition to his own. A third of the fines is to go to the persons who give information of the meeting.

The preacher is to be fined ten pounds for the first offence, and twenty for the second. If the fine cannot for any reason be levied on his goods and chattels, the magistrate is required to levy it on the goods and chattels of any other persons present at the service.³⁹

Any constable wilfully neglecting to give information of a conventicle is to be fined five pounds; and every magistrate wilfully omitting to enforce the Act, one hundred pounds. In both cases half of the fine is to be given to the informer.⁴⁰

The Bill contained a clause that Burnet describes as "very extraordinary," providing in effect that "if any doubt should arise concerning the meaning of any part of this Act, it was to be determined in the sense that was the most contrary to conventicles, it being the intention of the House to repress them in the most effectual manner possible"; and further, that no record, warrant, or proceedings under the Act should "be reversed, avoided, or in any way impeached by reason of any default in form."⁴¹

VI

The fierce persecution which followed the passing of the second Conventicle Act was suddenly arrested. Charles was aiming at arbitrary power. Parliament, which was prorogued in April, 1671, did not meet again till 1673. In 1670 the King had entered into a secret treaty with Louis XIV., in which he bound himself to support the French King in his determination to break the power of "that ungrateful and insolent republic

³⁸ *Ibid.*, § 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, § 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, § 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, § 12. Burnet, i. 498.

of Holland." Charles was to receive an annual pension of £200,000 from France, and the aid of 6,000 French infantry. In March, 1672, without any declaration of war, and while he was professing to be a friendly mediator between Holland and Louis, Charles struck the first blow. The homeward-bound Smyrna fleet of seventy-two Dutch merchantmen was making its way up the Channel under the convoy of six men-of-war when the English admiral attacked it. The freight was supposed to be worth a million and a half sterling. It would have been a rich prize. But after two days' fighting the English fleet was beaten off; the piratical assault on a friendly power was unsuccessful.⁴²

Charles and his profligate ministers knew that the Dutch war would provoke angry discontent in England; and, to divide popular feeling, and to secure the neutrality, if not the support, of one section of the nation, they resolved to suspend the penal laws against the Nonconformists.

On March 15 (1671-2), after consultation with Louis, Charles issued his Declaration of Indulgence.

He begins by recalling the proofs he had given, in the whole course of his government, of his zeal for the preservation of the rights and interests of the Church, and makes special reference to "the many and frequent ways of coercion that we have used for reducing all erring or dissenting persons, and for composing the unhappy differences in matters of religion which we found among our subjects upon our return." But, "it being evident by the said experience of twelve years, that there is very little fruit of all those forcible courses," his Majesty thinks himself "obliged to make use of that supreme power in ecclesiastical matters, which is not only inherent in [him], but hath been declared and recognised to be so, by several statutes and Acts of Parliament."

He then renews the declaration of his resolution to preserve "the Church of England in its doctrine, discipline and government, as now it stands established by law," and to prevent any person, "who is not exactly conformable," from holding

⁴² Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, i. 96-102; *Somers' Tracts* (second edition), viii. 13-18. In any case such an attack would have been a breach of the agreement in the Peace of Breda, which provided that in the event of war no merchant shipping should be attacked within six months after war had been declared. Burnet, i. 562-563.

any "ecclesiastical dignity or preferment of any kind," in the kingdom of England.

But it is the King's will and pleasure—

"1. That the execution of all, and all manner of penal laws, in matters ecclesiastical, against whatsoever sort of Nonconformists or Recusants, be immediately suspended. . . .

"2. From time to time [to] allow a sufficient number of places, as shall be desired, in all parts of this our kingdom, for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, to meet and assemble in order to their publick worship and devotion."

To prevent "disorders," every place in which the Nonconformists propose to meet must first be "allowed," and the "teacher" of the congregation "approved" by the Crown. No licences for places of public worship are, however, to be granted to the Roman Catholics. Catholics are to be exempted from the penal laws, but must worship "in their private houses only."⁴³

Some of the Presbyterians hesitated about availing themselves of the Indulgence. The King's act was unconstitutional; it relieved the Romanists from the pressure of the penal laws, and might lead to the allowance of the public celebration of the Romish worship. What they wanted was not toleration as Dissenters, but a place, on honourable terms, in the national Church; if they accepted the Indulgence, and set up isolated congregations, they would be in danger of becoming Independents. But the scruples of most of them seem to have been overcome, and they presented a loyal address to Charles thanking him for his favour.⁴⁴

The Independents appear to have felt less difficulty; and in an address written by Dr. Owen, and presented by him to the King, they promise to pray that God will "continue his royal heart in these councils and thoughts of *indulgence*, whose beginnings have restored quietness to neighbours, peace to counties, emptied prisons, and filled houses with industrious workers."⁴⁵

Three thousand five hundred licences were granted within

⁴³ Echard, 880-881. Cobbett, *Parl. History*, iv. 515-516. See Note A, p. 442.

⁴⁴ Baxter, *Life*, iii. 214-215.

⁴⁵ Orme, *Memoirs of Owen (Works)*, i. 273.

ten months. Most of the rooms licensed, indeed, were in private houses; but the sudden appearance of such a large number of Nonconformist congregations alarmed the friends of the Church.⁴⁶

In addition to the usual Congregational services, the Presbyterians and Independents united to establish a weekly "lecture" for the discussion of the principal questions at issue between Protestants and Romanists, and between orthodox Protestants and Socinians. The lecture was delivered on Tuesday mornings in Pinners' Hall. Owen, Baxter, Manton, and Bates were among the first lecturers.⁴⁷

Charles tried other methods in order to strengthen his hold on the Nonconformists. He gave private audiences to their leaders, and assured them of his earnest wish to secure for them freedom of worship. Pool, the author of the "Synopsis," received for two years an allowance of £50 from the royal purse. Owen received from Charles one thousand guineas, which he distributed among the poorer ministry.⁴⁸

Parliament met again on February 4, 1672-3, and within a week the Commons resolved—"That Penal Statutes, in matters ecclesiastical, cannot be suspended but by Act of Parliament." The resolution was carried on a division by 168 votes to 116; and on February 14, a petition and address embodying the protest were approved for presentation to the King.⁴⁹ Ten days later the King's reply to the address was received. It was not to the mind of the House, and after a vigorous debate a second address was agreed to and presented. The House replied that the King's answer—

"is not sufficient to clear the apprehensions that may justly remain in the minds of your people, by your Majesty's having claimed a power to suspend Penal Statutes, in matters Ecclesiastical, and which your Majesty does still seem to assert, in the said Answer, to be intrusted in the crown, and never questioned in the reigns of

⁴⁶ Stoughton, *Religion in England*, iii. 399-400.

⁴⁷ Baxter, *Life*, iii. 227. Orme, *Memoirs of Owen (Works)*, i. 274.

⁴⁸ Burnet, i. 565. Owen denied that these pensions were offered or accepted as bribes. Neal, iv. 410-411. But see Stoughton, *op. cit.*, iii. 400-402; and Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 468-470; and *infra*, pp. 452-453, and note 18.

⁴⁹ C. J. (Feb. 10 and 14, 1672-3), ix. 251-252. Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. 526-527.

your ancestors ;' wherein, we humbly conceive, your Majesty hath been very much misinformed ; since no such power was ever claimed, or exercised, by any of your Majesty's predecessors ; and, if it should be admitted, might tend to the interrupting of the free course of the laws, and altering of the legislative power, which hath always been acknowledged to reside in your Majesty, and your two houses of Parliament." ⁵⁰

The King struggled hard for his prerogative, but the Commons were firm. Alderman Love, member for the City of London, and a Presbyterian, made a speech which produced a deep impression. He said, "that they [*i.e.* the Presbyterians] had rather still go without their desired liberty than have it in a way that would prove so detrimental to the nation." ⁵¹ The House showed that it was in earnest by stopping the progress of a money-bill, and Charles had to yield. He broke the seal of the Declaration with his own hands, and the licences were called in. ⁵²

The position taken by Alderman Love and the Nonconformists who supported him commanded admiration and sympathy ; and a Bill was brought in for the relief of all Protestant Dissenters that were willing to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and to subscribe the *doctrinal* articles of the Church of England. They were to be exempted from all pains and penalties for not attending church ; they were to be at liberty to meet together for religious worship ; and their ministers, on taking the oaths and making the necessary subscription at quarter-sessions, were to receive a certificate licensing them to preach. These provisions of the Bill assured toleration to orthodox Nonconformists. But the Bill also provided for the repeal of the clause in the Act of Uniformity which required a declaration of assent and

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (Feb. 24 and 26, 1672-3), ix. 256-257. Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. 546-547, 551.

⁵¹ Echard, 889. For other versions of Love's speech, see Neal, iv. 418 ; Wilson, *Life of Defoe*, i. 58 ; and Burnet, ii. 6-7.

⁵² Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. 561. Charles yielded as the result of a message from the French King. Louis said that money was necessary for the war with Holland, and that if Parliament insisted on making supply contingent on the recalling of the Declaration, the Declaration must be recalled. See Burnet, ii. 11 ; and Colbert's letter to Louis XIV. (March 20, 1672-3), in Dalrymple, *Review of Events after the Restoration*, i. 135-137. Burnet (ii. 13) says that Charles "ordered the seal put to it [the Declaration] to be broken."

consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer. This was a movement towards Comprehension.⁵³

The Bill passed the Commons; but before it had reached its later stages in the Lords Parliament was adjourned. A prorogation followed the adjournment, and the Bill lapsed.

VII

Parliament was disposed to "ease" Protestant Dissenters, but its fierce hostility to the Roman Catholics was unabated. By *An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish recusants*—commonly called the *Test Act*—passed this Session (1673), all persons holding any office, civil or military, or receiving any salary from the Crown, were required (1) to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy; (2) to receive the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England; and (3) to make the following declaration against Transubstantiation:—

"I, A B, do declare that there is not any transubstantiation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper or in the elements of bread and wine, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever."⁵⁴

The Bill, according to its title and preamble, was directed against "Popish recusants"; but in its effect it prevented any Nonconformist from holding any civil or military office, unless he first consented to receive the Lord's Supper according to the rules of the English Church.⁵⁵ A few obscure local offices were exempted from the operation of the Act,⁵⁶ but the reception of the Lord's Supper from a clergyman of the

⁵³ *A Bill for the Ease of his Majesty's subjects, Dissenters in matters of religion from the Church of England.* C. J. (Feb. 14, 27, March 7, 10, 13, 19, 1672-3; March 28, 29, 1673), ix. 252, 258-259, 264, 266, 271, 279-280, 280-281. L. J. (March 21, 25, 1672-3; March 27, 29, 1673), xii. 561, 571, 576, 579-580; and for the *Act against Popish Recusants*, *ibid.* (March 20, 24, 25, 1672-3; March 29, 1673), xii. 561, 567-568, 569, 570, 584. Parliament, after an adjournment from March 29 to October 30, 1673, was prorogued on account of an address passed by the Commons protesting against the Duke of York's marriage to the Princess of Modena. Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. 585, notes; Burnet, ii. 31; C. J. (Oct. 30, 31, 1673), ix. 283, 285.

⁵⁴ 25 Car. II. cap. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, § 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, § 17.

English Church was enforced on every man receiving a commission in the army or navy, upon ministers of state, and the holders of the obscurest position in the Customs and Excise.⁵⁷

The discovery of what was believed to be a great Popish Plot (1678) added fresh passion to the hatred and the terror with which the nation regarded Rome. Papists were disabled from sitting in either House of Parliament: ⁵⁸ another Bill for excluding the Duke of York—afterwards James II.—from succession to the Crown, was carried through the Commons, but rejected by the Lords. Fourteen bishops, true to the doctrine of the divine right of the royal family, voted with the majority against the measure.⁵⁹

VIII

Meanwhile a fresh but unsuccessful attempt was made (1680) in favour of Comprehension; but the Bill was not supported with any enthusiasm, even by the Presbyterian members of the House of Commons, and it was soon dropped.⁶⁰ A Bill for releasing Protestant dissenters from the penalties of the Act of the 35th year of Elizabeth passed both Houses; it was alleged that the Clerk who should have presented it for the royal assent “privately conveyed it away,” and it is certain that it never became law.⁶¹ Its disappearance caused some disturbance.

Early in the session of the new Parliament that met at Oxford in the spring of 1680-1, Sir William Jones said:—

“This matter deserves mature consideration, whether in respect of the Loss of the Bill, or the Shaking the very Constitution of Parliament. The Bill that is lost, is of great moment, and of great use to secure the country, and perhaps their lives too, in the

⁵⁷ For the debates on the Indulgence and the two Bills, see Cobbett, *Parl. History*, iv. 516-585.

⁵⁸ 30 Car. II. stat. 2. cap. 1. *An Act for the more effectual preserving the King's person and government, by disabling papists from sitting in either house of Parliament.* The Duke of York was expressly exempted from this Act: § 14.

⁵⁹ So Burnet, ii. 252. Echard, 995, says, “All the bishops were against it but three.” But, as shown in the notes to Burnet, *l.c.*, 252-253, *note d*, two separate votes of the House have been confused.

⁶⁰ Burnet, ii. 274-275. Cobbett, *Parl. History*, iv. 1255-1260.

⁶¹ Echard, 999; Burnet, ii. 273-274.

time of a Popish successor. . . . The Precedent is of the highest consequence: the King has his negative to all Bills, but I never knew that the Clerk of the Parliament had a negative, if he laid it aside, or not.”⁶²

There was a Conference with the Lords on the subject of the misadventure, but nothing came of it. Parliament, which was resolute in pressing the Exclusion Bill, was dissolved a few days after the opening of the session.

During the last few years of his life, while Charles was pursuing with consummate skill a policy directed to the destruction of English freedom, the Nonconformists endured the most cruel persecution.⁶³ The weapons were there—and the will to use them.

NOTE A

The following is a copy of a Congregational Licence.

“CHARLES REX.

“CHARLES, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., to all mayors, bailiffs, constables, and other our officers and ministers, civil and military, whom it may concern, greeting. In pursuance of our declaration of the 15th of March, 1671, we do hereby permit and license A B of the Congregational persuasion, to be a teacher of the congregation allowed by us, in a room or rooms of his house in . . . for the use of such as do not conform to the Church of England, who are of that persuasion commonly called Congregational, with farther license and permission to him the said A B to teach in any place licensed and allowed by us, according to our said declaration.

“Given at our court at Whitehall the second day of May, in the twenty-fourth year of our reign, 1671. By his majesty’s command.

“ARLINGTON.”⁶⁴

⁶² Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.*, iv. I 311. See also *ibid.*, 1308, 1312. C. J. (March 24, 25, 1680-1), ix. 708.

⁶³ “The rest of that Reign was one continued Invasion upon the Rights of the People, and the Nation seemed unwilling now to contend for them any more.” “This was a Time never to be forgot, when to wish well to our Country was a Crime; and when Heaven itself was ranked upon our Enemies’ side, by some that pretended to expound its will.” Welwood, *Memoirs*, 135, 138. And see Note B, pp. 443-444.

⁶⁴ Neal, iv. p. 410. Some licences were granted for buildings or rooms alone, without specifying the “teacher.”

NOTE B

Charles II. began his reign with an undertaking to grant liberty to tender consciences. In addition to the penal Acts of Elizabeth, which were confirmed by the Parliament that met in February, 1672-3, the following laws were made against Nonconformists during his reign:—

“1. An act for well governing and regulating corporations, 13 Car. II. cap. 1. Whereby all who bear office in any city, town, or borough, are required to take the oaths and subscribe the declaration therein mentioned, and to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper according to the rites of the church of England. This effectually turned the dissenters out of the government of all corporations.

“2. The Act of Uniformity, 14 Car. II. cap. 4. Whereby all parsons, vicars, and ministers, who enjoyed any preferment in the church, were obliged to declare their unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer, etc., or be *ipso facto* deprived; and all schoolmasters and tutors were prohibited from teaching youth without licence from the archbishop or bishop, under pain of three months' imprisonment.

“3. An act to prevent and suppress seditious conventicles, 16 Car. II. cap. 4. Whereby it is declared unlawful to be present at any meeting for religious worship, except according to the usage of the Church of England, where five besides the family should be assembled; in which case the first and second offences are made subject to a certain fine, or three months' imprisonment, on conviction before a justice of peace on the oath of a single witness; and the third offence, on conviction at the sessions or before the justices of assize, is punishable by transportation for seven years.

“4. An act for restraining Nonconformists from inhabiting in corporations, 17 Car. II. cap. 2. Whereby all dissenting ministers, who would not take an oath therein specified against the lawfulness of taking up arms against the king on any pretence whatsoever, and that they would never attempt any alteration of government in church or state, are banished five miles from all corporate towns, and subject to a fine of 40*l.* in case they should preach in any conventicle.

“5. Another act to prevent and suppress seditious conventicles, 22 Car. II. cap. 5. Whereby any persons who teach in such conventicles, are subject to a penalty of 20*l.* for the first, and 40*l.* for every subsequent offence; and any person who permits such a conventicle to be held in their house, is liable to a fine of 20*l.*; and justices of the peace are empowered to break open doors where they are informed such conventicles are held, and take the offenders into custody.

“6. An act for preventing dangers which may happen from Popish recusants, commonly called the test act, whereby (as afore-mentioned) every person is incapacitated from holding a place of trust under the government, without taking the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Neal, iv. 423-424. And for a schedule showing the full range of the King's power in ecclesiastical affairs, see L. J., xi. 487-489.

CHAPTER V

JAMES II

ACCESSION OF JAMES II.—HE AVOWS HIS FAITH—ROMANISM IN THE ASCENDANT—PENAL LAWS SUSPENDED—PARLIAMENT REMONSTRATES—SIR EDWARD HALES'S CASE—THE LAWS OF ENGLAND THE KING'S LAWS—COURT OF HIGH COMMISSION RESTORED—IT TAKES ACTION AGAINST THE BISHOP OF LONDON—UNIVERSITIES FORCED TO ADMIT ROMANISTS TO DEGREES AND OFFICE—DECLARATION OF INDULGENCE—NONCONFORMISTS TEMPTED TO SUPPORT THE KING—MOST OF THEM PREFER CONSTITUTIONAL LAW TO PERSONAL RELIEF—A ROYAL PROGRESS—NONCONFORMISTS PUT IN OFFICE—HALIFAX'S APPEAL—SECOND DECLARATION OF INDULGENCE—BISHOPS AND CLERGY DISREGARD THE ORDER TO READ IT IN CHURCH—TRIAL AND ACQUITTAL OF THE SEVEN BISHOPS—OVERTURES OF THE CHURCH TO NONCONFORMISTS—BIRTH OF AN HEIR TO THE THRONE—INVITATION TO WILLIAM OF ORANGE—COLLAPSE OF ROMANISM—WILLIAM LANDS IN ENGLAND—THE NATION RALLY TO HIM—JAMES TAKES FLIGHT.

KING CHARLES died on February 6, 1684-5. He was reconciled to the Roman Church just before his death, and received absolution and the last Sacraments from Huddleston, a Romish priest, who had saved his life after the Battle of Worcester. James II. was a Catholic when he came to the throne, and on the ground of his Catholic faith a powerful party had endeavoured to exclude him from the succession.

When he met the Privy Council he declared that while he was resolved to maintain unimpaired the authority and ancient prerogatives of the Crown, "he would not invade any man's property, but would preserve the government by law established in church and state."¹ The clergy, who for many years had been insisting on the duty of passive obedience, received the King's assurance with unmeasured confidence and delight. "As to our religion," said Dr. Sharp, in a sermon

¹ Burnet, iii. 6. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, iv. 1342. Repeated, May 22, 1685, on opening the session of Parliament, *ibid.*, 1351-1354.

at St. Lawrence Jury, "we have the word of the King, which (with reverence be it spoken) is as sacred as my text."²

But notwithstanding his declaration, it was the King's firm resolve to restore England to the Roman communion. The second Sunday after his accession he went openly to mass. Huddleston was told to make it publicly known that Charles had died a member of the Roman Church.³ Within a few months all the laws which excluded Catholics from civil and military offices under the Crown were disregarded; and very soon Catholic statesmen controlled the policy and Catholic soldiers commanded the armies of the kingdom.

It seemed as if England were on the point of returning to the ancient faith. The clergy were forbidden to preach against "the King's religion." The Catholic worship was celebrated with gorgeous pomp in the King's Chapel at St. James's. The Jesuits had a large school at the Savoy in which half the children were Protestants. Carmelites, Benedictines, and Franciscans walked the streets of London. Four Catholic bishops were consecrated in the Royal Chapel, and their pastoral letters to the catholic laymen of their dioceses were printed by the royal printers and with public licence. The Lord High Treasurer and the Lord Privy Seal, the Earls of Rochester and Clarendon, were Catholics; several Catholic peers, and a Catholic priest—Father Petre—were sworn members of the Privy Council. In Scotland a Catholic was made Governor of the Castle of Edinburgh. In Ireland a Catholic, Colonel Talbot, afterwards Earl of Tyrconnel, was put at the head of the army. There were Catholic officers in the army which the King assembled on Hounslow Heath; mass was openly celebrated in the tent of Lord Dumbarton, the second in command to Lord Feversham; and the Protestantism of Lord Feversham was regarded with suspicion.⁴ Hull and Portsmouth, two of the principal ports in the kingdom, were in the hands of Catholic governors.

In November, 1685, the Commons carried an address to the Crown in which they showed their alarm at the suspension

² Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 118. Evelyn, iii. 211-215. Sharp was afterwards Archbishop of York. He was the first to provoke the King's displeasure by preaching against the Church of Rome. See p. 448.

³ Burnet, iii. 11. Evelyn, iii. 139.

⁴ Burnet, however, says that he was a Protestant: iii. 50.

of the penal laws affecting the Catholics, and declared that the disqualifications imposed by the Test Act could not be removed except by Act of Parliament. The King was greatly provoked by their boldness, and Parliament was immediately prorogued.⁵

In order to secure a legal sanction for his dispensing power, he had an indictment laid against Sir Edward Hales, a Roman Catholic, who had been appointed colonel of a regiment and governor of Dover Castle, but who had neither received the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the English Church, nor fulfilled the other conditions imposed by the Test Act. He pleaded the King's dispensation in bar of the penalty. The case was tried before the Court of King's Bench on June 21, 1686, and of twelve judges eleven agreed—

“(1) That the laws of England are the King's laws. (2) That, therefore, 'tis an inseparable prerogative in the Kings of England, as of all other Sovereign Princes, to dispense with all Penal Laws in particular cases, and upon particular necessary reasons. (3) That of those reasons and necessities, the King himself is sole judge: and then which is consequent upon all, (4), That this is not a trust invested in, or granted to the King, by the people, but the ancient remains of the sovereign power and prerogative of the Kings of England; which never yet was taken from them, nor can be.”

“Thus,” adds Echard, “by the breath of a few mercenary judges, in effect, the laws of England were basely given up at once into the Power and Will of the King.”⁶

II

In the summer of 1686 James proceeded to set up once more the Court of High Commission, which had been abolished for ever with the Royal consent in the early months of the

⁵ C. J. (Nov. 16, 1685), ix. 758. Parliament was first prorogued on November 20, 1685, and then, by successive stages, to November 22, 1687. It did not sit again during James's reign.

⁶ Howell's *State Trials*, xi. 1165-1199. Echard, 1077. Sir Edward Hale's “coachman was set up to inform against him, and to claim the £500 that the law gave to the informer.” Burnet, iii. 97. See also Hallam, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 61-62 and notes.

Long Parliament.⁷ Jeffreys, who was Lord Chancellor, was at the head of the Commission ; the other Commissioners were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Durham and Rochester, the Earls of Sunderland and Rochester ; and Sir Edward Herbert, Lord Chief Justice. Any three of the Commissioners, provided that Jeffreys was one of them, were empowered to call before them all ecclesiastical persons, "of what degree and dignity soever," and to punish them by excommunication, suspensions, deprivations, or other ecclesiastical censures for any ecclesiastical offences.⁸

The Commission began by calling Compton, the Bishop of London, to answer for his contempt of the command of the King, requiring him to suspend Dr. Sharp. Sharp was the clergyman who at the beginning of the reign made the King's word as sacred as a text of Holy Scripture ; but he had recently preached a sermon against Popery, at which the King had taken offence.⁹ Compton alleged that Sharp's sermon had not been subjected to judicial inquiry in the ecclesiastical courts, but that when the case was tried he would deal with him as the canons warranted ; and that he had complied with the substance of the King's mandate by requiring him to abstain from preaching. The defence was declared to be unsatisfactory ; the bishop was suspended during the royal pleasure, and the administration of the diocese of London was placed in the hands of the Bishops of Durham, Rochester, and Peterborough. Dr. Sharp expressed his sorrow for having incurred the royal displeasure, and was then relieved from further punishment.¹⁰

The King now resolved to compel the universities to throw open their gates to Catholics. He directed the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge to admit Alban Francis, "an ignorant

⁷ Burnet (iii. 108) says that it was proposed to set up "an ecclesiastical commission, without calling it the high commission," but with unlimited powers in ecclesiastical cases.

⁸ Kennet, *Complete History of England*, iii. 454-456. Sancroft, the Archbishop, declined to act : "He objected to the superior authority given to a layman, the chancellor, and excused himself on the ground of his age and infirmities. James saw his true reason, and erased his name, not only from the list of commissioners, but also of privy councillors, saying that if he was too infirm to be of the first, he was equally so to be of the other." Lingard (1830), viii. 377, *note*.

⁹ See pp. 445-446.

¹⁰ Burnet, iii. 106-108. Howell, *State Trials*, xi. 1155-1166

Benedictine monk," to the degree of Master of Arts without administering the oaths. The Vice-Chancellor—"a very honest, but a very weak man"—hesitated, and the Court of High Commission suspended him.¹¹ At Oxford the proceedings of the King were still more violent. Walker, the Master of University College, and several Fellows of other colleges, had become Catholics. James granted them dispensations, empowering them to retain their dignities and emoluments. Massey, a Fellow of Merton, another convert to Romanism, was made Dean of Christ Church.¹²

III

The nation watched with growing but silent indignation these audacious and arbitrary proceedings ; but on Hounslow Heath James had an army such as no King of England before him had ever commanded in time of peace, and he was confident that his policy would receive no sudden check. The universities and the clergy had been preaching for many years the doctrine of passive obedience, and he appears to have had a serious belief that nothing would provoke the English Church to turn against the Crown.

On April 4, 1687, he issued a Declaration of Indulgence, in which he said that he could not but heartily wish that all his subjects were members of the Catholic Church. It is his opinion that conscience ought not to be forced ; and that the two Houses of Parliament, when he thinks it convenient to

¹¹ Burnet, iii. 149-150. Howell, *State Trials*, xi. 1315-1340.

¹² Wood, *Ath. Oxon.* (Bliss), iv. 437-44. In 1687 James commanded the Vice-President and Fellows of Magdalen, one of the richest colleges, to elect as their President Dr. Farmer. He appears to have been a man of discreditable character ; he was not distinguished for his learning, and had not the qualifications required by the statutes of the college ; "an ignorant and vicious person," says Burnet. The Fellows disregarded the King's mandate, and elected Dr. Hough. The Ecclesiastical Commission deposed Dr. Hough, deprived twenty-four of the Fellows of their fellowships, and declared them incapable of holding any ecclesiastical preferment. In the following year Parker, Bishop of Oxford, whom the King had appointed President instead of Farmer, died, and the Fellows, most of whom were non-Catholics, were directed by James to elect Dr. Giffard, one of the four vicars apostolic. They complied, and Magdalen became a Catholic college. Burnet, iii. 151-160. Howell, *State Trials*, xii. 1-52.

call them together, will approve of the exercise of his prerogative in suspending the penal laws relating to religion. First, he pledges himself to protect and maintain the archbishops, bishops, clergy, and all the members of the Church of England, in the free exercise of their religion as by law established, and in the quiet and full enjoyment of all their possessions. Secondly, he declares it to be his royal will and pleasure, that all laws inflicting penalties for nonconformity to the established religion in any manner whatsoever be immediately suspended. The Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, and the tests and declaration imposed by the Test Act and by the Act for disabling Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament, are not henceforth to be required from any person appointed to civil or military office under the Crown. All persons omitting to take the oaths are to be relieved by the royal dispensation from the penalties attached to the omission. And finally, a free pardon is given to all Nonconformists and recusants for any crimes already committed contrary to the penal laws relating to religion.¹³

The Nonconformists were strongly tempted to support the King. While the Catholics had been protected from the penal laws by the exercise of the prerogative, the Nonconformists had been suffering incessant and bitter persecution. There were large districts of the country in which it was never safe for them to meet for worship. The clergy and the magistrates were never weary of hunting them down. Heavy fines were inflicted on them; many of their ministers had been imprisoned. Early in the reign, Baxter, who was now seventy years of age, was brought before Judge Jeffreys for five or six passages in his paraphrase of the New Testament, in which he had offered some objections to diocesan episcopacy, and maintained that in some exceptional cases it was lawful to resist the authority of the prince. A heavy fine was inflicted on him which he was unable to pay, and he was kept in prison for eighteen months.¹⁴ The laws which the King now suspended inflicted the most cruel injustice on large numbers of his most peaceable subjects. Might not

¹³ Wilkins, iv. 614-615.

¹⁴ £500, with the requirement to give security for good behaviour for seven years. On the Bench the judge outdid even himself in brutality. Howell, *State Trials*, xi. 493-502.

those to whom he gave relief from unjust laws thank him for suspending them? Opinion was divided. Some addresses were presented, in which the royal clemency was acknowledged with effusive gratitude; but the principal Nonconformist leaders and the majority of their adherents refused to support a policy which, as they believed, threatened the foundations of public liberty. The ministers of London met to consider whether or not they should address the Crown; two messengers from the court were present to learn the result of the meeting. John Howe spoke strongly against the dispensing power, and against everything that would increase the power of Papists and assist them in their endeavours to destroy Protestantism. Dr. Daniel Williams declared that he would rather continue to suffer the injustice inflicted by the penal laws than sanction a violation of the fundamental principles of the constitution. "It were better," he said, "for them [Protestant Dissenters] to be reduced to their former hardships, than declare for measures destructive of the liberties of their country, and that for himself, before he would concur in an address which should be thought an approbation of the dispensing power, he would choose to lay down his liberty at his Majesty's feet."

In closing the debate, Howe informed the messenger from the court that in this judgment the meeting generally concurred.¹⁵

IV

On November 20, 1687, Parliament was dissolved, having been prorogued since November, 1685; and the King resorted to extraordinary measures in order to make sure of a House of Commons that would consent to repeal the Test Act. He made a progress through the kingdom. "As the Presence of a Sovereign King," says Echard, "naturally raises an awful Veneration on the minds of those who seldom approach Majesty, it can hardly be expressed with what joyful Acclama-

¹⁵ Daniel Williams, *Practical Discourses, Introduction*, x. Calamy, *Memoir of John Howe*, 134-135. "Few concurred in those addresses; and the persons that brought them up were mean and inconsiderable." Burnet, iii. 185.

tions he was received, and what Loyal Acknowledgments were paid him at Portsmouth, Winchester, Bath, Gloucester, Worcester, Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Chester, Newport, Lichfield, Coventry, Bristol, Banbury and other places; which gave his Majesty, great Hopes and Expectations.”¹⁶ He revised the lists of the Lord Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants of the counties, and those who would not engage to assist him in securing the return of members of the House of Commons favourable to the royal policy were dismissed. Half of the Lord Lieutenants, among them many of the greatest and most powerful nobles in the kingdom, refused to answer and lost their commissions. Magistrates were removed from the commission of the peace for the same reason, and Dissenters favourable to the repeal of the Test were appointed in their place. The Corporations in every part of England, which under their new charters were very much at the mercy of the Crown, were also purged of men who were opposed to the designs of the King. In the City of London the aldermen were turned out, and their vacant places filled with Non-conformists.¹⁷

There was a war of pamphlets. The Indulgence was fiercely attacked and vigorously defended. In *A Letter to a Dissenter upon Occasion of his Majesty's late gracious Declaration of Indulgence*, of which twenty thousand copies were published, the Marquis of Halifax said that he was “neither surprised nor provoked” by the Dissenters accepting offers of relief, and by their desire to make themselves “less uneasy and obnoxious to authority.” But he begged them to consider (1) the cause they had to suspect their new friends, who had made them “not their choice, but their refuge.” Only the other day, he reminds them, “you were *sons of Belial*: now, you are *Angels of light*. The change is too sudden, too violent, to be trusted”; (2) The motives of those who advise acceptance; suggesting that some of the Protestant ministers who favoured the proposal had been bribed with Roman

¹⁶ Echard, 1090. Burnet (iii. 189-190) says that the progress was a failure; that the King found “a visible coldness both in the nobility and gentry; that he designed to go through many more places; but the small success he had in those which he visited made him shorten his progress.”

¹⁷ Burnet, iii. 191.

Catholic gold ;¹⁸ (3) Their duty as Christians and citizens not to hazard the public safety by a desire of relief or revenge. He lays stress on the difference "between enjoying quietly the advantages of an act irregularly done by others, and the going about to support it against the laws in being,"—between thanking the King for an Act of more than doubtful legality, and taking advantage of the relief which the Act had given them. And "after giving thanks for the breach of one law, (they) lost the right of complaining of the breach of all the rest." Having set a precedent when it was for their advantage, they cannot challenge it when it may be to their prejudice. He assures the Nonconformists that Churchmen are now convinced of their error in persecuting those who refused to conform ; that the next Parliament would be disposed to treat Protestant Dissenters with gentleness ; and reminds them that the heir to the throne, Mary, the wife of William of Orange, had been bred in a country famous for its toleration of religious differences. They are, therefore, entreated to take sides with the Church in resisting the Crown.¹⁹

James did not lose courage. On April 27, 1688, he issued a second Declaration. His "conduct," he says, "has been such in all times as ought to have persuaded the world" that he is "firm and constant" to his resolutions ; "yet that easy people may not be abused by the malice of crafty, wicked men," he thinks fit to declare that his intentions are not changed since he issued his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience a year before. The Indulgence of 1687 is then recited at length ; and the Declaration concludes by an appeal to the country "to choose such members of Parliament, as may do their parts to finish" what the King had begun ; and announces that it is the King's intention "to call a Parliament that shall meet in November next at farthest."²⁰

¹⁸ This imputation of bribery in Halifax's *Letter* and his reference to "money sprinkled amongst the Dissenting ministers," . . . "men who have mortgaged themselves to severe creditors, that expect a rigorous observation of the contract" (*ibid.*, 3) were hotly resented ; and the author of *Animadversions on a late Paper entituled a Letter to a Dissenter* (25) challenged proof that any money had been "given, promised, or propounded to any of the persons that did first address" the King, or that the addresses had been drafted by persons other than those who signed them—*i.e.* by Roman Catholic priests. For subsequent discussion arising out of these gifts, see pp. 520-523, 524-527.

¹⁹ *A Letter to a Dissenter*, 1, 2, 5, 8.

²⁰ Wilkins, iv. 616.

It was ordered that the Declaration should be read at time of divine service in all churches and chapels in and near London on Sunday, May 20, and Sunday, May 27; and in all the rest of England on Sunday, June 3, and Sunday, June 10, under penalty of prosecution before the ecclesiastical courts. The bishops were directed to take measures for securing that the order should be obeyed by their clergy. Some of them complied; but eighteen refused, and according to Burnet's estimate it was read in only seven churches in London and in about two hundred all over England.²¹ Seven of the bishops met at Lambeth—Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph, Ken of Bath and Wells, Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, White of Peterborough, Trelawney of Exeter—and agreed upon a petition to the King, in which they said that their "averseness . . . to the distributing and publishing in all their churches" the Declaration for Liberty of Conscience proceeded "neither from any want of duty and obedience" to the King . . . "nor yet from any want of tenderness to Dissenters," but, "among many other considerations, from this especially; because that Declaration is founded upon such a dispensing Power, as hath been often declared illegal in Parliament"; . . . and that it was a matter of so great moment and consequence to the whole nation, both in Church and State, that they could not make themselves parties to it.²²

When the bishops presented the petition the King answered them roughly and angrily, and told them that if they did not hear from him that he had changed his mind he should expect his command to be obeyed. Early in June they were sent to the Tower under a warrant charging them with "making and publishing a seditious libel against his Majesty and his government." On June 29 they were put on their trial in Westminster Hall. Two of the judges told the jury that the petition was libellous; two that it was neither libellous nor seditious. The jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty. Westminster Hall rang with shouts of triumph; the news travelled swiftly to Hounslow Heath, and was received by the soldiers with rapturous cheers which startled the King, who was spending the day in the tent of Lord Feversham. In London, and in

²¹ Burnet, iii. 229.

²² Wilkins, iv. 617.

all the cities and towns of the kingdom, there were illuminations and bonfires and displays of popular delight and enthusiasm.²³

The bishops now held a great position in the country, and they used their power wisely and generously. A scheme was drawn up under the direction of Sancroft for reconciling the moderate Nonconformists to the Church. It was proposed that Discipline should be enforced more strictly; that there should be a fresh revision of the Liturgy; and that, if Convocation and Parliament allowed, some of the "ceremonies" should be omitted. In July Sancroft sent "Articles" to the clergy of his province, in one of which he recommended them to show "a very tender regard to our brethren, the Protestant Dissenters."²⁴

V

But before these "Articles" were issued, the leaders of the great parties in the State had taken a step which in a few months rescued the nation from the perils which threatened it. On Sunday afternoon, June 10, while the bishops were in the Tower, the Lord Mayor of London received an announcement from James that a son had been born to him that morning, and the Lord Mayor was told to celebrate the great event with bonfires and public rejoicings. A proclamation was issued appointing a public thanksgiving, which was to be celebrated in the churches of London and Westminster on June 17, and in all other places on July 1. But no man that cared for the Protestantism of England, or for the cause of civil freedom, was disposed to rejoice or to give thanks. Till now, men of all parties that had regarded with hostility and alarm the unconstitutional acts of the King, had looked forward with hope to the accession of Mary, the wife of the Prince of Orange. Now that a Prince of Wales was born—or declared to have been born, for many regarded the birth as an imposture²⁵—that hope perished.

On June 30—the day on which the bishops were acquitted, and within three weeks after the birth of the child—Admiral Herbert, who had been deprived of his command for refusing to

²³ Howell, *State Trials*, xii. 183-434. Burnet, iii. 233-237.

²⁴ Wilkins, iv. 619.

²⁵ Burnet, iii. 244-257, 318-323.

vote for the repeal of the Test Act,²⁶ sailed for Holland with a formal invitation to William to avert by force of arms the perils which threatened "the religion, the liberties, and the properties of the nation." The address was signed by "the seven patriots"—the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Devonshire, the Earl of Danby, the Lord Lumley, the Bishop of London, Edward Russell, and Henry Sydney. The Earl of Devonshire represented the Whigs and the Dissenters; Lord Danby the Tories and the Church; Compton, the Bishop of London, the High Churchmen; Russell and Sydney bore names that recalled the two great political martyrs of the last reign.²⁷

James, as soon as he heard of William's preparation to invade the kingdom, attempted to recover the confidence of the Church and the nation. He invited the counsel of the bishops, and told them that he was ready to do whatever they should think necessary for the security of the Protestant religion and of the people's rights without derogating from his own prerogative. Compton's suspension was removed. A Churchman was nominated to succeed the Lord Mayor, who was a Baptist. The city charter was sent back with great ceremony to the Guildhall. A proclamation was issued for restoring to the corporations throughout the kingdom their ancient Charters, Liberties, Rights, and Franchises. The Ecclesiastical Commission was dissolved. The Bishop of Winchester, the visitor of Magdalen College, Oxford, was ordered to redress the wrongs of the President and Fellows who had been illegally dispossessed. Popish justices of the peace, mayors, and recorders, were removed, and Protestants appointed in their places. "So that in the space of about twelve days, that formidable fabric was in effect, or in a great measure, demolished, which the Romish cabal had been near four years in erecting."²⁸

²⁶ Burnet, iii. 100-101.

²⁷ The address is described by Sir James Mackintosh (*History of the Revolution*, 413) as "a cold, creeping, irresolute address." . . . "Not one great principle or generous inspiration escapes them in that document." William is told that "one of the chief causes" upon which his entering of the kingdom in a hostile manner must be founded on *his* part, although many other reasons are to be given on *their* part, is the birth of a child, which, they say, "not one in a thousand believes to be the Queen's." (*Ibid.*, 691.) See Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, i. 5, 19-23, and letters in the *Appendix*.

²⁸ Echard, 1114. Burnet, iii. 315-317.

It was too late. On October 19 the Prince of Orange set sail from Helvoetsluys with a powerful fleet and nearly four hundred transports filled with Dutch troops. He carried at his mast-head the English flag, inscribed with the words "*The Protestant Religion and Liberties of England*," and the motto of the House of Nassau "*Je maintiendray*." A strong north-west wind, which in a few hours rose to a fierce storm, drove him back to port. A violent gale prevented him from putting to sea again for nearly a fortnight. On November 1, the gale had sunk, and with an east wind—"the Protestant wind"²⁹—he set sail for the English coast. Lord Dartmouth with the English fleet was lying off Harwich, watching for the Dutch ships; but the sea was heavy and the wind unfavourable, and before he could get under sail William had slipped past him and was off Dover. The English cliffs were lined with great crowds of people, who watched his progress with the eager hope that now at last the dangers which threatened their religion and their freedom were over. On the night of the fourth the pilot was directed to sail short of Dartmouth, that the fleet might enter the great harbour of Torbay the next morning. When the morning came it was discovered that through a false reckoning Dartmouth had been passed in the darkness; and, as the wind was still blowing from the east, there seemed nothing to be done but to make for Plymouth. The fidelity of the Governor of Plymouth to William was doubtful, and the error of the pilot was regarded as a grave misfortune. Admiral Russell told Bishop Burnet, who had joined the Prince, to "go to his prayers, for all was lost." But the wind changed to the south, and in four hours the fleet was in Torbay. William landed on English soil on November 5.³⁰

For ten days hardly any person of distinction joined him, and he began to think of returning to Holland. But then the country gentlemen of the west, with their armed followers, flocked to his standard. The whole country broke out into insurrection. The governor of Plymouth declared for the Prince of Orange. Bristol, Oxford, Norwich, Hull, York—all the midland and northern towns—were in the hands of his friends. The army of James was broken up by the desertion

²⁹ Burnet, iii. 316. Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, i. 5.

³⁰ Burnet, iii. 327, 324-330.

of the officers. Churchill, Grafton, Kirke, and Trelawney carried over their regiments to William. Lord Cornbury, Clarendon's son and the King's nephew, also deserted him, and tried, but unsuccessfully, to induce three regiments of which he was in command to follow his example. The King's daughter, the Princess Ann, and her husband, Prince George of Denmark, went over to William before the end of November.³¹

On December 18 William entered London, and was received with great popular enthusiasm. James fled from England on December 23, and by his flight relieved the nation from the gravest difficulties in the way of a satisfactory settlement of its future government.

³¹ Burnet, iii. 331-332. Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, i. 6, 196-203.

BOOK V

*FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE DEATH OF
GEORGE III*

1688—1820

CHAPTER I

THE TOLERATION ACT AND THE COMPRE- HENSION BILL

WILLIAM SUMMONS A CONVENTION—HE RECEIVES A NONCONFORMIST DEPUTATION—STANDS FOR COMPREHENSION AND TOLERATION—HE ACCEPTS THE CROWN—OATH OF ALLEGIANCE MODIFIED—THE NON-JURORS—FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO REPEAL OR AMEND THE TEST ACT—TOLERATION ACT: ITS PROVISIONS—COMPREHENSION BILL: ITS PROPOSALS—THE BILL POSTPONED—ROYAL COMMISSION TO REVISE THE PRAYER-BOOK—CONVOCATION HOSTILE—COMPREHENSION ABANDONED.

I

SOON after William arrived in London he summoned the peers to meet him at St. James's on December 21, 1688. He also summoned all gentlemen who had sat in any of the Parliaments of Charles II., the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, and a deputation from the Common Council, to meet him on the 26th. The two assemblies agreed in requesting him to undertake at once the responsibilities and duties of the executive government, and to issue writs for a "Convention" of the Estates of the Realm for the settlement of the affairs of the kingdom.¹

On January 2 (1688-9) about ninety Nonconformist ministers introduced by the Earl of Devonshire, Lord Wharton, and Lord Wiltshire, waited on William, and assured him "of their grateful sense of his hazardous and heroic expedition which the favour of Heaven had made so surprisingly prosperous." John Howe, who spoke in their name, said that—

"They esteemed it no common felicity that the worthy patriots of the nobility and gentry of this kingdom had unanimously concurred with his highness' design. . . . They promised their

¹ Mackintosh, 556, 568-569.

utmost endeavours in their several stations, to promote the excellent and most desirable ends for which his highness had declared. They added their continued fervent prayers to the Almighty, for the preservation of his highness' person, and the success of his future endeavours for the defence and propagation of the Protestant interest throughout the Christian world; that they should all most willingly have chosen that time for the season of paying their duty to his highness, when the lord-bishop and the clergy of London attended his highness for the same purpose (which some of them did, and which his lordship was pleased condescendingly to make mention of to his highness), had their notice of that intended application been so early as to make their more general attendance possible at that time. Therefore, though they did now appear in a distinct company, it was not on a distinct account, but on that only which was common to them, and to all Protestants." ²

William in a gracious reply told them that his great purpose was to "defend and support" the Protestant religion, and to "give it strength and reputation throughout the world, sufficient to preserve it from the insults and oppressions of its most implacable enemies"; that he would aim to do this first of all in these kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and that he would "use his utmost endeavours so to settle and cement all different persuasions of Protestants in such a bond of love and community, as may contribute to the lasting security and engagement of spirituals and temporals to all sincere professors of that holy religion." ³

These brief sentences contain William's religious policy. He was the irreconcilable enemy of Romanism everywhere. His chief reason for accepting the English crown was the hope that he might be able to use the power of England to check the policy of the French King, and so to check the growing political strength of Catholicism on the continent of Europe. He wished to make the English Church sufficiently comprehensive to include the great body of the English Non-conformists. If there were any true Protestants who might feel compelled to remain out of the national Establishment after the terms of conformity were relaxed, he wished them to enjoy complete toleration.

² Calamy, *Memoirs of Howe*, 142-144. Compton, the Bishop of London, with a considerable number of the clergy and a few Nonconformist ministers, had presented their congratulations to William on December 21, three days after his entrance into London. Mackintosh, 554.

³ *Gazette*, Jan. 5, 1688-9.

II

The "Convention" met on January 22, and, after long debates, resolved on February 12 that "William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, be and be declared King and Queen of England, France and Ireland."⁴ During his life, "the sole and full exercise of the royal power" was to be vested in William; it was to pass to Mary, if she survived him. With the offer of the crown, the Convention made a "Declaration of Rights," in which, among other articles defining the constitutional liberties of the kingdom, there are several suggested by the late religious troubles. It is declared—

"That the pretended Power of suspending of Laws [or the execution of laws] by Regal Authority, without Consent of Parliament, is illegal; that the pretended Power of dispensing with Laws, or the Execution of Laws, by Regal Authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal; that the Commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for ecclesiastical Causes, and all other Commissions and Courts of like Nature, are illegal and pernicious; . . . [and] that the Subjects, which are Protestants, may have Arms for their Defence, suitable to their conditions, as allowed by law."⁵

On February 13 the two Houses went to Whitehall, and Lord Halifax, as Speaker of the House of Lords, made the offer of the crown to William and Mary. The Clerk of the Lords read the Declaration of Rights. William accepted the offer in his own name and Mary's; and the same day the new King and Queen were proclaimed.⁶

III

To remove all doubts concerning the legality of the proceedings of the Convention, an Act was passed declaring it to be to all intents a legal Parliament; and the Act required the members of both Houses to take the usual oaths to the new Sovereign.⁷ The form of the Oath of Allegiance occasioned

⁴ The crown of Scotland was offered to William and Mary by the Scottish estates a few weeks later.

⁵ C. J. (Feb. 12, 1688-9), x. 28-29. I. J., xiv. 125-126.

⁶ Mackintosh, 627-628.

⁷ I W. and M., cap. 1.

long discussions, and it was reduced to the simplest terms. Those who took it were simply required to swear that they would "bear true allegiance to their Majesties King William and Queen Mary"; the words "rightful and lawful sovereigns" were omitted.⁸ But Sancroft, and several of the bishops, and the Earls of Clarendon, Lichfield, and Exeter, and several of the members of the House of Commons, refused to swear.

There was nothing, however, to enforce the oaths on the clergy generally; or even on the bishops, so long as they did not attempt to take their seats in the House of Lords; nor did the Act impose the oaths on the civil or military servants of the Crown. Whether previous statutes enjoining the oaths in their old form were still in force, was regarded as doubtful. An Act was therefore passed for *Abrogating the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, and appointing other Oaths*. It required all holders of ecclesiastical office, as well as other persons holding office under the Crown, to take the new Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance.⁹

But to many of the bishops, and to large numbers of the clergy, James was "the Lord's anointed." He was King by divine right; and for more than a generation they had been teaching that no crimes committed by a lawful prince against the nation could justify resistance to his authority. During the debates on the settlement of the kingdom, Sancroft had proposed that James should be recognised as King, and that the Prince of Orange should be invited to govern as Regent. He could not revoke the oath of allegiance that he had sworn to James; and James was still his sovereign by right divine.¹⁰

The Act required the oaths to be taken before August 1, 1689. Sancroft, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Turner, Bishop of Ely, Frampton, Bishop of Gloucester, Lloyd, Bishop of Norwich, and White, Bishop of Peterborough, resolutely refused to submit; under the Act they were suspended for six months, and at the end of the

⁸ I W. and M., cap. 1, § 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, cap. 8, § 3.

¹⁰ D'Oyley, *Sancroft*, i. 413 foll.; and particularly, 420-421. In the debates in the Convention, Sir Robert Howard had met the theory of "divine right" in a very frank and fearless style. "I have heard," he said, "that the King has his crown by divine right; but we the people have a divine right too." Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, v. 46.

six months, February 1690-1, were *ipso facto* deprived.¹¹ Ejection, however, did not follow at once. Sancroft's successor, Tillotson, was not nominated till April 23, and he did not gain possession of Lambeth till June 23, 1691.¹²

About four hundred of the inferior clergy followed the example of the six non-juring bishops and forfeited their livings.¹³ The *Non-jurors* claimed to be the true heirs and representatives of the English Church. They ordained several bishops and maintained a separate worship. They contended that the State has no ecclesiastical authority over the Church, and that, therefore, the bishops deposed by William were the only true and lawful bishops of their several dioceses; that their successors were guilty of rebellion against their true Sovereign and of creating a schism in the Church; and that all persons remaining in communion with them shared their sin. In 1718 the sect was split into two parties—each of which continued to consecrate its bishops. The last of the bishops is said to have died in Ireland in 1805; and in 1815 a non-juring clergyman is said to have been living in the west of England.¹⁴

IV

While the Oaths Bill was before Parliament, William made a speech to both Houses (March 16) in which he expressed the hope, that while they provided for the exclusion of Papists, they would "leave room for the admission of all Protestants" that were "willing and able" to serve the Crown; and he let it be known that if Parliament would consent to the repeal of

¹¹ 1 W. and M., cap. 8, § 7.

¹² D'Oyley, *Sancroft*, i. 462-470. Three other bishops had also refused to take the oaths—Thomas of Worcester, Lake of Chichester, and Cartwright of Chester. Thomas died in June, Lake in August, 1689, and Cartwright within the year. *Kettlewell, Life*, 199-204. Lathbury, *History of the Non-jurors*, 45. Of the seven bishops who had refused to read the Declaration of Indulgence, five refused the oaths: Lloyd of St. Asaph, and Trelawney of Bristol, who had refused to read the Declaration, consented to take them.

¹³ Lathbury, *ibid.*, 84. And see the list in *Kettlewell, Life, Appendix*, xii.-xxxv.

¹⁴ Lathbury, 97-99; 290-291; 362-364; 412. Mason, *Vindiciæ*, translated by Lindsay, Pref. lxxxiii-iv; *Kettlewell, Life*, 345-349. D'Oyley (*Sancroft*, ii. 34-35, *note*) states that the non-juring bishops had died out at an earlier date, 1779.

the Test Act which disqualified Nonconformists for all places of public trust, he was willing that the clergy in actual possession of benefices should be exempted from the necessity of taking the oath of allegiance.¹⁵ To meet the wishes of the King, a committee of the Lords drew up a clause for insertion in the Bill, abolishing the Sacramental Test as a qualification for any office, employment, or place of trust; but the clause was rejected by a large majority. A second clause was proposed by which it was provided that it should be sufficient if a person duly appointed should, within a year before or a year after his admission to office, receive the Sacrament, either according to the usages of the Church of England or according to the usages of any other Protestant congregation. This too was rejected by a heavy majority.¹⁶

During the debates on the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy in the House of Commons, it was proposed to repeal the Corporation Act, which made the receiving of the Sacrament according to the rites of the English Church a necessary qualification for holding any municipal office. A Bill was brought in for that purpose, and passed its second reading. But when it was about to be committed, it was moved that the committee should be instructed to make no alteration in the law touching the Sacrament. This was met, not by a direct negative, but by a motion for adjournment, which was carried by a narrow majority—116 to 114; and the Bill was then dropped.¹⁷

But though the Test Act and the Corporation Act were to remain unrepealed for nearly a century and a half longer, Parliament was quite ready to give to the Nonconformists very substantial relief. Owing partly to the mutual jealousies of statesmen and of the two great political parties, it was not possible as yet to admit any persons that refused to take the Sacrament according to the rites of the English Church into municipal corporations or into the service of the Crown; but the time had come for a toleration of their worship.

Before the non-juring bishops withdrew from the House

¹⁵ L. J. (March 16, 1688-9), xiv. 150. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, v. 184.

¹⁶ L. J. (March 15, 21, 1688-9), xiv. 148, 156-157. *Ibid.* (March 23, 1688-9), xiv. 158-159. Rogers, *Protests*, i. 72-74. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, v. 196-198.

¹⁷ Grey, *Debates* (Feb. 25, 1688-9), ix. 110-111. C. J. (April 1, 1689), x. 74.

of Lords, they moved for the introduction of two Bills for the relief of their dissenting brethren—a Bill for the comprehension of the more moderate Nonconformists in the national Establishment, and a Bill for tolerating the worship of those who might be unable to conform.

V

The Toleration Bill was brought into the House of Lords on February 28, 1688–9, by the Earl of Nottingham, the Tory Secretary of State.¹⁸ It passed both Houses without difficulty, and received the royal assent on May 24.

The Act is entitled *An Act for exempting their Majesties' Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of Certain Laws*.¹⁹ After reciting a series of persecuting statutes beginning with the Act of Uniformity passed in the first year of Elizabeth, it is enacted that none of them—

“ Shall be construed to extend to any person or persons dissenting from the Church of England, that shall take the oaths mentioned in . . . an Act for removing and preventing all questions and disputes concerning the assembling and sitting of the present Parliament, and shall make and subscribe the Declaration mentioned in a statute made in the thirtieth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, entitled, *an Act to prevent Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament*.”²⁰

The *oaths* were the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of Supremacy, and were in the following words :—

“ 1. I do sincerely Promise and Swear, That I will be faithful, and bear true Allegiance, to Their Majesties King William and Queen Mary. So help me God.

“ 2. I do swear, That I do from my Heart abhor, detest and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable Doctrine and

¹⁸ William had appointed both Whigs and Tories to offices of State ; the modern method of creating a Cabinet of one political party—the party commanding a majority in the House of Commons—was adopted on the suggestion of the Earl of Sunderland a few years later.

¹⁹ 1 W. and M., cap. 18. L. J. (Feb. 28, 1688–9, and May 24, 1689), xiv. 134, 217. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, v. 263–266.

²⁰ 1 W. and M., cap. 18, § 2. The numbering of the sections differs considerably in the various editions of the Statutes.

Position, That Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any Authority of the See of Rome, may be Deposed or Murdered by their Subjects, or any other, whatsoever.

“ And I do Declare, That no Foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath or ought to have any Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority, Pre-eminence or Authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this Realm : So help me God.”²¹

The *Declaration* declares that Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Invocation of the Virgin and the Saints are superstitious and idolatrous.²²

Another clause exempts such persons from “ the pains, penalties, and forfeitures ” to which, under the Acts of Elizabeth and Charles II. for the suppression of “ seditious Conventicles,” they are liable for being present at Nonconformist worship.²³

In subsequent clauses Nonconformist *ministers* are relieved from certain pains and penalties. Persons “ in holy Orders, or pretended holy Orders, or pretending to holy Orders,” who take the oaths and subscribe the Declaration, and who also declare their “ approbation of and subscribe ” the Thirty-nine Articles—with the exception of the Thirty-fourth (*Of the Traditions of the Church*), the thirty-fifth (*Of the Homilies*), and the thirty-sixth (*Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers*), and the words of the twentieth article affirming that “ the Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies and authority in Controversies of Faith ”—are exempted from the pains and penalties of the Five Mile Act, and from the fine of £100 inflicted by the Act of Uniformity of Charles II. on any person consecrating and administering the Lord’s Supper who has not been episcopally ordained.²⁴ Nonconformist ministers are exempted by the Act from serving on juries, and from the obligation to fill parochial offices.²⁵

Baptists are exempted from the obligation to subscribe the article on Infant Baptism.²⁶ *Quakers* are allowed to make a solemn declaration instead of taking the oaths. They are exempted from signing the Articles, but are required to profess their faith in the Trinity and in the inspiration of Holy

²¹ 1 W. and M., cap. 1, §§ 6, 7.

²³ 1 W. and M., cap. 18, § 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, § 11.

²² 30 Car. II., stat. 2, cap. 1, § 3.

²⁴ 1 W. and M., cap. 18, § 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, § 10.

Scripture.²⁷ *Unitarians* are left without protection: it is expressly declared that "neither this Act, nor any clause herein contained, shall be construed to give, in any case, benefit or advantage to any person that shall deny the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity:"²⁸ eight years later (1697), an Act was passed which made the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity a penal offence, punishable, on a second conviction, with three years' imprisonment.²⁹ *Roman Catholics* are also excluded from the benefits of the Act.³⁰

Previous legislation making attendance on public worship compulsory is confirmed. Every person in the kingdom is still left under a legal compulsion to be present at the worship of the English Church on Sunday, unless he is present at some congregation or assembly for religious worship permitted by the Act.³¹

For a Nonconformist congregation to secure the protection of the Act, the place in which it worships must be *certified* to the bishop, the archdeacon, or the justices of the quarter sessions; and during religious worship *the doors must not be "locked, barred, or bolted"*—a provision intended to prevent the holding of seditious meetings under pretence of celebrating Nonconformist worship.³² Any person *disturbing* the worship of a dissenting congregation meeting in a certified building is made liable to a fine of twenty pounds.³³

The Act is a curious example of the characteristic methods of English legislation. The Act of Uniformity is not repealed; the preamble of the Act is left on the Statute-Book, declaring that "a great number of people in divers parts of the realm, following their own sensuality and living without knowledge and due fear of God, do wilfully and schismatically abstain and refuse to come to their parish churches"; but the persons guilty of this grievous offence are exempted from the penalties which the Act imposes on them; if they take the necessary oaths and make the necessary declaration, they may continue to follow "their own sensuality and live without knowledge and due fear of God." The Conventicle Acts, which inflict heavy fines on persons present at Conventicles, are not repealed;

²⁷ 1 W. and M., cap. 18, § 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, § 17.

²⁹ 9 and 10 W. III., cap. 35. (Cap. 32 in some editions.)

³⁰ 1 W. and M., cap. 18, § 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, § 16.

³² *Ibid.*, § 19, 5.

³³ *Ibid.*, § 18.

but it is declared that persons may be present at conventicles without being fined. The Five Mile Act is not repealed; but Nonconformist clergymen may reside within five miles of their former parish, or within five miles of a municipal corporation, without being liable to any punishment.

Notwithstanding its gross imperfections, the Toleration Act secured freedom of worship to the great majority of Dissenters, and is the foundation of our present liberties. It legalised Nonconformity.

VI

The Comprehension Bill—described as *An Act for uniting their Majesties' Protestant Subjects*—was introduced into the House of Lords by the Earl of Nottingham and read a first time on March 11, 1688-9.³⁴

It was a very bold measure. Candidates for ordination in the English Church, instead of being required to sign the Articles and to declare that the Book of Common Prayer and of ordering of bishops and deacons contained in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, were to make the following declaration—"I do approve of the doctrine and worship and government of the Church of England by law established, as containing all things necessary to salvation: and I promise in the exercise of my ministry, to preach and practise according thereunto"; and as the Bill passed through the House, the clause declaring *approval* of the doctrine, worship, and government of the Church, was softened down to an engagement to "*submit* to the present constitution" of the Church.³⁵ The revised Declaration was in the following terms:—

"I, A B, do submit to the present Constitution of the Church of England. I acknowledge that the Doctrine of it contains all things necessary to Salvation, and I will conform myself to the worship and the government thereof as established by Law, and

³⁴ L. J. (March 11 and 14, 1688-9, April 4 and 5, 1689), xiv. 145-146, 147-148, 167, 168-169.

³⁵ "Had the Bill become law, the only people in the kingdom who would have been under the necessity of signing the Articles would have been the dissenting preachers." Macaulay, *Hist.*, iii. 94.

I solemnly promise in the exercise of my Ministry to Preach and practise according thereunto.”³⁶

A minister who had received Presbyterian ordination was not to be required to be re-ordained in order to be admitted to a living in the English Church; it was to be sufficient that he submitted to the imposition of the hands of a bishop, who was to address him in these words,—“Take thou authority to Preach the word of God, and administer the sacraments, and to perform all other Ministerial Offices in the Church of England.” This clause, however, was struck out.³⁷

By the Act of Uniformity every clergyman presented to any benefice was required, within two months after he was in actual possession of it, to declare “openly and publicly, before the congregation,” his “unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer . . . and the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons”: this declaration was to be unnecessary.³⁸

Except in the Royal Chapels, and in cathedrals and collegiate churches, the surplice was to be unnecessary. No communicant was to be compelled to kneel when receiving the Lord’s supper. No minister was to be compelled to make the sign of the cross when baptizing a child. If the parents wished it, godfathers and godmothers were to be dispensed with.³⁹

The Bill closed with a petition to their Majesties to appoint a commission to revise the Liturgy and the Canons, and to consider by what alterations in the ecclesiastical courts their jurisdiction might be made more effective, especially in the removal of scandalous ministers.⁴⁰

On the last clause of the Bill there was a vigorous discussion. The Bill provided that the Commission should consist of thirty bishops and priests; the Whig lords insisted

³⁶ A copy of the Bill, preserved among the records of the House of Lords, was published for the first time in the appendix to the *Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners appointed to consider the subscriptions, declarations, and oaths required to be made and taken by the clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland. Parl. Paper, 1865 (3441)*. For the Declaration see *Appendix, 47-48, 53*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

that some of the Commissioners should be laymen. On a division the numbers for and against the amendment were equal, and the amendment was therefore lost.⁴¹

VII

In the House of Commons the friends of the Nonconformists were in a majority, and had they been united in favour of the Bill, they could easily have carried it. But, according to Bishop Burnet, some of those who—

“Seemed most favourable to the dissenters . . . set it up for a maxim, that it was fit to keep up a strong faction both in church and state; and they thought it was not agreeable to that, to suffer so great a body as the presbyterians to be made more easy, or more inclinable to unite to the church: they also thought that the *toleration would be best maintained, when great numbers should need it, and be concerned to preserve it*: so this good design being zealously opposed, and but faintly promoted, it fell to the ground.”⁴²

It was suggested that on such questions as those which were raised by the Bill it was proper to ask the opinion of Convocation; but as Parliament had not been regularly called, Convocation was not sitting. The House, therefore, agreed to postpone the further consideration of the Bill till the following year, and to advise the King to summon Convocation.⁴³

VIII

But the Royal Commission for the revision of the Prayer-Book and the Canons, and for considering what measures were necessary for the reformation of the ecclesiastical courts, was appointed. It included some of the most eminent of the bishops and theologians of the English Church—among the rest, Compton, Bishop of London, and Burnet, the new Bishop of Salisbury, Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Beveridge, Patrick, Kidder, and Tenison. The Commission sat eighteen times, and there

⁴¹ L. J. (April 5, 1689), xiv. 168-169. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, v. 213-214, and notes. Rogers, *Protests*, i. 74-79.

⁴² Burnet, iv. 20-21, and 17-19.

⁴³ Burnet, iv. 58, 59. Reresby, *Memoirs*, 344, 345. Nicholls, *Apparatus ad Def. Eccl. Anglic.*, 93. Birch, *Tillotson*, 344-345.

were also meetings of various committees. Burnet, Tillotson, and Tenison were never absent. Lessons from the canonical Scriptures were substituted for Lessons from the Apocrypha. The legendary saints' days were to be omitted. The damnable clauses of the Athanasian Creed were explained, and the use of that Creed was to be made less frequent. Forty-two new Collects were drawn up. The Beatitudes were inserted after the Ten Commandments in the Communion Service, with the petition, "Lord have mercy upon us and make us partakers of this blessing." In the office for Baptism parents are permitted to undertake the duty of instructing their children; godfathers and godmothers are not to be necessary; and the sign of the cross is to be omitted at the option of the minister. Additions were made to the Catechism and the Confirmation Service. The Absolution in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick was so modified as to lessen the Nonconformist objections to it.⁴⁴

But the labours of the Commission came to nothing. Convocation met at the end of November, and the Lower House showed itself irreconcilably opposed to any concession to the Nonconformists. The Comprehension Bill was dropped. It was the opinion of Calamy that if it had become law, two-thirds of the Nonconformists would have conformed.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ For details of the proposed alterations, see *Parl. Paper*, 1854 (283); and Calamy, *Abridgment*, i. 451-455. "The alterations cover ninety pages, and amount to 598 in number." Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 105.

⁴⁵ Nicholls, *App. ad Def. Eccl. Angl.*, 93-95, 97-100. Calamy, *Abridgment*, i. 448.

CHAPTER II

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESBYTERIANS AND THE INDEPENDENTS

MERCHANTS' LECTURE AT PINNERS' HALL—THE "UNITED BRETHREN" IN LONDON—"HEADS OF AGREEMENT"—PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH POLITY EMBODIED IN THEM—UNION OF THE CHURCHES ELSEWHERE—PEACE DISTURBED BY THE CENSURE OF DAVIS, AND BY CONTROVERSY OVER CRISP'S SERMONS—DR. WILLIAMS EJECTED FROM THE LECTURESHIP AT PINNERS' HALL, AND A PRESBYTERIAN LECTURESHIP SET UP AT SALTERS' HALL—PRESBYTERIANS DRIFT INTO INDEPENDENCY—DIFFERENCES IN ORGANISATION AND DOCTRINE BETWEEN PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS.

DURING the troubles which followed the passing of the Act of Uniformity more than one attempt had been made to bring about a good understanding between the Presbyterians and the Independents. In 1672, while the "Indulgence" of Charles II. was in force, some of the merchants and tradesmen of London had established a weekly Lecture—the Merchants' Lecture—to be delivered on Tuesday mornings in Pinners' Hall, Broad Street. The Lecture was for the defence of the Protestant religion against Romanism, Socinianism, and Infidelity. Four of the original Lecturers were Presbyterians; two were Independents.¹

In 1690, within two years after the passing of the Toleration Act, a serious attempt was made to draw the two denominations together and to suppress their distinctive names. On the side of the Congregationalists the most eminent ministers who took part in this project were Matthew Mead, of Stepney, and Isaac Chauncey, pastor of the Church in Mark Lane, which had formerly been under the pastorate of John Owen. Increase Mather, the eminent Congregationalist of Boston, Massachusetts, who happened to be in England, was also extremely active in promoting the union. On the side of the

¹ See Note A, p. 484.

Presbyterians were Baxter, Bates, Annesley, Sylvester, Daniel Williams, and John Howe, who at this time was more closely associated with the Presbyterians than with the Independents. Eighty or ninety ministers entered into the Union. It does not appear that their action was either authorised or approved by their Churches; and no layman took part in their deliberations. The Union was formed by the ministers, and by the ministers alone.

The Document which defines the foundation of the Union is entitled *Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers in and about London, formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational*.² Although the Churches had not been invited to express any judgment on the proposals, the scheme is not intended merely to promote brotherly intercourse among the ministers; it is "for the preservation of order" in the congregations that cannot conform; and "the general concurrence of the people," as well of the ministers in London and in other parts of the kingdom, is referred to as a proof that the work had been undertaken at a time when the "Divine influence" would "overcome all impediments to peace."³

There are no longer to be any Presbyterians or any Congregationalists, and the controversies which had extended over more than a hundred years are to cease; for, as the Preface declares,—

"It's incumbent on us, to forbear condemning and disputing those different sentiments and practices we have expressly allowed for; to reduce all distinguishing Names to that of UNITED BRETHREN; to admit no uncharitable jealousies, or censorious speeches; much less any debates whether Party seems most favoured by this Agreement."⁴

1. The Agreement recognises the fundamental principle of Congregationalism—that personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is an indispensable qualification for church membership.

"None shall be admitted as Members, in order to Communion in all the special Ordinances of the Gospel, but such persons as are

² The *Heads of Agreement* were published in a quarto pamphlet in 1691. The pamphlet was reprinted in full in the *Congregational Magazine* for February, 1843. And see Calamy, *Memoir of Howe*, 180 fol.; and *Abridgment*, i. 476-483.

³ *Heads of Agreement*, i.-ii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii.-iv.

knowing and sound in the *fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion*, without Scandal in their Lives; and to a Judgment regulated by the Word of God, are persons of visible Godliness and Honesty; credibly professing cordial subjection to Jesus Christ.”⁵

2. It recognises another fundamental principle of Congregationalism—that every society of Christian men and women meeting regularly for worship, communion, and instruction in Christian truth and duty, is a Church.

“Particular Societies of Visible Saints, who under Christ their Head, are stately joined together for ordinary Communion with one other, in all the Ordinances of Christ, are *particular Churches*, and are to be owned by each other, as Instituted Churches of Christ, though differing in *apprehensions* and *practice* in some lesser things.”⁶

3. It recognises the Independence of every individual Church—its right to choose its own officers, and the “authority” it has “received from Christ for exercising government.”⁷

4. It recognises, though in terms suggested by Presbyterian traditions, the responsibilities and rights of the ordinary members of the Church.

“In the Administration of *Church power*, it belongs to the *Pastors* and other *Elders* of every particular Church (if such there be) to *rule* and *govern*; and to the Brotherhood to *Consent*, according to the *Rule of the Gospel*.”⁸

All the early Independents insisted on the authority that belongs to the pastor and elders; but it is doubtful whether any of them, except Francis Johnson, would have been willing to accept the terms in which the *Agreement* defines the power and duty of the people. Some expressions, indeed, might be quoted from John Robinson which approach very nearly to the same theory of the place of the commonalty in the Church, but they are inconsistent with the general spirit of his writings. It is true that the authority to give consent to the proposals of church rulers implies the authority to withhold it; but the language points to that theory of Presbyterian-Independence which was suggested by the troubles of the Church at Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

⁵ *Heads of Agreement*, 2-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

5. There is also a Presbyterian element in some of the articles of the *Agreement* in relation to the ministry.

(a) In the calling and choosing of a pastor it is agreed that "ordinarily" a Church should not act on its own responsibility.

"In so great and weighty a matter, as the calling and choosing a *Pastor*, we judge it ordinarily requisite, That every such Church consult and advise with the *Pastors* of neighbouring congregations."⁹

Such consultation would be regarded as wise and expedient by the most earnest Independents; but to declare it "ordinarily requisite" is a concession to Presbyterianism.

(b) The concurrence of the pastors of neighbouring congregations is also declared to be "ordinarily requisite" in the ordination of a minister after he has accepted the call of a Church. This, too, is contrary to the severer principles and traditions of Independency.¹⁰

(c) And it is declared to be "expedient" that before a pastor-elect is ordained, he should satisfy the pastors of neighbouring Churches that he has the qualifications which are necessary for the work of the pastorate.

"It is expedient, that they who enter on the work of Preaching the Gospel be not only qualified for Communion of Saints, but also that, except in *cases extraordinary*, they give proof of their *Gifts and Fitness* for the *said work*, unto the *pastors of Churches* of known abilities to discern and judge of their qualifications; That they may be sent forth with *Solemn Approbation and Prayer*; which we judge needful, *that no doubt may remain concerning their being called to the work*, and for the preventing (as much as in us lieth) ignorant and rash intruders."¹¹

In other words, no man was to be ordained to the pastorate without the sanction of an informal synod or council. It has been the general custom of Independent Churches to invite the concurrence of neighbouring pastors in the ordination of their ministers, and the pastors who take part in an ordination have clearly the right—though of late years it has not often been formally and publicly exercised—to satisfy themselves that the minister they ordain has "gifts and fitness" for pastoral work; but the terms of this section disclose a distrust

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

of the individual Church that would have provoked the antagonism of the earlier representatives of Independency.

6. The question whether there should be "Ruling Elders, who labour not in *word and doctrine*," is left open. On this point the opinion of early Congregationalists was divided; but the general judgment of English Congregational Churches from the time of Henry Jacob had recognised only two classes of church officers—pastors and deacons.¹²

7. While the agreement declares "that none of our particular Churches shall be *subordinate* to one another, each being endued with *equality of power* from Jesus Christ"—which is the genuine Congregational and Independent idea and is expressed in a genuine Congregational and Independent form—and while it further declares that "none of the said particular Churches, their officer or officers, shall exercise any *power*, or have any *superiority*, over any other Church or their officers," it is agreed that occasional synods should be held—*consisting of ministers only*—and that the judgment of these synods should have great moral weight.

"1. We agree, That in order to concord, and in any other weighty and difficult cases, it is needful, and according to the mind of Christ, that the Ministers of several Churches be consulted and advised with about such matters.

"2. That such Meetings may consist of smaller or greater numbers, as the matter shall require.

"3. That particular churches, their respective Elders, and Members, ought to have a reverential regard to their judgment so given, and not dissent therefrom, without apparent grounds from the word of God."¹³

8. In matters of faith it is declared to be sufficient—

"That a Church acknowledge the Scriptures to be the word of God, the perfect and only Rule of Faith and Practice; and own either the Doctrinal part of those commonly called the Articles of the Church of England, or the Confession, or Catechisms, Shorter or Larger, compiled by the Assembly at Westminster, or the Confession agreed on at the Savoy, to be agreeable to the said Rule."¹⁴

On the whole, the *Heads of Agreement* are strongly in favour of the Congregational Polity; but the Congregation-

¹² *Heads of Agreement*, 12-13.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11, 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

alists who accepted them could hardly have had that glowing vision of a society of saints, one with Christ, filled with His Spirit, the organ of His will, which had kindled the imagination of their ecclesiastical ancestors. It is still more certain that the Presbyterians who accepted it must have long surrendered, if any of them had ever held, the theory of the divine right or Presbytery.¹⁵

II

The *Heads of Agreement* were accepted as a basis of union by Presbyterians and Independents in many parts of the kingdom. Some good men welcomed the reconciliation of the two great Nonconformist bodies with a passion of thankfulness. John Flavel "did frequently bless the Lord for that Mercy, both in public and private, and even melted into Tears of Joy at the mentioning of it." He said that "he could now take up the words of old Simeon, '*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.*'"¹⁶ "Meetings of Ministers," which included both Presbyterians and Independents, were established in many counties. They were held, in some cases, annually, and in others half-yearly, for the consideration of matters of common interest, and their "advice" was supposed to have been the means of "preserving love, peace, and order among their churches."

In London the peace was soon disturbed. At the instigation of some country ministers, the "United Brethren" in London published a censure on the doctrinal teaching and the ministerial irregularities of Mr. Davis, the Congregational minister of Rothwell¹⁷ in Northamptonshire. Mr. Davis had been a schoolmaster in London, and a member of the Church of which Thomas Cole, a vigorous Independent, was the pastor. He became pastor of the Church at Rothwell in 1691 without having received any regular education for the ministry. He was a man of vehement zeal and an effective popular preacher. He went about the midland counties preaching the Gospel with great success, sometimes travelling eighty miles from home

¹⁵ Cf. Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 293-294.

¹⁶ John Flavel, *Remains*, xvii.-xviii., and cf. *ibid.*, 104-105. He was chosen to be Moderator of the General Meeting held at Topsham, presided over its proceedings in the morning, and died at night.

¹⁷ Sometimes given as Rowell.

in his evangelistic work. Many of his converts lived too far from Rothwell to be able to attend the services there with any regularity. He therefore suggested that they should hold religious meetings among themselves for religious conversation and worship. When he could, he visited them himself; sometimes he sent them "lay" preachers from the Rothwell Church. The grave and learned ministers of London heard with dismay that in Northamptonshire, with Mr. Davis's approval, a swarm of tailors, weavers, dyers, shoe-makers, and farmers were preaching the Gospel. This was not all. He seems to have been betrayed into vehement denunciation of ministers and Churches that did not share his own passionate earnestness.

He was charged with teaching some perilous errors on the subject of faith, and justification, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; with maintaining, for example,—“that all believers at all times stand before God without sin; yea, when they are sinning against God, they are without spot before God; and when they have sinned and prayed for pardon, it is for the discovery thereof to their conscience, and not for what is properly forgiveness.”¹⁸ There appears to be no doubt that in his eagerness to glorify the divine grace Mr. Davis had passed beyond the limits of Calvinism into the paradoxes of Antinomian heresies; although there was no charge against his personal character.

The London ministers censured him heavily; censured his irregular practices, his “arrogancy and insolence,” and his “abominable assertions” concerning Christian doctrine. They declared that he had never been recognised as one of the “United Brethren,” and solemnly disowned him.

To many Independents this assumption of authority on the part of the London ministers was intolerable; and many of them had strong sympathy with Mr. Davis in the faith and practices for which he was condemned. They insisted less strenuously than the Presbyterians on the universal necessity of a regular education for the Christian ministry; and they held a more rigid form of Calvinism.¹⁹

¹⁸ Calamy, *Abridgment*, i. 513.

¹⁹ Davis, R., *Truth and Innocency vindicated* (1692). Calamy, *Abridgment*, i. 512-514; *Historical Account*, i. 372-374; *Memoir of Howe*, 182. Toulmin, *Historical View*, 188-192. Skeats, *Free Churches*, 177-178. Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 295-296.

Divisions of a still graver kind were created by the controversy on the works of Dr. Tobias Crisp. Dr. Crisp, who had begun life as an Arminian, ended as a very high Calvinist. He was Rector of Brinkworth in Wiltshire, and died in 1642. In the three volumes of his sermons which were published after his death, there were opinions which provoked the alarm and condemnation of the more moderate Calvinistic divines; and it is even said that some of the members of the Westminster Assembly were anxious to have the books publicly burnt. Soon after the accession of William III., Crisp's sermons were republished by his son, with some additions from his father's unpublished manuscripts, and several eminent ministers—John Howe among them—signed a prefatory notice declaring that the manuscripts were genuine. The republication provoked great excitement. Crisp's theology was fiercely denounced as destructive of the foundations of Christian righteousness. The ministers who had attested the genuineness of his manuscripts were supposed to have expressed their approval of his opinions.

Dr. Daniel Williams attacked the heresies in one of his Merchants' Lectures at Pinners' Hall, and in a treatise entitled *Gospel Truth stated and vindicated*.²⁰ Bates, Howe, Alsop, Shower, and twelve other Nonconformist ministers wrote testimonials approving of Dr. Williams's book, and these appeared in the first edition (1692). In a second edition testimonials appeared from a still larger number of theologians. But this attempt to strengthen Dr. Williams's position, and to suppress the opinions of Dr. Crisp by the authority of great names, increased the importance and the bitterness of the controversy. Most of the Independents were against Dr. Williams: they thought that in his assault on Dr. Crisp he had compromised the freedom of the divine grace. Most of the Presbyterians were on his side. Dr. Williams was driven from the Lectureship at Pinners' Hall, and a new Presbyterian Lectureship was set up at Salters' Hall (1694): Bates, Howe, and Alsop went with him.²¹ In the fierceness

²⁰ *Gospel Truth stated and vindicated, wherein some of Dr. Crisp's opinions are considered. Discourses*, iii. 1-273.

²¹ Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 351-352; *Abridgment*, i. 537; *Memoir of Howe*, 194. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 4. The Salters' Hall Lectureship was maintained for about a hundred years. Toulmin (*Historical View*, 211), writing in 1814, says: "A few years since, the Lecture at Salters' Hall, for want of support and attendance, was given up."

of the conflict some of the opponents of Dr. Williams attempted to ruin his moral reputation; and when the charge which was brought against him was shown to be wholly false, they accused him of Socinianism.

The controversy raged for seven years, and then the leading Congregationalists and the leading Presbyterians united in a formal condemnation of Antinomian heresies.²²

III

The *Heads of Agreement* had made it apparent that the Presbyterians had no earnest desire to set up the Presbyterian polity. Many—perhaps most of them—would have been glad to see a national Presbyterian Establishment; but they did not care to create a voluntary Presbyterian Church. In practice they became Independents. Each minister, with his congregation, stood apart; there were relations of friendly sympathy between ministers and congregations in the same town and in the same country; but the Presbyterian minister and his people were just as free as the Congregational minister and his people from the control of any external authority. They were Independents—but not Congregationalists.

1. It is of the essence of Congregationalism that the Church—an organised Society of persons professing personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—should receive members into its fellowship, should exercise discipline, should elect and depose its ministers and other church officers. But among the Presbyterians such a Society was very rarely organised; and when it was organised, its powers were extremely restricted. The Rev. Joseph Hunter, who is justly regarded as a high historical authority by the modern English Presbyterians—commonly called Unitarians—puts this very clearly. He says:—

“ In the formation of the Independent Congregations there was usually more of speciality and solemnity than appears to have been the case at the establishment of those which were Presbyterian,

²² For fuller details of the controversy, see also Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 321-324, 394-397, 409-410; *Abridgment*, i. 515-516; *Memoir of Howe*, 184-185; Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 198-204; and Skeats, *Free Churches*, 178-183, with the authorities, 183, *note*.

and an historical register was kept of all matters interesting to the congregation, such as the election of pastors and the disowning or admission of members ; so that it was known, with as much precision as it now is by the Quakers, who were members of the body. There was little if anything of this at the original setting out of the Presbyterians. The ministers received all comers who were disposed to leave the Church and place themselves under their pastorship ; and though at first it appears to have been the case that some kind of permission was obtained from the minister before a person not before known was received to the Lord's table, yet even this soon fell into disuse, and the principle of open communion, as it was called, became very generally, if not universally, the principle of the Presbyterian congregations, which was in effect, that any person might join in the Sacraments, as well as in the worship, without any ostensible form of admission, just as he might in the National Church." ²³

2. The election of the minister in Presbyterian congregations was sometimes vested in the trustees, sometimes in the congregation ; and the congregation was taken to mean either (a) all persons that customarily attended the chapel ; or (b) those who had been accustomed to subscribe ; or (c), when the letting of pews was introduced, persons holding seats.²⁴ Among the true Congregationalists the Church and the Church alone had authority to elect the minister.

3. The controversies over Mr. Davis of Rothwell and on the opinions of Dr. Crisp revealed a difference of doctrinal tendency between the two denominations. The Presbyterians were still Calvinists, but Calvinists of a moderate type ; and they were greatly alarmed by the more extravagant opinions which claimed the shelter of the recognised Calvinistic theology. The Independents were Calvinists of a stricter and more resolute kind ; they were not Antinomians, but they were disposed to forgive the excesses of Calvinism, while they regarded any movement towards Arminianism with the deepest apprehension. Dr. Crisp might have exaggerated some of the characteristic doctrines of the Calvinistic theology : but

²³ Joseph Hunter, *Life of Oliver Heywood*, 416.

²⁴ "It might have been presupposed that this unsettled state of things would lead to dissensions, and so undoubtedly it sometimes has done ; but, practically, the system of popular election, even with the additional circumstance of no clear right vesting in any party, has not been found to work ill, it often happening that the congregation find it for their interest to defer to the opinion of one or two principal contributors." Hunter, *ibid.*, 422.

they feared that the Presbyterians were surrendering them ; and they thought that Dr. Crisp's error was the less perilous. They believed that if Calvinism was surrendered, the Churches would gradually drift into Socinianism ; and events which happened within a quarter of a century confirmed their fears.

NOTE A

The Merchants' Lecture

The six original Lecturers were William Bates, Thomas Manton, Richard Baxter, William Jenkyn, John Owen, and John Collins. Manton, Owen, Jenkyn, and Baxter were succeeded by John Howe, Matthew Mead, Vincent Alsop, and Daniel Williams. Among those who held the Lectureship after the secession of the Presbyterians (see p. 481) were Nathaniel Mather, Thomas Bradbury, John Hurrion, Richard Winter ; and, in the present (nineteenth) century, the Claytons, George and John Burder, Henry Foster, John Pye-Smith, Robert Vaughan, Samuel Martin, James Sherman, Thomas Binney, Alexander Raleigh. In 1778 the Lecture was removed from Pinners' Hall to Old Broad Street Chapel ; in 1844 to the Poultry Chapel, and delivered once a month ; in 1869 to the Weigh House ; and in the following year, 1870, the weekly Lectures were resumed. In 1873, for a short period while the Weigh House was under repairs, the Lecture was given in the Dutch Church, Austin Friars. In 1883 it was removed to Finsbury Chapel, Moorfields. It is now again delivered at the Dutch Church, Austin Friars. (See Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 249-256.)

CHAPTER III

THE OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY ACT

ACCESSION OF ANNE—TORY REACTION—OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY BILL—MOTIVES OF ITS PROPOSERS—DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AMONG DISSENTERS AS TO THE LAWFULNESS OF THE PRACTICE—EDWIN'S CASE—DEFOE'S PROTEST—ABNEY'S CASE—DEFOE'S CHALLENGE TO JOHN HOWE, AND HOWE'S REPLY—DIVERGENT OPINIONS OF MODERATE AND HIGH CHURCHMEN—THE BILL CARRIED BY THE COMMONS, BLOCKED BY THE LORDS—SECOND ATTEMPT, AGAIN FOILED, TO CARRY IT—BURNET ON THE BILL—THIRD ATTEMPT: THE "TACK"—THE BILL DROPPED—SACHEVERELL'S ATTACK ON DISSENT—DEFOE'S "SHORTEST WAY WITH THE DISSENTERS"—SACHEVERELL IMPEACHED—POPULAR EXCITEMENT—TORIES IN POWER—A DEAL WITH THE WHIGS AT THE EXPENSE OF DISSENT—THE BILL CARRIED—ITS RESULTS.

WILLIAM III. died on March 8, 1701-2. During the last few years of his reign the hatred with which the High Church and Tory party regarded the Dissenters had been growing more bitter, and the news of his death was received with exultation and triumph among the enemies of the Toleration Act. The meeting-house at Newcastle-under-Lyme was partly wrecked by a violent mob, and there were fears of similar outrages in other parts of the kingdom.¹

His successor, Queen Anne, hated the Whigs, and was a zealous defender of the Church. When the Ministers of the Three Denominations² presented a loyal address congratulating her on her accession, she received them ungraciously. Most of the statesmen who had served William were dismissed from office, and their places filled by Tories. In the new House of Commons which met in October, the Tories "were at least double the number of the Whigs. They met full of fury against the memory of the late King, and against all who had been employed by him."³

¹ Calamy, *Abridgment*, i. 620; *Historical Account*, i. 460, note.

² See Note A, p. 496.

³ Burnet, v. 45.

I

Within a few weeks after the opening of Parliament a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons to prevent what the Tories denounced as a profane evasion of the Test and Corporation Acts. Under these Acts no person could hold any civil, military, or naval office under the Crown, or be elected a member of any municipal corporation, without receiving the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the English Church. There were Dissenters who qualified themselves for election as town councillors, aldermen, and mayors, by receiving the Lord's Supper at church immediately before their election; and the Tories declared that most of them never went to church again. The system not only allowed but encouraged profanity. It was said that—

“To make the celebration of this institution, which was ordained and confined by our Lord Himself to the serious remembrance of His death in the assemblies and churches of Christians, to be the instrument of some particular sort of Christians (as well as of infidels and Atheists) getting into civil offices, and to be the bar against other sorts of Christians, is debasing the most sacred thing in the world into a political tool and engine of State.”⁴

But the profanity of this practice, by which it was maintained that the most sacred service of the Christian Church suffered degradation, was not the only reason which led the Tories to introduce the Bill *For Preventing Occasional Conformity*. In a large number of cases the Corporations returned the Borough members. The Nonconformists were all Whigs; if they were excluded from municipal corporations, the Corporations would send Tory members to the House of Commons.

The lawfulness of “Occasional Conformity” had been acknowledged by the more moderate Dissenters ever since the passing of the Act of Uniformity. John Howe says:—

“In [16]62 [the very year in which that Act became law] most of the considerable, ejected London-ministers met, and agreed to hold *Occasional Communion* with the (now) re-established Church; not quitting their own Ministry, or declining the Exercise of it, as they could have opportunity. And as far as I could by

⁴ Bishop Hoadly, *Works*, ii. 522, in Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 423.

enquiry learn, I can little doubt this to have been the *Judgment* of their Fellow-sufferers, through the Nation, in great part, ever since." ⁵

There is no doubt that some Congregationalists, and the majority of those who were described as Presbyterians, practised "Occasional Conformity." The Baptists were more rigid: at an assembly of delegates from more than a hundred Churches, held soon after the passing of the Act of Toleration, it was recommended that members of Baptist Churches who communicated with the Church of England should, after admonition, be rejected.⁶

A few years before the death of William III. an attempt was made to make the question a subject of public controversy. In 1697, Sir Humphry Edwin, an eminent Congregationalist, was Lord Mayor of London, and he went in state to Pinners' Hall, which was being used as the meeting-house of a Congregational Church. This imprudent act provoked the fury of the High Churchmen, and did very much to rekindle their hatred of the Dissenters.⁷ For other reasons it provoked the keen criticism of Daniel Defoe, who published an anonymous pamphlet under the title of *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters in cases of Preferment: With a Preface to the Lord Mayor, occasioned by his carrying the Sword to a Conventicle* (1697). Defoe did not discuss the question whether the Dissenters were right in separating from the Church, but insisted that if a man's conscience compelled him to become a Nonconformist, he was violating his conscience if he conformed for the sake of qualifying himself for office.

In 1701 Sir Thomas Abney, a member of John Howe's Church, was Lord Mayor. Before his election he had received

⁵ *Some Consideration of a Preface to an Enquiry concerning the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters, etc.*, 33.

⁶ The Conference was held September 3-12, 1689. Fifty years later, at a meeting of the Baptist Board in 1742, it was unanimously decided that it was absolutely unlawful for a member of a "Gospel Church" to communicate with the Established Church on any consideration whatever. (See the details of Mr. Baskerville's case, and the letter of the ministers and deputies, in Ivimey, *English Baptists*, ii. 495; iii. 228-233.)

⁷ See Nicholls, *Apparatus ad Defen. Eccl. Angl.*, 108-109, and his *Defence*, 127—the English version, which is even more violent than the original. Pinners' Hall is "a nasty conventicle"; Edwin's action is a "horrid crime." And Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 400-401.

the Lord's Supper from a clergyman of the Established Church ; and Defoe republished his pamphlet with a preface in which he challenged John Howe to express his judgment on Sir Thomas Abney's conduct, and on "the practice of alternate communion,"—to condemn or justify it. In reply to the argument that the Sacrament thus taken is a civil rather than a religious act, and implies no religious conformity, he insists that the Sacrament, however and whenever administered, is the same in its nature and purpose ; and that to take it as a civil act in one place and a religious act in another "is *playing Bo-peep* with God Almighty." And as for the plea of patriotism and public duty, he says—"They are patriots indeed that will damn their souls to save their country." ⁸

Howe in his reply declared that for a long time he had felt a strong and constant reluctance to perplex himself or disturb others by taking part in controversies about "the circumstantial of our religion." He disclaims all responsibility for what Sir Thomas Abney had done, and refuses to pronounce any judgment upon it ; but it is clear that Howe's opinion was in favour of occasional communion with the English Church. He protests with great warmth against the insinuation of Defoe's title that "'Preferment' was the *inducement* to that worthy person, to act against his own conscience in that case, when it was his known judgment, testified by his practice several years before." ⁹

Moderate Churchmen regarded the practice of "Occasional Conformity" with hearty approval ; they believed, and believed rightly, that it softened the hostility of Dissenters to the Church, and made the position of the Church more secure.¹⁰ High Churchmen denounced it with passionate violence : it "ought to qualify its professors for a gaol instead of a church, bring them to the scaffold instead of the altar, and advance them to Haman's punishment instead of his preferment" ;

⁸ Defoe, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters in cases of Preferment* (1701), *Genuine Works*, i. 314-315. Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 464-465.

⁹ See Howe, *Occasional Conformity*, 1-3, 25-26, 34.

¹⁰ Burnet, v. 108-109. "I think the practice of occasional conformity, as used by the Dissenters, is so far from deserving the title of a vile hypocrisy, that it is the duty of all moderate Dissenters, on their own principles to do it." Archbishop Tenison, in *Abbey and Overton, English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 428.

it was "a prodigious act of the most audacious villany"; "Naaman's crime, more odious and stinking than his leprosy." The "Occasional Conformists" were "pious hypocrites," "double apostates," "miscreants"; "men like Esau, that reprobate of God," "like Gehazi, that will imprudently lie, and not have so much shame as he had to disown it."¹¹

This was the temper in which the Occasional Conformity Bill was introduced into the House of Commons in November, 1702. The Bill in its original form provided that if after taking the Test any member of a corporation, or any person holding an appointment under the Crown, attended any Dissenting service at which five persons were present—excluding members of the family, if the service were held in a dwelling-house,—he should cease to hold his office; he was to be fined a hundred pounds for his offence, and five pounds for every day in which he continued to discharge his official duties after he had attended the Dissenting service; he was to be incapable of holding any other office till he had conformed to the Church for a year, and his conformity was to be proved to the satisfaction of the magistrates at quarter-sessions; if after he was appointed to office a second time, he repeated his offence, the penalties were to be doubled.

The only persons on whom the Corporation Act imposed the sacramental test were mayors, aldermen, and town councillors; but the Occasional Conformity Bill inflicted on the ordinary "freemen" of cities and boroughs the penalty of disfranchisement for the crime of attending a Nonconformist service. Its real purpose was not merely to protect the Sacrament from profanation, but to strengthen the Tory interest in the House of Commons.

The Bill was carried in the House of Commons by a large majority. In the other House, which consisted largely of peers and bishops created by William, it was resolutely and skilfully opposed. To have thrown out the Bill altogether would have been to resist a strong popular passion; amendments were therefore adopted, to which it was known that the House of Commons would object. One of the most important of these touched the honour of the Lower House. It had recently been a contention on the part of the Commons

¹¹ Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 378. Several of the phrases cited are Sacheverell's.

that as the Lords had no right to alter the provisions of a money Bill, they had no right to increase or diminish the fines which a Bill sent up to them by the Commons attached to the violations of the law. To provoke a quarrel between the two Houses, in which there was a chance of the Bill being wrecked, some of the peers who were most hostile to it voted for lowering the fines. The plot succeeded. There was a conference between the two Houses on the Lords' amendment. After long discussions the Lords adhered to most of their amendments, and the Bill was lost. For the defeat of this attack on their liberties the moderate Dissenters were indebted chiefly to the courage and persistency of Archbishop Tenison and Bishop Burnet; under their leadership a majority of the bishops had voted against the Bill; and in the Conference with the Commons Burnet was one of the principal and ablest defenders of the amendment.¹²

In the next session (1703) the Bill was brought forward again, with some of its provisions softened; ¹³ it met with stronger opposition than before in the Commons, but was carried by a heavy majority. In the Lords the second reading was lost by a majority of twelve.¹⁴ Burnet, who was again one of the leading opponents of the measure, gives the following account of the grounds on which he resisted it:—

“ I knew how the act of test was carried. . . . I related that in the house, and the many practices of the papists, of setting us of the church against the dissenters, and the dissenters against us, by turns, as it might serve their ends. I ventured to say, that a man might lawfully communicate with a church that he thought

¹² Burnet, v. 49–54. The amendments made in the Bill by the House of Lords are shown in tabular form by Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 61–68; for the conferences between the two Houses, *ibid.*, 67–92. He has taken his facts from a paper printed by order of the House of Lords in 1702: *An Account of the Proceedings of the Lords Temporal and Spiritual in relation to the Bill intituled an Act to prevent Occasional Conformity*. C. J. (Nov. 14, 16, 25, 28; Dec. 9, 10, 12, 1702; Feb. 5, 1702–3), xiv. 34, 35–36, 46, 51, 76, 78, 80, 180–183. L. J. (Dec. 2, 3, 9, 17, 18, 1702; Jan. 8, 16; Feb. 24, 1702–3), xvii. 178, 178–180, 184–185, 192–193, 195, 230–231, 244, 306–315). The statements of the two Houses, given under the last reference in each case, are full and interesting.

¹³ Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 156, note; 168–170.

¹⁴ C. J. (Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 1703), xiv. 241, 246. Second reading carried by 210 votes to 132, third reading by 223 to 140. L. J. (Dec. 14, 1703), xvii. 348.

had a worship and a doctrine uncorrupted, and yet communicate more frequently with a church that he thought more perfect. I myself had communicated with the churches of Geneva and Holland ; and yet at the same time communicated with the Church of England : so, though the dissenters were in a mistake, as to their opinion which was the more perfect church, yet allowing them a toleration in that error, this practice might be justified.”¹⁵

In the following session (1704) a third attempt was made to carry the measure ; and, to force the Lords to pass it, the Tories and the High Churchmen proposed to “ tack ” it to the Land Tax Bill. This policy provoked great anger, and the “ Tackers,” as the Tories were called, were defeated by 251 to 134. In the Lords the Bill was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 34.¹⁶

The elections of 1705 gave the Whigs a majority in the House of Commons, and the “ Occasional Conformity ” Bill was laid aside for several years.

II

But the hostility with which the clergy and large masses of the people regarded the Dissenters did not diminish ; and the trial of Dr. Sacheverell raised it to a white heat.

Sacheverell is described by Bishop Burnet as—

“ A bold, insolent man, with a very small measure of religion, virtue, learning, or good sense ; but he resolved to force himself into popularity and preferment, by the most petulant railings at dissenters and low-churchmen, in several sermons and libels, wrote without either chasteness of style or liveliness of expression : all was one unpractised strain of indecent and scurrilous language.”¹⁷

In a sermon preached at Oxford in 1702, he had denounced those Churchmen who had favoured the toleration of Dissenters as “ apostates and renegadoes to their oaths and professions,” and declared it to be “ as unaccountable and amazing a Contradiction to our Reason,” as “ the greatest Reproach and

¹⁵ Burnet, v. 108.

¹⁶ C. J. (Nov. 23, Dec. 5, 14, 1704), xiv. 433, 443, 459. Second reading carried by 192 votes to 138 ; report, with amendments, by 145 to 118 ; third reading by 178 to 131. For the proposal to “ tack,” see Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 359–367. L. J. (Dec. 15, 1704), xvii. 600.

¹⁷ Burnet, v. 434.

Scandal upon our Church," that they should be "such false Traitors to their Trusts, and Offices, as to strike Sail with a Party that is such an open and avowed Enemy to our Communion; and against whom, every man, that wishes its welfare, ought to hang out the *Bloody Flag* and *Banner* of Defiance."¹⁸ It was in reply to the furious assaults of Sacheverell and his party that Defoe wrote *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. This bitter satire was so successful an imitation of the spirit and style of the passionate enemies of Nonconformity, that for a time some High Churchmen supposed that it was written by one of themselves. "I join," wrote one of them, "with that author in all he says, and have such a value for the book, that, next to the Holy Bible, and the sacred Comments, I take it for the most valuable piece I have. I pray God to put it into her Majesty's heart to put what is there proposed in execution."¹⁹ Defoe, catching the true temper of Sacheverell, and expressing it with a violence hardly in excess of that which may be found in Sacheverell's own writings, insisted that the time had now come to make an end of Nonconformity.

"If ever you will establish the best Christian Church in the World. If ever you will suppress the Spirit of Enthusiasm. If ever you will free the Nation from the viperous Brood that have so long sucked the Blood of their Mother. If you will leave your Posterity free from Faction and Rebellion, this is the time. This is the time to pull up this heretical Weed of Sedition, that has so long disturbed the Peace of our Church, and poisoned the good corn." . . . "If the Gallows instead of the Counter, and the Gallies instead of the Fines, were the reward of going to a Conventicle, there would not be so many sufferers: the Spirit of Martyrdom is over; *they that will go to Church to be chosen Sheriffs and Mayors, would go to forty Churches rather than be Hanged*. If one severe law were made, and punctually executed, that who ever was found at a Conventicle, should be Banished the Nation, and the Preacher be Hanged, we should soon see an end of the Tale; they would all come to Church, and one Age would make us all one again."²⁰

The grave, moderate Nonconformists were shocked that their cause should be defended with weapons like these; and

¹⁸ *The Political Union*, 23; cf. *Nature and Mischief of Prejudice and Partiality*, 33-34, 52.

¹⁹ Wilson, *Defoe*, ii. 56.

²⁰ Defoe, *Shortest Way*, 17-18, 21.

the High Churchmen, as soon as the writer's real intention was discovered, were fiercely indignant. The pamphlet was burnt in New Palace Yard by order of the House of Commons. Defoe himself was tried at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to pay a heavy fine, £200; to stand three times in the pillory, and to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure. Though the Nonconformist leaders felt the strongest repugnance to their champion, he was regarded with enthusiasm by the common people. The pillory was hung with garlands of flowers and surrounded by applauding crowds.²¹

Sacheverell had not yet won his promotion, and he continued to attack the Dissenters. Preaching before the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London on November 5, 1709, he declaimed on the Perils to which the Church and the nation were exposed from *False Brethren*. He asserted the old High Church doctrine of non-resistance as the great security of the State, and maintained that the opposite doctrine was "a damnable position," and that those who taught it were chargeable with "rebellion and high treason." The Dissenters were denounced with more vehemence than ever. They were "sanctified hypocrites"; they committed "the most abominable impieties"; they were ready "to renounce their creed and to read the Decalogue backwards"; they justified "murder, sacrilege, and rebellion by texts of Scripture," and wrested "the Word of God to their own and their deluded people's perdition"; they were "filthy dreamers and despisers of dominion"; they were "monsters and vipers"; "unhallowed, loathsome, and detestable," "miscreants begat in rebellion, born in sedition, and nursed in faction." Forty thousand copies of this sermon were printed and circulated.²²

Sacheverell had preached a similar sermon at Derby before the judges;²³ and the Commons resolved to impeach him before the House of Lords for attacking the means by which the Revolution of 1688 had been brought about, and maintaining that those who defended toleration were "false brethren," and that her Majesty's ministers were imperilling the Church

²¹ See Wilson, *Defoe*, ii. 67-68, with the passages given there from Tutchin's *Observator* for Saturday, July 10, 1703, and the *London Gazette*, No. 3936, Thursday, July 29, to Monday, August 2, 1703.

²² *Perils of False Brethren*, 11-13, 14, 15, 19.

²³ *The Communication of Sin: A Sermon preached at the Assizes held at Derby, August 15, 1709.*

and the constitution. It is possible that all these grave offences might have been left unpunished ; but in the sermon before the Lord Mayor there was a contemptuous reference to the prime minister, the Earl of Godolphin, and this the earl could not forgive.²⁴

The trial began on February 27 (1709-10), and on March 20, by a majority of 69 to 52, the Lords found that Sacheverell was guilty of the articles of the impeachment. On March 23 they suspended him from all clerical duties for three years, and directed that his two sermons should be burnt by the common hangman. So light a sentence was justly regarded by his friends as a triumph.²⁵

The trial created immense popular excitement. Thousands of persons accompanied him every morning from his lodgings to Westminster Hall, with shouts of *The Church and Sacheverell!* Five Dissenting meeting-houses were attacked by the furious mob, and the pews brought out into the streets and burned. After gutting Burgess's Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the mob burnt Burgess in effigy. Another meeting-house was wrecked, and Bishop Burnet's house and others were threatened ; but the soldiers were ordered out and the rioters dispersed.²⁶ After the trial was over, Sacheverell made a triumphal progress through the western counties of England, and was received in town after town with the wildest enthusiasm. When his suspension expired, there were rejoicings all over the kingdom ; bonfires blazed, and the bells of the churches were rung, as if for a great victory which had saved the country from ruin. He preached before the House of Commons, and the Queen appointed him to St. Andrew's, Holborn, one of the best livings in London. After this he lived a quiet life.

The House of Commons before which Sacheverell preached

²⁴ Burnet, v. 443, *note*. "In what moving and lively colours does the holy Psalmist paint out the crafty insidiousness of such wily *Volpones*." *Perils of False Brethren*, 21.

²⁵ For details of the trial and sentence, see L. J. (March 20, 1709-10), xix. 15 ; Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 805-887 ; Howell, *State Trials*, xv. 1-522 ; *Compleat History of the Proceedings against Dr. Sacheverell*, 31, 239-242, and *passim* ; Burnet, v. 434-450.

²⁶ Luttrell, *State Affairs*, vi. 551 ; Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 228 ; Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 828. At Cirencester people got up a cock-fight ; one of the cocks was named Sacheverell, and the other Burgess. "Unfortunately, cock Burgess killed cock Sacheverell." Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 336.

in 1713 was not the House which had impeached him in the spring of 1710. In the summer of 1710 a new Parliament was elected, and several causes contributed to give the Tories a large majority. In the previous winter there had been very severe and very general distress; and the distress was attributed to the blunders and crimes of the Government. The conduct of the Whigs in continuing the war with France, after terms had been offered which might have been accepted with honour, had provoked great resentment. The Sacheverell trial had made them hated by all who claimed to be the special friends of the Church; and the clergy told the people that if the Church was to be saved from destruction, it was necessary to expel the Whigs from power.

When the Queen met Parliament at the opening of the second session, early in December, 1711, she told them "that notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war, both time and place are appointed for opening the treaty of a general peace."²⁷ The Whigs were alarmed; and the Earl of Nottingham, who had been one of the Tory leaders, offered to join them in addressing the Crown in favour of a policy which would prolong the war, if they would assist him to carry a Bill against Occasional Conformity. He told them that if they would make this concession, it would soothe the fears with which the Whigs were regarded by the Church, and enable him to secure the support of many of the Tories against the proposed peace. The Whig leaders accepted his proposals and deserted their friends.²⁸ The Bill was brought in on December 15, 1711, and passed both Houses within a week. It enacted that all persons in places of profit and trust under the Crown, and all mayors, aldermen, and members of town councils who should be present at any meeting for divine worship, in which the Book of Common Prayer was not used, and where ten persons or more were present—exclusive of those belonging to the family, if the meeting were held in an inhabited house—should on conviction forfeit their office, and pay a penalty of £40, which was to be given to the informer. Such persons

²⁷ L. J. (Dec. 7, 1711), xix. 335-336. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 1035. The phrase—"those who delight in war"—was interpreted as a direct attack upon Marlborough. Burnet, vi. 78-79.

²⁸ Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 243. Stanhope, 498. Lecky, *History*, i. 117.

were to continue incapable of office till they should depose that they had been to no conventicle for a whole year.²⁹

It now became a question with Dissenting mayors, aldermen, town councillors, and justices of the peace, whether they should resign their offices and throw up their commissions, or cease to attend Dissenting worship. Their political friends pressed them strongly to retain their positions; they were told that the succession of the House of Hanover would be imperilled if all the Dissenters in England retired from the municipal corporations and from the bench; and they were assured that on the death of the Queen they should have relief. This argument and this promise seem to have decided the course of the majority of the Dissenters who were affected by the Act. For several years men like Sir Thomas Abney, who was an alderman of London, ceased to attend Dissenting worship. Isaac Watts was his chaplain, and preached to him and his family in their own house.³⁰

NOTE A

The Ministers of the Three Denominations

In the early years of the eighteenth century the Dissenting Ministers—Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists—living in London and its immediate neighbourhood had formed themselves into three separate “Boards” for the promotion of the separate interests of their several Denominations. On State occasions the three Boards had united to present an Address to the throne; and they had acted together in resisting the attempts to reverse the policy of the Toleration Act. On July 11, 1727, a few weeks after the death of George I., a meeting was held at the George in Ironmonger Lane, the Rev. Joseph Boyce in the chair, when it was resolved to form an organisation that should include all Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist ministers living within ten miles of the cities of London and Westminster, for the maintenance and extension of civil and religious liberty. It was agreed “That no person be allowed to join with the body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers in any public act but such as are approved by one or other of the three.” The six Congregational Ministers on the first committee were Ridgeley, Watts, Bradbury, Hurrion, Lowman, and Asty.

²⁹ 10 Anne, cap. 2, §§ 1, 3, 4 (in some editions, cap. 6).

³⁰ Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 245–246, and *note*.

The "General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster" is still in existence, and it still retains its ancient privilege of addressing the Crown.

In 1836 the majority of the Presbyterian members of the body withdrew from it, and declared by resolution that the Union of the Ministers of the Three Denominations was dissolved. This was the result of the excitement of the controversy in reference to Lady Hewley's Charity, and of the decision of the Court of Chancery, by which the Charity was kept in the hands of evangelical Non-conformists.³¹ On the Congregational Board, which consisted of 95 members, and constituted the majority of the whole body, there were no Unitarians. On the Baptist Board, which consisted of 59 ministers, there were a few—five—Unitarians; but these were not accustomed to meet with their Baptist brethren for business, and the Board had resolved a few months before that the names of the Unitarian minority should no longer be reported to the General Body of the Three Denominations. But on the Presbyterian Board, which consisted of 21 ministers, there were eighteen Unitarians, and only three ministers who were orthodox Presbyterians.³² The relations between the 23 Unitarian Ministers and their 175 brethren had been severely strained. The Unitarians complained that at the meetings of the United Ministers there had been unjust and ungenerous references to their position; that the Baptist Board had recently determined to exclude ministers holding Unitarian opinions; that the United Ministers had refused to redress this injustice; and that, therefore, the ministers who had been excluded from the Baptist Board were also excluded from the general body of "Protestant Dissenting Ministers"; that the late secretary of the general body, after discharging the duties of his office with great efficiency for seven years, had been "set aside, on the ground openly alleged, and even declared in print, of his religious views on points of doctrine, and those of the body to which he belongs, not being consonant to those of the majority of the Three Denominations."

The three orthodox Presbyterians, Mr. Broadfoot, President of Cheshunt College, Mr. Young of Albion Chapel, Moorfields, and Mr. Redforth, held a meeting, and declared that "they were, properly speaking, the only Presbyterians of the body, those withdrawing being so only in name, besides their being, in the decisions in the case of Lady Hewley's Charity, legally adjudged to be no Presbyterians." Mr. Broadfoot, Mr. Young, and Mr. Redforth further declared that they considered themselves "as carrying on with them all the privileges belonging to the Presbyterian Body, and as being and constituting the Presbyterian Denomination in the General Body of the Dissenting Ministers of London and

³¹ See pp. 640 foll.

³² *Congregational Magazine*, May, 1836, 331.

Westminster and their vicinity," and they claimed the Minutes of the Presbyterian Board.

The seceders had laid their case before Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, and Lord Russell, who was Secretary for the Home Department; and the General Body, having recognised the claim of the three orthodox Presbyterians, also sent a deputation to wait on the two statesmen to maintain that their privileges had not been impaired by the secession.

³³ For a detailed account of the history and proceedings of the Body see a paper by the Rev. Thomas James in the *Congregational Year Book*, 1867, 406-417.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISSENTING ACADEMIES AND THE SCHISM BILL

EARLY DISSENTING ACADEMIES—MORTON, GALE, ROWE, CHAUNCEY, EAMES—ATTACKED BY SAMUEL WESLEY AND SACHEVERELL—SCHISM BILL—ITS PROVISIONS—THE QUEEN'S DEATH PREVENTS IT FROM BECOMING LAW—GEORGE'S ACCESSION ANNOUNCED AT FETTER LANE.

FLUSHED with their triumph in passing the Occasional Conformity Act, the Tories now resolved to strike a blow at the very roots of Nonconformity.

I

As the Dissenters were excluded by the Act of Uniformity from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, a considerable number of the ejected ministers received into their houses the sons of the Dissenting gentry and nobility who wished their sons to receive a liberal education; and they also made special provision for the theological education of those young men who, even in the darkest times of Nonconformity, wished to become Nonconformist ministers. Some of the men who became pastors of Nonconformist Churches after the Revolution had studied in Scotland, or at Utrecht, or at other continental universities; but most of them had been students in these private "Academies."

Richard Frankland, who under Cromwell had been appointed to a tutorship in the University of Durham, between 1662 and 1698, when he died, had educated more than 300 students, most of them for the Christian ministry.¹ Among the most eminent Congregational scholars who conducted

¹ Calamy, *Abridgment*, ii. 287, and 284-288; *Continuation*, 452-453. Palmer, *Memorial*, ii. 179, note.

“ Academies ” were Charles Morton, Theophilus Gale, Thomas Rowe, Isaac Chauncey, Dr. Ridgley, and John Eames.

Morton had been a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, and was a distinguished mathematician. He was ejected in 1662 from the rectory of Blisland in Cornwall, which his father had held before him. Soon after the Fire of London he came to Newington Green, and became the tutor of some of the most distinguished Congregational ministers of the next generation. He was greatly worried by persecutions in the ecclesiastical courts, and in 1685 went over to New England, where he was invited to become Vice-president of Harvard. Three of his friends took charge of the students he left behind him.²

Theophilus Gale, author of *The Court of the Gentiles*, was a Fellow of Magdalen. He is described by Wood as “ a learned and industrious person ” ; “ well read in, and conversant with the writings of the fathers, and the old philosophers ” ; “ an exact philologist, and philosopher ” ; and “ also a good metaphysician and school divine.” He was ejected from Winchester Cathedral in 1662, and went to France for three years with two of the sons of Lord Wharton, who was a firm friend of the Nonconformists. On his return to England, he settled at Newington Green near to Morton, and received theological students into his house. He died in 1678, and left the greater part of his library to Harvard.³

He was succeeded by Thomas Rowe, who had probably been one of Gale’s pupils. His father was pastor of a Congregational Church which met for a time in Westminster Abbey. Among Rowe’s students were Isaac Watts ; Daniel Neal, the author of the *History of the Puritans* ; John Evans, author of a book on the *Christian Temper*, which once had great popularity ; Jeremiah Hunt, who afterwards studied at Edinburgh and Leyden, and who became pastor of the Congregational church at Pinners’ Hall ; Samuel Say, the successor of Calamy ; Josiah Hort, who became Archbishop of Tuam ; and John Hughes, who was the writer of several papers in the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*.⁴

² Calamy, *Abridgment*, ii. 144–145 ; *Continuation*, 177–197. Palmer, *Memorial*, i. 347–348.

³ Wood, *Ath. Oxon* (Bliss), iii. 1149–1151. Palmer, *Memorial*, 243–244. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 161–168.

⁴ Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 168–172.

Isaac Chauncey was son of Charles Chauncey, who was driven from England by Archbishop Laud and became President of Harvard. Isaac was one of the early students at Harvard, but probably finished his studies either at Oxford or Cambridge. He was ejected in 1662, and became pastor of the Congregational Church at Andover. In 1687 he became pastor of the Church, then meeting in Mark Lane, which had formerly been under the pastorate first of John Owen and then of David Clarkson. Isaac Watts succeeded him in 1701, and Chauncey, who was a man of considerable learning, then became tutor of the Academy, in Tenter Alley, Moorfields, London, created by the Congregational Fund Board.⁵ Chauncey died in 1712, and was succeeded in the theological chair by Dr. Ridgley; ⁶ John Eames, a Fellow of the Royal Society and distinguished for his scientific knowledge, holding the chair of Philosophy and Languages. Eames succeeded Dr. Ridgley, and held the chair till 1744.⁷ This Academy was represented till 1850 by Homerton College, one of the three colleges that were united to form New College, London.⁸ There were also Congregational "Academies" at Bridgwater, Taunton, Tewkesbury, Colyton, Carmarthen, Bridgnorth, and other towns in different parts of the country.⁹

II

Before the Revolution, the men who had conducted the

⁵ Calamy, *Continuation*, 877-878. Palmer, *Memorial*, iii. 380-381. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, i. 289-291. For the Congregational Fund Board, see Note A, p. 506.

⁶ Ridgley's name is sometimes given as Risley. Calamy, *Continuation*, 98-101. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 72-81.

⁷ Eames, though distinguished as a scholar, was disabled for the ministry by a defect in the organs of speech, and by a pronunciation that was "harsh, uncouth, and disagreeable." He once attempted to preach, but broke down, and never repeated the experiment. Wilson, *ibid.*, ii. 73-74, *note*.

⁸ The "Fund Academy" was united in 1744 with the "Academy of the King's Head Society." *Congregational College Calendar*, 1885, 43-46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 30-38; and for an account of their character and work, 39-42, with the passages there given from Doddridge's *Diary and Correspondence*, ii. 461-475, and cf. Orton, *Memoirs of Doddridge*, 86-122. On Academies in general, see Bogue and Bennet, *History of Dissenters (Seminaries)*, ii. 1-91; iii. 264-313; iv. 258-297; Toulmin, *Historical View*, 215-261; and Gordon, *Early Nonconformity and Education*.

“Academies” were subject to incessant persecution. They and their students were driven from place to place, and their position was extremely precarious.¹⁰ South, in a sermon delivered in 1685, appealed to his hearers to—

“employ the utmost of your power and interest both with the King and Parliament, to suppress, utterly to suppress and extinguish, those private, blind, conventicling schools or academies of grammar and philosophy, set up and taught secretly by fanatics, here and there all the kingdom over. . . . For this is the direct and certain way to bring up and perpetuate a race of mortal enemies both to church and state. To derive, propagate, and immortalise the principles and practices of *forty-one* to posterity, is schism and sedition for ever, faction and rebellion *in sacula saculorum*; which I am sure no honest English heart will ever say Amen to.”¹¹

After the passing of the Toleration Act the “Academies” held a securer position. An attempt indeed was made to suppress them by reviving against those of the tutors who were university graduates an oath which was taken by Masters of Arts of Oxford and Cambridge, and which was interpreted as pledging them not to lecture except in their own or the sister university; but the attempt was not very successful.¹²

In 1703 Samuel Wesley—the father of John Wesley—who had been educated by Charles Morton, but had since

¹⁰ For an attempt to suppress Frankland (see p. 499), cf. Thoresby, *Letters*, i. 172-173; and for a similar attack on Doddridge, see the presentment, with Doddridge's reply and appeal, in Waddington, (1700-1800), iii. 295-298; and Doddridge, *Correspondence and Diary*, iii. 127-140.

¹¹ South, *Sermons*, ii. 298.

¹² Towards the end of the thirteenth century there was an attempt made at Northampton to establish a university in that town; and about the same time there was a similar attempt at Stamford. To defeat these enterprises, Oxford imposed on her graduates an oath not to lecture in any other place—“as in a university”—except at Cambridge. The Cambridge oath omitted the words, “as in a university,” and required her graduates to swear not to lecture in any other place except at Oxford. (See Fuller, *University of Cambridge*, 24-29; Huber, *English Universities*, i. 97, 415-417; and Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ii. (2), 395-398, with references in notes.) There was an ingenious controversy about the meaning of the oaths. The Nonconformist clergy satisfied themselves that they were free to teach in their private academies. The Nonconformist case is stated with great fulness by Morton, and less elaborately by Cradock, in Calamy, *Continuation*, 177-197, 732-735.

conformed, attacked the Academies with considerable vigour.¹³ He complained that by these private institutions men were being drawn away from the Church, and were being made Dissenters; that they “endangered the success of the two universities”; and that those who taught in them violated the pledges they had given at graduation. He declares that there must have been “some thousands” educated by the Nonconformist clergy, and among them many of the sons of the nobility and gentry who, but for these “sucking Academies,” would have gone to Oxford and Cambridge.

In his famous sermon before the Lord Mayor in 1709 Sacheverell declared that these “Academies” were a peril to the nation, and that “Atheism, Deism, Tritheism, Socinianism, with all the hellish principles of Fanaticism, Regicide, and Anarchy, were taught in them.”¹⁴

The Tories believed that if they could destroy the Dissenting “Academies,” they would put an end to Dissent; the Dissenting congregations of the next generation would have no educated ministers; the sons of the wealthy merchants who were now the chief support of the Dissenting interest would be sent to Oxford and Cambridge, and would become loyal Churchmen; only the poor and the ignorant would continue to attend the conventicles; and Nonconformists would become too weak and too contemptible to trouble the Church any longer.

On May 12, 1714, Sir William Windham, at the instigation of Lord Bolingbroke, who had received his education from an ejected minister, introduced into the House of Commons *A Bill to prevent the growth of Schism, and for the further Security of the Church of England as by law established*. The Bill provided that no person should keep any public or private school or seminary, to teach or instruct youth as tutor or schoolmaster, unless he subscribed the declaration: “I, A B, do

¹³ *A Letter from a Country Divine, concerning the Education of Dissenters in their private Academies in several parts of the nation. Humbly offered to the consideration of the Grand Committee of Parliament for Religion*. It is said that the letter had been written to Clavel several years earlier, in or about 1690; and that Clavel now published it without Wesley's consent (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, lx. 315). See also Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 458-459, and note; and *Reliquiæ Hearnianæ*, i. 35-37.

¹⁴ *Perils of False Brethren*, 15; and cf. *Nature and Mischief of Prejudice*, 54-57.

declare that I will conform to the liturgy of the Church of England, as it is now by law established," and obtained a licence to teach from the archbishop or bishop. No licence was to be granted unless the applicant produced a certificate that he had received the Sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England, at some parish church within the previous twelve months. To teach without these qualifications was to incur a penalty of three months' imprisonment. If, after obtaining his licence, the tutor or schoolmaster was present at any other religious worship than that of the Church of England, he was to be imprisoned for three months, and be for ever incapable of resuming the employment of teaching.

It was further provided, "that if any person, licensed as aforesaid, shall teach any other catechism than the catechism set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, the licence of such person shall from thenceforth be void, and such person shall be liable to the penalties of this Act." This crime, however, was not beyond the reach of mercy. If the licence was lost for teaching an unauthorised catechism, the offender might become capable of recovering it, on making oath in a court of justice that for twelve months he had not been present at any Dissenting service, and that during the same twelve months he had received the Sacrament three times according to the usage of the Church of England.

This atrocious Bill was aimed not at the "Academies" merely. It was intended to prevent Dissenters from having their children taught by Dissenters either in private schools or in their own houses. They petitioned the House of Lords to be allowed to be heard by counsel against the measure, but their petition was refused.¹⁵ It was moved by Lord Halifax that they should be allowed to have schools for their own children, from which the children of parents who were not Dissenters should be excluded; but the motion was lost.¹⁶

¹⁵ The petition was rejected by 72 to 66. Petitions against the Bill were also submitted by foreign Protestants living in England, who pleaded their immunity for the past 160 years; by many schoolmasters and schoolmistresses; and by others who taught navigation, surveying, gauging, and mensuration. The committee to which the Bill was referred were instructed to receive a clause in favour of the foreign Protestants. L. J. (June 4, 7, 9, 1714), xix. 704, 709, 710-711.

¹⁶ Lost by 62 votes to 48. For Halifax's speech, see Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 1354-1355.

Three amendments were carried : (1) The bishop's licence was to be dispensed with in the case of any tutor "employed by any nobleman or noblewoman to teach his or her own children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren only in his or her family"; but though the licence was to be dispensed with, the other qualifications defined by the Act were declared to be necessary. It is probable that under the shelter of this clause Dissenting tutors in noble families might have remained undisturbed. Where the bishop's licence was necessary and had not been obtained, it would be easy to obtain a conviction; in other cases conviction would be more difficult. (2) The Act was not to extend to "any person who as a tutor or school-master shall instruct youth in reading, writing, arithmetic, or any part of mathematical learning only, so far as such mathematical learning relates to navigation or any mechanical Art only," and provided that the teaching was only in English. (3) The infliction of the penalties was taken out of the hands of the ordinary magistrates and committed to the superior courts. The Act was to extend to Ireland, and was to take effect from Sunday, August 1, 1714.¹⁷

But on that Sunday morning Thomas Bradbury, the pastor of the Independent Church in Fetter Lane, and the great "political dissenter" of that time, was walking across Smithfield and met Bishop Burnet, who was driving westwards. The bishop observed that Bradbury was looking very grave, and asked him the reason. "I am thinking," he replied, "whether I shall have the constancy and resolution of that noble company of martyrs whose ashes are deposited in this place; for I most assuredly expect to see similar times of violence and persecution, and that I shall be called to suffer in a like cause." The bishop then told him that he was on his way to the palace, and that the Queen was dying; and he promised to send a messenger to Fetter Lane if the Queen died that morning. While Bradbury was preaching, the messenger came in, and gave the signal which had been arranged with the bishop; the man leant over the front of the gallery and dropped a handkerchief, and Bradbury knew that

¹⁷ C. J. (May 12, 27; June 1, 23, 1714), xvii. 631, 644, 660, 697-698. L. J., *vid. note* 15 (and June 11, 14, 15, 1714), xix. 713-714, 715, 716; and for Protest, *ibid.*, 716-717. Rogers, *Protests*, i. 218-221. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 1349-1358.

the Queen was dead. He finished his sermon, and said nothing of the great event which had just happened ; but in his closing prayer he invoked the blessing of God on "George, King of Great Britain and Ireland." The congregation then sang the 89th Psalm. It was not unfitting that the first public announcement of the accession of the House of Hanover should be in a Nonconformist meeting-house.¹⁸

NOTE A

The Congregational Fund Board

This Board was founded in 1695, and was originally supported both by the Presbyterians and Independents,—the Presbyterians contributing £2,000 a year, and the Independents £1,700. The Board contributed towards the education of students in the private "Academies," and also towards the support of ministers who received an inadequate income from their congregations. But Thomas Goodwin, son of the famous President of Magdalen, was formally appointed as Tutor to the Board as early as 1696 or 1697, and was directed to "take none under his tuition but such as shall be approved by the Board." Chauncey was appointed by the Board from 1699, and succeeded Goodwin in the principal charge of the students supported by the Board in London. The present income of the Board exceeds "£2,000 a year; the greater part of which is distributed in the relief of poor ministers; £120 per annum are given to the poor members of twelve contributing churches; and the remainder towards the support of students in Western, Brecon, and New Colleges." Under the will of a Mr. Trotman a considerable amount of property was vested in trustees, most of them ejected Independent ministers, to be used for Nonconformist purposes. The trustees granted small exhibitions to young men who were studying for the Dissenting ministry. Among the men who were so assisted were Stephen Lott, Benjamin Chandler, both of whom went to Oxford; Samuel Wesley and Isaac Watts also received assistance from the Fund Board. See *Calendar of the Congregational Colleges of England and Wales*, 1885, 43-44; and Waddington, iii. (1700—1800), 261-263.

¹⁸ Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 513-514.

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM AT THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE

DECLINE OF NONCONFORMITY DURING ANNE'S REIGN—NUMBER OF CHAPELS LICENSED—TRUST DEEDS—COMPARATIVE STRENGTH OF PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS—SOCIAL POSITION—WORSHIP—DOCTRINE—CHURCH GOVERNMENT—RELIGIOUS LIFE—LEADING MINISTERS.

AT the death of Queen Anne in 1714, rather more than fifty years had passed since the Nonconforming clergy were ejected from the English Church by the Act of Uniformity; and twenty-five since the passing of the Toleration Act. Nonconformity had not been crushed by persecution; but at the end of a quarter of a century of comparative ease and freedom, it was showing a want of spiritual energy that filled its most devout leaders with the gravest anxiety.

I

In the ten or twelve years immediately following the Toleration Act, there had been universal and vigorous activity. Between 1688 and 1700, the Dissenters took out 2,418 licences for places of Dissenting worship.¹ Many of the licensed buildings were very small; and as many were mere temporary premises, the same congregation must, in many instances, have taken out licences for several different buildings in the course of a few years, or even of a few months. The 2,418 licences do not, therefore, represent separate Dissenting congregations. It is estimated that during the reign of

¹ *Parliamentary Paper*, 1853 (156); quoted by Skeats, *Free Churches*, 197. Cf. *ibid.*, 157, for the figures of the two years, 1688—1690.

William III. the Nonconformists erected about 1,000 or 1,200 permanent meeting-houses. As many of these were of considerable size, the first generation of "tolerated" Nonconformists must have had a considerable amount of wealth and must have spent it generously.² To facilitate the raising of the necessary funds, the pews in some cases were sold before the meeting-house was erected; but when this was done, it was sometimes provided that the property in a pew should be forfeited if for six successive months the pew was not occupied by the proprietor or some member of his family.³ In London several Nonconformist congregations rented or purchased the disused halls of some of the City Companies.⁴

The trust deeds of Independent meeting-houses built within this period did not contain any provisions as to the doctrines to be preached in them; and even when in the next generation Trinitarians seceded from a congregation which had become Arian, they inserted no doctrinal clauses in the deeds of their new buildings. The buildings were vested "for the worship of God according to the customs of the people called Independents," or for "the use of a congregation of Protestant Dissenters called Independents."

The Presbyterian trust deeds were drawn up in the same way. The meeting-house was vested for the use of a Presbyterian congregation; but the doctrines to be taught by the minister were not defined. In some cases a congregation is described as "Presbyterian or Congregational."

Two or three years after the death of Queen Anne, Daniel Neal made out a list of 1,107 Dissenting congregations in England, besides 43 in Wales. Of the English 860 were either Presbyterian or Independent, and 247 were Baptist.⁵ The Presbyterian congregations were still much more numerous than the Independent, and also larger; it is probable that of 860 congregations described as belonging to one or other of the two denominations, about 500 were Presbyterian, and

² Some of the original meeting-houses were built of wood; one of these, erected in Gravel Lane, Houndsditch, for the Presbyterian congregation of which Samuel Pomfret was pastor, is said to have held 1,500 persons. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, i. 397.

³ See Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 445.

⁴ Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 1, 63, 447, 514, 525, 557, 560.

⁵ In Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, ii. 97-99; Skeats, *Free Churches*, 280; Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 457.

about 360 Independent. If the list is complete—which is doubtful—it shows that in the number of Dissenting congregations there had been no increase during the reign of Queen Anne.⁶

II

In the social rank of their adherents the Dissenting congregations had suffered severe loss during the five-and-twenty years since the passing of the Toleration Act. The ejected ministers retained the loyal affection and support of a considerable number of the nobility and gentry. In the houses of their great friends they held secret Nonconformist services when Nonconformity was illegal; and in these same houses they found shelter from the penalties they had incurred by violating the law. But the children of these distinguished persons—notwithstanding the powerful influence attributed by men like Samuel Wesley to the Dissenting “Academies”⁷—drifted back to the Establishment: in the towns the congregations of the second generation of Nonconformists consisted of merchants, manufacturers, and tradesmen; and in the country, of farmers, with here and there a country squire.

In their services, which were held only in the morning and afternoon, the Nonconformists of this period maintained the traditions of an earlier time. The sermons of the elder ministers were still cumbrous both in their general structure and in their style, and they were usually of great length. There was also a long extemporaneous prayer.

The principal change was effected by the publication in 1707 of Watts’s Hymns. The edition was exhausted in twelve

⁶ The Presbyterians “were nearly double” the Independents. Bogue and Bennett, *op. cit.*, ii. 99. It is not easy to form a very trustworthy judgment on the question of increase or decrease; partly because it is difficult—perhaps impossible—to discover how many congregations are represented by the licences taken out between 1688 and 1700; partly because Neal’s list may not have been complete. (Skeats, *l.c.*, 281–282.) It was not very easy in those days for a private person to obtain accurate returns from all parts of England. Bogue and Bennett were of opinion that the number of Dissenters was greater after 1688 than before, and greater still at the death of Queen Anne. *Ibid.*, ii. 93.

⁷ See pp. 502–503; and cf. the speech of Compton, Bishop of London, in the debate on the Schism Bill. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vi. 1354.

months, and a second edition, with 150 additional hymns, was published in 1709. It was not until 1718, when the seventh edition was issued, that Watts had been able to finish his version of the Psalms, "imitated in the language of the New Testament." Many thousands of copies of the earlier editions of the Hymns were sold, and they must have come into very general use even before the death of Queen Anne.⁸

Till now the Nonconformist congregations had been content with singing versions of the Psalms. Patrick's version was commonly used by the Independents at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁹ "The sound of the gospel proceeded from the pulpit, but the praises of the Jew ascended from the hearers: the worshippers seemed to localise themselves in Judea—to retrace some two or three thousand years in the world's history—and withdraw from the 'light that lightens the Gentiles' to join their 'fathers who were under the cloud.'" ¹⁰ At the end of the Lord's Supper, which was celebrated every month or every six weeks, they had nothing more appropriate to sing than a bald version of the 23rd or the 118th Psalm. Watts redeemed the Psalmody of the Congregationalists from Judaism, and made it Christian. It was a revolution the greatness of which cannot be measured.¹¹

The *doctrinal faith* of the Independents during this period was also almost unchanged; or if changes had begun, they were not yet very apparent. In the two controversies relating to Davis of Rothwell and to Dr. Crisp, the Independents had shown that they were not only Calvinistic, but were disposed to regard with sympathy the most extreme forms of Calvinism.

In *church government* the forms of the Congregational polity were rigidly maintained; but the ideal of the mystic

⁸ *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707). *The Psalms of David imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian State and Worship* (1718).

⁹ J. Patrick, *A Century of Select Psalms turned into Meter* (1679).

¹⁰ Milner, *Life of Isaac Watts*, 369.

¹¹ But the change was not universally approved. Thomas Bradbury had a strong objection to what he called "Watts's *whims*." Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 527-528. "The poetry of Watts," Wilson adds, "was received but slowly into most of our congregations. It is only of late years that it has acquired so general a patronage; and even in the present day there are many who prefer the rhyming of Brady and Tate, or the bald version of the Scotch."

element of Congregationalism which had created the enthusiasm of the Brownists had almost disappeared. The Congregationalists under King William III. and Queen Anne believed that the apostolic Churches were Congregational and Independent; they also believed that this form of polity was favourable to the development of a serious and lofty religious life; but the age was unfriendly to mysticism, and the original Congregational idea, which made a society of saints the very organ of the will of Christ, had lost its hold both on imagination and faith.

In many Congregational Churches, too, a greater measure of formal authority was, in practice, and probably in theory, attributed to the pastor and those who shared with him the government of the Church, than would have been allowed by the earlier Congregationalists. It was the theory of John Owen that in a true Congregational Church the pastor and elders—not the pastor and deacons—governed with the consent of the Church.¹² The proposals of the church officers required confirmation by the Church; but that the Church should act for itself, against the decision or consent of its officers, was hardly contemplated as possible. Such action would be revolutionary. It practically came to this, that the Church had the power to veto the proposals of its officers, but had not the power to initiate action of its own.¹³ This scheme was a milder form of the theory which Francis Johnson had set up in the Church at Amsterdam at the beginning of

¹² "The rule and government of the Church, or the execution of the authority of Christ therein, is in the hand of the elders." "The first officer or elder of the Church is the pastor." Owen, *True Nature of a Gospel Church, Works*, xx. 472, 398.

¹³ Owen insisted that in "every Church consisting in any considerable number of members there should be more elders than one"; and he adds, "When God first appointed rule in the church under the Old Testament, He assigned unto every ten persons or families a distinct ruler." He says, "Some there are who begin to maintain that there is no need of any more but one *pastor, bishop* or *elder* in a particular church, which hath its rules in itself. . . . This is a novel opinion, contradictory to the sense and practice of the church in all ages." *Works*, xx. 483, 481. Since Henry Jacob's time it had been the common practice of Congregational Churches to have only one elder—*i.e.* the pastor. And this is still the practice in recent times; but deacons have discharged the two offices of the diaconate and the eldership. Owen maintains that when there is only one elder, the polity of the Church is almost certain to become either "*prelatical* or *popular*." *Ibid.*, 482.

the seventeenth century.¹⁴ It seems to have been commonly accepted by English Congregationalists from the time of the Revolution. Robert Browne, Henry Barrowe, and John Robinson had also insisted on the real authority of the pastor and elders; but they did not attempt to define the precise limits of that authority; nor is it probable that they would have approved the restrictions which were imposed on the constitutional duties and rights of the commonalty of the Church by the theory of John Owen, and by what seems to have been the practice of Congregational Churches at the end of the seventeenth century and during a great part of the eighteenth.

Most of the Congregational Churches of this period were small Churches; even the most famous of them were small, when compared with the Churches of our own times. Caryl died in 1673, and the Church of which he was pastor numbered only 136 communicants. John Owen, who had a small congregation in the neighbourhood, was invited to be his successor. Owen brought with him thirty-five members, and the united Church numbered 171. Nineteen years later, when Watts became pastor of the Church, it had greatly declined.¹⁵

Nor were the Churches strong in the energy of their religious faith, the fervour of their devotion, and their loyalty to Christ in conduct. Burnet, in his *Pastoral Care*, which was published soon after the Restoration, said that the Dissenters had largely lost their reputation for strictness in religion. He was not an unfriendly critic of the Nonconformists, and this account of them is supported by other evidence.¹⁶

Their condition under Charles II. and James II. had been

¹⁴ See Dexter, 281-282.

¹⁵ When Caryl's Church and Owen's united, there were among the members Lord Charles Fleetwood, Sir John Hartopp, Colonel Desborough, Colonel Berry, and other distinguished officers of Cromwell's army; also Lady Abney, Lady Hartopp, Lady Vere Wilkinson, Lady Tompson, Mrs. Bendish, Cromwell's grand-daughter. The pastors of this Church were Caryl (1660-1673); Owen (1673-1683); David Clarkon, who for a year was Owen's colleague (1682-1687); Isaac Loeffs (from some uncertain date to 1689); Isaac Chauncey, who for two years was the colleague of Loeffs (1687-1702). (Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, i. 254. Palmer, *Memorial*, i. 146.) The decline of the Church is said to have taken place under Chauncey's pastorate. Some of the Presbyterian Churches were much larger. Pomfret's Church in Gravel Lane, Houndsditch, numbered at one time 800 communicants.

¹⁶ *Pastoral Care*, 201.

extremely unfavourable. A steady, unrelenting persecution would have been less injurious to the vigour of their spiritual character; it would have driven from the Nonconformist Churches all those persons whose Nonconformity was the result of education or of intellectual preference, but had no deep roots in the spiritual life; it would have disciplined the rest to a robust and courageous piety. But the persecution, though at times cruelly severe, was intermittent. When the conventicles were fiercely repressed, those Nonconformists who had no great religious zeal consulted their safety and stayed at home, and their zeal became still less fervent. In the intervals of the storm they returned to the Nonconformist congregations, and by their presence lowered the religious temperature of their brethren.

Even the leaders of the Congregational Churches, the men whose intense faith and lofty courage had made so profound an impression on the conscience and heart of the nation under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, were tempted to a policy of moderation and compromise. From the Restoration to the Revolution the Court was constantly encouraging them to expect that the persecuting laws would be relaxed. The true policy of the Nonconformists was a policy of frank and open resistance to the laws which oppressed them; but they were warned that if they acted too vigorously, all chance of obtaining greater liberty would be lost. In these circumstances of difficulty the leaders showed an admirable resoluteness as well as an admirable sagacity; but large numbers of their adherents, who might have stood firm if there had been no hope that the persecution would be relaxed, temporised: and the effect of their temporising on their personal character was disastrous—their moral fibre was enfeebled, and the fires of their religious zeal were almost extinguished. It is probable that there were large numbers of such persons in the Churches which were formed after the passing of the Toleration Act. They failed to maintain, either in their religious earnestness or in their personal habits, the great traditions of Congregationalism.

When the time of peace came, most of the great Nonconformist leaders had passed away. Bridge died in 1670; Caryl in 1673; John Rowe in 1677; Theophilus Gale in 1678; Thomas Goodwin in 1680; John Owen in 1683. Their

successors were men of another type. Some of them were men of great learning, and some who were not learned had considerable intellectual vigour ; but they had not the great qualities of the race that had passed away. The most eminent of them were Isaac Watts, who became pastor of the Church in Mark Lane in 1702, and remained its pastor till 1748 ;¹⁷ John Nesbitt, of Hare Court (1690—1727) ; Matthew Clarke, of Miles's Lane (1692—1726) ; Thomas Reynolds, of the Weigh House (1695—1727) ; Thomas Rowe, of Haberdashers' Hall (1678—1705), who also had an Academy ; Daniel Neal, of Silver Street (1706—1743) ; and Thomas Bradbury, of Fetter Lane (1707—1728), who afterwards removed to Carey Street and died in 1759.¹⁸

¹⁷ He had been for a short time morning preacher during Dr. Chauncey's pastorate. In 1704 the Church removed to Pinners' Hall, on account of the decayed condition of its own building ; and from 1708 it met in a new meeting-house erected in Duke's Alley, Bury Street, St. Mary Axe.

¹⁸ The dates are taken from the lists in Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UNDER GEORGE I. AND GEORGE II.

(1714—1760)

NONCONFORMIST DEPUTATION TO GEORGE I. ON HIS ACCESSION—
MANIFESTO OF THE PRETENDER—RIOT AND INSURRECTION—RE-
DRESS OF DISSENTING GRIEVANCES—ACT FOR “STRENGTHENING
THE PROTESTANT INTEREST”—ACCESSION OF GEORGE II.—BILL
OF INDEMNITY—ITS UNSATISFACTORY CHARACTER—APPOINT-
MENT OF DISSENTING DEPUTIES—WALPOLE AND NONCONFORMIST
CLAIMS—THE “REGIUM DONUM”—ITS HISTORY AND EFFECTS
—AN INDEMNITY TO DISSENTERS FOR LOYALTY TO THE THRONE.

I

N EARLY a hundred of the Dissenting ministers of London, with Dr. Williams at their head, presented an address to George I. on his accession (1714). They wore black Genevan cloaks; and as the dark procession moved towards the King, a nobleman touched Bradbury on the arm and said, “Pray, sir, what is this? A Funeral?”—“No, my lord,” answered Bradbury promptly, “it is a Resurrection.”¹

On August 29 the Pretender sent out a manifesto from Plombières, asserting his claim to the throne of Great Britain, and explaining that till the death of Queen Anne he had not pressed his rights because he knew her “good intentions” to him, “and this was the reason we then sate still, expecting the good effects thereof, which were unfortunately prevented by her deplorable death.”² The manifesto confirmed the

¹ According to another version of the story, Bradbury answered: “Yes, my lord; it is the funeral of the Schism Bill, and the resurrection of Liberty.” Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 514. For the address, see Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 299–300.

² Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vii. 21–22.

suspensions of the country that the Tories who were in the confidence of Anne had been plotting on behalf of the Stuarts. Bolingbroke and Ormond fled to France. The Earl of Oxford was impeached of high treason and committed to the Tower.

In the midland and southern counties of England, the High Church and Tory party demonstrated their hatred of the House of Hanover by outrages on the Dissenters. Dissenting meeting-houses at Oxford, Birmingham, Bristol, Norwich, Reading, Wrexham, and other towns, were gutted or burnt. In Staffordshire the outrages were exceptionally numerous and violent.³

The High Churchmen said that if the good old Church of England was to fall, it mattered not whether it was destroyed by a Catholic like King James II., or a Lutheran like King George. In the north of England, and in Scotland, there was open rebellion; but early in November the royal army reached the main body of the English rebels near Preston, and compelled them to lay down their arms; the rebel leaders were sent to the Tower. The insurrection in Scotland was suppressed a few months later, and the Pretender, who had landed in Scotland late in December, sailed for France early in February (1715-6).

During these troubles the Dissenters had in many ways given solid proofs of their loyalty; under the House of Hanover they expected with confidence a large extension of their religious liberties.⁴ The rebellion delayed any attempt to assert their

³ Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vii. 108, *note*. Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 313-314. Lecky, *History*, i. 263, *note* 1. These outrages occasioned the passing of the Riot Act in 1715, which contained the following clause: "That if any persons unlawfully, riotously, and tumultuously assembled together, to the Disturbance of the public Peace, shall unlawfully, and with Force, demolish or pull down, or begin to demolish or pull down, any Church or Chapel, or any Building for religious Worship certified and registered" (according to the Statute 1 William III. cap. 18, the Act of Toleration) . . . the same "shall be adjudged felony without Benefit of Clergy." The Hundred in which such damage is done is made liable for damages, as in cases of robbery. 1 Geo. I. stat. 2, cap. 5, §§ 4, 6. These clauses were repeated (7 and 8 George IV. cap. 30, §§ 2, 8), and other enactments were made for the protection of Nonconformist places of worship. The Act of George IV. has been amended and explained by subsequent legislation. See Stephen, *History of Criminal Law*, ii. 271, 291-293.

⁴ See the various addresses to the Crown in Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 299-300, 366-368, 460-462, 490-492, 496-500; and *ibid.*, 329-330.

claims; but when the danger had passed by, two hundred members of the House of Commons met at the Rose Tavern, Temple Bar (March 20, 1716-7), to consider whether a Bill for the redress of Dissenting grievances should be introduced into Parliament. Fears were expressed that the measure would encounter strenuous opposition in the Lords, and the meeting was adjourned; but at a second meeting, held a few days later, assurances were received that the difficulties which had been anticipated had disappeared. The Dissenters, in every part of the country, met and demanded the repeal of the Occasional Conformity Act and the Schism Act, which had been passed in the preceding reign, and of the Corporation Act and the Test Act, which had been passed under Charles II.⁵

On December 13, 1718, Lord Stanhope, principal Secretary of State, introduced a Bill into the House of Lords *for strengthening the Protestant interest*.⁶ The Bill repealed the Act against Occasional Conformity, the Act for the Prevention of Schism, and certain clauses in the Corporation and Test Acts. It was opposed by Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, who regarded these Acts as the "main bulwark and supporters of the Established Church";⁷ by Davies, Archbishop of York; and by Smalridge, Bishop of Bristol. Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor, Willis, Bishop of Gloucester, and Gibson, Bishop of Lincoln, spoke on the other side. Kennet, Bishop of Peterborough, also made a vigorous speech in favour of the Bill. He said that—

"The Dissenters, though the most zealous promoters of the Revolution, have hitherto been no gainers by it; for they might have enjoyed toleration under King James, if they would have complied with his measures; while the Establishment has gained all its present honours and emoluments. To exclude Dissenters from serving that Government of which they are the firmest supporters is the grossest political absurdity."⁸

In the course of the debate it became necessary to surrender the clauses repealing certain parts of the Corporation and Test Acts.⁹ The third reading was carried by a majority of

⁵ Tindal, ii. 524-525, and *note*.

⁶ L. J., xxi. 24.

⁷ Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vii. 570.

⁸ See Timberland, *Debates*, iii. 105; Tindal, ii. 580, *note*.

⁹ L. J. (Dec. 19, 1718), xxi. 29-30.

55 to 33. In the Commons, the amended Bill passed by a majority of 221 to 170. In both Houses unsuccessful attempts were made in Committee to exclude from the benefit of the Act persons denying the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁰ The Bill received the royal assent on February 18, 1718-9.¹¹

II

George II. came to the throne in 1727, and in the same year the first Annual Bill of Indemnity was passed for relieving Dissenters from the penalties attached to the violation of the Corporation and Test Acts.¹² This measure of relief was narrow in aim and ineffective in result. As Mr. Lecky has pointed out, it had no reference to conscientious scruples: its declared intention was to relieve those who "through ignorance of the law, absence, or unavoidable accident," had omitted to qualify; and only by a liberal but illegitimate interpretation could it be extended to relieve those who had deliberately abstained from conscientious motives. The Act applied only to those who were already in office; it did not help a candidate. In cases where previous conformity was required, objection might be taken to a Dissenting candidate for office; and such objection, if raised, rendered invalid any votes that were given to him.¹³ The King himself was known to be in favour of a more generous policy, and he gave early proof of his determination to protect the Nonconformists. In 1733 an ecclesiastical prosecution was commenced against Doddridge for keeping an Academy in Northampton. It was stopped by the intervention of the Crown. The King said, "During my reign there shall be no persecution for conscience' sake."¹⁴

¹⁰ L. J. (Dec. 23, 1718), xxi. 35. C. J. (Jan. 9, 1718-9), xix. 49-50; motion lost by 136 to 234.

¹¹ See references given above, and also L. J. (Dec. 22, 23, 1718), xxi. 32-33, 34. C. J. (Dec. 24, 1718; Jan. 7, 10, 1718-9), xix. 47-48, 50. The critical divisions were 243 to 202, for committing the Bill; 221 to 170, for rejecting amendments; 215 to 157 for the third reading. See also Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vii. 567-581, 584-589.

¹² 1 Geo. II. stat. 1, cap. 5, § 2.

¹³ Lecky, *History*, i. 323-324, and note 2. He states that this power of objection excluded many Dissenting candidates from municipal office. The Acts were passed annually till the Test Act was repealed in 1828.

¹⁴ Orton, *Memoirs of Doddridge*, 251-252; Doddridge, *Correspondence and Diary*, iii. 139-140.

In November, 1732, two meetings were held in Silver Street Chapel, London, to consider the expediency of attempting to get the Test and Corporation Acts repealed. At the second of these meetings it was resolved that every congregation of the three denominations of Protestant Dissenters—Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists—in and within ten miles of London should be recommended to appoint two deputies to be members of a society for the protection of the rights of Dissenters. This was the first attempt of Nonconformity to combine for purposes of self-defence: it marks a distinct stage in the struggle for civil and religious liberty.¹⁵

In the general election of 1734 the Dissenters exerted their whole strength to keep the Whigs in power, and they appealed to Sir Robert Walpole to bring in a Bill to relieve them of their remaining disabilities. But Walpole had recently incurred great unpopularity by a scheme for changing the mode of levying the duties on tobacco; he was afraid of provoking the cry of "the Church in danger," and he declined to accede to their request. The Dissenting Deputies, however, were resolved to test the mind of Parliament, and in March, 1735-6, Mr. Plumer, member for Hertfordshire, brought forward a measure for repealing the Test. Walpole, who could not afford to lose the support of the Dissenters, but dreaded the wrath of the clergy, "opposed the motion with great caution and daintiness of expression." The motion was lost by 251 to 123.¹⁶

The Deputies again approached Walpole to press their claims. But they chose an unlucky moment, when he had suffered an ignominious defeat in the House of Lords over a Bill to relieve the Quakers of the ruinous expense to which they were then put by actions for levying tithe or church-rate. The bishops had proved too strong for him, and he was unwilling to run the risk of a second humiliation. When, therefore, a deputation with Dr. Chandler at their head waited on him, reminding him of his pledges, and begging for their

¹⁵ *A Sketch of the History and Proceedings of the Deputies appointed to protect the Civil Rights of the Protestant Dissenters*, 1-2. See also Stoughton, *Religion in England*, vi. 7-8, and Skeats, *Free Churches*, 378-379. See Note A, p. 523.

¹⁶ C. J. (March 12, 1735-6), xxii. 629. Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, ix. 1046-1059. Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 476.

fulfilment, he assured them of his personal sympathy, but told them that the time for action had not yet come. "You have so repeatedly returned this answer," said Chandler, "that I trust you will give me leave to ask when the time will come?" "If you require a specific answer," said Walpole, "I will give it you in a word—never!"¹⁷

The Deputies were not discouraged, and in March, 1739, a Bill for repeal was again submitted to the House of Commons; it was lost by 188 to 89.¹⁸ No further attempt was made to repeal the Acts till 1787.

It was inconvenient to the great Whig statesmen for the Dissenters to press their claims, and some of the London ministers were openly charged with being more anxious to avoid offending eminent politicians than to protect the civil rights of their Dissenting brethren. Sir Robert Walpole, who had discovered that gold could purchase him a majority in the House of Commons, resolved to try whether gold would not purchase the ignominious submission of the Dissenters to persecuting laws. In 1723, on the suggestion of Daniel Burgess,¹⁹ who for some time had been secretary to the Princess of Wales, it was proposed that the King should make an annual grant out of the royal purse for the relief of Dissenters. Walpole regarded the proposal with great satisfaction. Five hundred pounds a year was entrusted to nine Dissenting ministers, with authority to distribute it at their discretion, and without giving any account of it, among the poor widows of Dissenting ministers. The sum was shortly afterwards raised to £1,000, and the distributors were authorised to make grants to poor ministers as well as to ministers' widows.²⁰

It was alleged that as this grant was dependent on the will of the Crown, and might have been withheld on the advice of the Government, the ministers who had the distribution of it discouraged all Dissenting movements for the exten-

¹⁷ Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 608. Doddridge, *Correspondence and Diary*, iii. 365-366.

¹⁸ C. J. (March 30, 1739), xxiii. 310.

¹⁹ Not the eminent Independent minister of New Court, Carey Street, but, perhaps, his son. Calamy, *Continuation*, 875.

²⁰ Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 465-468. The grant was subsequently increased to £1,700, if not to £2,000; but there were "large fees and other deductions." *London Magazine* (Nov., 1774), xliii. 547. Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iii. 352-353.

sion of religious liberty ; and that as the irresponsible " Lord Almoners " of the royal bounty, they were able to exert a wide and most disastrous influence on the Dissenting ministry, and through them on the political action of Dissenters generally. The charge was made in a pamphlet published in 1734, only ten years after the grant was first made.²¹ In the very month that the first attempt to repeal the Corporation and Test Acts was defeated (April, 1736), an eminent member of the " Three Denominations " was so impressed with the mischievous effect of the grant, and with what is described as " the hostile operations of the ministers who maintained this connection with the Exchequer, against the Bill for the repeal of the Test Act, and against every measure not agreeable to the Treasury bench," that he moved the following resolution at a general meeting of the body²² :—

" That the receiving of money from persons in power by dissenting ministers, and distributing it privately in charities without account is disapproved by this assembly.

" That the names of those ministers might be mentioned, who received the money from the gentlemen in power."²³

The resolutions were quashed. The grant, and the method of it, continued. But in 1762, Dr. Chandler, the very man who had moved the resolutions, was appointed distributor with extraordinary powers. The previous distributors were displaced, and Dr. Chandler had unlimited authority to dispose of the money and to choose his colleagues. He associated with himself six ministers and nine laymen, and an account of

²¹ *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Protestant Dissenters of the Three Denominations relating to the Repeals of the Corporation and Test Acts from 1731 to the present time (1734)*. The pamphlet is freely used in an article in the *Congregational Magazine* for March, 1837. See note 22, *infra*, and Note B, p. 524.

²² From an article in a series published in *Baldwin's London Magazine* for June, September, and November, 1774, and January, 1775 (xliii. 277-282, 431-433, 545-550; xlv. 5-8). The writer's main object is to show the inconsistency of those who, while objecting to the interference of the magistrate in matters of religion, asked for toleration acts, with tests enforced by law, to shelter themselves, and who, openly or covertly, opposed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The third of these articles was reprinted in 1792 under the title of *An Address to Protestant Dissenters on the Origin and Influence of the Regium Donum*. The greater part of it was given in the *Congregational Magazine* for March, 1837.

²³ *London Magazine* (Nov., 1774), xliii. 547.

the way in which the money had been distributed was laid before a meeting of the sixteen distributors every year.

When Bute withdrew from office, "the old set"—the men whom Chandler had succeeded—struggled hard to regain power and the purse. They prevailed, and were reinstated by Rockingham; and Chandler had the mortification of hearing his business methods disparaged, and of being told by a noble lord that "the money was not designed to pass through *lay hands*."²⁴

It was believed that the *Regium Donum* was a most effective instrument in the hands of successive Governments. A noble duke is reported to have said that "it did not cost the administration half so much to manage them [the Dissenters] as to purchase a paltry borough." The writer in *The London Magazine* gives various instances in which, as he alleges, the men who managed the fund had been found either out of sympathy with their brethren, or even in active opposition to them. The grant, he insists, has given "the Almoners an influence and power both in city and country that is dangerous, and may be fatal to the cause at large." It has been, he says, "an *Achan's wedge*" in their camp. He quotes a friend who, on hearing a complaint of some religious disability, replied that "it was well known they received a handsome sum of money from Government to silence their complaints as well as their applications—therefore, they should either nobly throw up the grant, or remain in silence." And he drove home the advice of the friend with the taunt of an enemy—Shebbeare, who had attacked the Dissenters on this very score :—

"No sooner (says he) was his present majesty enthroned, than their teachers, either because the annual sum which by his grandfather had been given among them, was *diminished* or *no longer paid*, began to feel their consciences again grow tender. God, like the Diana of the Ephesians, was now once more to be served in their own way (by rebellious practices) because by that craft they had their wealth."

Even if it were not a case of corruption, there was abundant room for suspicion. Secrecy provoked distrust. For the names of the distributors were not known before Lord Bute's

²⁴ *London Magazine* (Nov., 1774), xliii. 548-549.

administration; and this secrecy aggravated the injurious influence of the grant.²⁵

III

One of the most curious illustrations of the political position of the Dissenters at this time was afforded by the rebellion of 1745. Among High Churchmen there still lingered a strong affection for the Stuarts, and they regarded the Kings of the House of Hanover as the natural enemies of the English Church. The Dissenters rose with passionate loyalty against the Pretender. They pressed in crowds into the regiments of volunteers. Large numbers of them took commissions under the Crown. But in fighting for the King they had violated the Test Act. When the rebellion was subdued, they were graciously included in the Act of Indemnity and in the royal pardon granted to the rebels who had endeavoured to drive George II. from his throne.²⁶

NOTE A

The Dissenting Deputies

In 1732 the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists living in and near London held a meeting in Silver Street Chapel to consult on the measures to be taken to secure the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts; and on January 14, 1735-6, it was resolved to constitute a permanent Association to which every congregation within ten miles of London belonging to one of the three denominations should be invited to send two "Deputies." The deputies were to be chosen annually, and were "to take care of the civil affairs of the Dissenters."

Throughout the rest of the eighteenth century and till recent times the "Dissenting Deputies" were the vigorous leaders of every movement to extend religious freedom, and they showed singular courage and energy in defending Dissenters whose legal rights were violated.

If, during the last thirty or forty years, they have held a less conspicuous position, it has only been because their work has been

²⁵ See Note B, p. 526.

²⁶ See Skeats, *Free Churches*, 422-424, and notes, with the extract from Fox's speech in support of the repeal of the Test Act, 1790.

taken up by other organisations having a national character. Their opinions, however, still command large and just deference from statesmen in reference to all questions affecting the civil and religious rights of Nonconformists.

In 1836 the deputies appointed by those Presbyterian congregations which had become Unitarian followed the example of their ministers and seceded from the General Body of Deputies. The Independent deputies were delegated from 53 congregations, which were all orthodox: the Baptist deputies from 36 congregations, 32 of which were orthodox; the Presbyterians from 13 congregations, 3 of which were orthodox. The seceding Presbyterians, therefore, represented 10—or, at most, 13—congregations out of 102. For the secession and its causes, see pp. 497-498, and 640 foll.

NOTE B

The Regium Donum

In the reign of Charles II. a pension of £50 a year was granted by the King to a considerable number of the ejected Presbyterian clergy, and £100 to some of the leading men among them. Richard Baxter sent back the money, and declared that he would never touch it. John Owen also received a thousand guineas from Charles to distribute among the Dissenters who had suffered severely and had been reduced to poverty by the laws against Nonconformity. Towards the end of the reign of Queen Anne, Dr. Daniel Williams refused a thousand pounds which was offered him as coming from the Queen for distribution among the Dissenters.

In 1723—on the suggestion of Daniel Burgess, and with the concurrence of Sir Robert Walpole, the annual grant known as the English Regium Donum was first made. In 1837, on the motion of Mr. Charles Hindley, a Return was made to the House of Commons “of the names of the Committee by whom the Parliamentary Grants to Protestant Dissenting Ministers have been distributed, and the mode in which they are apportioned.” The following statements are made in the Return²⁷:—

“It appears . . . that when in the year 1723 his Majesty King George I., out of his royal compassion to the distressed condition of many of the Dissenting clergy and their families, directed an annual allowance to be paid out of the royal treasury for their relief, the money was issued every half year, under the customary order, to a gentleman appointed to the office of receiver by his Majesty’s Government. After the money had been obtained by that gentleman, the entire sum was divided in equal portions among nine Protestant Dissenting Ministers of great respectability, of the Presbyterian and Independent denominations, residing in London

²⁷ *Parl. Papers*, 1837 (127)

and the neighbourhood, for the purpose of being distributed in the manner best fitted in their judgment to answer the benevolent intentions of the royal donor.

“ These nine Dissenting ministers were in this way constituted the first ‘ Committee ’ (by which, it is presumed, is meant the board of trustees) for the appropriation of the royal grant, *each trustee being held responsible for the application of that portion of the money which was placed at his disposal.*”

The Return goes on to say that this plan was generally acted on in after times. Each trustee distributed his share of the grant, at his earliest convenience, in small sums among such poor Protestant Dissenting ministers as he deemed to be proper objects of the royal charity.

“ The course thus pursued, with very rare exceptions, during the whole period that the fund to be distributed was strictly a charitable grant from the King’s personal bounty, was uniformly followed after the year 1804, when, on the settlement of the civil list by a compact entered into between the King and the Parliament, in reference to the hereditary revenues of the Crown, the *grant was directed to be made in future by an annual vote of the House of Commons.*

“ In the year 1806, after the Royal bounty had thus assumed the form of a Parliamentary grant, the board of trustees consisted of eight Dissenting ministers, highly esteemed in their respective denominations, three of them being Presbyterians, three Independents, and two Baptists. But in 1810 another Baptist minister was added, to make the number equal from each of the denominations ; and this proportion has been maintained to the present time.

“ The plan uniformly observed in the apportionment of the Parliamentary grants has been as follows :—The money . . . has been divided among them in nine equal portions to be distributed, according to the best of their judgment and discretion, among the most deserving objects in that class of necessitous persons contemplated by the grant—namely, the poor Protestant Dissenting ministers of England and Wales.

“ No trustee, however, has made it a rule to confine his exhibitions to the ministers of his particular denomination ; the general practice of the whole board has been, when acting collectively or individually, to administer relief, on application, to poor Protestant Dissenting ministers of good character, without reference to the religious class or party to which they belonged.”

The trustees made it a rule that not more than £5 should be granted at one time, unless in very exceptional instances, and then only on the approval of the whole board ; and the grant was never repeated to the same person within fifteen or eighteen months. An annual meeting was held, at which the trustees compared their lists to prevent more than one of them making a grant to the same case.

The Return was made by the nine distributors of the grant

and it contains the names of the distributors for the preceding thirty years. At that time the grant amounted to £1,000 a year.

The grant was condemned in a Resolution passed at a meeting of the ministers of the Three Denominations held on January 28, 1834, and it had previously been condemned by the Dissenting Deputies. In 1836 Mr. Aglionby moved for a Return to the House of Commons "of the names of the Dissenting Ministers who received grants out of the sum annually voted to poor ministers." This Return appears to have been refused. In March, 1837, a powerful article against it appeared in the *Congregational Magazine* under the title *Historical Notes on the Regium Donum*.

For some years the subject provoked warm controversy. Dr. Pye Smith, one of the distributors, who was a member of the Anti-State Church Association—now the Liberation Society—was the principal defender of the Grant. He maintained—

1. That George I. and George II. had paid the money out of the hereditary revenues of the Crown, derived from the rents and profits of the royal demesnes, which had always been at the personal disposal of the Kings of England, and which had been expended partly, indeed, in defraying the charges of the executive government, but partly in maintaining the royal establishments, and partly in charitable gifts, permanent or occasional.

2. That on the accession of George III. it was thought advisable to substitute for these hereditary revenues a fixed annual sum, equivalent to them in amount, which obtained the name of the Civil List, and the charges which had hitherto been defrayed out of the hereditary revenues of the Crown were then transferred to the new fund.

3. That a readjustment of the Civil List was made in 1804, under which certain payments which had previously been charged on the Civil List were to be provided for by an annual vote of the House of Commons. Among these payments were certain royal charities, including the bounty to poor French refugee clergy and laity, and to the Dissenting ministers of England and Wales.

4. That although by this change the *Regium Donum* became a Parliamentary grant, it still remained one of the royal charities which were permanently charged on the royal estates. Parliament took the revenues from the estates and became the royal Almoner. And Parliament made an excellent bargain with the Crown on behalf of the nation: for after defraying all the charges included in the annual votes, the revenue from the royal estates yielded a considerable balance that was appropriated to the public service.

5. That, therefore, the *Regium Donum* is not derived from the compulsory taxation of the people, and is not open to the objections urged against it by those who object to levy taxes for the support of religion.²⁸

²⁸ See *Brief Statement of the Regium Donum and Parliamentary Grant to poor Dissenting ministers by the Trustees*, 5-7.

This ingenious argument did not satisfy the opponents of the grant ; but though the Nonconformist feeling against it grew in strength every year, the House of Commons showed for some time no disposition to discontinue it. In 1845 Mr. Charles Hindley moved that the grant should cease, but he obtained the support of only three members. In 1847 another return was laid before Parliament, showing (1) the names of the persons by whom the grant was distributed ; (2) the proportion of the grant allocated to each sect or Body of Dissenters ; (3) the regulations under which grants were made to individual ministers ; (4) the salaries or allowances made to the persons by whom the grant was distributed. It was stated that the services of the Trustees were entirely gratuitous, and that the whole cost of administration did not exceed £25 a year. *Parl. Papers*, 1847 (611).

The opposition was renewed with great vigour in 1848 and 1849, without success. The question was raised again in 1850, and Mr. Bright spoke against the grant, which, however, was maintained on a division. *Parl. Debates*, (*Hansard*: T.S.), cxiii. 128-131. But in 1851 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that, in deference to the general protest of the Dissenters, the Government would not place the grant on the votes, and from that year the English *Regium Donum* ceased. The grant appears for the last time in the *Estimates* for 1851. *Parl. Papers*, 1851 (211), 1852 (238).²⁹

The *Irish Regium Donum*, which has a curious history (see an article reprinted in *The Congregational Magazine*, July, 1835, 451-457), was a sum distributed among the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland. In 1836 it amounted to £25,579. It ceased, with provision for existing interests, on the passing of the Act disestablishing the Irish Church in 1869.

²⁹ See, in addition to the references given above, Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 466-468, and the authorities quoted in the *notes* ; and Thomas Rees, *Sketch of the History of the Regium Donum and Parliamentary Grant to Poor Dissenting Ministers of England and Wales : a Vindication* (1834).

CHAPTER VII

THE SALTERS' HALL CONTROVERSY

ARIANISM AT EXETER—EARLIER ARIANS IN ENGLAND—BIDDLE AND FIRMIN—SHERLOCK AND HIS TEACHING—ANTI-TRINITARIAN LEGISLATION—TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—EMLYN—WHISTON AND CLARKE—CONFLICT AT EXETER—MINISTERS OF DEVON INTERVENE—MEETING OF THE THREE DENOMINATIONS AT SALTERS' HALL—TRINITARIAN DECLARATION PROPOSED—SECESSION OF NON-SUBSCRIBING MINISTERS—BOTH PARTIES SEND ADVICE TO EXETER—PEIRCE AND HALLET EJECTED—IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTROVERSY AS EVIDENCE OF GROWING DIVISION IN DOCTRINE BETWEEN PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS—INCONSISTENCY OF THE NON-SUBSCRIBERS, WHO AFTERWARDS CONFORM.

IN 1717 the Dissenters of Exeter began to fear that some of their ministers had surrendered their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and had become Arian. The controversy created by their alarm extended from Exeter to London, and had important results on the relations between the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, and on the subsequent fortunes of Congregationalism.

I

The denial of the doctrine of the Trinity had long been regarded in England with great horror. It was a crime for which nothing short of death was an adequate penalty. This was the offence for which Bartholomew Legatt was burnt at Smithfield, and Edward Wightman at Lichfield in 1612.¹ But the flames had not destroyed the heresy. It reappeared among the innumerable forms of religious speculation which alarmed the grave and sober theologians of the Westminster Assembly, when the repression of the bishops ceased at the

¹ Fuller, v. 418-425; and see p. 211.

outbreak of the Civil War. John Biddle, who is commonly described as the first of English Unitarians,² was master of a Grammar School in the city of Gloucester in 1644; and he was imprisoned under the Long Parliament, under Cromwell, and under Charles II., for denying the doctrine of the Trinity. In 1648 the Assembly of Divines procured from Parliament an ordinance that all persons denying the Trinity should be put to death; but before any sentence on Biddle could be executed, the power of the Assembly and of that Parliament had been broken.³ Thomas Firmin, a wealthy merchant, who under the teaching of Thomas Goodwin, of Coleman Street, had renounced Calvinism, was persuaded by Biddle, who was one of his friends, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not sustained by Holy Scripture. Like Biddle, he believed in the miraculous conception of our Lord Jesus Christ, and regarded this as the justification of His title "Son of God"; but our Lord was not *divine*; He was God's "Messenger, Minister, and Creature." Biddle taught that the Holy Spirit is the chief of "all the ministering spirits"; but Firmin denied the personality of the Spirit, and believed that He is "the power and inspiration of God."⁴ About 1690 a series of anonymous pamphlets began to appear, in which these opinions were maintained; their publication extended over several years; and it was commonly believed that they were published at Firmin's expense.⁵ The first two of these tracts were answered by Sherlock, who maintained that a belief in the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed is essential to salvation. The controversy gradually drew into it many famous names—Wallis, Jane, South, Burnet, Tillotson, and Bull.

By some of the controversialists who claimed to represent "the Catholic Faith," Sherlock was charged with Tritheism; and Sherlock's opinions having been maintained by a

² Toulmin, *Biddle*, iii.

³ For an account of Biddle's life and character, see Toulmin, *op. cit.*; Neal, iv. 122-123, and *notes*; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, iii. 173-206; and Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, i. 245-247.

⁴ For Firmin, see Hunt, *ibid.*, ii. 201-202. See also Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, iii. 372-389; and Firmin, *Life* (by Cornish). Tillotson, in a funeral sermon (1681) for a merchant named Gouge, does high honour to the benevolence of "that useful and worthy citizen, Mr. Thomas Firmin." Firmin, *Life*, 25. John Wesley believed that Firmin was "a really pious man." Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, iii. 290.

⁵ Firmin, *Life*, 12-13, 53.

preacher before the University of Oxford, the Convocation of the University condemned them as "contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and especially to the doctrine of the Church of England publicly received."⁶ This open schism among eminent theologians, and their inability to agree upon a definition of the doctrine which Unitarianism was boldly assailing, created alarm. In 1695 King William issued *Directions for the Preserving of Unity in the Church*, ordering that no other doctrine concerning the Trinity should be set forth than what was contained in Scripture, and is agreeable to the Three Creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles; that new terms should be avoided; that there should be no public controversies between preachers; and that the same caution should be observed in writing as in preaching.⁷

But though the opponents of Unitarianism were divided about the definition of the doctrine which was imperilled, they were of one mind in the belief that Unitarianism should be suppressed. Unitarians were already excluded from the benefits of the Toleration Act, not only by their inability to subscribe the doctrinal articles, but by the express words of the clause which provided that nothing in the Act should, or be construed to, extend to "any person that shall deny, in his preaching or writing, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as it is declared in the aforesaid articles of religion."⁸ But this was not enough. In 1697 an Act was passed, with the general consent of Nonconformists as well as of Churchmen, which made the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity a penal offence, punishable, on a second conviction, with three years' imprisonment.⁹

Early in the eighteenth century the struggle began afresh with new combatants. Thomas Emlyn had been pastor of a Dissenting Church in Lowestoft. He had read Sherlock and Howe on the Trinity, and his faith became unsettled. He had succeeded Dr. Williams in the pastorate of that Presbyterian Church in Dublin, and the ministers of the city suspected his heresy and pressed him to resign. His

⁶ Abbey and Overton, *English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 487.

⁷ Wilkins, iv. 625-626.

⁸ 1 W. and M., cap. 18, § 17.

⁹ 9 W. III., cap. 35 (cap. 32 in some editions), § 1.

congregation wished him to retire for a time only ; to this proposal the ministers offered strenuous resistance. As the result of the strife, he published *A Humble Inquiry into the Scripture Account of Jesus Christ*. In this book he acknowledged the pre-existence of the " Word " who became incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ ; he also acknowledged that Christ is both Lord and God, and is a true object of religious worship ; but he insisted on the subordination of the Son to the Father, and maintained that Jesus disclaimed all the attributes which properly belong to God.¹⁰

For this book he was prosecuted in Dublin in 1702, at the instance of a Baptist of the name of Caleb Thomas, found guilty, and sentenced to pay a fine of a thousand pounds, and to lie in gaol till the fine was paid. The Chief Justice told him that he had deceived the pillory, and that if he had been in Spain or Portugal, he would have been burnt.¹¹ Bishop Hoadly wrote some years after :—

" Sometimes we of the Established Church can manage a prosecution (for I must not call it persecution) ourselves, without calling in any other help. But I must do the Dissenting Protestants the justice to say, that they have shown themselves, upon occasion, very ready to assist us in so pious and Christian a work, as bringing heretics to their right mind. . . . The Nonconformists accused him [Emlyn] ; the Conformists condemned him ; the secular power was called in, and the cause ended in an imprisonment, and a very great fine. Two methods of conviction about which the Gospel is silent." ¹²

Emlyn was in prison for more than two years. Upon his release he came over to England and assisted Whiston and Clarke in renewing the Trinitarian controversy.¹³

Whiston was Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, and had been a Boyle Lecturer. By the study of the early Fathers, he was led to the conclusion that before the Council of Nicæa the faith of the Church was Arian. He was expelled from the

¹⁰ *A Humble Inquiry, Works*, i. 81-129.

¹¹ *A True Narrative, ibid.*, i. 1-80.

¹² Hoadly, in " Sir Richard Steele's " *Dedication* prefixed to Cerri, *Account of the State of the Roman Catholic Religion throughout the World*, ix.-x., xi.-xii. ; in Skeats, *Free Churches*, 300-301, note.

¹³ Calamy, *Historical Account*, i. 107-108, note ; Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 409-411 ; and *ibid.*, 398-412.

university, and censured by Convocation; a prosecution commenced against him in the spiritual courts broke down through some technical informality. He became a General Baptist.¹⁴

Samuel Clarke was rector of St. James's, Piccadilly. His Boyle Lecture won him a great reputation, and has given him a permanent place among the greatest theologians of the English Church. In 1712 he published a treatise called *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, which he maintained a position which, without being Arian, leant towards Arianism. The Lower House of Convocation charged him with heresy. He offered an explanation which the bishops accepted as satisfactory, and escaped further trouble. But his book provoked an animated controversy. It was attacked by Waterland, and defended by Whitby.¹⁵

II

The controversy which was being maintained by these distinguished theologians of the Established Church was watched with keen interest by the Dissenters, and especially by the Presbyterians, who, largely under the influence of Richard Baxter, had been inclined to what in these days would be described as a liberal theology. Of the four Dissenting ministers who were preaching in Exeter when the troubles in that city began—Hallet, James Peirce, Withers, and Lavington—Lavington alone was unsuspected of Arianism.

Withers appears to have been a man of no great distinction. Hallet, who was the son of an ejected minister, became the pastor of a congregation in Exeter in 1689, and he had charge of an "Academy." Peirce had considerable learning and great intellectual force; and his influence among Dissenters

¹⁴ Whiston himself "repudiated the imputation of Arianism," and called himself "a Eusebian." Abbey and Overton, *English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 491, and 490-494. See also Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, iii. 13-20.

¹⁵ For Samuel Clarke, and the controversy in which he engaged, see Abbey and Overton, *op. cit.*, i. 494-509. For Whitby and his *Disquisitiones Modestæ in Bulli Defensionem Fidei Nicenæ* (second edition, 1720), see the note in Abbey and Overton, *ibid.*, 496.

in every part of the kingdom was immense. His *Vindication of the Dissenters* was regarded as one of the ablest statements of their case against the Established Church.¹⁶ He had been minister at Cambridge, where he came to know Whiston ;¹⁷ from Cambridge he went to Newbury ; and he removed from Newbury to Exeter in 1713.

The Exeter Dissenters were Presbyterians, and their affairs were in the hands of a committee of thirteen managers. To allay the anxieties which were disturbing the peace of the congregations, the managers made repeated appeals to the ministers to preach on the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peirce preached a sermon on the subject in 1717, but said nothing to quiet the alarm ; and when he was asked to preach on the subject again, he resented the request as an insult, and the conference between him and the managers confirmed the impression that he no longer held the orthodox faith.

At the meeting of the Assembly of Devon and Cornwall in 1718 it was resolved that each of the ministers present should declare his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, either in the words of the first article of the Church of England, or in the words of the answers to the fifth and sixth questions of the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, or, if they preferred it, in words of their own. Hallet made his confession in words selected from Holy Scripture ; Peirce in words of his own that were supposed to be consistent with Arianism. According to the official record, it was "the general sense of the Assembly that there is but one living and true God, and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God" ; which Peirce said was "the sense of about two to one" in the meeting.¹⁸

The excitement in Exeter continued to increase. It was reported that Mr. Hallet's students were becoming Arians. Members of the Church of England, forgetting that Whiston and Clarke were the leaders of the movement against Trinitarianism, said to Dissenters whom they met in the streets— "You denied your Church first, and now you are denying your

¹⁶ *Vindiciæ Fratrum Dissidentium adversus V. C. Gulielmi Nicholsii Defensionem Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ* (1710). English version, with additions (1717).

¹⁷ Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 6-7.

¹⁸ *Plain and Faithful Narrative*, 15.

Saviour." The Exeter clergy in their pulpits charged the Dissenters with denying the Lord that bought them, and making the press sweat with their blasphemies.¹⁹ The judge at the Exeter Assizes, in charging the grand jury, spent the greater part of his time in attacking the men who were reviving and propagating the Arian heresy.

The managers continued to appeal to the ministers to remove the suspicions which rested upon them; but instead of making any approach to a declaration of the Trinitarian faith, Peirce directed the clerk to omit the Doxologies which it had been customary to sing at the end of the Psalms, and which ascribed glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as one God.²⁰ Hallet, having been accustomed in his prayers to ascribe *all* glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, now omitted the word *all*; and having once used it inadvertently, he recalled it.

On the advice of five eminent London ministers—Calamy, Jeremiah Smith, W. Tong, Benjamin Robinson, and Thomas Reynolds—seven ministers of the county of Devon were requested to attempt a settlement of the difficulty. They saw Peirce, Hallet, and Withers, but without producing any impression on them, and then agreed to the following resolutions:—

"(1) That there are some errors in doctrine, which are a sufficient ground for the people to withdraw from their ministers holding such errors.

"(2) That the denying the true and proper divinity of the Son of God—viz., that He is one God with the Father, is an error of that nature, contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and common faith of the Reformed Churches.

"(3) That when so dangerous an error is industriously propagated, to the overthrowing of the faith of many, we think it the indispensable duty of ministers (who are set for the defence of the Gospel) earnestly to withstand it, and to give reasonable satisfaction to their people of their soundness in the faith. And we likewise recommend to the people, as their duty, to hold fast the truth in love, avoiding anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, and to behave themselves with all sincerity and meekness as becometh Christians."²¹

The resolutions, after being approved by the five London ministers, were sent to the managers with the advice that

¹⁹ *Plain and Faithful Narrative*, 7. Peirce, *Western Inquisition*, 39-40.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

²¹ *Plain and Faithful Narrative*, 27-28.

they should "proceed with wisdom and deliberation." The managers, the day after the resolutions were in their hands, made a final appeal to the four ministers. About Lavington there was no doubt. He made a statement that they considered satisfactory. Withers, after some hesitation, signed the first of the Thirty-nine Articles.²² Hallet and Peirce refused to make any statement of their belief, and in the course of the next week—about the middle of March, 1718-9—they were informed by the managers, who were the legal holders of the meeting-houses, that they were no longer ministers of the Presbyterian congregations in Exeter, and that they would not be suffered again to enter either of the pulpits.

Mr. Peirce complained that he and his colleague should have been dismissed on the sole authority of the managers, and insisted that according to the constitution of the Exeter Churches the people were to meet every year to give their judgment on any questions in which they were interested. It was replied that during the six years of Mr. Peirce's ministry no such meeting had ever been held, and that until they were dismissed both he and Mr. Hallet had appeared to be quite willing that the managers should keep the conduct of the affairs of the Churches in their own hands. The reply does not seem adequate. The constitution of the Churches recognised the authority of the people. When nothing of grave importance was being done, the managers might feel at liberty to act without consulting them; but on such a question as the dismissal of two of the ministers, it was the clear duty of the managers to call a meeting.

III

The controversy was not confined to the West of England. A few gentlemen in London suggested to the committee of the Three Denominations that they should offer advice to the Exeter congregations in their troubles. The committee discussed the proposal at several meetings, and then determined to invite the judgment of the General Body on their proposals. A meeting was held at Salters' Hall on February 19 (1718-9),

²² *Western Inquisition*, 160. Peirce, *Case of the Ministers ejected at Exon*, 12-13, 15.

and the paper submitted by the committee was carefully discussed. At an adjourned meeting held on February 24, it was moved that the "advice" should be accompanied with a declaration of the faith of the Assembly in the doctrine of the Trinity. When the division was taken, after an excited debate, feeling ran high. Some person "very indiscreetly called out, 'You that are against Persecution come upstairs!'" Which was pretty evenly ballanced by one of the other side calling out, 'You that are for the doctrine of the Trinity stay below!'" The motion was lost by a majority of four—57 to 53.²³

This vote kindled a fire in the London Churches. The people regarded it as a proof that many of the London ministers were drifting from the Trinitarian creed. At a third meeting, which was called on March 3, it was moved that, without reference to the advice to be sent to the Exeter Churches, the ministers should declare their faith in the doctrine of the Trinity and especially in the divinity of our Lord. The moderator, Dr. Joshua Oldfield, ruled that the motion was irrelevant to the business under discussion, and refused to put it to the vote. Sixty of the ministers immediately withdrew, and held a second, or "subscribing," assembly.

The large majority of the "non-subscribing" assembly, over which Dr. Joshua Oldfield continued to preside, were Presbyterian, but the assembly included a few Independents and Baptists. John Evans, Benjamin Grosvenor, Dr. Gale, Dr. Avery, Nathaniel Lardner, William Jacomb, and Daniel Burgess were among the "non-subscribers."

The "subscribing" assembly had for its moderator Thomas Bradbury, who had led the minority at Salters' Hall. It included nearly all the Congregational ministers of London, and a majority of those who were actual pastors of Churches; the most distinguished of them were William Tong, Jabez Earle, and Daniel Mayo.

Dr. Calamy, Isaac Watts, Daniel Neal, and Dr. Marryat kept out of the strife.²⁴

²³ *An Account of the late Proceedings at Salters' Hall* (second edition: 1719), 10. Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii., 411, note, gives the numbers as 73 to 62.

²⁴ Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 413-417. Skeats, *Free Churches*, 307.

Both assemblies sent advice to Exeter. The "non-subscribers" informed the Exeter Churches that in their judgment there are doctrinal errors of such importance as to oblige a congregation to withdraw from its minister; that the people themselves are the sole judges of what those errors are; that the Bible is the rule of faith; that no man should be condemned for refusing to sign human creeds, or for inferences drawn from his opinion by others but disclaimed by himself; and that strife should be avoided. At the same time they declared that "We do utterly disown the Arian doctrine, and sincerely believe the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity." What they objected to was that in place of Scripture "a humane composition" should be offered to them as a test of orthodoxy.²⁵

The "subscribers" recognised the duties and rights of the people in almost the same words as those used by the non-subscribers; they gave it as their judgment that in such troubles as those which had arisen at Exeter neighbouring ministers should be invited to intervene and to offer their counsel; that a minister may properly be called upon to declare his faith when his faith is suspected; that when the differences between a minister and his people are very grave, they should separate from each other; and that the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity is an error contrary to the Scriptures and to the faith of the Reformed Churches. They also declared their own faith in the Trinity in the words of the first article of the Church of England and of the Catechism of the Westminster Assembly.

The "non-subscribers," on the other hand, while disclaiming all sympathy with the Arian heresy, set out their reasons for not subscribing at the Salters' Hall Conference. They say that their orthodoxy was not suspected; that to have subscribed would have been to take sides with one of the parties at Exeter; that no declaration in other words than those of Scripture could serve the cause of peace and truth; that the subscription proposed was beyond that which was required by the Toleration Act, and that it attributed undue importance to the Assembly's Catechism; that to have

²⁵ *An Authentick Account*, 5-11. *Reply to the Subscribing Ministers' Reasons*, 5.

submitted to the proposal would have been contrary to the principles of Protestantism, and a surrender of Christian liberty ; and, finally, that if such demands were complied with, no one could tell where they would stop.

Neither paper reached Exeter till the managers had dismissed Hallet and Peirce.²⁶

The controversy had grave consequences. It was the open sign of the great doctrinal rupture between the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. The non-subscribers declared that they were only asserting their Christian liberty ; but they were reminded that in order to obtain the protection of the Government for themselves, they had been quite willing to comply with the Toleration Act, and that of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England they had already signed thirty-five and a half ; but that now, in the name of Christian liberty, they refused to sign the first of these articles for the sake of defending a truth that lies at the very foundation of the Christian faith. Eighteen or twenty of those zealous defenders of Christian liberty who were unwilling to declare their faith in one great article of the Christian creed, subsequently entered the English Church, signed the whole of the thirty-nine articles, and declared their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book intituled 'The Book of Common Prayer.'" Others of them openly professed their adherence to the Arian theology.²⁷

²⁶ The literature of the controversy at the two centres, Exeter and London, is too voluminous for references in detail. The following pamphlets give the main substance of the discussion: *A True Account of what was transacted in the assembly of the United Ministers of Devon and Cornwall, met at Exon, May 5 and 6, 1719.* James Peirce, *The case of the ministers ejected at Exon, (1719);* and *The Western Inquisition, (1720).* *An Authentic Account of several Things done and agreed upon by the Dissenting Ministers lately assembled at Salters' Hall (1719).* *An Account of the late Proceedings of the Dissenting Ministers at Salters' Hall (1719).* *A Reply to the subscribing ministers' reasons, etc. (1719).* *A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Differences among the Dissenters at Exeter, etc. (1719).* A summary of it may be found in Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii. 418-420, notes ; Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iii. 230, note ; and Skeats, *Free Churches*, 310, note. See also Calamy, *op. cit.*, ii. 262-264, 403-418, 425-430, 435-437, 488-499, and notes ; Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iii. 515-522 ; Bogue and Bennett, *op. cit.*, iii. 217-225 ; Skeats, *op. cit.*, 302-311 ; Waddington, iii. (1700-1800), 87-196 ; and Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 417-420.

²⁷ See Note A, p. 539.

NOTE A

The Non-subscribers and Nonconformity

The writer of what is known as the "Palmer," or the "London Manuscript," in Dr. Williams's Library, supplies a considerable amount of information on the affairs of this period; he says—"As to those ministers who appeared against what they called 'imposition' in the Salters' Hall controversy—that is, against declaring their faith as to one article of Christianity only (though never offered as a term of communion or of exercising the ministerial office),—and strenuously defended the right of private judgment, it might reasonably have been expected that the cause of Nonconformity would have received from them considerable encouragement; especially that they themselves, by their own example and practice, would have kept steady to it; but it proved the reverse, for of those non-subscribing gentlemen and such as had imbibed their principles, there have been at least twenty persons who called themselves dissenting ministers conformed to the Church of England since 1718; and, if the laity had travelled the same road in an equal proportion, that interest would have received a greater shock. And here it is worthy of remark, that those gentlemen, who could not digest an article of faith, are on a sudden so enlightened, as to be convinced that it is their duty to sign thirty-nine, while those ministers that could honestly subscribe an article have to a man kept steady to the dissenting interest."

Calamy, referring to the conformity of the non-subscribers, says, "This was, by many, apprehended to have an odd aspect, and not to be very consistent"; he gives a list of the conforming ministers. *Historical Account*, ii. 503-504, 506.

CHAPTER VIII
ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER GEORGE I.
AND GEORGE II.

(1714—1760)

STATISTICS OF NONCONFORMITY IN LONDON, AND IN ENGLAND AND WALES—ENGLISH PRESBYTERIANS TEND TOWARDS ARIANISM—CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES REMAIN ORTHODOX, AND ATTRACT EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIANS—DOCTRINAL POSITION OF LONDON MINISTERS—THEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES OF CONGREGATIONALISM—DODDRIDGE—WATTS AND TRINITARIANISM—ALLEGED DECAY OF THE “DISSENTING INTEREST”—STRICKLAND GOUGH’S PAMPHLET—HIS EXPLANATION OF THE DECAY—DODDRIDGE AND WATTS DISPUTE THE FACTS—REPLY TO HIS PAMPHLET—PROPOSED REMEDIES—ABRAHAM TAYLOR ON SPIRITUAL DECLINE—WATTS ON THE DECAY OF PRACTICAL RELIGION—REVIVAL OF SPIRITUAL LIFE—THE KING’S HEAD SOCIETY—ITS ACADEMY—FUND BOARD ACADEMY IN WESTERN ENGLAND—NORTHERN EDUCATION SOCIETY—ACADEMY AT HECKMONDWHIKE—SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES—CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES TOUCHED BY THE METHODIST REVIVAL.

I

NO trustworthy figures are known to be in existence illustrating the external growth or decay of Dissent in the country generally during the reign of George I. But in the Palmer MS., in Dr. Williams’s Library,¹ it is said that in

¹ This document—to which reference has already been made (p. 539)—is dated Feb. 24, 1731–2; it was deposited in the Library by the Rev. Samuel Palmer, Feb. 13, 1800. The writer was a Nonconformist, “who came from Northampton to reside in London.” The author entitles his sketch, *A View of the Dissenting Interest in London of the Presbyterian and Independent Denominations from the year 1695 to the 25th of December, 1731; with a postscript of the present state of the Baptists*. He deals with all the Churches of those orders in the City of London and the Bills of Mortality, and gives a detailed account of each with its ministers. It is not always possible to reconcile the lists that he gives with his statistics; but in cases of discrepancy his definite statements have been accepted.

1731—three years after the accession of George II.—the number of Presbyterian and Independent meeting-houses in London was 58,² an increase of only one since 1695; 29 of them, however, had been enlarged or rebuilt, so as to accommodate 4,000 additional persons. Of the congregations 14 are said to have increased; 15 to have declined; and 20 had remained nearly as they were, five-and-thirty years before; 12 congregations had become extinct; and 10 new congregations had been formed. The writer concludes that the number of Dissenters in London had not diminished, but had, perhaps, increased. The increase, however, had not corresponded to the increase of the population, which he estimates at about one-sixth.

An account of the Dissenting congregations in England and Wales, drawn up in 1772 by Josiah Thompson, a Baptist minister, probably shows with approximate accuracy the number that existed at the death of George II. in 1760. In England there were 1,092 congregations, of which 390 were Baptist and 702 Presbyterian and Independent. The numerical superiority of the Presbyterians had, however, by this time been lost; it is probable that considerably more than half of the 702 congregations—perhaps 380—were Independent, and that most of the Independent congregations were larger than the Presbyterian. But the original contrast between the two denominations remained. Hereditary wealth and education were still with the Presbyterians; Independents, generally, belonged to an inferior social rank.³

II

From the time of the Salters' Hall Controversy it became apparent that the Presbyterian ministers, and many of their Churches, were drifting fast into Arianism; and from Arianism they went on to what was called Socinianism. In London, in Lancashire, in Cheshire, and throughout the West of England, minister after minister and Church after Church were swept away by the current. Here and there a Congregational

² In 1695 there were 57, but the number of *congregations* was 60: six congregations met in three meeting-houses.

³ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iii. 329-330.

minister of a Congregational Church went with the stream. James Foster—one of the most famous preachers of those days—had received a large part of the theology of Socinus before he accepted in 1744 the pastorate of the historic Congregational Church that met in Pinners' Hall.⁴ He was succeeded in 1753 by Caleb Fleming, an avowed Socinian; at Fleming's death, in 1778, the Church ceased to exist.⁵

But the great majority both of the Congregational ministers and of the Congregational Churches held fast to the Trinitarian faith. The principal cause of the difference between the fortunes of the two denominations lies in their polity. The Presbyterians trusted the management of their affairs to persons for whose religious life there was no guarantee—to trustees, subscribers, or seat-holders; among the Independents the Church, consisting of those who had declared their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who had been received into communion on giving evidence that their faith was a real spiritual force and not a mere tradition, elected and, in extreme cases, dismissed the pastor. Evangelical doctrine in the preaching of the minister was secured by the presence of evangelical life in the people.

In many ways the departure of the Presbyterians from the evangelical faith contributed to the strength of the Independents. Sometimes, when an Arian was appointed to a Presbyterian pulpit, those of the people who held fast to the creed of their fathers joined the Independent congregation that was nearest to them. Sometimes the seceders founded a new Independent Church. In some cases, where a Presbyterian congregation had become almost extinct, an Independent Church was allowed to take possession of the meeting-house.

When a Presbyterian pulpit became vacant, and the majority of the subscribers or of the trustees were evangelical; they were obliged, in order to obtain an evangelical minister, to send to one of the Independent Academies; and with an

⁴ "Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten Metropolitans in preaching well."

Pope, *Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue I.*

See Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 270-283, and the verses quoted by Stoughton, vi. 86-87, *note*.

⁵ Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 283-289.

Independent minister, the congregation gradually came to accept the Independent polity.

The following figures taken from the Palmer MS.⁶ show the doctrinal position of the London ministers belonging to the principal Dissenting denominations in 1730 :—

Presbyterians . . . 44	}	Calvinist . . . 19
		Arminian . . . 13
		Baxterian ⁷ . . . 12
Independents . . . 33	}	Calvinist . . . 27
		Doubtful . . . 1
		Antinomian . . . 3
		Not described ⁸ . . . 2
Baptists . . . 27	}	Seventh Day
		Calvinist . . . 1
		Arminian . . . 1
		Particular
		Calvinist . . . 7
		Antinomian . . . 9
	}	General
		Arminian . . . 6
		Socinian ⁹ . . . 3

But though most of the Independents held fast to the Calvinistic faith, they were not wholly untouched by the rationalising spirit of their time. Thomas Bradbury, of Fetter Lane, was as robust, as fearless, as uncompromising, in his theology as in his politics. In Philip Doddridge, on the other hand, there is an illustration of the influence produced by the atmosphere of the age on the dogmatic attitude of a man whose religious life was deep and earnest, and whose creed in its substance was identical with that of the great Independents of the Commonwealth.¹⁰

⁶ See above, p. 540, note 1.

⁷ In the technical language of our own time, the "Baxterians" would be described as forming the *Broad Church* section of the Presbyterian denomination.

⁸ "Do not deserve any particular remark," *Palmer MS.*, f. 92. Skeats, *Free Churches*, 335, note, describes them as "disorderly." Skeats, it should be noticed, treats the list as if it referred to *Churches*; but it refers to *ministers*.

⁹ One of these was Foster—afterwards minister of the Congregational Church in Pinners' Hall.

¹⁰ Whether it can be accurately said that Doddridge's creed was in its *substance* identical with that of the great Independents of the Commonwealth may be disputed. On one or two points there were

The men of the Commonwealth, in building up their massive theological systems, were supremely concerned to discover what God had revealed to the human race by prophets, by apostles, and by the Lord Jesus Christ. For their own apprehension of what God had revealed, they relied on the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Then, with a fearless faith and a perfect disregard of how their work might look to those who did not share their own vision of the truth, they proceeded to set out their discoveries in formal propositions; to build on these propositions conclusion upon conclusion, binding tier to tier with the clamps of an iron logic. They thought of nothing except how they might give the most complete and systematic expression to what they believed that they had been taught of God. Doddridge, devout, gentle soul, was not less faithful to the truth which he believed he had found in the revelation that had come from heaven; but it is difficult to resist the impression that in constructing his theology he wishes to give as few chances as possible to hostile criticism. If he can, he will soften the edge of a proposition which might be censured as harsh and stern. If he can, he will make his faith appear reasonable. From such anxieties as these the great Independents of the preceding century were free, and this freedom gives to their work a boldness and vigour which are rarely found in the work of their successors.

Isaac Watts is, perhaps, still more open to this criticism than Philip Doddridge; and his active and inquisitive intellect led him to some theological peculiarities which have been forgotten in the immense and enduring service that he has rendered to English-speaking Evangelical Churches in all parts of the world. He thought, for example, that if the children of believers die in infancy, the covenant of grace

serious divergences. He believed that "Christ had before His incarnation a *created* or *derived* nature"—not a divine personality—that was subjected to humiliation when He came in the flesh. (*Lectures*, 383, *coll.*, 1: second edition, 1776.) This is logically destructive of the august and glorious truth that it was the Eternal Son who became man. He was also inclined to a Sabellian conception of the Trinity. But his position in relation to the Trinity vacillated. Cf. *ibid.*, *Definition* lxxviii. (391), and *Propositions*, cxxvi., cxxviii. (382 foll., 392 foll.), and his *Confession of Faith* in Waddington, iii. (1700—1800), 280—287; esp. §§ 15, 17, 18.

with their parents secures their eternal salvation ; but that other children dying in infancy cease to exist at death.¹¹

Watts's opinion on the great controversy with the Arians underwent a great change after the publication in 1722 of a treatise which he entitled *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*.¹² At that time he was within the strict lines of orthodoxy. In 1724 he published *The Arian invited to the Orthodox Faith ; or a plain and easy method to lead such as deny the Deity of Christ into the belief of that great Article*. A second part was published in 1725.¹³ Watts now maintained that the human soul of our Lord, a glorious spirit, greater than all the angels, was the first creation of God. The Eternal Word—which according to Watts is a divine Power, rather than a divine Person—was intimately associated with the soul of Christ, and through Christ created all things.¹⁴ The Eternal Spirit was also regarded by him as a divine Power—not a divine Person. Personality he attributed to the Father alone.

But whatever perils may follow, sooner or later, from the abandonment of that conception of the Trinity which has been held through a long succession of centuries by the vast majority of those who bear the Christian name,¹⁵ Watts, like Doddridge, was unharmed. To both of them Christ was always divine—the object of fervent love, unmeasured trust, and most reverential worship ; His death was the propitiation for human sin ; He was the Lord and Judge as well as the Saviour of mankind. To them the Holy Spirit was always the Giver and Defender of the supernatural life ; the Teacher and the Comforter of the Church. Their theology, if it had no touch of Arianism in it, was perhaps nearer the heresy which lies at the opposite pole of theological speculation, the heresy of Sabellius.¹⁶

¹¹ Dr. Ridgley, another eminent Independent theologian belonging to the early part of the eighteenth century, supposed that if the children of unbelievers die in infancy, they live for ever, but in a state of perfect unconsciousness.

¹² *Works*, vi. 109–206.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vi. 207–270, 271–390.

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., *ibid.*, 319, 328, 341, 370.

¹⁵ The difference between the creed of the East and of the West on this great mystery is inconsiderable, compared with the differences between those who accept and those who reject the Nicene creed.

¹⁶ Sabellius, so far as his speculations are known to us, “ distinguished between the unity of the divine *essence* and the plurality of its

III

The decay of what was called "the Dissenting Interest," which had created great anxiety among Dissenters of all descriptions in the days of Queen Anne, was not arrested under George I. Wealthy Dissenting families continued to forsake the Meeting-house. The sons of eminent Nonconformists who had suffered for their Nonconformity became Churchmen. Many congregations in some parts of the kingdom were wasting away; here and there the Dissenting congregation had become extinct. At least fifty Dissenting ministers became clergymen between the accession of George I. (1714) and the year 1731.¹⁷

In 1730 there was published *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest in a Letter to a Dissenting Minister*. The pamphlet was anonymous, but Doddridge thought it of sufficient importance to call for a serious reply. He took it for granted that it was written by "a gentleman of the laity"; it was really written by Strickland Gough, a student who had recently left one of the Dissenting Academies. But Doddridge and some other writers evidently regarded it as expressing the views of a considerable section of the wealthier and better educated members of Dissenting congregations; and it is this representative character, and the serious discussion which it occasioned, that give the pamphlet its value. What the Dissenters who claimed to hold "free principles" were saying in private conversation is here preserved in print. The adherents in 1730 of what would now be described as a "liberal theology" and of "modern thought," have given in this pamphlet their account of the

manifestations." Father, Son, and Spirit, as he conceived them, were not Persons but manifestations, "following one another in order, like dramatic parts. God as Father is the Creator and Lawgiver; through the incarnation the same God fulfils the office of Redeemer, up to the time of the Ascension; and, lastly, as Holy Ghost regenerates and sanctifies. . . . The Sabellians are said to have compared the triplicity of God to the Sun, the light of the Sun, and its heat. . . . For the proper human soul of Christ Sabellianism substituted God Himself, in one mode of manifestation, streaming through a human body." G. P. Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine* (second edition), 103.

¹⁷ This is the estimate of an anonymous writer, who says that he does not make the statement without foundation, and whose wish was to diminish rather than to exaggerate the number. *Some Observations on the Present State of the Dissenting Interest*, 10.

causes which had led to the gradual decay of Dissent during the previous fifteen or twenty years, and their methods for restoring its health and vigour.

The writer finds two causes of the decay. He attributes to the Dissenters—(1) “Ignorance of their own principles;” and (2) “An ill conduct and management of their own interests.” He does not think that the declining strength of Dissent is owing to “the loss of a puritanical spirit”; for “the spirit of the good old Puritans was nothing else but a spirit of *liberty*,” and that spirit, instead of being lost, is “rather carried farther and improved.”¹⁸ This conception of the “good old Puritan spirit” prepares us for his account of “the fundamental principle of the Dissenters,” which, as he apprehends it, is “a *liberty* for every man to form his own sentiments; and to pursue them by all lawful and regular methods; to disclaim the *impositions* of men, and to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.”¹⁹ The divine obligation of any form of church government is denied. No form is imposed on the Church in the New Testament; nor does the writer appear to believe that there are to be found in the contents of the Christian Revelation, or in the ends for which Churches have been divinely constituted, or in the relation of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who are gathered together in His name, or in the great promises He has given to them, any laws which should determine the membership of the Church or its polity. Every Church must judge for itself what form of organisation is best, and also how it should conduct its worship. He insists on the obligation resting on every man to worship God “according to the dictates of his own conscience,” and maintains that as the Scriptures are “a sufficient rule of the conduct of men,” every man must discover, if he can, what the Scriptures teach, and obey it; but as to church government and Christian worship, he thinks that the Scriptures teach little or nothing.²⁰

On these grounds he is strongly hostile to the Uniformity imposed by the Establishment. He argues that if liberty is to be maintained, Churches must be “not national but private.”²¹ He places the emphasis of his argument against the English Church on its infringement of liberty. He

¹⁸ *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

objects to the enforced subscription to Calvinistic articles, to the enforced recitation of the Athanasian Creed, to the enforced use of rites and ceremonies which to many good men seem objectionable. "The general rule in the Scriptures for religious worship is, that *all things be done decently and in order*. But what an indecent noise is made by the responses? the most confused and harsh one can hear! What superstition in bowing to the altar, and the cross in baptism? But above all,"—he asks—"what tender parent can be willing to give up his own natural right over his child, and have it dedicated in baptism by others?"²² He wonders, "who could be grave to hear Mr. Addison, or Mr. Pope, chanting out the Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins, when Dr. Watts's, which have all the charms of poetry in them, cannot be sung in a church without public authority."²³

He is rather hard on "those gentlemen who have been strong and powerful advocates for Liberty"—non-subscribers at Salters' Hall for example,—but have gone over to the Church, and wishes that they "would rather have sought some civil than ecclesiastical preferments."²⁴ He thinks that if the greatness of the Dissenting contention for freedom against authority were made clear to Dissenters, fewer of them would conform. The great spiritual ideas which had been the inspiration and glory of Puritanism and Nonconformity are wholly forgotten. Nothing is left except the duty resting on every man to obey "the dictates of his own conscience."

Unhappily for his great argument, that if Dissenters were taught that Freedom is the fundamental principle of Dissent, they would not become Churchmen, he himself became a clergyman within a few months after his pamphlet was published; and in the pamphlet itself he acknowledges that most of those who had conformed to the Church held those "free principles" which he regarded as the real root of Dissent and the only secure guarantee of its strength and permanence. His explanation of the awkward fact that so many men who held "free principles" had entered the Establishment is frank and interesting: "it has always arose

²² *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 23. Mr. Gough did not understand that baptism in the English Church is something very different from "dedication."

²³ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

from their not being able to live by them"; which means that the ministers who held the principles which in the writer's judgment are the very life and glory of the Dissenting Interest, could not hold together Dissenting congregations.²⁵

As to "the ill conduct and management of their own interests," his principal charge against the Dissenters is that the ministers have not sufficient liberty in their preaching, and that the people "will not be well instructed by those who have the courage to teach them even disagreeable truths, rather than flattered into what may possibly be false, and, if it be true, is but of the least importance in religion;" and he thinks that they ought not to "be jealous of heresy in their younger preachers."²⁶ That many congregations in that age would have been disposed to resent any serious departure from the *forms* in which it had been customary to state the great truths that had been the substance of the Puritan and Nonconformist faith, is no doubt true; but at a time when the ministers, as was very soon shown, were forsaking the substance—not the mere form—of the truths that the people regarded as of the very substance of the Christian creed—when they were surrendering their faith in the Trinity, in the divinity of our Lord, and in the Protestant doctrine of Justification—Mr. Gough's suggestion was a rather severe demand on their forbearance. However, as the result of the refusal of many of the Dissenters to provide salaries for ministers who in the belief of the people had ceased to preach the Christian Gospel, and some of whom were preaching what the people believed to be deadly error—fatal to the higher life of all who received it—"the best" of the Dissenting ministers, it is alleged, were obliged to enter the Church of England; and most of the ministers who were generously maintained were men "whose births and hopes" were "low"—men who, according to Mr. Gough's charitable suggestion, were not gentlemen, and who flattered people, and fell in with their prejudices in order to obtain their support.²⁷

He also thinks that in choosing their ministers people are too much attracted by "some oddness that hits their peculiar humour," and that they are too ignorant to know

²⁵ *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32, 37.

wherein "oratory, strength of speech, and the art of persuasion consist"; they are gravely at fault in matters of taste; and they ought to consult the "general credit" of the Dissenters rather than their own preferences. Young ministers who study "good sense and politeness" should be encouraged. It was because of the absence of these qualities in Dissenting ministers that "people of wit and politeness grew ashamed of them, and chose a more graceful way of religion."²⁸

He speaks with admiration of the special encouragement given to Foster,²⁹ for whom a Sunday evening lecture had recently been established at the Old Jewry, and who was defending "original Christianity," "in the politest and finest manner," before "a crowded auditory"; and he says that "there are many others that would shine out, if they had the same advantages from the world."³⁰

As a matter of course, he thinks that more importance should be attached to worship in public religious services. For worship "infinitely becomes us, as we are dependent creatures, and stand at an infinite distance from God our Maker. 'Tis both a solemn and pleasant employment; it tends to ennoble our natures, preserve us from vice, and beget in us all those affections of love, fear, and joy, that result from our relation to the most amiable, powerful, and indulgent Being. Nothing," he adds, "creates a greater pleasure to me than *rational* worship."³¹

But he recommends—and this is also a matter of course—"the practice of the Church, of diversifying the worship." He complains that the prayers of Dissenting ministers are generally too short, and that their sermons are too long; and he suggests that it would be well if they used "notes" in their prayers as well as in their sermons.³²

²⁸ *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 34-35.

²⁹ This lecture "he [Foster] carried on till nearly the time of his death, with a degree of popularity which is said to have been unexampled among Protestant Dissenters. 'Here (says Dr. Fleming) was a confluence of persons of every rank, station and quality—wits, free-thinkers, numbers of clergy; who, whilst they gratified their curiosity, had their prepossessions shaken, and their prejudices loosened. And of the usefulness and success of these lectures he had a large number of written testimonials from unknown, as well as known persons.'" Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 274. And see above, p. 542.

³⁰ *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 36-37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

³² *Ibid.*, 40-41.

He thinks it desirable that great care should be taken in admitting young men to the Academies to be educated for the ministry. "They should be creditable and promising, chosen either out of the families of Gentlemen, or else upon the account of a very extraordinary genius."³³ And he has views of his own with regard to the kind of education that the Academies should provide for ministerial students. They should be "perfectly taught Latin and Greek" before the commencement of their theological course; and "the time usually wasted in old systems of logic and metaphysics (should be) spent in studying and understanding the classics, the *Belles Lettres*, oratory, and particularly the art of speaking naturally, justly, and genteelly." "It may seem odd and whimsical," he adds, "to propose a dancing-master for one tutor at an Academy; but if something equivalent to it was contrived, to give them a gracefulness and gentility of address, and prune off all clumsiness and awkwardness that is disagreeable to people of fashion, and which gives learning the air of pedantry, it would do them a most eminent service."³⁴

Of his two final recommendations one is perfectly distinct—there should be fewer congregations, and larger salaries. The other is rather obscure; but he appears to wish that in the larger towns "the generous people"—by which he means people like himself, holding "free principles"—should form one congregation, and the "bigoted"—by which he means people holding the theological position of the great founders of Puritanism and Nonconformity—should worship in another. When the two sections are in one religious society, it "lays the minister under too great restraints to please both parties."³⁵

These are the remedies proposed for the decay of an "Interest" which had been created by the glorious faith, the invincible courage, and the passionate enthusiasm of martyrs and saints. Incidentally the writer expresses his judgment that "the credit of the interest can only arise from the *learning* and *piety* of those engaged in it," and in a few lines of cold commonplaces he argues that for the ministry neither is sufficient alone, and that "they must both join to make him

³³ *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 42.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

perfect"; but after this ceremonious recognition of the necessity of religious life in the minister, if a Church is to be strong, the subject is finally dismissed.³⁶

The impression produced by this pamphlet is a decisive proof that whether the Dissenters were increasing or diminishing in number, the "Dissenting Interest" was in danger of losing all the noblest elements of its life and vigour. The pamphlet appeared without the name of the author; the author's name, when known, gave it no authority. It would never have received the serious attention of men like Doddridge, Watts, and Abraham Taylor, if the spirit and views expressed in the pamphlet had not been shared by a large number of persons belonging to Dissenting congregations.

That there was a general falling-off in the *number* of Dissenters was denied. Doddridge, speaking for the congregations in those parts of England that he knew best—the Midlands—says:—

"I know that in many of them, the number of Dissenters is greatly increased within these twenty years; and the interest continues so to flourish, that I am confident some of our honest people, who converse only with their own neighbourhood, will be surprised to hear of an *Enquiry into the causes of its decay*."³⁷

Watts in the Preface to *An Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians* (1731) says—"So far as I have searched into that matter,"—the decay of the Dissenting Interest—"I have been informed, that whatsoever decrease may have appeared in some places, there have been sensible advances in others."³⁸

The author of an anonymous pamphlet published in 1731—*Some Observations upon the Present State of the Dissenting Interest and the Case of those who have lately deserted it*—insists that the "Decay" is local, not general; and he attributes very much of the local decay to the decline of the trading prosperity, and the consequent decrease in the population in some of the southern counties. Dissent relied for very much of its strength on "the middling and trading people"; and it was in these southern counties, "in which Trade is

³⁶ *Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, 35.

³⁷ Doddridge, *Free Thoughts*, 31.

³⁸ *Works*, iv. 585.

prodigiously sunk from what it was," that the Dissenting congregations had suffered most severely.³⁹

Nor does he attach very much importance to the loss of the fifty ministers who had entered the English Church. Some of these, he says, were in middle life ; but he describes most of them as " young persons," who were distinguished by " an unsuitable gaiety and levity of conduct," or by " an unseasonable and imprudent forwardness in discoursing upon some particular schemes concerning the Disputables in religion." ⁴⁰ He thinks that those who had conformed were, after all, an inconsiderable fraction of the whole body of the Dissenting ministers in the kingdom, and he alleges that the impression that their conformity had produced was owing chiefly to the fact that they lived in or near London. " I shall not pretend," he says, " to inquire into the Reasons that might be assigned for this circumstance, but shall mention one certain consequence of it, namely, that by this means they have been more taken notice of, and made a much greater noise in the world." ⁴¹

Among the subordinate causes of the " Decay," which, although he thinks it had been exaggerated, he does not deny, this writer gives a conspicuous place to the practice of those Dissenting parents who placed their children under High Church schoolmasters. " For my part," he exclaims, " I had a thousand times rather my boy could write only an awkward hand, or know no more of Latin than his mother, than that for the sake of skill in them he should run the hazard of being poisoned and corrupted in his religious principles." He reminds Dissenters of the attempt which had been made under Queen Anne to destroy Dissent by suppressing Dissenting Schools :—

" We thought it a very *unnatural hardship* laid upon us by the Schism Act, which took away from us our Privilege of educating our children ; and methinks, we should not tamely and foolishly do almost the same thing that Act aimed at, by voluntarily putting our Children under such sort of Tuition. Though the Contrivers of that Act did it to their *eternal Infamy* ; yet in this they acted a *wise and consistent part*, taking thereby the *likeliest* step to suppress our Interest. And shall we, who are sensible of their View in it, by taking much the same Steps, be contributing towards the

³⁹ *Some Observations*, 21, 30-31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

Accomplishment of it? I would not, therefore, where there is any opportunity of avoiding it, send a child to a Tory School, so much as to learn his A.B.C.”⁴²

And as most of the Free Schools had fallen into Tory hands, he advises that Dissenters should establish schools of their own.

He thinks that in some congregations the older men have been too unwilling to consult the wishes of the younger people in matters of indifference, such as “an alteration in the common method of singing the Psalms”; that ministers and “managers” have sometimes presumed too much on their official authority; that the older ministers have not been considerate and kindly in their treatment of their younger brethren; and that students who have just left the Academies should have received more generous attention from the Churches.⁴³ Too much encouragement had been given to “strolling Scotch ministers,” who had come to England without trustworthy recommendations. “It is a foolish humour in some of our Societies, to be engaged by the Noise and Wheedle of these People. . . . The Power of their Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, etc., runs too much in their heads; and the general fire of their Tempers is too great, to fit them to deal with *English* constitutions, and to act upon Dissenting principles.”⁴⁴ Finally, in defending the practice of Occasional Conformity, many Dissenters, who claimed the value of moderation, had argued as if there were “nothing of moment” in the differences between the Dissenters and the English Church, and a spurious moderation had sapped conviction.⁴⁵

But he acknowledges that the real root of the evil lay deeper, and that there had been a real decline of religious earnestness. In a sermon preached on January 6, 1731-2, at Hare Court, Aldersgate Street, by Abraham Taylor, of Deptford, at a monthly meeting of ministers for “spending some time in prayer, on account of the great declensions in religion visible at the present day,”⁴⁶ the loss of religious earnestness is attributed principally to the gradual departure of the Dissenters from the religious faith of their fathers.⁴⁷

⁴² *Some Observations*, 29-30.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁴⁶ Taylor, *Spiritual Declensions*, iii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 32-36.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

The preacher is a true heir of the Puritan and Calvinistic tradition. He recalls the controversy concerning Justification which sprang up soon after the Toleration Act, and insists that this was the beginning of the evil. He traces the revolt during the early years of Queen Anne against one Calvinistic doctrine after another; and reminds his hearers, that even "the satisfaction of Christ was made nothing of, under pretence that He died to set us an example of patience, meekness and charity." "This was not done so much from the pulpit," he says, "for it would not have been bore by the honest Christians, as in other ways"; but in the pulpit instead of preaching to the people—

"the great doctrines of the gospel, and acquainting those who heard the word, on what foot, and by what aid, they must act in doing duty, a great deal of pains were taken to amuse them with mere moral babble, under the plausible name of practical preaching. They were told a great deal of the advantage of curbing their passions, of the present benefits of sobermindedness, of the rewardability of sincerity, let a man's opinions be what they would. As this way of preaching grew in use, Christ was very much left out, and some seemed to take pleasure, in being able to spin out an empty harangue, the length of an hour, without mentioning His name."⁴⁸

Then, a little later, after the accession of George I., the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ was denied, and the Personality of the Holy Spirit. The evil was made worse by the "unaccountable and rash conduct" of some who did not profess to have renounced the doctrine of the Trinity, but who insisted that it was "a matter of mere speculation," and that "Christ's divinity was not a matter about which good people should differ, and that the denial of it was not a fundamental error." "Though great forbearance was pleaded for with respect to such as tried to rend the crown from Christ's Head, yet no fair quarter could be given to those who, in a manly and Christian way, declared and defended their faith, as to His supreme dignity and honour."⁴⁹ And from this point some men had drifted into mere natural religion.

Abraham Taylor, while deploring with great solemnity the religious contrast between the Dissenters of 1732 and those of an earlier generation, does not set out in detail the differences

⁴⁸ Taylor, *Spiritual Declensions*, iii. 26.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 27, 28.

in their character and habits of life ; except that he says that when the declension began, even those “ who professed godliness, contented themselves with praying once a day ” ; ⁵⁰ that prayers in the family wholly ceased, or were offered only once a week ; and that—

“ the professors of religion grew greatly remiss, as to attending on the public worship of God ; it then grew fashionable to attend only once a day, and, on the least pretence in the world, not to attend at all, and that for several weeks together ; and, at the same time, pride and luxury greatly increased.” ⁵¹

Watts is more specific.⁵² He is satisfied that “ the great and general reason ” of the decline of Dissent is “ the decay of vital religion in the hearts of men, and the little success which the ministrations of the Gospel have had of late in the conversion of sinners.” ⁵³ Nor is it among Dissenters alone that religion has declined ; it has declined in the whole kingdom. After giving much earnest and evangelical advice both to ministers and congregations, and insisting that Dissent is worthless unless Dissenters are distinguished for the vigour of their religious life, he recites some of the particulars in which the Dissenters of the preceding age had differed from most of their fellow countrymen. (1) They were conspicuous for their habitual reverence for the name of God. (2) They observed the Lord’s Day with exceptional strictness. They were not satisfied with attending worship once a day ; and they spent a great part of the rest of the day in religious thought, religious reading, and prayer. (3) They were accustomed to speak freely to each other on “ themes of virtue and practical godliness.” (4) They were unlike many of their neighbours “ in keeping more regular hours for the various duties to God and man, in abstaining from vain company and much wine, in preserving better order in families, in maintaining the daily worship of God there, by reading the Word and prayer with an uninterrupted constancy, and in training up

⁵⁰ Taylor, *Spiritual Declensions*, iii. 29.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 29, 30. See also another sermon on the same subject, and on the same lines, in *A Defence of some Important Doctrines of the Gospel. Lime Street Lectures*, ii. 373-411.

⁵² *An Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians. Works*, iv. v.

⁵³ *Works*, iv. 585.

their children and their servants to the knowledge and fear of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ, with utmost solicitude and holy watchfulness. (5) They were remarkable for their frugality and industry; bankruptcy occasioned by extravagance or indolence would have led to immediate excommunication; and among Dissenters the excluded man "would have borne a long and heavy load of infamy." (6) "It was a constant and known mark of a Protestant Dissenter that he avoid those amusements" which border so near upon vice and irreligion that sometimes it is hard to separate them.⁵⁴

(1) The avoidance of profane language is, he trusts, still a habit of Dissenters; but in all the other particulars that he enumerates he evidently fears that they have declined from the nobler life of their fathers. (2) He implies—what Abraham Taylor definitely asserts—that many of them are satisfied with attending worship only once on Sunday, and that they spend the rest of the day in unnecessary business, in long dinners, in conversation that has nothing to do with the great memories of the day or its great hopes, and that private religious thought and worship on Sunday are generally neglected.⁵⁵ (3) He evidently thinks that Dissenters are "as shy" as their neighbours in talking about religion; that "loose and profane talk, and the most notorious crime of scandal," have taken the place of that devout conversation which at once expressed and sustained the religious life of their fathers.⁵⁶ (4) He asks whether they have not abandoned the regular and disciplined life which was once common among them; whether they do not turn day into night, and night into day. He suggests that partly as the result of this want of order, family prayer is irregular, even where it is not altogether neglected. Dissenters, so Dr. Watts feared, might be found indulging in "public drinking" till eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and were sometimes greatly the worse for their drinking. He also fears that the religious training of children and servants has become uncommon.⁵⁷ (5) He charges Dissenters with thinking as lightly of bankruptcy as their neighbours. They neglect their business, and are too eager for pleasure. Their houses are too large; their servants too numerous; their style of living too extravagant. In

⁵⁴ *Works*, v. 48-58.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 51-52.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 49.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 52-54.

their haste to be rich they make heavy ventures which their own capital will not cover, and the people who trust them are ruined. The sober, modest, thrifty habits of their fathers are fast disappearing.⁵⁸ (6) Finally, it is no longer a characteristic of Dissenters that they abstain from the amusements which were once supposed to be wholly inconsistent with a devout life. Some Dissenters still abstained from them; but some Churchmen also abstained from them. There was a time when every man that regarded with conscientious disapproval the government and worship of the Church would have regarded with equal disapproval "many of our midnight assemblies, midnight balls, lewd and profane comedies, masquerades, public gaming-tables, and deep play."⁵⁹ The refusal to conform to certain practices of the Church and the refusal to conform to certain practices of the "world" went together. In Watts's time they went together no longer.

IV

The Congregationalists had not departed as far from the doctrine and the practice of the earlier Nonconformists as the Presbyterians, and at the very time of the publication of the *Enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest*, they were attempting to recover something of their old seriousness and earnestness. A few devout laymen met every week at the house of a friend who lived in Sweeting's Alley, near the Exchange. They were loyal to the theology of John Owen and the other leaders of Congregationalism under the Commonwealth and Charles II. They wished to revive the deep and fervent religious life and the austere morality which had been associated with that theology. They accordingly formed themselves into a society; and as the house in which they met had the sign of the King's Head, they called their new society "The King's Head Society."⁶⁰ It is said that they established the Lime Street Lecture. The lectures, which were published in two volumes, were ranked among the ablest defences of Calvinism. Among the Lecturers

⁵⁸ *Works*, v. 55.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, v. 55.

⁶⁰ They afterwards met at a tavern in the Poultry, which also had the sign of the King's Head. Waddington, iii. (1700—1800), 263—264.

were Thomas Bradbury, Abraham Taylor, and the famous Calvinistic Baptist, John Gill.⁶¹ They also made a new and very important attempt for the increase of the efficiency of the Congregational ministry. It was their belief that young men received the assistance of the "Fund Board," and were admitted into the Academies, who gave no satisfactory evidence of their personal religious faith; they also believed that the rule of the Board which prevented the granting assistance to young men who had not received a fair classical education excluded from the ministry many young men of vigorous intellectual power and ardent religious life. They, therefore, resolved to found an Academy of their own. At the Fund Academy the course extended over four years: it was resolved that at the King's Head Academy the course should extend over six; this was to meet the case of young men who had not received a good grammar-school education. It was also resolved that no student should be received about whose fidelity to the Puritan creed, or whose personal religious earnestness, there was any doubt. Samuel Parsons and Abraham Taylor were the first tutors. The students boarded with Parsons in Clerkenwell till 1735, when they were transferred into Taylor's charge at Deptford. In 1744 the King's Head Academy and the Fund Academy were united.⁶²

The spread of Arianism both in the north and in the west of England created great anxiety among those who held fast to the theology of Puritanism. They thought that the surest way to check its further progress was to set up new Academies with orthodox tutors; and in 1751 the Congregational Fund Board resolved to send students to the Rev. John Lavington, of Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire.

⁶¹ The Lecture is said to have been indebted to the munificence of Mr. Coward. For a reference to one of the lectures delivered on this foundation, see above, p. 556, note 51. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, i. 212.

⁶² Dr. Zephaniah Marryatt was the first President of the united Academy (1743—1754); and, to meet his convenience, the King's Head Academy was removed from Stepney to Plasterers' Hall in Adde Street. Dr. John Conder succeeded him, 1754—1781, and the Academy was removed to Mile End. In 1769 an "ancient mansion" at Homer-ton became the home of the College. Dr. Daniel Fisher was President from 1781 to 1803; the Rev. James Knight, from 1803 to 1805; and Dr. Pye-Smith, from 1806 to 1850. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, ii. 530—531. *Congregational College Calendar*, 1885, 45—46. For Taylor's troubles with his students, see Waddington, iii. (1700—1800), 266—268.

The fortunes of this institution were changeable and chequered. After Mr. Lavington's death (1764), the Rev. James Rooker, of Bridport, became Tutor. Mr. Rooker retired in 1779 on the ground of ill-health; and then the Academy was removed to Taunton, and the Rev. James Reader was appointed Tutor. Mr. Reader died in 1794, and at the close of 1795, the Rev. James Small succeeded him, and the Academy was removed to Axminster. In 1798 Mr. Small had only one student; and the Fund Board, while expressing their complete satisfaction with him as a Tutor, determined that the Academy should be discontinued. This decision led to a proposal that the Academy should be carried on with the assistance of the Fund Board and the King's Head Society, under the management of a committee in which the Churches of the western counties should be largely represented. This proposal was accepted, and Mr. Small continued to act as Theological Tutor till 1828, when he resigned on account of broken strength. The Academy was then removed to Exeter. Dr. Payne was appointed Theological Tutor, and the educational course was made much more liberal. In 1845 the Academy, now called the Western College, was again in difficulties. There were only three students. Its supporters in Exeter and the neighbourhood were discouraged, and the Fund Board expressed an intention of withdrawing its aid. To prevent the closing of the College, the ministers of Devonport and Plymouth proposed that it should be removed to Plymouth; and the institution was carried on in temporary premises in that town till 1852, when the present college was built. Dr. Richard Alliot was President from 1849 to 1857, and the Rev. John Charlton from 1857 to his death in 1875. He was succeeded by the Rev. Charles Chapman.⁶³

In 1756 a society was formed in London called "The Northern Education Society," for the purpose of dispelling the "cloud of Socinian darkness" then spreading over the northern counties of England, and to the end that many congregations "might be blessed with godly preachers, sound in the faith and exemplary in their lives." The congregations in the large towns of the north had at this time deserted the Trinitarian faith, with the exception of White Row Meeting—New Queen

⁶³ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 273-276; and *Congregational College Calendar*, 1885, 66-68.

Street—Leeds, under the pastorate of Mr. Edwards, who had been one of Wesley's preachers, and Nether Chapel, Sheffield, of which the Rev. I. Pye, maternal grandfather of the Rev. Dr. Pye-Smith, was minister. The Northern Education Society set up their Academy at Heckmondwike, and the Rev. James Scott was appointed Tutor.⁶⁴

Another indication of the rise of a new spirit was the holding of a religious service on Sunday evening in a large number of country towns. The service was altogether of a different kind from the "Lecture" which was sometimes delivered in London and some of the larger towns before the Revival began. The "Lecture" was more elaborate than the sermons which had been delivered earlier in the day: it was usually a defence of the Being of God, or an argument for the truth of the Christian religion, or an attack on Romish or Socinian heresies. The new service was generally an evangelistic service. It was found that large numbers of persons would come to the meeting-house in the evening who would not come in the morning or afternoon; and the minister usually preached to them on one or other of the great truths by which the leaders of the Revival had achieved their triumphs. Where the traditions of Puritanism were strong, it was objected that the evening service prevented that quiet instruction and catechising of children and servants to which Puritanism attached the highest importance. The morning and afternoon services, each of them two hours long, had left only the evening free; and now the evening was lost. But the attractiveness of the evening service to persons who would not attend worship either in the morning or afternoon, and its freer and more popular character, swept away all opposition. In the course of a few years the practice became common, and ultimately the service in the afternoon was given up in its favour.

The Congregational Churches were beginning to feel something of the warmth that was radiated from the new religious movement of which Wesley and Whitefield were leaders; but for some years they regarded that movement with perplexity and doubt—some of them regarded it with positive hostility; and it was not till after the accession of George III. that the spirit and power of the Evangelical

⁶⁴ Bogue and Bennett, *op. cit.*, iv. 528; and *Cong. Coll. Cal.*, 1885, 73-74. See Note A, p. 562.

Revival took complete possession of the Congregational Churches of England.

NOTE A

The Heckmondwike Lecture

The curious institution called the "Heckmondwike Lecture" is the memorial of the Heckmondwike Academy. It was customary to have a "double Lecture" at the closing of the Academy for the summer vacation, and the most eminent ministers who were accessible were invited to be Lecturers. When the Academy was removed, the "double Lecture" was still continued. It is now customary to have two sermons by two different ministers delivered to the same congregation on a Tuesday evening in June; two more on Wednesday morning; and a fifth on Wednesday evening. A fair has grown up in connection with the Lecture. The Academy remained at Heckmondwike under Mr. Scott till 1783, when it was removed to Northowram near Halifax, and the Rev. Samuel Walker became Tutor. In 1794 the London committee gave up the management of the institution, and it was transferred to the charge of a committee representing the neighbouring Churches. The local committee determined that it should be removed to Masborough, near Rotherham, and Dr. Edward Williams, of Carr's Lane, Birmingham, was invited to fill the Theological Chair, and to be minister of Masborough Chapel. Mr. Joshua Walker, of Clifton, erected a building for the accommodation of the students near the Tutor's house. Dr. Williams died in 1813 and was succeeded by Dr. James Bennett, of Romsey, Hants. The Presidents who succeeded him were Rev. Clement Perrott (1821—1834), Rev. Dr. Stowell (1834—1850), and the Rev. Dr. Falding. The present building was opened in 1876. See p. 561, *note* 64.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UNDER GEORGE III.

(1760—1820)

DISSENTERS AND THE SHRIEVALTY—THE CLERGY AND THE OBLIGATION TO SUBSCRIBE—DECLARATION SUBSTITUTED FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION REQUIRED OF DISSENTING PREACHERS AND TEACHERS—ATTEMPTS TO REPEAL THE CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS—PROPOSALS FOR RELIEF OF UNITARIANS—BURKE ON THE RELATION OF CHURCH AND STATE—REACTION AGAINST DISSENT—BISHOP HORSLEY'S CHARGE—LORD SIDMOUTH'S BILL TO RESTRICT PREACHERS' LICENCES—NONCONFORMIST RESISTANCE SUCCESSFUL—PROTESTANT SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—PROGRAMME OF THE SOCIETY—TOLERATION EXTENDED—UNITARIANS PROTECTED—FREEDOM SECURED FOR MISSIONARIES IN INDIA.

GEORGE III. succeeded his grandfather in October, 1760, and died in January, 1820, after reigning nearly sixty years. During this long period no very considerable laws were passed for the extension of the religious liberties of Nonconformists; but though the most oppressive statutes remained unrepealed, the worst of them gradually became obsolete.

I

Early in the reign a legal decision was given in favour of the Dissenters which relieved them from most vexatious and iniquitous persecution by the City of London.

In 1742 a Dissenter—Mr. Robert Grosvenor—who had been elected to the office of sheriff, was cited by the Corporation before the Court of King's Bench for refusing to qualify by receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the English Church. In 1748 the Corporation adopted a bye-law inflicting a fine of more than £400 on every person that should decline to stand for the office after he had been

nominated, and a fine of £600 on every person that should refuse to serve after being elected. As the Test Act required every person elected to the office to "qualify," in order to serve, this extraordinary bye-law inflicted a heavy penalty on every Dissenter that the Corporation chose to nominate. And it was the intention of the Corporation to nominate Dissenters who were unlikely or unable to serve. They nominated one who was blind, another who was bedridden. At every vacancy a Dissenter was nominated; one after another refused to stand, or, when elected, refused to serve; in six years the fines amounted to £15,000. The Corporation was building the Mansion House, and the fining of Dissenters seemed the easiest and least offensive way of raising money for the purpose. But the Dissenters resolved, at last, to resist. In the year 1754 three Dissenters in succession were elected; they refused to serve, and they were fined. The Dissenting Deputies encouraged them to test their legal liability. The case against one of them—Mr. Streatfield—broke down immediately on a technical ground. The case against the other two—Mr. Sheafe and Mr. Evans—was carried by appeal from court to court until at last it reached the House of Lords. Before it could be tried, Mr. Sheafe died, and Mr. Evans was left alone. On February 3 and 4, 1767—thirteen years after the beginning of the action—six out of seven Judges gave judgment in favour of the Nonconformist. Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice, delivered the decision of the Lords, and with a noble eloquence denounced the Corporation and vindicated the principles of religious liberty.¹

II

In 1771 a movement was originated for releasing the clergy from the obligation to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles. The leader of the movement was Archdeacon Blackburne, who, a few years before (1766), had published *The Confessional*, in which he maintained that Protestant Churches cannot, without violating their own principles, impose creeds as the test of orthodoxy. *The Confessional* was published anonymously, but created a great sensation. At a meeting held at "The

¹ *Sketch of the History and Proceedings of the Deputies appointed to Protect the Civil Rights of Protestant Dissenters*, 25-39.

Feathers Tavern," July 17, 1771, a petition for the relief of the clergy from subscription was adopted, in which the petitioning clergy maintained that subscription prevented them from exercising the right of searching the Scriptures and judging its meaning for themselves. Theophilus Lindsey, Vicar of Catterick, in Yorkshire, went up and down the country to obtain signatures, but without much success.² The clergy were indifferent; the Methodists were hostile. The Countess of Huntingdon, who was becoming a person of considerable importance in connection with the Methodist revival, got up counter-petitions, obtained a promise from Lord North, the First Lord of the Treasury, to resist the proposed legislation, and canvassed members of Parliament to vote against its prayer.³ The petition was presented on February 6, 1772, and a motion founded on it was moved by Sir William Meredith, which gave rise to a debate of eight hours. Burke, who had promised Lady Huntingdon to oppose it,⁴ made a vigorous speech.

"[The petitioners,]" he said, "want to be preferred clergymen in the Church of England as by law established; but their consciences will not suffer them to conform to the doctrines and practices of that church; that is, they want to be teachers in a church to which they do not belong; and it is an odd sort of hardship. They want to receive the emoluments appropriated for teaching one set of doctrines, whilst they are teaching another. A church, in any legal sense, is only a system of religious doctrines and practices, fixed and ascertained by some law; by the difference of which laws, different churches (as different commonwealths) are made in various parts of the world; and the establishment is a tax laid by the same sovereign authority⁵ for payment of those who so teach and so practise. For no legislature was ever so absurd as to tax its people to support men for teaching and acting as they please; but by some prescribed rule.

"*The hardship amounts to this, that the people of England are not taxed two shillings in the pound to pay them for teaching, as divine truths, their own particular fancies.* For the State has so taxed the people; and by way of relieving these gentlemen, it would be a cruel

² T. Belsham, *Memoirs of Lindsey*, 48, 50-51. The petition was signed, not by ministers only, but by physicians, surgeons, and others. It is given in full in *Parliamentary Debates (Debrett)*, vi. 168-171.

³ *Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon, by a Member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings*, ii. 286.

⁴ For his letter, *ibid.*, ii. 286-287.

⁵ Tithes, therefore, in Burke's view, were, for all practical purposes, taxes.

hardship on the people to be compelled to pay, from the sweat of their brow, the most heavy of all taxes to men, to condemn as heretical the doctrines which they repute to be orthodox, and to reprobate as superstitious the practices which they use as pious and holy. . . . If they do not like the establishment, there are a hundred different modes of dissent in which they may teach. But even if they are so unfortunately circumstanced that of all that variety none will please them, they have free liberty to assemble a congregation of their own ; and if any persons think their fancies (they may be brilliant imaginations) worth paying for, they are at liberty to maintain them as their clergy ; nothing hinders it. But if they cannot get a hundred people together who will pay for their reading a liturgy after their form, with what face can they insist upon the nation's conforming to their ideas, for no other visible purpose than the enabling them to receive with a good conscience the tenth part of the produce of your lands ? ”⁶

The motion was lost by a majority of 217 to 71.⁷ It was brought on again in 1773 and 1774, but on both occasions defeated. The whole movement was really intended to enable Unitarians to remain in the English Church, and after the third defeat Lindsey and some other clergymen resigned their livings and became Unitarian ministers.

It was wittily said that if the petitioners had been successful, the Dissenting ministers would have been the only persons in England under a legal obligation to sign the Thirty-nine Articles ; and during the first of the three debates on the question it was suggested that while those who held the emoluments of the Church might reasonably be required to profess their belief, it was unreasonable to enforce subscription upon those who were neither its ministers nor its members. A Bill was therefore brought into the House of Commons on April 3, 1772, by Sir Henry Hoghton and Edmund Burke, substituting for the subscription to doctrinal articles required from Dissenting ministers, tutors, and schoolmasters, a general Declaration of belief in the Holy Scriptures as containing a revelation of the mind and will of God and the rule of faith and practice. The measure passed through the Commons, but was defeated in the Lords by 102 to 39.⁸

⁶ Burke, vi. 96-97.

⁷ *Parliamentary Debates (Debrett)*, vi. 160-162.

⁸ Second reading carried in the Commons by 70 to 9. C. J. (April 14, 1792), xxxiii. 696. The Bill thrown out in the Lords by 73 present and 29 proxies, 102, as against 23 present and 6 proxies, 39. L. J. (May 19, 1792), xxxiii. 419.

In the Lords' debate, in reply to Drummond, Archbishop of York, who had charged the Dissenting ministers with being men of "close ambition," Lord Chatham said :—

"This is judging uncharitably; and whoever brings such a charge without evidence, defames. The dissenting ministers are represented as men of close ambition: they are so, my lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals; and to the doctrines of inspired apostles, not to the decrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a scriptural and spiritual worship; we have a Calvinistic creed, a Popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy. The Reformation has laid open the Scriptures to all; let not the bishops shut them again."⁹

The Bill was defeated again by the Lords in 1773; several congregations of Dissenters petitioning against it on the ground that the relaxation of subscription would encourage Unitarianism and Popery. Why it should have encouraged Popery is not apparent.¹⁰

The Dissenters were provoked by this second defeat, and assaulted the bishops, and the other opponents of the measure, in a storm of pamphlets which showed that the timid submission with which the grievances of Nonconformists had been endured was giving place to a very different temper. Well-known Dissenting leaders like Ebenezer Radcliffe, Kippis, Furneaux, Gibbons, Stennett, and Robert Robinson, led the attack. Joshua Toulmin, of Birmingham, was conspicuous in the fray. In 1779 the opposition collapsed. The Bill, slightly altered, passed through both Houses, strongly supported in the Lords by Dr. Shipley, bishop of St. Asaph, and the following Declaration was substituted for subscription to the Doctrinal Articles :—

"I, A B, do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and a Protestant, and as such that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as commonly received among Protestants Churches, do contain the revealed will

⁹ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 162–163. Skeats, *Free Churches*, 459–460.

¹⁰ Bill thrown out by 80 to 28, including proxies on both sides. The petitions from Dissenting ministers and others are duly recorded in the official Journals. L. J. (April 2, 1773), xxxiii. 601. See also Ivimey, *Baptists*, iv., 31–32. Bogue and Bennett, iv. 163–165.

of God ; and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice.”¹¹

III

The Dissenting Deputies now thought that the time had come to attempt the carrying of a Bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. The measure was laid before the House of Commons by Mr. Beaufort on March 28, 1787. He was seconded by Sir Henry Hoghton. Lord North, now in opposition, described the Acts as “ the great bulwark of the constitution,” and asserted that the people of England owed to them “ those inestimable blessings of freedom which we now happily enjoy.” Pitt, who was Prime Minister, insisted that some Dissenters were opposed to the very existence of the Establishment, and that to repeal the Acts would alarm the Church. Fox vindicated the Dissenters. The motion was lost by 178 to 100.¹²

The Bill was brought forward again by Mr. Beaufoy in 1789, and in the course of an excellent speech he denounced the laws as degrading the sacrament to “ a qualification for gauging beer-barrels and soap-boilers’ tubs, for writing Custom-house dockets and debentures, and for seizing smuggled tea.”¹³ Fox made a great speech on the same side. The motion was lost by only 20 ; the votes were 122 to 102.¹⁴

¹¹ 19 Geo. III. cap. 44. *Parliamentary Register*, xii. 171-172, 353-354 (March 17, April 28, 1779).

¹² *Parliamentary Register* (Commons), xxi. 527-568 ; and introduction, *ibid.*, 522-527. C. J. (March 28, 1787), xlii. 613. *Annual Register*, 1787, xxix. 114-120. The “ tellers ” are omitted from the figures as given in the *Journals*, while they are included in the *Annual Register*.

¹³ Cowper put the Dissenters’ case excellently, in his “ Expostulation,” *Poems*, (1800), i. 126.

“ Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
The Saviour’s feast, His own bless’d bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office-key, a pick-lock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp’d in sacramental blood ?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists will write ;
And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.”

¹⁴ *Parliamentary Register* (Commons), xxvi. 93-128 ; especially, 104. C. J. (May 8, 1789), xliv. 340.

In the same year Lord Stanhope, in the House of Lords, moved for leave to bring in a Bill repealing the Acts which inflicted penalties on persons absenting themselves from Church, or speaking in derogation of the Book of Common Prayer. The Acts were practically obsolete. But the Archbishop of Canterbury and several other bishops resisted the motion, and it was lost. Lord Stanhope, though defeated, said that he was determined to persevere; "and if the right reverend bench of Bishops would not suffer him to load away their rubbish by cartfuls, he would endeavour to carry it away in wheelbarrows, and if that mode of removal was resisted, he would take it, if possible, away with a spade, a little at a time." And, indeed, he presented another Bill, dealing with vexatious prosecutions for the recovery of tithe, on that very day.¹⁵

In 1790 Fox himself took charge of the Bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and brought it forward in one of his greatest speeches. Burke opposed him, and quoted Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley in support of the contention that the Dissenters were aiming at the destruction of the Establishment. He declared his intention, should the Bill go forward, of proposing to substitute for the Test a Declaration, to the effect that a religious establishment in England is not contrary to the law of God, the law of Nature, or the true principles of the Christian religion; and that it is not noxious to the community; with a solemn pledge never to vote in the election of members of a corporation or members of Parliament with any hope that the persons elected will promote any religious opinions or establishments to the prejudice of the Established Church, and never to use the power derived from any official position to destroy or subvert the same.¹⁶

Wilberforce, alleging that the Establishment was in danger, spoke against the Bill. Pitt had moved for a call of the House; the nation was terrified by the French Revolution. Price and Priestley, and many other Dissenters, had declared their admiration of the principles of the Revolution and their sympathy with its leaders; the vote was, therefore, a heavy one—the motion was defeated by 294 to 105.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Parliamentary Register (Lords)*, xxvi. 232-245, 253-261.

¹⁶ Burke, vi. 126.

¹⁷ C. J. (March 2, 1790), xlv. 203. *Parliamentary Register (Commons)*, xxvii. 139-196. *Annual Register (1790)*, xxxii. 72-77.

In May, 1792, Fox had the boldness to propose in the House of Commons to repeal those parts of the Act of 1697 which proscribed Unitarian opinions, and made the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity a penal offence, punishable on a second conviction with three years' imprisonment. Burke was again his most formidable opponent. He replied vigorously to those who insisted that the State had no right to take any knowledge of the religious opinion of its subjects, and that the alliance of the Church and State was injurious to both. Holding fast to the true conception of the English Church as illustrated throughout its history since the Reformation, and as maintained by Whitgift in his controversy with Cartwright, and by Hooker in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*,¹⁸ he said :—

“ An alliance between church and state in a Christian commonwealth is, in my opinion, an idle and fanciful speculation. An alliance is between two things that are in their nature distinct and independent, such as between two sovereigns. But in a Christian commonwealth the church and the state are one and the same thing, being different integral parts of the same whole. For the church has been always divided into two parts, the clergy and the laity ; of which the laity is as much an essential, integral part, and has as much its duties and privileges, as the clerical member ; and in the rule, order, and government of the church has its share. Religion is so far, in my opinion, from being out of the province of the duty of a Christian magistrate, that it is, and it ought to be, not only his care, but the principal thing in his care ; because it is one of the great bonds of human society ; and its object the supreme good, the ultimate end and object of man himself.”¹⁹

He was not disposed to restrict the freedom already possessed by Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, Independents, and Quakers,—“ they are in *possession*, a great title in all human affairs.” “ Old religious factions are volcanoes burnt out ; on the lava, and ashes, and squalid scorixæ of old eruptions grow the peaceful olive, the cheering vine, and the sustaining corn. . . . But when a new fire bursts out, a face of desolations comes on, not to be rectified in ages.”²⁰ This was the first time that Parliament had ever heard of any religious congregation, or association, known by the name—Unitarians—which the petitioners whose case was supported by Mr. Fox had assumed.

¹⁸ This was the theory of Coleridge too, and of Dr. Arnold. See *ante*, p. 135.

¹⁹ Burke, vi. 115.

²⁰ *Idem*, vi. 117.

Who were they? What were they? As a theological faction they were associated for the express purpose of proselytism; and their purpose in proselytising was to “collect a multitude sufficient by force and violence to overthrow the Church.”²¹ They were also a political faction, and their design was to subvert the State; this was proved by their open and declared approval of the French Revolution. “Is it not better,” he asked, “to take *treason* unprepared, than that *treason* should come by surprise upon us, and take us unprepared?”²² The new sect was a peril both to Church and State; and he was against relaxing any laws which might restrain its growth. The motion was defeated by a majority of 142 to 63.²³

IV

For some years the Dissenters made no effort to relieve themselves of their disabilities. In many parts of England they were persecuted both by the magistrates and by the mob. Laws which had become obsolete, if they had not been virtually repealed by the Toleration Act, were revived; and Dissenters were fined and imprisoned for attending Dissenting services. But the nation was excited by the great European war, and filled with horror by the crimes of the French Revolution. Some Dissenters held French principles; Dissenters generally were therefore regarded as the enemies of the English Constitution. It was no time to agitate for the redress of their wrongs. They gave their whole strength to the evangelisation of the country, and suffered quietly.

From this quiescence they were roused by an attempt of the Government to impose upon them new legal disabilities, and disabilities which were specifically intended to fetter their evangelistic work. The original author of the scheme was Dr. Pretyman, the tutor of Pitt, whom Pitt had made Bishop of Lincoln.²⁴ Dissenting preachers, in order to obtain the protection of the Toleration Act, had to obtain a licence from

²¹ Burke, vi. 118.

²² *Idem*, vi. 121.

²³ *Parl. Register (Commons)*, xxxiii. 17–40. *Annual Register*, 1792, xxxiv. (1). 367–371, with the notes on 368–370, containing the report of the revolutionary speeches at the dinner of the Unitarian Society.

²⁴ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 41.

a magistrate; and the object of the scheme was to increase the difficulty of obtaining a licence.²⁵

The Church had been alarmed by the rapid increase of Dissenters under the inspiration of the Evangelical Revival. New chapels were built in great towns, and were rapidly crowded. A whole army of itinerant preachers spread over the villages. In 1800 Horsley, Bishop of Rochester, in a charge to his clergy, endeavoured to influence the mind of the country against this great religious movement by identifying it with the Revolution in France. The bishop claims to have unmasked and defeated the political designs of the Socinians; and now the enemies of Church and State have become more cautious. But the same political projects that they had pursued as open heretics they are pursuing now under the cloak of evangelical zeal.

“Still the operations of the enemy are going on—still going on by stratagem—the stratagem still a pretence of reformation,—but the reformation the very reverse of what was before attempted. Instead of divesting religion of its mysteries, and reducing it to a mere philosophy in speculation, and to a mere morality in practice, the plan is now to affect a great zeal for orthodoxy, to make great pretensions to an extraordinary measure of the Holy Spirit’s influence. . . . In many parts of the kingdom new conventicles have been opened in great number, and congregations formed of one knows not what denomination. The pastor is often, in appearance at least, an illiterate peasant or mechanic. . . . Sunday schools are opened in connexion with these conventicles. There is much reason to suspect that the expenses of these schools and conventicles are defrayed by associations formed in different places.”²⁶

The local preacher, though “in appearance” a ploughman or a village carpenter or blacksmith, was, the bishop feared, a political agent in disguise; and the conventicle and the Sunday school were supported by revolutionary associations, in order to diffuse through the country “sedition and atheism,” political discontent, and a hatred of the throne and the Church.²⁷ Francis Wollaston, vicar of Chislehurst, published *A Country Parson’s Address to his Flock, to caution them against being misled by the Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing, or receiving Jacobin Teachers of Sedition, who intrude themselves under the specious*

²⁵ See Note A, p. 579.

²⁶ *The Charges of Samuel Horsley*, 144–145.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

Pretence of instructing Youth and preaching Christianity (1799). "It were to be wished," he said, "that the law gave to the minister of a parish the power of proceeding, in a summary way, against such as intrude unasked into the fold committed to his care."²⁸

In the year 1809 Lord Sidmouth moved in the House of Peers for "a return of the number of persons who had obtained licences to become dissenting ministers, during the last fifty years." The returns showed that, since 1760, 12,000 places had been registered for Dissenting worship, and that rather less than 3,700 persons had been licensed as Dissenting ministers; but of these 1,068 had been licensed within the previous seven years.²⁹ On May 9, 1811, his lordship brought in a Bill to restrict licences. His contention was that the law had recently received a novel interpretation; and that it was never intended that licences should be granted to "cobblers, tailors, pig-drivers, and chimney-sweepers." If, indeed, Dissenters thought that persons of this kind were fit to teach them, it was not for him to object; but it was his belief that persons who had no right to be regarded as Dissenting ministers took out licences in order to avoid election to parish offices, and in order to escape serving in the militia. There were counties in England, he said—Devon and Buckinghamshire—where the magistrates permitted no person to qualify, unless he showed that he was in holy orders, and the preacher and teacher of a congregation. He had no wish to hurt the Dissenters; he wished to increase their respectability. He therefore proposed that in order to entitle any man to obtain a qualification as a preacher, he should have the recommendation of at least six "substantial and reputable" householders of the congregation to which he belonged, and a congregation willing to listen to his instructions. The magistrate would, of course, have to determine

²⁸ F. Wollaston, *Country Parson's Address*, 4.

²⁹ The number of persons who had "taken the oaths and subscribed the declarations perscribed by 1 W. and M., cap. 18, and 19 George III., cap. 44, between the years 1760 and 1808," was 3,672. The number of "places of worship registered or recorded conformably to the Act of 1 W. and M., cap. 18," was 12,161. The returns are given in *Sketch of the History and Proceedings of the Deputies appointed to protect the Civil Rights of Protestant Dissenters*, 86. It does not follow that there were more than 12,000 Dissenting congregations. The same congregation might have met in several buildings; and temporary buildings used for Dissenting services required to be registered.

whether the householders were "reputable." To meet the case of the Methodists and of other itinerant preachers, Lord Sidmouth had another proposal:—"With regard to preachers who are not stationary but itinerant, I propose that they shall be required to bring a testimonial from six householders, stating them to be of sober life and character; together with their belief that they are qualified to perform the function of preachers." This created a difficulty. To be able to judge whether a man has the necessary qualifications, the "six householders" must first hear him preach; but to preach without a licence was illegal, and the licence was not to be obtained till the "six householders" had declared that the man was able to preach.³⁰

The Dissenting Deputies had endeavoured to induce Lord Sidmouth not to bring the Bill forward. But there were some Nonconformists—Mr. Belsham, the eminent Unitarian, among them—who assured him that the Bill was reasonable in its principle and moderate in its provisions.³¹ Indeed, the Bill could obviously have no effect on the ministers of settled congregations. But it struck heavily at those who in every part of England were preaching in cottages, in barns, on village greens; the Methodist local preachers; laymen in connection with Baptist and Independent Churches, who were endeavouring to kindle the new fire in populations that were hostile to them.

Under the leadership of a Committee consisting of a large number of the most eminent Dissenters in the kingdom, all the Evangelical Nonconformists, including the Methodists, offered a passionate resistance to the Bill. The Unitarians, represented by Mr. Aspland, also took part in resisting it. A large subscription was raised. Seven hundred hostile petitions were laid on the table of the House of Lords. Lord Erskine presented 250 from the Wesleyan Methodists. Not less than 336 were obtained within forty-eight hours from congregations within a hundred and twenty miles from London. The Whig leaders—Earl Grey, Lord Holland, and the Marquis of Lansdowne—stood by the Dissenters. Erskine condemned the Bill as a violation of the Toleration Act. Earl Stanhope said that if it were persisted in, the signatures to the petitions

³⁰ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : F.S.)*, xix. 1128-1140.

³¹ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 44.

against it would have to be counted by millions instead of thousands. Lord Sidmouth clung to his measure, and urged the Lords to allow it to be read a second time. He inveighed against the Dissenting preachers, and said that if things went on in their present course we should have a nominal Established Church and a sectarian people. But the Government refused to support him; the Archbishop of Canterbury, while contending that the objects of the Bill were laudable, since it was intended, first to produce uniformity in explaining the Act of Toleration, and, secondly, to increase the respectability of the Dissenting interest, by excluding from the Dissenting ministry persons who were unfit for the office, admitted that the Dissenters were the best judges of their own concerns, and thought that it would be unwise and impolitic to press the Bill against their consent. Lord Erskine's amendment, that the Bill should be read "this day six months," was carried without a division.³²

V

By their success in defeating Lord Sidmouth's Bill, the Dissenters made a sudden discovery of their political strength, and within three days after their triumph they resolved to form *The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty*. Thomas Pellatt, and John Wilks—member for Boston, and son of Matthew Wilks, the zealous, sagacious, and eccentric minister of the Tabernacle, Moorfields—were its honorary secretaries.³³ The object of the Society was to "obtain the repeal of every penal law which prevented the complete enjoyment of religious liberty."³⁴ Heated by the recent conflict, two hundred congregations made collections on behalf of this new and venturesome association. The Tabernacle, Moorfields, sent £293, and the Weigh House £75. Traditions which have not yet passed away attribute to John Wilks the most extraordinary powers as a popular orator. It is recorded that at the annual meetings of the Society great audiences listened to speeches of

³² *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xx. 233-255. *Annual Register*, 1811, 47-50. For an account of the whole controversy, and a reprint of Sidmouth's Bill, see *Sketch of the History and Proceedings of the Deputies*, 83-112.

³³ *Evangelical Magazine*, 1811, 278-285.

³⁴ *Ibid.* (1812), 446.

his, three hours in length, in which he related the work of the Society during the preceding year, and urged the claims of Dissenters to a large measure of religious liberty. The Society proposed to secure the abolition of the Corporation and Tests Acts, the amendment of the laws relating to Marriage and Burial, and the opening of the Universities. There were many Dissenters who had not yet discovered the injustice of the Church Rates.³⁵

The Society determined to secure such changes in the law as would put an end to the gross violations of the Toleration Act of which many rural magistrates had recently been guilty. For attending a prayer-meeting some persons had been fined £90 by magistrates in Wales. "In Berkshire, three hundred pounds were expended in resisting the conviction of Mr. William Kent, of Childrey, in a penalty of twenty pounds, for praying at such a meeting. A persecution of this kind was raised at Wickham Market, in Suffolk, which cost the Dissenters about five hundred pounds."³⁶

The failure of Lord Sidmouth's Bill appears to have added fresh intensity to the hatred of Dissenters; and in some parts of England attempts were made to crush Dissent by reviving the persecuting laws of Charles II. The Dissenters, therefore, appealed to the Government to bring in a Bill for repealing three Acts passed in that reign:—(1) The Act for preventing the mischief that may arise from persons refusing to take lawful oaths;³⁷ (2) The Five Mile Act; (3) The Conventicle Act. In July, 1812, a Government Bill was laid before the House of Commons, by Lord Castlereagh, and before the House of Lords by Lord Liverpool, and passed without opposition.³⁸

By the Dissenters of that time the Act was described as the new Toleration Act.³⁹ It not only definitely repealed the three persecuting Acts passed in the reign of Charles II., but considerably extended the relief granted by the great measure of William III. By the Toleration Act, only *five* persons, in

³⁵ Wilks, in *Congregational Magazine* (1824), 327-328, and Skeats, *Free Churches*, 559.

³⁶ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 48.

³⁷ An Act directed against the members of the Society of Friends.

³⁸ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xxii. 994-995, 1105-1110, 1191-1193, 1247-1248, 1250.

³⁹ 52 George III., cap. 155.

addition to members of a family, could meet together for religious worship in an unregistered building: by the Act of 1812, the number was raised to *twenty*.⁴⁰ By the Toleration Act, no person was allowed to preach till he had taken the oaths; under the Act of 1812, he was only liable to take them on being required in writing by a justice of the peace; and he could not be required to take them more than once.⁴¹ By the Toleration Act, the Dissenting preacher was obliged to attend the quarter sessions to take the oaths; by the Act of 1812, the oaths might be taken before any justice of the peace; and in no case was any person to be required to travel more than five miles to take them.⁴² As the Toleration Act had been recently interpreted, only particular persons could insist on taking the oaths; by the Act of 1812 any Protestant might require a Justice to administer the oaths and grant the certificate.⁴³ The Toleration Act inflicted a penalty on persons who entered a registered meeting-house and disturbed the congregation, but for whatever tumult they might create outside no penalty was provided; the Act of 1812 inflicted a fine of £40—twice the old fine—on all persons wilfully and maliciously annoying a congregation; whether the annoyance was created outside or inside the building.⁴⁴

Even after this Act was passed the guarantees of religious liberty were incomplete. “Lord Romney informed against the Honourable Charles Noel, for celebrating worship at Barham Court, in Kent, though by the forms and the ministry of the Establishment. The plea of ignorance could not procure exemption from the fine of forty pounds for two offences.”⁴⁵

In 1813 Mr. William Smith brought in a Bill for the repeal of the Statutes of William III. and George III. that made it a penal offence to deny the doctrine of the Trinity and excluded all Unitarians from the benefits of the Toleration Act. Mr. Smith’s Bill also repealed two Acts of the Scotch

⁴⁰ 52 George III., cap. 155, § 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, § 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, §§ 6, 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, § 7. See Lord Sidmouth’s account of the practice of magistrates in Devon and Buckinghamshire, *ante*, p. 573.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, § 12.

⁴⁵ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 53.

Parliament which punished the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity with death. What Mr. Fox had failed to achieve in 1792 was accomplished by Mr. William Smith in 1813 without any serious difficulty.⁴⁶

VI

In the same year there was a great struggle to obtain freedom for the work of Christian missionaries in India. The Charter of the East India Company was expiring, and had to be renewed. The Company refused to allow Baptist missionaries to go to India in English ships; the missionaries had been driven to take shelter at Serampore under the Danish flag, because the Company's regulations were unfavourable to their settlement on British territory; two missionaries sent out by the Baptist Missionary Society in American ships were ordered to leave the country. When the Directors of the London Missionary Society requested permission to send missionaries to territory under the government of the Company, permission was refused.

Wilberforce, in the House of Commons, and Andrew Fuller in the country, protested against this monstrous pretension of an English trading company to exclude millions of the human race from a knowledge of the Christian Gospel. The Company maintained that it was impossible to convert the natives of India to the Christian faith, and that the attempt to do it would lead to the loss of the country. But Dissenters and Churchmen united in insisting that there should be a clause in the new Charter compelling the Company to allow facilities to persons who desired to preach the Christian Gospel to the people of India and to establish schools for their children. The Company met the demand with the most resolute resistance, but were beaten. The Government were compelled to yield to the demand for freedom.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xxv. 1147-1148; xxvi. 1222. 53 Geo. III., cap. 160.

⁴⁷ For the discussion of the subject, see *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xxv., xxvi.; and especially Warren Hastings's evidence, xxv. 422-424, 427-428, with the various petitions contained in the same volume, and the speeches of Wilberforce, xxvi. 831-872, 1051-1079. Also Ivimey, *Baptists*, iv. 134-157.

NOTE A

Form of a Preacher's Licence

The following is a copy of a "licence" found among the papers of the late John Angell James:—

CERTIFICATE FOR DISSENTING MINISTERS

Southampton, I do hereby certify, that at the General Quarter
to wit Sessions of the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the
King, holden *by adjournment* at the Castle of
Winchester, in and for the said county, on *Monday the eighteenth day*
of July, in the *forty-third* year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord
George the Third and in the year of our Lord 1803,

JOHN JAMES

a Dissenting Teacher, did in open Court, between the Hours of Nine and Twelve of the Clock in the Forenoon, take and subscribe the Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, and Abjuration, and did also make and subscribe the Declaration against Transubstantiation, and against the Invocation and Adoration of the Virgin *Mary*, and the Sacrament of the Mass and all other Idolatry, and also did subscribe the Declaration mentioned in the Act passed in the nineteenth year of his present Majesty, George III.

Witness my hand this *Eighteenth* Day of *July* 1803.

PETER KERBY,
Clerk of the Peace.

CHAPTER X

ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER GEORGE III. (1760—1820)

GROWTH OF CONGREGATIONALISM—MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH AGAINST THE INCREASE OF DISSENT—CONGREGATIONALISM AND THE METHODIST REVIVAL—THE EFFECT OF THE REVIVAL ON THE DOCTRINE AND POLITY OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND THE CHARACTER OF THEIR MEMBERS—EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING—PRAYER-MEETINGS—LAY EVANGELISTS—THEOLOGICAL ACADEMIES—SUNDAY SCHOOLS—LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY—HOME MISSIONARY ORGANISATIONS—CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

I

IN 1772 the congregations in England belonging to the “Three Denominations” numbered 1,092; fifty years later, towards the close of the long reign of George III., they numbered 1,583. In 1772 it is probable that there were about 380 Independent congregations; fifty years later there were 799. Within the same period the Baptists had increased from 390 to 532 congregations. The Presbyterians alone had fallen off. In 1772 they had probably about 320 congregations; fifty years later the number had sunk to 252. One-fourth of their congregations had become extinct, or had gone over to the Independents; and most of those that remained were very small. It has been estimated that of the Dissenters belonging to the “Three Denominations” towards the close of the reign of George III., the Presbyterians did not number more than one-twentieth.

The Independents had not only more than doubled the number of their congregations; the separate congregations were much larger. The Baptists had grown with almost equal rapidity.¹

¹ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 327-334.

In addition to the "Three Denominations" there were the new religious societies which had been created by the Evangelical Revival,—the Wesleyan Methodists, who in the early part of this century had already built their chapels in nearly every town in the kingdom, and in hundreds of villages; and the Calvinistic Methodists, as they were then called, consisting of congregations that had been formed by George Whitefield and through the exertions of Lady Huntingdon. These congregations were not very numerous, but the buildings in which they met were usually very large and very crowded. The preachers maintained the traditions of Whitefield's fervour and free popular eloquence.

The growth of these different forms of Dissent alarmed the supporters of the Established Church, and in 1811 the House of Lords obtained a return of the places of worship in towns containing 1,000 inhabitants and upwards. The returns were obtained through the bishops, and are probably very imperfect in their enumeration of the Dissenting meeting-houses, for the bishops' officers who collected the returns were likely to be ignorant of the obscurer meeting-houses; but they showed that in the towns containing at least 1,000 people there were 3,457 places of worship not connected with the Establishment, and only 2,547 churches.² Other parliamentary returns had shown that half of the parochial incumbents were non-resident, and that nearly 4,000 of the benefices were worth less than £150 a year.³

To strengthen the Church against the growth of Dissent, the Government in 1809 proposed to vote £100,000 for increasing

² These returns of the archbishops and bishops of the number of churches and chapels of the Church of England in every parish of 1,000 persons and upwards, also of the number of other places of worship *not* of the Establishment, vary, as given in different places, in an unaccountable way. As given in (a) *Parl. Papers*, 1812 (256); (b) *Annual Register*, 1811, liii. 268, *appendix*; (c) Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 261-262; they appear as follows:—

	Belonging to the Establishment.	Not belonging to the Establishment.
(a)	2,533	3,438
(b)	2,547	3,457
(c)	2,655	3,457

³ Livings of value under £150 per ann., 3,996. *Parl. Papers*, 1810 (272).

Resident Incumbents, 4,421. Non-resident, 5,840. *Parl. Papers*, 1812 (255).

the revenues of Queen Anne's Bounty, which was created to augment small livings. These votes were made annually till they amounted to £1,100,000. They did not, however, always pass without criticism. In the session of 1810, when the Bill came before the House of Lords, and was supported by Lord Harrowby, on the score of the poverty of the clergy and the increasing numbers of Dissenters, Earl Stanhope said that Dissenters would continue to increase while they found that the advocates of the Establishment supposed that the best means of maintaining it was to apply for public money. He went on to say—

“Whether you vote six millions or sixty millions, whether you build churches or no churches, whether you calumniate Dissenters or otherwise, the number of communicants of the Established Church will decrease, and that of Dissenters increase, so long as the Church of England is made the engine of State policy, and its prelates are translated and preferred, not for their religious merits, but for their support to the minister of the day.”⁴

But to relieve the clergy was not enough; the Dissenters were building new chapels in all parts of the kingdom, and it was necessary for the Church to keep pace with them. With this end in view an Act was passed in 1818, creating a Church Building Commission; and it was determined to supply the Commissioners with funds to carry out their work. There were precedents of a kind for such a course. After the Great Fire, a rate had been levied by Parliament for restoring and rebuilding the London churches that had been injured or destroyed, and a tax on coals brought into the city was appropriated to the rebuilding of St. Paul's. A grant had also been made by Parliament for the erection of new churches in the reign of Queen Anne. That effort, indeed, had been a failure: only eleven new churches had been built instead of fifty. But the Government decided that the time had come to make a fresh attempt, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought in a Bill to appropriate £1,000,000 to that purpose. In the House of Lords, Lord Liverpool, who introduced the Bill, said that its object was “to remove Dissent,” and urged that it was the duty of Parliament to enable the Church to counterbalance the activity of the Dissenters.⁵ Lord Holland, although he

⁴ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F. S.)*, xvii. 709, 751-770.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii. 710, 713.

did not oppose the measure, took objection to the grounds on which it had been advocated. The Bill, he said, had been defended as a measure for placing Churchmen and Dissenters on an equal footing. What it actually did was to say to the Dissenters, "You, gentlemen, who pay for yourselves, who pay for your own chapels and your own clergy, in addition to paying tithes to ours, shall also contribute to the creation of those churches in which you have no interest whatever."⁶ The Bill, however, passed; the million was voted—in fact, more than the million, for the duty on materials was remitted, making a large addition to the nominal grant.⁷

II

The rapid increase in the number of Congregationalists during the reign of George III. was due, in part, to the same causes that had contributed to their strength under the two preceding reigns. The Presbyterian ministers continued to drift farther and farther away from the Calvinistic creed. They passed from Arianism to Unitarianism, and their congregations died out; many of their people became Independents. But the principal cause of the new and expansive vigour of the Congregational Churches was the great Evangelical Revival. Whitefield had begun field-preaching in 1739; Wesley had instituted lay-preachers in 1741; and when George III. came to the throne, England was passing through a great religious revolution.

For some years the great majority of the Congregationalists regarded the new movement with deep distrust. The following passage, though written in the first few years of the nineteenth century, represents contemporary opinion :—

"Scarcely could two classes of good people be more different than the evangelical Dissenters and the Methodists. The former were a disciplined army of veteran warriors, long inured to service, and to whom every part of service was familiar; the latter were soldiers of the revolution, not so expert, but full of enthusiasm, and eager for the battle. The difference was displeasing to the Methodists, who charged the Dissenters with coldness and deadness, many

⁶ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : F. S.)*, xxxviii. 716-717.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xxxviii. 709-721. See also *ibid.*, xxxvii. 1115-1131. In 1837 these remissions had amounted to £170,561; from 1837 to 1845, to £165,778. *Parl. Papers* (1838), 325; (1845), 322.

of whom for heart religion and sanctity of life, and faithful performance of relative duties, were superior to themselves. The Dissenters, displeased at the charge, and provoked at the irregularities and imprudence of the Methodists, were not backward to retaliate.”⁸

The ways of Methodism were wholly unlike their own. They had been accustomed to hope that their children would be gradually drawn to Christ by the gentle influence of Christian homes. If they grew up to manhood and womanhood without showing any signs of personal religious faith, they trusted that by the orderly services of the meeting-house religious thought would be gradually awakened, religious purpose gradually strengthened, and that after some months—perhaps, some years—of solicitude, they would be able to rest in the divine mercy for eternal salvation. They did not deny the possibility of sudden conversion ; but they were unfamiliar with it. They found it hard to believe that a man might go into a Methodist meeting, a swearer and a drunkard, and be “ born again,” and “ find peace,” and rejoice in “ the full assurance ” of his salvation, before the meeting broke up.

They were shocked by the violence of the movement, by its tumult, by its appeals to passion, by its defiance of the traditions of all Protestant Churches. They were shocked by the illiteracy of many of the Revival preachers. Doddridge, whose warm and sympathetic nature was impressed by the ardour of Whitefield, took part in the services at the Tabernacle in the summer of 1743. Watts wrote him a letter of remonstrance :—

“ I am sorry that since your departure I have had many questions asked me about your preaching or praying at the Tabernacle, and of *sinking the character of a Minister, and especially of a Tutor, among the Dissenters so low thereby*. I find many of your friends entertain this idea; but I can give no answer, as not knowing how much you have been engaged there. *I pray God to guard us from every temptation.*”⁹

Dr. Jennings also expressed his disapproval. But Doddridge was impenitent. A few months later Whitefield was in Northampton, and the report reached the Coward Trustees, who were the principal supporters of Doddridge’s Academy, that he had preached in Doddridge’s pulpit. Nathaniel Neal,

⁸ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iii., 408-409.

⁹ Doddridge, *Diary and Correspondence*, iv. 269-270.

Secretary of the Trust, wrote immediately to tell Doddridge that the information had given him the "utmost concern"; that "the matter was canvassed" at a meeting of the Trustees; and he adds, "I now find myself obliged to apprise you of the very great uneasiness which your conduct herein has occasioned them." Then follows a long appeal to Doddridge to reflect "in how disadvantageous a light" his regard for the Methodists had placed him in the opinion of many of his "judicious" friends, and what an advantage it had given to his "secret and avowed enemies." The trustees were "particularly in pain" on account of the harm that Doddridge's sympathy with the Methodists was likely to inflict on the Academy. Doddridge had not only allowed Whitefield to preach in his pulpit; he had prefixed a recommendation to some Methodist book without the advice of the trustees; and a letter which he had written, "excusing" this presumption, had given the trustees "great offence."¹⁰

Between the Independents and Whitefield there were no great doctrinal differences. The Independents were Calvinists, and so was Whitefield. But Wesley was preaching fiercely against the doctrine of election, and expelling Calvinists from the Methodist societies; and the Arminian Methodists, as the Wesleyans were called, were generally regarded by the Independents as enemies of the "doctrines of grace."¹¹ Whitefield, again, differed from Wesley on the doctrine of "perfection" to which the Wesleyan preachers gave great prominence.

But the fires of the Revival had been kindled from heaven, and before the accession of George III. the Congregational Churches had caught the flame. Their ministers were beginning to preach with a new fervour, and their preaching was followed with a new success. The religious life of their people was becoming more intense. A passion for evangelistic work was taking possession of Church after Church, and by the end of the century the old meeting-houses were crowded; many of them had to be enlarged, and new meeting-houses were being erected in town after town and village after village in every part of the kingdom.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, iv. 274-276; and cf. 277-281, and the letter from Dr. Jennings, 257-258.

¹¹ For the opinions of Wesley and Whitefield on election and perfection, see letters in Tyerman, *Wesley*, i. 313-317.

Nor was it merely by their own evangelical earnestness that their numbers were enlarged. Many of the congregations founded by Whitefield, though distinguished for a time as "Calvinistic Methodists," gradually adopted the Congregational polity and lost their distinctive name. In some of these the "trustees" or "managers" claimed a power which was inconsistent with the authority attributed by the Congregational theory to the Church; and in the case of Whitefield's Tabernacles in Moorfields and in Tottenham Court Road, there was a bitter and prolonged struggle on the part of the people to secure or retain the right of electing their ministers;¹² but in most cases the "Calvinistic Methodist" congregations became "Congregational" by a transition so gradual that it would be difficult to determine when the change was made.

The Congregationalists were also strengthened, especially during the last thirty years of the reign of George III., by frequent secessions from the Establishment. From about 1770 the Revival began to exert a powerful influence on the clergy of the Establishment. The Evangelical party, indeed, never became actually dominant in the English Church. Mr. Gladstone estimates that they did not exceed one in twenty of the clergy at the close of the reign of George III., and that perhaps they had risen to one in eight at the close of the reign of George IV.¹³ But wherever there was an earnest Evangelical clergyman, his church was crowded, and his congregations generally cared very much more for Evangelical doctrine than for the Church. If, on his death or preferment, the patron appointed a non-Evangelical clergyman to the parish, it was not unusual for scores of people to desert the church and become Congregationalists. In some cases, as at Huddersfield, after the removal of Mr. Venn, the Evangelical seceders founded a new Congregational Church.¹⁴

¹² The struggle, which began in 1834, led to a Chancery suit and a costly and prolonged arbitration. John Wilks was the leading representative of the managers. John Campbell—afterwards Dr. Campbell—who had recently been appointed to the pastorate of both congregations, and William Bateman, one of the "managers," defended the rights of the people. Whitefield had registered the chapels as "places of worship for Nonconformist congregations calling themselves Independents." For details, see Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 376—380.

¹³ *Gleanings of Past Years*, vii. 210—211.

¹⁴ Venn, H., *Life and Letters of Henry Venn*, 43, 47, 168.

III

The effects of the Evangelical Revival on the *doctrinal position* of the Congregational Churches, though for a long time hardly observed, were considerable. The Wesleyans were still regarded by most Independents with strong hostility on account of their Arminianism; the children of hereditary Independents were still taught the Assembly's Catechism; and Independent theologians still maintained the great Calvinistic doctrines of Original Sin, Election, and the Final Perseverance of the saints. But the characteristic genius of the Revival was silently working against the Calvinistic creed. The preachers who had caught its true spirit vehemently appealed to men to repent, and to trust for eternal salvation in the mercy of God revealed through Christ. They might hold fast to the creed that only the elect would really repent and appeal to the divine mercy; but they preached as if they thought that every man might repent and trust in Christ. They might be assured that, according to the eternal counsels of God, Christ died only for the elect; but they preached as if they thought that He died for every man in the congregation. At home in their study, they might be unable to resist the proof that when the evangelist John wrote that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," he really meant that "God so loved the *Church* that He gave His only begotten Son"; but in the pulpit they pleaded with men as if they believed that the text was true as it stood.

In time, the fervour of the preaching melted down the rigid lines of the theological system. Preachers unconsciously endeavoured to bring their theology into a closer harmony with their sermons. The doctrines of Election, and a limited Atonement, were mentioned very occasionally, or dropped altogether. They were not denied—they might be true—but they had no real relation to the life and works of the children of the Revival, and, therefore, there was no need to say anything about them. Professional theologians came to the aid of the preachers. Edward Williams, pastor of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, and afterwards Tutor at Rotherham, wrote a famous treatise on the *Divine Equity and Sovereignty*—not with the view of breaking up Calvinism, for he was a loyal Calvinist, but with

the hope of removing some of the difficulties which devout and thoughtful people supposed they had discovered in the ordinary statements of Calvinistic doctrine. In the course of a few years preachers who had discovered the glory of the divine love while listening to Wesleyan preaching, became Congregational ministers, and brought with them very much of the Methodist fervour and something of the Methodist faith. Then it became common to believe that in a sense Christ died for all men, though it was God's eternal purpose that only the elect should be actually redeemed by His death; and Independents began to describe themselves as "Moderate Calvinists." They thought that while preserving the strong foundations of the Calvinistic theology and its method, they could modify some of the Calvinistic doctrines, which in their rigid form had become incredible to them. But they were attempting an impossible task, and doing injustice to the constructive genius of their great master. They had not learnt that theologians who begin with Calvin must end with Calvin. "Moderate Calvinism" was Calvinism in decay. The old Calvinistic phrases, the old Calvinistic definitions, were still on the lips of the Independents when George III. died; but in the spirit and tendency of their theology they were Calvinists no longer.

IV

The Revival also exerted a very powerful influence on the *polity* of the Congregational Churches. The Congregational tradition was in a large measure lost, and has not yet been recovered.

Indeed, it began to disappear long before the power of the Revival had been felt. The "Heads of Agreement," drawn up by the Presbyterians and the Independents soon after the Act of Toleration, contain evidence of the relaxation of the vigour with which the idea of the Church had been seized by the Independents of an earlier time.¹⁵ The decay of religious earnestness under Queen Anne and George I. contributed to enfeeble the true Congregational theory; for it is only in a Church that is vividly conscious of its union with Christ that the Congregational theory can have any real authority. To

¹⁵ See *ante*, pp. 474-479.

the Presbyterians who came over in such large numbers to the Congregational Churches during the reign of George II. and up to the end of the eighteenth century, the great conception of the Church which had been asserted by the Congregationalists was altogether unknown. They became Congregationalists, not because they believed in the authority and sanctity which Congregationalism attributed to the society of saints, but because they believed in the Evangelical doctrine on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁶

There was the same indifference to church polity in those who became members of Congregational Churches as the result of the Evangelical Revival. Evangelical Churchmen passed from the parish church to the Congregational meeting-house because the minister preached "the Gospel" and the clergyman did not. The men and women who had been wholly indifferent to religious truth and duty before their hearts were touched and their consciences awakened by the carpenter who came from the Congregational Church in a neighbouring town to preach in a cottage, or in a barn, or on the village-green, became, as a matter of course, members of the Church to which the preacher belonged, and contributed what they could towards building the village Congregational chapel. They heard nothing from the fervent evangelist about the principles of the Congregational polity—they cared nothing about them; they were Congregationalists because it was from a Congregationalist that they had learnt to trust in the infinite mercy of God and to live a Christian life. Nor did the pastors of the larger Churches in the towns care very much about the Congregational idea; their great solicitude was to make men Christians.

The large outlines of the Congregational polity were still

¹⁶ Walter Wilson, writing in 1814, recognised and deplored the indifference with which most of the Independents of his time regarded their ecclesiastical principles. They did not care enough about Congregationalism and Nonconformity to maintain "a periodical publication devoted to their interest." Wesleyan Methodists and Baptists, both General and Particular, had their magazine, but the Independents had none. "*The Dissenters' Magazine*, an ably conducted work, published several years ago, sunk in a most shameful manner for want of support." He adds, "*The Evangelical Magazine* is devoted to no party, but conducted by Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Lutherans, Calvinists. The influence it has obtained over the religious public is prodigious; and it has been a powerful engine for promoting the reign of indifference." *Dissenting Churches*, iv. 555-556, and *note*.

preserved ; but the old meaning had gone out of them. The Churches elected their own ministers and deacons, and in exercising their powers they asked for the guidance of Christ. But it is doubtful whether very many of them held the original theory of Congregationalism—that since the people are one with Christ, Christ Himself appoints the officers of the Church through them. When they spoke of looking for Christ's guidance in these solemn acts, the most devout of them probably meant that only by the aid of His Spirit could they hope to exercise their own *rights* wisely.

Persons who desired to be admitted into church fellowship had first to satisfy the pastor and two of the deacons that they understood the central truths of the Evangelical faith, and trusted in Christ for eternal salvation, and were resolved to keep His commandments. The pastor and the deacons gave their testimony to the Church ; and then the Church—in some Churches only the men-members—were required to declare by their votes whether the candidate should be “received.”¹⁷ And the vote of the Church determined whether any church member had been guilty of conduct which required his exclusion from membership. Both in the admission of members, and in their excommunication, the old forms were observed with great solemnity ; but it is probable that the most devout Congregationalists of this period had ceased to think of these acts of the Church as being Christ's acts rather than their own. The Congregational polity is rooted in the great spiritual truth that the ideal Church is so completely one with Christ that it becomes the organ of His will. The Evangelical Revival insisted on the union of the individual saint with Christ ; but the union of the Church—an organised society of saints—with Christ was not familiar to it. It cared little for the Church ; its whole solicitude was for the rescue of the individual sinner from perdition and the growth in holiness of the individual Christian. It failed to recognise the great place of the Church both in the rescue of men from irreligion and in the discipline of Christian perfection.

V

The Revival also helped to suppress the original type of

¹⁷ See Note A, pp. 605-606.

Independent character. Reserve, a firm self-restraint in habits of expenditure and in amusements, patient, resolute industry, punctuality in the discharge of all obligations, a family life governed by exact method, a keen interest in theology, and a keen interest in politics, a delight in books and in intellectual pursuits of the severer kind, a strict observance of Sunday—these were the characteristics of the men who had been disciplined by Independent traditions. The great Independents of the Commonwealth who had been formed by other influences were freer and more genial ; but in the course of a generation or two the prevailing type of Independent character had taken this austere form. Watts deplored the irregular habits of the Dissenters of his time ; but in many Churches the type was still preserved. It was not greatly modified by the Presbyterians who began to enter Congregational Churches in the middle of the eighteenth century ; for the Presbyterians who retained the creed of the older Puritans retained also much of their austerity of life.¹⁸ The authority of the original type of character was still asserted by the public opinion of the Churches. Any serious departure from it was condemned.

But when Congregational Churches began to be thronged with Churchmen who had inherited another ideal of Christian morals and conduct, and with still larger numbers of persons who were the children of careless and irreligious parents, and inherited no ideal of Christian morals or conduct of any kind, the whole spirit of the Churches was changed. The moral traditions of Independency were lost. The gravity, severity, and solid strength, to which the habits of an earlier age had formed the members of Congregational Churches, disappeared. The intellectual earnestness also disappeared. Congregationalists ceased to be keen theologians, and they ceased to be keen politicians. During the first twenty or thirty years of this century, the best and noblest men in the Congregational Churches were all aglow with the zeal of the Revival. These men touched the imagination of their contemporaries, and exerted

¹⁸ Something of the orderliness and gravity of the Presbyterians was transmitted even to those of their descendants who gave up the Calvinistic creed. The traditional manners and morals remained for a long time after the traditional faith had been abandoned. Within living memory, many Unitarians who had Presbyterian ancestors preserved, in the regulation of their families and in their general habits, strong traces of the original Presbyterian type.

over them the most powerful moral and religious influence ; and they created for their successors a new ideal of the Christian life. In the next generation, the ideal Christian man was one who avoided "worldly" amusements, and freely spent his time and strength in religious work ; and among all religious work, evangelistic work had the highest place. By this ideal the Congregational Churches have been governed down to our own time.

VI

The evangelistic passion took possession of ministers and Churches ; changed the ordinary character of Congregational preaching ; led to the setting up of new services ; originated many new religious enterprises, and many new forms of religious activity.

For several generations, Congregational ministers had been accustomed to read their sermons ; at the beginning of the present century, except among the older ministers, this practice had almost disappeared—if not absolutely condemned, it was "generally considered as the staff of the feeble, and the crutch of the lame" ;¹⁹ and it was not till the fires of the Revival had sunk that the reading of sermons again became common in the Congregational pulpits.²⁰ The substance of the sermons was changed as well as their form. They became less elaborate, and less theological ; more impassioned and popular. "It is at present," wrote Dr. Bogue and Dr. Bennett in 1812,

¹⁹ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 346.

²⁰ Père de la Rue speaks of the change that passed over the French pulpit in the time of Louis XIV. The great preachers in the preceding generation had prepared the substance of their sermons, but they preached extemporaneously. This was the ordinary custom of Bossuet himself. But when the sermon became a work of art, and its religious ends were subordinated to the perfection of its form, the great preachers began to preach *memoriter*—which is only another kind of reading, and a kind of reading which is open to exceptional objections. He sorrowfully confesses that he was led astray by the new practice :—"C'étaient là les modèles" [the earlier, extemporaneous preachers] "que je m'étais proposés. Mes premiers essais furent selon leur méthode, et je m'y serais attaché si je n'eusse été insensiblement emporté par le goût du temps, que je voyais suivi des plus habiles sans exception, et des plus vertueux sans scrupule. . . . Je doute que je sois assez heureux pour inspirer à d'autres ce que je n'ai pu gagner sur moi. J'aurai du moins la consolation d'avoir dit la vérité." *Sermons du Père de la Rue* : Migne, *Orateurs Sacrés*, xxviii. 210.

“ necessary to vary, to embellish, to enliven public instruction in every way, in order to suit the more volatile turn of the public mind.”²¹ The congregation no longer consisted almost exclusively of persons who had been trained in the quiet and orderly homes of hereditary Independents; in nearly every congregation there were now scores—and in many congregations hundreds—of persons who had received no careful discipline in their youth, and who were morally as well as intellectually incapable of listening to such sermons as had been preached by the “ painful preachers ” of earlier times.

A new kind of prayer-meeting was begun on a week-night. It had not been unusual for the Church to meet occasionally on a week-night for prayer; and prayers were generally offered by the deacons as well as by the minister. Now it became common to have a prayer-meeting that was open to all comers; and other persons besides the officers of the Church took part in the service.

Lay-preaching in the villages had never been wholly disused by Congregationalists; but towards the close of the eighteenth century, and, to a still larger extent, during the first twenty or thirty years of the nineteenth century, the number of lay-preachers was greatly increased. It would probably have been almost as difficult in 1820 to find a Congregational Church without a body of lay-preachers, as it would be now to find a Congregational Church without a Sunday school.

New institutions were established for the express purpose of training evangelists. In 1776 a society was instituted in London, called the *Societas Evangelica*. Its object was to “ extend the Gospel in Great Britain by itinerant preaching,” and in 1778 it established an “ Academy ” for training evangelists. The most active founders of this scheme were Thomas Wilson, Benjamin Mills, George Welch, and Henry Burder. For four years the students lived at their own homes and attended lectures three days a week. In 1782 Dr. Stephen Addington was appointed Tutor; a house was taken at Mile End, large enough for the accommodation of both Tutor and students; the course of education was made more liberal; and the institution was called the Evangelical Academy. In 1791 it removed to Hoxton Square, and was known as Hoxton

²¹ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 375-376.

Academy until in 1825 it removed to Highbury Park and became Highbury College. Dr. Simpson succeeded Dr. Addington in 1791. His successors were Dr. William Harris (1818—1829), and Dr. Ebenezer Henderson (1830—1850).²²

Hackney College had a similar origin. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, the Rev. John Eyre, an Evangelical clergyman at Homerton, who had been a preacher in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, founded a society which was afterwards known as the *Village Itinerancy or Evangelical Association for spreading the Gospel in England*. To secure suitable agents, Mr. Eyre proposed that the society should "educate in their own manner such a number of pious young men for the ministry, and so far contribute to their support as their funds would allow, and as might be necessary for introducing the Gospel into such situations as would otherwise be destitute of it." The Institution was opened in 1803 with Mr. Collison, a Congregationalist, for Tutor. He was succeeded in 1847 by the Rev. John Watson, in 1859 by the Rev. Samuel McAll, and in 1881 by Dr. Cave. As happened in the case of the Evangelical Academy at Mile End, the course of education was gradually enlarged; it now extends over five years. The college has been removed to new buildings in Finchley Road, Hampstead.²³

But the Academies and the Colleges were unable to meet the eager demand for Evangelical preachers. Mr. Welch, a London banker, who was one of the principal supporters of the *Societas Evangelica*, Mr. Townsend, a wealthy London merchant, and other gentlemen, provided the funds to enable Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, and Cornelius Winter, of Painswick in Gloucestershire,²⁴ to receive into their houses and to educate a considerable number of students. After Mr. Welch's death, Robert Haldane, of Edinburgh, made large contributions to assist Dr. Bogue in carrying on his work. John Angell James, of Birmingham,

²² See Burder's letters in Waddington, iii. (1700—1800), 597—598; Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 263—265; and *Congregational College Calendar for 1885*, 48—49 (Highbury College). Highbury was one of the three colleges—the other two being Homerton and Coward—which were united to form New College, St. John's Wood, in 1850.

²³ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 119; Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 267—268; *Congregational College Calendar for 1885*, 94—96.

²⁴ Mr. Winter's "Seminary" was at Marlborough,

was educated by Dr. Bogue ; and William Jay, of Bath, by Mr. Winter. William Bull, of Newport Pagnell, had an Academy whose students were to be prepared for the ministry in any denomination of Evangelical Dissenters or in the Established Church. The scheme for this institution was drawn up by Cowper's friend, the Rev. John Newton, one of the leaders of the Evangelical clergy, and the Academy derived its chief support from an Evangelical Churchman, John Thornton, of Clapham.²⁵

New Colleges were founded to educate men for the ordinary pastorate. Edward Hanson, a Yorkshire gentleman living in London, offered to contribute £60 a year towards the education of students for the ministry at an Academy to be established in the West Riding. A Yorkshire Committee was formed ; additional funds were secured ; and in 1800 the Rev. William Vint, of Idle, was appointed Tutor. The students lived in his family. Mr. Hanson died in 1802, and bequeathed to the Institution £150 a year. In 1810 an Academy House was built, which was subsequently enlarged. The original course of study covered four years ; in 1826 it was extended to five ; and in the same year the Idle Academy became Aire-dale Independent College. In 1829 it was resolved to remove the College to Undercliffe, near Bradford.²⁶

In 1810 an attempt was made in Manchester to combine in one institution a Dissenting Grammar School and an Academy for the education of young men for the Congregational Ministry, but after an experiment of four years the scheme was given up as a failure. A few years later—in 1816—an Independent Academy was opened at Blackburn, of which Dr. Fletcher was Principal and Theological Tutor. The term of study was to be four years. In 1823 Dr. Fletcher removed to Stepney, and was succeeded by the Rev. George Payne. Under Dr. Payne's Principalship the course of study was

²⁵ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 279—282. Waddington, iii. (1700—1800), 108. Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 140—145.

²⁶ Bogue and Bennett, iv. 278—279. Bennett, 151—152. The new College at Undercliffe was opened on March 5, 1833, and in the same month Mr. Vint died. He was succeeded by the Rev. Walter Scott (1834—1858), and the Rev. Daniel Fraser, LL.D. (1858—1876). A new building was opened in 1877. Dr. Fairbairn, now Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, was Principal of Aire-dale from 1877 to 1886.

greatly extended. Dr. Payne removed to Exeter in 1829, and was succeeded by the Rev. Gilbert Wardlaw.²⁷

Among the other Academies established during these years in various parts of the kingdom, one calls for special notice on account of the exceptional circumstances of its history. After Doddridge's death, the Academy over which he had presided was removed from Northampton to Daventry, and placed under the charge of Caleb Ashworth, who held office for a quarter of a century, and was then succeeded by Thomas Robins, who retired, after six years' service, in 1781. Thomas Belsham, who had been Assistant Tutor, was then promoted to the headship and the theological chair. But in course of time, finding that his opinions conflicted with the principles that the College was founded to maintain, and that he could not conscientiously teach the doctrines contained in the Assembly's Catechism, as required by the Coward Trustees, who maintained the institution, Mr. Belsham resigned office. The Academy was then removed to Northampton, with John Horsey as Theological Tutor. But the influence of the place had become hostile to evangelical religion; the Tutor was suspected of unorthodoxy; "most of the pupils were found to be Socinians"; and it was concluded that the will of the founder was being disregarded. The trustees, therefore, in 1798 removed Mr. Horsey, dissolved the institution, and resolved to start again on a new foundation.

In the following year, 1799, buildings were obtained at Wymondley, a Hertfordshire village, not far from Hitchin. The Academy was revived, and the Rev. William Parry, of Little Baddow, Essex, was appointed Tutor, with Mr. Henry Foster Burder as his colleague. But in spite of the changes of place, and staff, and surroundings, the former traditions still survived; and it is clear that Mr. Parry, whatever his own convictions may have been, had neither the strength nor the tact required to grapple with the difficulties of the situation. It is significant that when the troubles came to a head in the spring of 1816, the trustees should have received the first

²⁷ Bennett, 152-155. In 1843 the Blackburn Academy was removed to Manchester and became the *Lancashire Independent College*. Mr. Wardlaw was Principal, from 1829 to 1843; Dr. Vaughan, from 1843 to 1857; Mr. Henry Rogers, from 1853 to 1869; the Rev. Caleb Scott, from 1869 to 1904, when he was succeeded by the Rev. W. F. Adeney, D.D. *Cong. College Calendar*, 1885, 111-113.

intimation of the crisis in a letter written, not by the Tutor, but by his assistant colleague.

A theological institution of this type cannot succeed unless it possesses the confidence of the Churches with which it is most closely associated. Its students depend for their support in some measure upon the preaching engagements they can secure during the later years of their academic course. When their course comes to an end, and they are ready to enter upon the work of the ministry, Churches hesitate to offer them a pastorate if there is reason to suspect that they have been subject to alien and hostile influences during their period of training. Such was the experience at Wymondley. The neighbouring Churches held aloof from the Academy. With the exception of a small congregation at Stevenage, there was not a single Church connected with it. The students were rarely invited to preach; they could not meet their personal expenses; and several of them got into debt. When they came to the end of their course, the same difficulties beset them. The taint of Socinianism was on them; they were "dreaded by most of the congregations to whom they were sent"; and many of them, failing to find a Church that would call them to its pastorate, had to give up the ministry altogether. There had been laxity in the admission of students, laxity in discipline, and, it is to be feared, laxity in the system of instruction. The trustees shrank from a second revolution, and for nearly three years the disorder continued, until, after the death of Mr. Parry in 1821, the Rev. Thomas Morell was invited to succeed him. No useful purpose would be served by dredging up the incidents and details of the strife, or by recording the cases of students who withdrew or were dismissed. One thing is clear—that religious unrest was but one of the disturbing elements, and that although the mischief may have begun in the class-room, it was aggravated by insubordination and indolence, by suspicion, tattle, and slander. It may, however, be recorded that Thomas Binney, who entered the Academy when things were at their worst, withdrew for a time, through resentment at the expulsion of two of his fellow students. Within eighteen months, Mr. Morell's firm wisdom had done much to restore order. Binney himself had come under the influence of Joseph Fletcher, of Blackburn, and he had ripened both in mind and character. He applied for

readmission, and entered the Academy once more in May, 1821. For some years the institution remained at Wymondley, but in 1832 the trustees determined to avail themselves of the advantages offered by University College, London, and established the Academy under the name of Coward College—so perpetuating the name of its founder—in Torrington Square, London, leaving the theological teaching to Mr. Morell, but using the classes at University College for the instruction of the students in other subjects.²⁸

During the whole of this period the Academies and Colleges were regarded as centres of evangelistic activity. Meeting-houses which, as the result of Arian and Unitarian doctrine, had been deserted, or almost deserted, were once more crowded through the evangelical preaching of the students; and many of them had to be pulled down and rebuilt because they were too small to accommodate the congregations. In other cases the students gathered new congregations and founded new Churches.²⁹

VII

In 1780 Robert Raikes laid the foundations of the modern Sunday school. He gave to each of four women whom he first employed on Sunday to teach the poor children of Gloucester to read, and to say the Catechism, a shilling for their day's work. During the week the women kept dames' schools, or were engaged in other occupations. For some years a very large number of the teachers in Sunday schools were paid for their work.³⁰

Raikes's experiment was not the first of its kind. There was a Sunday school in connection with the Presbyterian congregation at Mixenden, near Halifax, several years before this time. An old MS., quoted by the Rev. J. Brierley in the *Congregational Register for the West Riding*, 1863, states that "One Abram Burns was a Sabbath-day teacher, and was paid

²⁸ See Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 255-273; with the extracts from the *Wymondley Papers*; Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 135-136; Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 268-271; and *Cong. Coll. Calendar*, 1885, 46-48.

²⁹ See for illustration an extract from the report of the Idle Academy in Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 31-32.

³⁰ W. H. Watson, *The First Fifty Years of the Sunday School*, 19, 22; and *idem*, *History of the Sunday School Union*, 4-6.

a trifle for his labour," and that " Benjamin Patchett, yeoman, assisted as a free teacher." Dr. Watts's Catechism and the Assembly's Catechisms were used in the school; and between the services on the Sabbath Mr. Evans frequently collected the children together in the aisles of the chapel, to give them scriptural instruction and to examine them in the catechisms.³¹

But, as the proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal*, Raikes was able to bring his scheme before the public, and, though some Sunday schools probably existed in different parts of England before his time, it was he who gave the Sunday-school movement its initial and effective impulse.³²

A society which was founded to encourage the formation of Sunday schools expended in the payment of teachers, from 1786 to 1800, upwards of £4,000.³³

But towards the end of the century it became apparent that unless the schools were worked by voluntary teachers great masses of neglected children could never be reached. The immediate results, indeed, of Raikes's advocacy of the new movement were very surprising. It was estimated that within seven years the number of scholars had reached nearly a quarter of a million; this was rather less than 3 per cent. of the population. A Parliamentary return, obtained in 1818, showed that the number of scholars had risen to 477,225; or rather more than 4 per cent. of the population.³⁴ From that time, and

³¹ Mr. Evans, who was probably an Arian, was minister of the congregation from 1764 to 1779. Benjamin Patchett was an elder during the pastorate of the preceding minister, the Rev. James Ritchie, and published in 1759, *A Short Inquiry into the proper qualification of Gospel Ministers: with some Directions how we, who are hearers, may know whether the Doctrines our Ministers deliver from the pulpit are according to God's mind and will, or not.* "This man," says the Rev. J. G. Miall, "was in the habit of calling out to the minister in the pulpit when anything displeased him. He was much respected and feared." J. G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, 318.

³² W. H. Watson, *The First Fifty Years of the Sunday School*, 21, 24.

³³ W. H. Watson, *History of the Sunday School Union*, 9; *Idem*, *First Fifty Years of the Sunday School*, 30-31.

³⁴ Another Parliamentary return, obtained in 1833, gave the number of scholars as 1,548,890; or nearly 11 per cent. of the population. The Education Census of 1851 gave the number of scholars as 2,407,642; or nearly 13½ per cent. of the population. In 1880—the Sunday school centenary year—it was estimated that 15 per cent. of the population of England and Wales were in Sunday schools, and that the number of scholars had risen to 3,800,000.

especially in the manufacturing districts in the north of England, the system developed with extraordinary rapidity, and among Congregationalists the custom of making payments to teachers disappeared. The whole work was done by voluntary zeal.

During the first thirty or fifty years after the founding of Sunday schools—and perhaps for a longer period—their chief object was to teach children to read and to instruct them in the elements of Christian truth. In some schools writing and arithmetic were taught. That the school might be made a great evangelistic agency was only slowly discovered. The children were “dismissed” at thirteen or fourteen years of age, just at the time at which they were becoming most sensitive to religious appeal. During the last thirty years there has been an enormous increase in the proportion of older scholars; and there are many Congregational Churches which derive a third, and even a half, of their members from the schools. With the growing importance of the school as a *religious* force, it has gradually drawn to itself nearly the whole evangelistic zeal of the Churches. From 1780 to 1830 it was natural for the ablest and most zealous members of a Congregational Church to become lay-preachers; and for some years later, if a teacher was able to give an effective address in the school, it was a very usual thing for the minister to suggest that he should be sent out into the villages to preach. But, for a long time past, the school has held the supreme place, and in connection with Congregational Churches lay-preaching in most parts of England has gradually declined.

VIII

The London Missionary Society was founded in 1795. Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, in a sermon preached at Salters' Hall in 1792, had contrasted the rapid spread of the Christian faith in former ages with its slow progress in recent times; he maintained that the heathenism of a large proportion of the human race was the result of the culpable neglect of the Christian Church, and that it was the duty of the Church to attempt—and to attempt immediately—to preach the Christian Gospel to all mankind.

At a meeting of the Warwickshire Association of Congregational ministers on June 27, 1793, there was a discussion on

the question—"What is the duty of Christians with respect to the spread of the Gospel?" After the discussion, the following resolutions were agreed to:—

"1. It appears to us that it is the duty of all Christians to employ every means in their power to spread the knowledge of the Gospel both at home and abroad.

"2. As ministers of Churches solemnly engaged by our office to exert ourselves for the glory of God and the spiritual good of man, we unite in the determination to promote this great design in our respective connexions.

"3. We will *immediately* recommend to our friends the *formation of a fund for the above purpose*, and report progress at our next meeting.

"4. That the first meeting of every month, at seven o'clock in the evening, be a season for united prayer to God for the *success of every attempt made by all denominations of Christians for the spread of the Gospel.*"

In a letter which appeared in *The Evangelical Magazine* in September, 1794, Dr. Bogue made a special appeal to the Congregational Churches to do something for the conversion of the heathen; reminded them that the Church of England had a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; that the Kirk of Scotland had a similar society; that the Moravians, Methodists, Baptists, were all doing their part, and that the Congregationalists alone were idle.³⁵

At last, after several conferences in which Congregationalists, Churchmen, Presbyterians, and ministers of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion took part, a meeting was held on Monday evening, September 21, 1795, at the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street, to consider a plan and constitution for a new Missionary Society. Sir Egerton Leigh, Bart., one of the delegates appointed by the Warwickshire Association to attend the meeting, was in the chair; and the plan and constitution were submitted by an Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. John Eyre. On the next day, September 22, Dr. Haweis preached a sermon on Mark xvi. 15-16, in the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, Spa Fields. The chapel was thronged, and there was great excitement. The singing of the hymn, "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness," was interrupted by sobs

³⁵ *Evangelical Magazine*, September, 1794, 378-380. Bogue and Bennett, iv. 383-387. Waddington, iv. (1800-1850), 58-91.

and tears. At this service the Missionary Society was formally constituted ; after the sermon, the plan of the proposed Society was submitted by Mr. Eyre and adopted by the congregation.

The London Missionary Society was one of the most characteristic creations of the Revival. It was an attempt to unite men of all Evangelical Churches in the work of preaching the Gospel to the heathen. The missionaries that the Society sent out, and the Churches they founded, might be Presbyterian, Congregational, or Episcopalian. The directors and their constituents were satisfied if the missionaries and their converts held the Evangelical Faith. This is still the Society's fundamental principle, and it still derives some support from Presbyterians and from members of the Established Church ; but within twenty years after it was founded it had to rely principally on the contributions of Congregationalists.³⁶

The enterprise was too immense to command immediately universal sympathy and confidence. To men that did not share the courage, faith, and enthusiasm of its founders, it must have seemed hopeless. By some of the older Independents, who had not yet been penetrated with the spirit of the Revival, it was regarded for some time with considerable hostility. In 1814 Walter Wilson contrasted the zeal of the Dissenters of former days with what he regarded as the fanaticism of his contemporaries :—

“ It is true, they did not beat up a crusade in the religious world for the wild purpose of proselyting the savage hottentot, or the untutored islander, but they conducted plans of instruction for the rising generation of their countrymen, which turned to infinitely better account. . . . The immense sums that have been consumed in equipping missionaries to the South Seas, without any useful

³⁶ In the Plan and Constitution adopted at the Annual Meeting held in Exeter Hall, May 12, 1870, the following are the terms in which the “ Fundamental Principle ” is defined :—“ As the union of Christians of various denominations in carrying on this great work is a most desirable object, so, to prevent, if possible, any cause of future dissension, it is declared to be a fundamental principle of the Missionary Society, that its design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order and Government (about which there may be differences of opinion among serious persons), but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, to the heathen ; and that it shall be left (as it ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God may call into the fellowship of His Son from among them, to assume for themselves such form of Church Government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God.”

result, would have civilised all the inhabitants in the vast parish of St. Giles's, and have provided them with food, clothing and religious instruction for the remainder of their lives. Zeal is an excellent quality, but its value is not to be estimated by noise and clamour, nor by the magnificence of its projects; neither is *the sacrifice of principle any evidence of Christian Charity.*"³⁷

But Dr. Bogue and his friends were not open to the charge implied in Mr. Wilson's disparagement of their enthusiasm. While they were endeavouring to send the Christian Gospel to "the savage hottentot" and "the untutored islander," they were the most earnest and most vigorous leaders of every movement for evangelising their own countrymen. At the very time that they were forming the Missionary Society for the conversion of the heathen abroad, they were creating new organisations for rescuing from irreligion the neglected towns and villages of England.

The "County Associations" had been Associations of *Ministers* for the purpose of conference and co-operation on matters of common interest. Between 1780 and 1810, Associations of Churches were formed in most of the counties of England.³⁸ The new Associations raised funds for the assistance of the poorer congregations in their respective counties and for the maintenance of ministers who were founding new Congregational Churches. In some cases they contributed towards the cost of erecting Congregational chapels. It was largely owing to the vigour with which these County Associations were worked, that Congregationalism grew so rapidly during the first twenty or thirty years of the nineteenth century.

In 1814 the Irish Evangelical Society was founded. Its original supporters belonged to different religious denominations; but, like the London Missionary Society, it gradually became a Congregational institution. Its object was to support evangelical preachers in Ireland, and for a few years it had

³⁷ Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, iv. 551-552. By the "sacrifice of principle" Mr. Wilson meant, no doubt, the indifference to church polity which led Independents to unite with Presbyterians and Episcopalians in founding and supporting the Missionary Society.

³⁸ Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, iv. 387. The dates given in the Congregational Year Book of the formation of the existing County Associations are, in many cases, the dates at which the Associations were reorganised.

a Theological Institution in Dublin for the training of ministers and evangelists.³⁹

In 1819 Mr. Thomas Thompson, a member of the Stock Exchange, and Mr. Abraham, a London solicitor, originated the Home Missionary Society. At the outset its title seems to have given some offence, on the ground that it treated as heathen a nation that in name, at any rate, was Christian.⁴⁰ But the Society had no difficulty in proving that large districts of the kingdom lay wholly outside the range of ordinary religious organisations; that if the Gospel was to reach them at all, it could not be through the ordinary channels; and that they needed a special agency to deliver them from a condition that was one of practical paganism. In North Devon, for instance, in the district bounded by Exmoor on the north and by Dartmoor on the south, and stretching from Witheridge in the east to Hartland in the west, forty miles across each way, and containing six hundred villages and hamlets, and 130,000 inhabitants, it was reckoned, on a moderate estimate, that there were at least 40,000 people who rarely, if ever, heard the Gospel.⁴¹ In other parts of the kingdom the religious destitution was almost scandalous. The Society set itself to supplement the efforts of the County Associations, where these had been established, and, so far as possible, to work in conjunction with them. They appointed as their agents either ministers, who offered themselves for this special service, or lay evangelists who had already proved themselves efficient; and in many cases put them under the immediate direction of the associated Churches of the district. Where the work met with opposition, or facilities for holding religious services were refused—an experience far from uncommon—the influence of the central committee was brought to bear upon the difficulty, and the obstacles raised by ignorance and bigotry were in many cases evaded or removed. The work of the Society grew, and continued to grow. By degrees the country was covered with a network of evangelistic agencies. Occasional services became regular

³⁹ The Theological Institution was discontinued through inadequate support, but was revived in 1832, under the care of Dr. Urwick and Mr. William Haweis Cooper. The Theological Institution was then mainly supported by the Hoxton Hibernian Association. Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 186–190. Waddington, iv. (1800–1850), 253f.

⁴⁰ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 326.

⁴¹ Waddington, iv. (1800–1850), 320.

engagements. In many places the mission station developed into a Church with a settled pastor of its own, which in its turn became a centre of religious enterprise and gave as it had received.⁴²

Another institution of Congregationalism, though not actually established during this period, may be said in a sense to belong to it ; for its first conception and the first attempt to give the conception substance and form date from the early years of the nineteenth century. New conditions were beginning to make new demands on the Churches. They had learnt by experience on more than one occasion how great a power they could exert when acting together. Singly they might be weak ; but collectively they were strong. And their leaders had discovered—even those of them whose loyalty to the principles of Congregationalism was most unbending—that independence and isolation are not the same thing.

In 1806 the Congregational Board of London declared itself in favour of a General Union of Independent Churches and ministers. In Lancashire, later in the same year, the County Association approved a similar proposal. But though a County Union was established in Lancashire, the larger proposal at that time went no farther.⁴³ Three years later, however, in 1809, a General Union was formed, to promote the spiritual growth of the Churches and to provide for the evangelisation of villages and country districts. Its history must be the subject of another chapter.

NOTE A

Admission to Church Membership

The original custom required the candidate for membership to appear before the Church Meeting and make a personal profession of faith, in addition to satisfying the pastor and the visitors. Any member of the Church was at liberty to ask the candidate questions. This custom was discontinued in many Churches towards the end of the eighteenth century ; though in some it survived for a few

⁴² Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 326—328 ; Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 320—323.

⁴³ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 126—127.

years longer. Then it became customary for candidates to write letters to the Church, giving some account of their belief and their personal experience. This custom was retained till quite recent times; in some Churches it is perhaps retained still. It was an innovation when, twenty or thirty years ago, instead of invariably appointing deacons as "visitors," unofficial members of the Church were sometimes appointed. It is a still more recent innovation to appoint women members of the Church to "visit" women candidates for fellowship. In some Churches the custom of appointing visitors has been wholly given up, and the Church votes on the "testimony" of the minister. See R. W. Dale, *Manual of Congregational Principles*, 166-167.

The limitation of the vote to men members of Churches seems to have been the general practice of the older Congregational Churches. The older Congregationalists were, like John Knox, unfavourable to "the regiment of women," and believed that the woman was not to exercise authority over the man. Most modern Congregational Churches, in truer harmony with the spirit of the Christian Gospel, give the vote to all persons, whether men or women, over eighteen years of age. See *ante*, p. 209.

BOOK VI

*FROM THE DEATH OF GEORGE III. (1820) TO THE
PRESENT TIME (1891)*

CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FROM 1820 TO 1891.

REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS—CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION—ABOLITION OF CHURCH RATES—REFORM OF THE MARRIAGE LAWS—UNIVERSITY TESTS ABOLISHED—CHURCHYARDS AND CEMETERIES—SOCIETIES FOR PROMOTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM—EDWARD MIALL AND THE LIBERATION SOCIETY—LADY HEWLEY'S CHARITIES—THE DISSENTERS' CHAPELS BILL.

DURING the seventy years which have passed since the death of George III., English Dissenters have been engaged in a long succession of struggles for the defence or the extension of their religious liberties, and they have won a long succession of triumphs

I

In 1820 Mr. Brougham brought forward an Education Bill which proposed to create a system of rate-supported schools in which the clergy were to have extraordinary powers. The rector or vicar, with two or three parishioners in each case, was to appoint the schoolmaster. The schoolmaster was required to be a member of the established Church, and to give proof of his membership by having taken the sacrament within six months previous to appointment.¹ The Dissenters defeated the Bill, and, as their victory revealed their strength, they resolved to attempt the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The agitation was led by the Protestant Society, which was supported by the leaders of the Whigs. The Duke of Sussex, Lord Holland, Lord John Russell, and Sir James Mackintosh, took the chair at its annual meetings. A great Conference, called by the Dissenting Deputies, was held in the

¹ See *infra*, pp. 648-649.

spring of 1827; Mr. William Smith, the member for Norwich, who presided, had voted, forty years before, for the motions of Mr. Fox and Mr. Beaufoy.² At a second meeting of the Conference it was resolved that a Bill for the repeal of the Acts should be submitted to Parliament, and that Lord John Russell should have charge of it.

Parliament met at the close of January, 1828, and petitions in favour of repeal were presented in enormous numbers. The Corporation of London adopted a petition in support of the claims of the Dissenters,³ and the example of London was followed by other corporations in every part of the kingdom. On February 26 Lord John Russell moved for a Committee of the whole House to consider the Acts. In his speech, which was an extremely able one, he declared that he could not accept the principle on which the Dissenters rested their claims to relief. He did not believe that every restraint and disqualification imposed on a man on account of his religious belief was of the nature of persecution. If the religion of any body of men was found to be hostile to the interests of the State, a restrictive test would, in his opinion, be justifiable. But the Acts were passed in circumstances which had long disappeared. The House of Stuart might naturally have regarded the Dissenters with apprehension, and might, therefore, have thought it politically expedient to exclude them from municipal offices; but the House of Hanover had always found the Dissenters its most loyal supporters and its firmest friends. The Test Act had been passed for the defence of the Church of England,—not against the Dissenters, but against the Duke of York, who was a Romanist and heir to the crown, and against a ministry that was suspected of designs hostile to English Protestantism.” The annual Indemnity Acts, which gave a partial relief to Dissenters, left scarcely an argument against the repeal of laws which had been so long virtually suspended. It could not be contended that these laws were necessary for the security of the Church, for they extended neither to Scotland nor to Ireland.⁴ Absurd were the number and variety of

² *Test-Act Reporter* (1829), 33-37. And see *ante*, p. 568.

³ *Ibid.*, 45-61.

⁴ In Ireland an Act was passed in 1779, admitting to civil and military offices Protestants who had not taken the sacrament. The taking of the sacrament according to the order of the English Church had, of course, never been made a qualification for office in Scotland.

persons affected by the Test Act : non-commissioned officers, as well as officers—excisemen, tide-waiters, and even pedlars. The penalties incurred by these different classes of men were sufficiently alarming—forfeiture of the office, disqualification for any other, incapacity to maintain a suit at law, to act as guardian or executor, or to inherit a legacy ; and, lastly, a penalty of £500. Even if such penalties were never enforced, the law which imposed them was wholly indefensible. Nor was it forgotten again to condemn the profanation of the holy sacrament, by reducing it to a mere civil form, imposed upon persons who either renounced its sacred character, or might be spiritually unfit to receive it.”⁵

Mr. Peel, afterwards Sir Robert Peel, who was Home Secretary and leader of the House of Commons, admitted that the Acts were not necessary for the protection of the Church, but rested his opposition to their repeal on the ground that the Dissenters had no practical grievance. Lord Palmerston, the Secretary for War, announced that he intended to vote against the Bill because he thought that the claims of the Roman Catholics were more urgent than the claims of the Dissenters. The motion was also opposed by Mr. Huskisson, Colonial Secretary, Lord Althorp, Lord Nugent, and Henry Brougham supported Lord John Russell. The motion was carried by 237 Ayes to 193 Noes—a majority of 44.⁶

Many of the ordinary supporters of the ministry had voted in the majority ; and after the Bill had been introduced, Mr. Peel stated that the feeling of the House in its favour was so decisive that the Government had determined to withdraw their opposition to it. He also undertook to communicate with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops in order to induce them to share the grace of a necessary concession to the Dissenters.⁷ To facilitate the passing of the measure, Lord John Russell consented that a Declaration should be made by all magistrates, and by all persons holding municipal offices, pledging them never to exert any power or influence that they might possess by virtue of their office “ to

⁵ Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 157–158. For Lord John Russell's speech, see *Parl. Debates (Hansard : N. S.)*, xviii. 676–694, and reprint in *Test Act Reporter*, 98–110.

⁶ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : N.S.)*, xviii. 781. C. J. (Feb. 26, 1828), lxxxiii. 107.

⁷ Peel, *Memoirs*, i. 69, 79.

injure or subvert the Protestant Church, by law established, or to disturb it in the possession of those rights and privileges to which it is by law entitled.”⁸

In the House of Lords the measure was firmly resisted by Lord Eldon, who proposed to substitute an oath for a declaration, and to provide effectual securities to prevent the Catholics obtaining any benefit from the repeal of the Acts. Lord Winchelsea attempted to exclude Unitarians. Lord Eldon was especially vehement in his antagonism to the Bill. It “was formed upon principles which no man could deny were revolutionary.” The Constitution required “that the Church of England should be supported; and the best way of affording that support to her was to admit only her own members to offices of trust and emolument.”⁹ Lord Holland, who had charge of the Bill, was supported by the Marquis of Lansdowne, Earl Grey, the Earl of Harrowby, and other lay peers. The Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Lincoln, Durham, and Chester, spoke in favour of the measure. The Duke of Wellington, who was prime minister, informed the House that the Government accepted it in the interests of religious peace. The only serious amendment insisted on by the House was moved by the Bishop of Exeter, who wished to add to the Declaration a phrase expressive of belief in Christianity—“upon the true faith of a Christian.” He did not regard the addition as necessary, but as decorous, and he proposed it “for the credit of Parliament.” But by inserting in the Declaration the words “on the true faith of a Christian,” the Jews were formally excluded from the benefits of the Bill. Lord Holland protested, but the House refused to yield. The third reading was carried without a division on April 28. On May 9, 1828, the Bill received the royal assent and became law.¹⁰

⁸ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : N.S.)*, xviii. 1193–1194, 1207, 1229–1230.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xviii. 1483–1485, 1497, 1518–1519, 1592–1605; xix. 39–49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xviii. 1591–1592, 1609; xix. 157–159. The disability inflicted on the Jews by this amendment was removed by an Act passed in 1845—8 and 9 Vic. cap. 52. The Declaration, as finally adopted, ran as follows:—“I, A B, do solemnly and sincerely, in the Presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, upon the true Faith of a Christian, that I will never exercise any Power, Authority, or Influence which I may possess by virtue of the office of — to injure or weaken the Protestant Church as it is by Law established in England, or to disturb the Bishops and Clergy of the said Church in the Possession of any Rights

II

In the following year (1829) the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed.

The laws which had been enacted in successive reigns for the repression of the Catholic Church were far more severe than those by which Charles II. had endeavoured to repress Protestant Dissent ; and the Revolution of 1688, which gave a large measure of relief to Protestant Dissenters, made the position of the Catholics worse than it had been before. In Ireland, where the Catholics constituted three-fourths of the population, the laws against Catholicism were even sterner and more pitiless than in England.¹¹ In both countries some of the worst of these laws had been repealed, and before the beginning of the century others had become obsolete ; but by the laws still in force the Catholics were deprived of many of the rights of citizenship.

During the negotiations which preceded the Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, the Irish Catholics had been encouraged to hope that as soon as the Imperial Parliament was created it would pass a measure of Catholic relief. Pitt indeed had been forbidden by the King to promise any concessions, nor had he himself determined upon any definite measures ; but he knew that the Irish Catholics were relying upon him to remove their disabilities.¹²

In 1801 he was prepared to allow Catholics to sit in Parliament, and to hold civil and military offices under the Crown ; he was also prepared to make provision for the Irish priesthood out of the national exchequer. On these terms the Irish Catholic bishops were willing that the Crown should have a *veto* on all future appointments to Catholic bishoprics in Ireland.¹³ But the King insisted that to make any further

or Privileges to which such Church, or the said Bishops and Clergy, are or may be by Law entitled." 9 Geo. IV. cap. 17, § 2.

¹¹ See Burke, *Tracts relating to the Laws against Popery in Ireland*, Works, vi. 5-48.

¹² As early as 1788, Pitt was favourable to a scheme for making public provision for the Irish Catholic priesthood. Erskine May, *Constitutional History*, iii. 117, note 2.

¹³ See the authorities, *ibid.*, iii. 118, notes 1, 2. It was part of Pitt's scheme to relieve Protestant Dissenters from their civil disabilities.

concessions to the Catholics would be a violation of his coronation oath, and Pitt resigned. He returned to power in 1804, but in deference to the King's wishes he agreed not to bring forward any measure to satisfy the Catholic claims; and in the following year, when the question was raised in the House of Commons on a motion made by Charles James Fox, Pitt, while frankly admitting that he was still of the opinion, formed at the time of the Union, that Catholics might be admitted to the United Parliament "under proper [safe]guards and conditions," without "any danger to the established Church or the Protestant constitution," declared that the circumstances which had then prevented him from proposing a measure to give effect to this conviction "had made so deep, so lasting an impression upon my mind, that so long as those circumstances continue to operate, I shall feel it a duty imposed upon me, not only not to bring forward, but not in any manner to be a party in bringing forward or in agitating this question."¹⁴ The motion was defeated by 336 Noes to 124 Ayes—a majority of 212. A similar motion by Lord Grenville in the Lords was defeated by 178 Noes to 49 Ayes—a majority of 129.¹⁵

Lord Grenville's Ministry (1806—1807) was wrecked through the introduction of a Bill by Lord Howick on March 5, 1807, to enable Catholics and Dissenters to hold commissions in the army and navy, and to provide that all persons that entered His Majesty's service should enjoy the "free and unrestrained exercise of their religion, so far as it did not interfere with their military duties."¹⁶ The King refused to allow Catholics to hold the higher commissions, and also refused to sanction the provisions of the Bill which removed the disabilities of Dissenters. The Ministry thereupon resigned.¹⁷

Year after year, the Catholic claims were brought forward; in the Commons, by Canning, Grattan, Lord Morpeth, and

¹⁴ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : F.S.)*, iv. 1015, 1018.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, iv. 843, 1060.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ix. 2-7. An Act had been passed in 1793 by the Irish Parliament enabling Catholics to hold any commission in the army up to the rank of colonel. As no similar Act had been passed for Great Britain, a Catholic captain in the King's service, when removed with his regiment from Ireland to England, became liable to the penalties of the Test Act. Dissenters were already capable, under an Act passed by the Irish Parliament in 1779, of holding civil and military offices in Ireland. Sir Erskine May, *Constitutional History*, iii. 126.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ix. 149, 173; *Annual Register*, 1807, xlix. 140-143.

Sir H. Parnell; and in the Lords, by Lord Grey, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Marquis of Wellesley, and Lord Donoughmore. But nothing was accomplished till 1813, when the Duke of Norfolk succeeded in carrying a measure which enabled Irish Roman Catholics to hold all such civil or military offices in England as by the Irish Act of 1793 they could hold in Ireland. In 1817 a Bill, identical in its effect with the measure rejected in 1807, was introduced by Lord Melville and became law; and all ranks in the army and navy were opened to Roman Catholics and Dissenters.¹⁸

In 1821 Plunket, who after the death of Grattan in 1820 was the most brilliant and eloquent Irish representative of the Catholic cause, carried a Bill through the House of Commons abrogating the declarations against transubstantiation and the invocation of saints, and interpreting the Oath of Supremacy in a sense which enabled a Catholic to accept it. It passed the third reading by 216 to 197. In the Lords the opposition was led by the Duke of York, and the Bill was lost by 159 to 120.¹⁹ In the following year (1822) a Bill introduced by Canning, to enable Catholic peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords, passed its second reading in the Commons by a majority of 235 to 223. At its later stages it was not opposed. In the Lords it was thrown out by 171 to 129—a majority of 42.²⁰ In 1823 two Bills introduced by Lord Nugent passed the Commons; one for admitting English Catholics to the franchise, the other for enabling them to become magistrates and members of municipal corporations. The first the Lords rejected by 80 non-contents to 70 contents; the second was dropped. When the Bills were reintroduced into the Lords in 1824 by the Marquis of Lansdowne, they were rejected by still larger majorities.²¹ In the same year Dr. Phillimore brought in a Bill to permit marriages between Catholics to be solemnised by their own priests, but the Bill was lost.²²

In 1825 Sir Francis Burdett succeeded in carrying a Bill

¹⁸ 53 Geo. III. cap. 128; 57 Geo. III. cap. 92.

¹⁹ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: N.S.)*, iv. 1269, 1523; v. 279.

²⁰ In the Commons the motion for leave to bring in the Bill was carried by five votes—249 to 244. *Parl. Debates (Hansard: N.S.)*, vii. 211, 475, 1216. See the criticism in the *Annual Register*, 1822, lxiv. 66–68.

²¹ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: N.S.)*, ix. 573, 1031, 1034, 1476; xi. 817, 842.

²² *Ibid.*, xi. 408; and Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 153–154.

through the Commons that imposed a new oath instead of the Oath of Supremacy; it passed the third reading by a majority of 248 to 227; but the Lords rejected it on the second reading by 178 to 130. Two years later (1827) his motion for the consideration of the Catholic claims was lost by four votes—276 to 272. In 1828 a similar motion was carried by a majority of 272 to 266; but the Lords refused to concur by a majority of 181 to 137.²³

In January, 1828, a new Government had been formed by the Duke of Wellington; and though both the Duke and Sir Robert Peel, who was leader in the Commons, were opposed to the Catholic claims, several of their colleagues who had been accustomed to act with Mr. Canning were strongly in its favour,²⁴ and Catholic Emancipation was made an open question. But within six months after the formation of the ministry, the "Canningites" retired; and their vacant places were filled by men who, on the Catholic question, were of the same mind with the Duke and Mr. Peel.²⁵

But the resignation of the friends of the Catholics led to the triumph of the Catholic cause. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, member for County Clare, was appointed President of the Board of Trade, and had to seek re-election (July, 1828).

²³ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: N.S.)*, xii. 764, 1151; xiii. 21, 71, 486, 662; xix. 675, 1294. *Annual Register*, 1825, lxxvii. 46-67; *ibid.*, 1827, lxi. 16-62; *ibid.*, 1828, lxx. 105-109.

²⁴ Canning died August 8, 1827.

²⁵ Bills had been brought in to disfranchise the boroughs of Penryn and East Retford, and to give one member to Manchester and another to Birmingham. Mr. Peel was willing that if both of the boroughs were disfranchised, the representation of one of them should be transferred to a large town. Mr. Huskisson, one of Canning's friends, had declared that if only one were disfranchised, a great town should receive a member. Before the Lords had dealt with the case of Penryn, he voted that the seat which would be available through the disfranchisement of East Retford should be given to Birmingham. Peel voted on the other side. Huskisson went home from the House at two o'clock, and wrote a letter to the Duke of Wellington offering to resign. The Duke treated the letter as an actual resignation, and laid it before the King. The misunderstanding was not terminated by subsequent negotiations, and Mr. Huskisson's office was filled up. This led to the resignation of his friends, Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Grant. The *Annual Register*, 1828, lxx. 14-21, gives the whole correspondence. The Earl of Aberdeen succeeded Lord Dudley at the Foreign Office; Sir H. Hardinge, Lord Palmerston as Secretary of State for War; and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald was put at the head of the Board of Trade; Sir George Murray taking Mr. Huskisson's place at the Colonial Office.

He was opposed by Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell polled 2,057 votes; Fitzgerald polled only 983. On July 5 Fitzgerald wrote to Peel and said that, though he had received the support of all the men of wealth and social influence in the county, they were powerless to control the votes of the mass of the people: "All the great interests broke down and the desertion has been universal. Such a scene as we have had! such a tremendous prospect as it opens to us! . . . The conduct of the priests has passed all that you could picture to yourself."²⁶

O'Connell, being a Catholic, could not take his seat, and the excitement in Ireland became intense. At a word from the leaders of the Catholic Association, the country would have broken into rebellion, and the Irish executive was unable to rely on the fidelity of the Catholic troops. The Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel were convinced that further resistance to the Catholic claims would provoke civil war, and they resolved to yield.

The Catholic Relief Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on March 5, 1829. It prescribed a new oath instead of the Oath of Supremacy, and so provided for the admission of Roman Catholics into both Houses of Parliament; to all corporate offices; to all judicial offices, except in the ecclesiastical courts; and to all civil and political offices, except those of Regent, Lord Chancellor in England, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The measure provoked fierce popular resistance. There were some Congregationalists that regarded it with alarm; they contended that the Roman Catholic Church was not merely a religious institution, but a great political organisation, under the absolute control of the prince of a foreign State; that throughout its history it had been intolerant and merciless towards Protestantism; that its unchangeable principles made it the most dangerous of all the foes to freedom; that its members regarded no promises as binding, no oath as sacred, that laid any restraint on the aggrandisement of their Church; that their real aim was to secure not toleration, but ascendancy, and that Catholic ascendancy would be fatal to the civil and religious liberties of the United Kingdom. But the political strength of the Nonconformists supported

²⁶ Peel, *Memoirs*, i. 114; *ibid.* i. 104-115, with Peel's own comments on the incident, 115 foll.

the measure ; and at a meeting of the Protestant Society Mr. O'Connell, speaking in the name of the people of Ireland, acknowledged their fidelity to the cause of justice. " I stand here," he said, " in the name of my country, to express our gratitude, in feeble but in sincere language, for the exertions made in our behalf by our Protestant Dissenting brethren. I have come here to express my thankfulness for the support which they have given to the great cause of my country." ²⁷

The Bill passed through its successive stages in the House of Commons by large majorities. In the Lords it was defended by the Duke of Wellington on the ground that it was necessary in order to avert civil war. " I am one of those," said the Duke, " who have probably passed a longer period of my life engaged in war than most men, and principally, I may say, in civil war ; and I must say this—that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice whatever, even one month of civil war in the country to which I am attached, I would sacrifice my life in order to do it." ²⁸ Lord Eldon stood firm in his opposition to it ; and he was supported in debate by the Archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Armagh, and by the Bishops of London and Durham. The Bishop of Oxford supported the Government. The second reading was carried by 217 to 112—a majority of 105 ; the third reading by 213 to 109—a majority of 104. The formal assent of the King, without which the Bill could not become law, was obtained with great difficulty. ²⁹

III

The Reform Bill of 1832 greatly increased the political power of the Nonconformists, and in the excitement of the popular triumph to which they had largely contributed they began to believe that it was now possible to carry a succession of ecclesiastical reforms. They thought that the time had come to remove the bishops from the House of Lords, abolish

²⁷ *Congregational Magazine*, 1829, v. 336-337.

²⁸ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : N.S.)*, xxi. 46 ; and 392.

²⁹ 10 Geo. IV. cap. 7. For the votes in the House of Commons—Second Reading, 353 to 173 ; Third Reading, 320 to 142, *ibid.*, xx. 1290, 1633. For the votes in the House of Lords, *ibid.*, xxi., 394, 694. For the King's attitude, Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 168, 172.

Church rates, redress the grievances of Dissenters in connection with marriages and burials, and open the national universities to men of all religious creeds. Some men of bolder and more ardent temper were eager to move at once for the disestablishment of the English Church.³⁰

It was determined to make a beginning with an attack on church rates. The Dissenters insisted that as they built their own chapels and kept them in repair, lighted them, cleaned them, and paid for the bread and the wine that they used at the Lord's Supper, Churchmen should do the same; that to impose a rate on Nonconformists for the maintenance of buildings which were used for religious services at which they were never present, and to which they conscientiously objected, was flagrantly unjust. In 1834 Mr. Divett, member for Exeter, brought in a Church Rate Abolition Bill, which was withdrawn on an appeal from Lord John Russell, who promised that the Government would submit a measure of their own.

The abolition of the rate was opposed by the Church on many grounds. She insisted on her ancient and legal rights: the rate was a tax not on persons, but on property; if it was abolished the landlords would obtain relief, but tenants, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, would have to pay a higher rent. "But, above all, it was maintained that *the fabric of the church was national property*—an edifice set apart by law for public worship, according to the religion of the State,—open to all,—inviting all to its services—and as much the common property of all as a public museum or picture gallery, which many might not care to enter, or were unable to appreciate."³¹ The ground of this contention was indisputable. The parish church is the property of the whole parish—not of those parishioners who attend its services, approve the ritual, and believe in the theology of the rector. All the parish

³⁰ The moderate and practical policy, aiming at definite and immediate results, is clearly set forth in a letter written by the Secretary of "The United Committee, appointed to consider the grievances under which Dissenters now labour, with a view to their redress," dated June 18, 1833. *Congregational Magazine*, 1833, xvi. 446. See also *ibid.*, 187. The disappointment and irritation of the friends of religious liberty, as time went on, are expressed in resolutions passed by the "Protestant Society" on May 17, 1834. *Ibid.*, xvii. 378.

³¹ Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 203.

churches in the nation, taken together, may be described as the property of the nation—not of any particular religious community; and it is the obvious interest of the nation that there should be adequate securities that its property should not be permitted to fall into decay. But it may be fairly answered that as long as the national property is in the exclusive possession of tenants attached to a particular religious creed and a particular form of religious worship, the tenants may justly be required to keep it in repair.

The Bill of the Government, which was introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp, on April 21, 1834, was founded on what Sir Erskine May describes as the main contention of the defenders of the rate. It recognised the churches as national property, and proposed to substitute for the existing church rate an annual grant of £250,000 from the Consolidated Fund. This did not satisfy Churchmen; for the rate was estimated to produce about twice the amount that the Government proposed to grant from the taxes. It did not satisfy the Dissenters; for they thought that a tax for the repair of the churches was just as objectionable as a rate. The Bill had to be dropped.³²

A second attempt to deal with the grievance was made by Lord Melbourne's Government in 1837. The popular agitation was becoming formidable. No less than 2,000 petitions were presented to Parliament praying for the abolition of church rates—some of them praying for the separation of Church and State. On March 3, Mr. Spring-Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, submitted the Government scheme to the House of Commons. It was that the repair of the churches, and other church expenses which had been hitherto provided for by the rate, should be met, partly by pew rents, and partly by surplus funds which were to arise from the better administration of church lands; the rate was to cease.

The resolution embodying this scheme was carried after a long debate by 273 to 250—a majority of 23; but when it was "brought up," the votes were 287 to 282; the majority had sunk to 5.³³ The scheme of the Government was wholly

³² Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 203–204. *Annual Register*, 1834, lxxvi., 207–213. *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, xx. 1012. C. J. (April 21, 22; June 19, 1834), lxxxix. 202–203, 207, 415.

³³ C. J. (March 15, May 23, 1837), xcii. 173, 401.

unsatisfactory to the resolute defenders of the Establishment ; for it asked them to surrender the rate, and to accept as compensation revenues which were already in the possession of the Church and available for other church purposes. This proposal had to be abandoned.

In the same year that this unsuccessful attempt was made to settle the dispute in Parliament, the question of the extent of the legal rights of the Church to the rate was raised by the churchwardens of Braintree. A majority of the vestry had postponed a rate for twelve months ; the churchwardens, in defiance of the vestry, proceeded to levy it on their own authority, and the legality of the rate was contested. The Consistory Court supported the churchwardens. On appeal, Lord Denman in the Court of Queen's Bench declared the rate to be " altogether invalid, and a church rate in nothing but the name " ; and the Court issued a prohibition restraining the churchwardens from collecting it. The Court of Exchequer confirmed the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench ; but Lord Chief Justice Tindal, in giving judgment, expressed a doubt whether the churchwardens and a minority of the vestry together—even though the majority opposed—might not grant a valid rate at a meeting of the parishioners called for that purpose.³⁴

The churchwardens acted on this hint. A majority of the vestry having again refused the rate, a monition was obtained from the Consistory Court requiring the parishioners to make a rate according to law. A second vestry meeting was called ; the rate was again refused by the majority of the parishioners assembled ; and then the churchwardens with the minority proceeded to vote it. This rate was also resisted. The Consistory Court, which had affirmed the legality of the rate levied by the churchwardens on their own authority, now decided that the rate which was levied by the churchwardens and a minority of the vestry was worthless. The Court of Arches declared it legal. The Court of Queen's Bench and the Court of Exchequer confirmed the judgment

³⁴ " This suggestion was founded on the principle that the votes of the majority, who refused to perform their duty, were lost or thrown away ; while the minority, in the performance of the prescribed duty of the meeting, represented the whole number." Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 205.

of the Court of Arches. But on appeal to the House of Lords, the rate was pronounced invalid. This decision was given in 1853, twelve years after the rate in dispute was levied.³⁵

While this protracted suit was pending, and after it had been finally settled, Bills for the complete or partial abolition of the rate were introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Harvey, Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Trelawney, Mr. Page-Wood, Mr. Hardcastle, and several other Liberal members. Mr. Hardcastle's Bill passed the Commons, but was defeated in the Lords. But at last the Conservatives came to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to maintain the law as it stood. Within six years after the decision of the Braintree case 1,525 parishes or districts had refused to levy a church rate. A scheme of which Mr. Hubbard was the most prominent advocate, and which received strong Conservative support, was brought forward session after session for exempting any parishioner from payment on his declaring himself a Dissenter and accepting some consequent disqualifications. Mr. Bright suggested that all that was necessary was to abolish the machinery for enforcing payment, and that in other respects the law might remain unchanged.³⁶

A Bill founded on this principle was introduced by Mr. Gladstone in 1868 and became law. Under this Act, a vestry has power to levy a church rate, and it is part of the duty of the ordinary rate collector to collect it; but the first section enacts that—

“no Suit shall be instituted or Proceeding taken in any Ecclesiastical or other Court, or before any Justice or Magistrate, to enforce or compel the Payment of any Church Rate made in any parish or place in *England or Wales.*”³⁷

Where money had been borrowed on the security of the rates, the payment was to remain compulsory until the loan had been discharged; and rates which under general or local Acts

³⁵ For references to dates and authorities, see Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 205–206, and *notes*. The question whether parishioners who refused to levy a church rate were punishable in the Ecclesiastical Courts was left open. Phillimore, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 1446.

³⁶ Sir Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 448, attributes the suggestion to Mr. Waldegrave-Leslie. It is usually attributed to Mr. Bright, and the *Annual Register*, 1868, cx. 147, credits him with its authorship.

³⁷ 31 and 32 Vic. cap. 109, § 1.

had been appropriated partly to ecclesiastical and partly to secular purposes, were to be henceforth applied to secular purposes only, and were not to be deemed church rates.³⁸ Parishioners who decline to pay the rate are declared not to be entitled "to enquire into, or object to, or vote in respect of the expenditure of the monies arising from such church rate."³⁹

IV

The agitation for the abolition of compulsory church rates extended over nearly forty years; the demand of the Dissenters for the reform of the marriage laws, and for the provision of a civil registration of births, deaths, and marriages, achieved almost immediate success.

Under Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, passed in 1753, all marriages were declared to be invalid that had not been performed in the parish church by a clergyman, after the publication of banns. All persons celebrating a marriage in violation of these provisions were liable to transportation. Jewish and Quaker marriages, however, were exempted from the operation of the Act.⁴⁰

The Act was not directed against the Dissenters, but against clandestine marriages:—

"A multitude of clergymen, usually prisoners for debt and almost always men of notoriously infamous lives, made it their business to celebrate clandestine marriages in or near the Fleet.⁴¹ They performed the ceremony without licence or question, sometimes without even knowing the names of the persons they united,

³⁸ 31 and 32 Vic. cap. 109, §§ 2, 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, § 8. According to Sir Robert Phillimore, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 1446, the Act "provided in rather an obscure manner for a voluntary church rate, clothed with some of the characteristics of the old law. This statute," he adds, "has been found generally inapplicable, and churches are now for the most part supported by voluntary contributions."

⁴⁰ 26 Geo. II. cap. 33, §§ 1, 8, 18. By "licence" a marriage might be celebrated without the publication of banns, but in the case of minors the issue of the licence was conditional on the consent of parents or guardians. With "special licence," issued by the Archbishop and costing a considerable sum, the marriage might be celebrated elsewhere than the parish church. *Ibid.*, § 6.

⁴¹ Prisoners for debt were allowed to live in the neighbourhood of the prison, within what were called the "liberties of the Fleet."

in public-houses, brothels, or garrets. . . . Almost every tavern or brandy-shop in the neighbourhood had a Fleet parson in its pay. Notices were placed in the windows, and agents went out in every direction to solicit the passers-by. . . . Young and inexperienced heirs fresh from college, or even from school, were thus continually entrapped. A passing frolic, the excitement of drink, an almost momentary passion, the deception or intimidation of a few unprincipled confederates, were often sufficient to drive or inveigle them into sudden marriages, which blasted all the prospects of their lives. In some cases, when men slept off a drunken fit, they heard to their astonishment that, during its continuance, they had gone through the ceremony. When a fleet came in and the sailors flocked on shore to spend their pay in drink and among prostitutes, they were speedily beleaguered, and 200 or 300 marriages constantly took place within a week. . . . In many cases in the Fleet registers names were suppressed or falsified, and marriages fraudulently antedated, and many households, after years of peace, were convulsed by some alleged pre-contract or clandestine tie. It was proved before Parliament that on one occasion there had been 2,954 Fleet marriages in four months, and it appeared from the memorandum-books of Fleet parsons that one of them made £57 in marriage fees in a single month, that another had married 173 couples in a single day.”⁴²

The evil was flagrant and required a sharp and decisive remedy. But the remedy bore hardly on all persons that were not members of the Established Church. Before the passing of this Act, Protestant Dissenters could be married in their own places of worship by their own ministers. The marriage was irregular ; but the consent of the man and the woman to become husband and wife made it valid ; and the children were therefore legitimate. But after 1754 the pretended celebration of a marriage in a Dissenting meeting-house became a legal offence, and the marriage had no validity.⁴³ To the Unitarians and the Roman Catholics the Act was specially offensive. In 1819 and 1822, Mr. William Smith, member for Norwich, proposed that in the case of marriages between Unitarians the clergyman performing the marriage might

⁴² Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 490-491. Mr. Lecky's discussion of the importance of Lord Hardwicke's Act in relation to the ecclesiastical and the legal conception of marriage is extremely interesting. He shows that the Act, although it made illegal all marriages not celebrated by a priest of the English Church, was really a grave departure from the traditional principles of the canon law, and was the first step in English law towards the recognition of marriage as a purely civil contract. *Ibid.*, 492-497.

⁴³ See Note A, pp. 643-644.

be required to omit from the marriage service the passages relating to the Trinity. The proposal was not a very reasonable one, and was rejected.⁴⁴ In 1823 and 1824 the Marquis of Lansdowne submitted two Bills; the first permitting Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics to be married in their own places of worship; the second enabling Unitarians to be married in their own places of worship, after the publication of banns in the parish church and the payment to the clergyman of the ordinary fees. The second Bill made a little more way than the first, but both alike were rejected.⁴⁵ In the same session a measure for the relief of Roman Catholics, constructed on similar lines, was submitted to the House of Commons by Dr. Phillimore. The Catholics had systematically broken the law. Large numbers of them in the poorer parishes had been married by their own priests: the marriages were illegal; the children were illegitimate. But neither this social scandal, nor the profanity of compelling a man who denied the doctrine of the Trinity to declare that he wedded his bride "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," was sufficient to outweigh, in the judgment of zealous Churchmen, the advantages which were derived by the Church and the nation from making the clergyman of the Establishment the only person in England that could celebrate a legal marriage.⁴⁶

In 1827 Mr. William Smith brought forward a new Bill, which passed the Commons, but failed in the Lords through the prorogation of Parliament: it allowed Unitarians, after the publication of banns, to be married before a magistrate, "thus reviving the principle of a civil contract, which had existed before Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1752."⁴⁷

The great political events of the next four or five years—the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the passing of the Catholic Relief Act, and the Reform of Parliament—prevented the renewal of the attempt to deal with the grievance

⁴⁴ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xl. 1200, 1503; *ibid.* (N.S.), vi. 1460.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (N.S.), ix. 967; xi. 75, 434. The Chancellor, Lord Eldon, staunchly resisted each and every proposal, in zeal for the Church and for religion far exceeding the Archbishop of Canterbury.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, xi. 408.

⁴⁷ Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 154. *Parl. Debates (Hansard: N.S.)*, xvii. 1343, 1407, 1426.

till 1834, when Lord John Russell brought forward his Dissenters' Marriage Bill. The Bill legalised marriages performed by Dissenting ministers in buildings licensed for the purpose. But (1) it required the publication of banns in church, or a licence; and (2) the marriages were to be registered at the chapels where they were celebrated. The first provision was resented as perpetuating, though in a milder form, the very injustice which the Bill was intended to remedy; and the second was condemned as providing inadequate security for the permanence of the legal proof of marriage. This Bill too was abandoned.⁴⁸

In 1835 Sir Robert Peel submitted another measure. He proposed that persons objecting to be married at church should enter into a civil contract of marriage before a magistrate; this was to constitute a legal marriage: when this was completed, the parties might have whatever religious service they pleased elsewhere.⁴⁹ Instead of the banns there was to be a notice to the magistrate; and the magistrate was required to transmit a certificate of the marriage to the clergyman of the parish for registration. Some Dissenters—probably the majority of Dissenters—were dissatisfied with the first of these provisions; the marriage of members of the Church of England was a religious ceremony, and the Bill proposed to make the marriage of Dissenters a mere civil contract. To the second provision there was the obvious objection that it required record and evidence of a civil contract to be preserved in an ecclesiastical register. The resignation of Sir Robert Peel led to the abandonment of the Bill.⁵⁰

Early in the session of 1836 Lord John Russell introduced two Bills, which became law, and which dealt with the difficulty in a larger and more generous spirit than had appeared in any of the previous measures. The first of these provided for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages by a civil officer: the second legalised marriages performed in

⁴⁸ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, xxi. 776-779. C. J., lxxxix. 226.

⁴⁹ This was the solution that Lord John Russell had rejected a year before, on the ground that "while it possessed a great advantage in its simplicity," and would obviate many difficulties, "it was so repugnant to the feelings of a great portion of the country, that he did not think it would be wise or expedient to propose any measure of the sort." *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, xxi. 777.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xxvi. 1073 foll. *Annual Register*, 1835; lxxvii. 141-143.

Dissenting chapels licensed for the purpose.⁵¹ Notice to the superintendent registrar was substituted for the publication of banns ; and the presence of a registrar at the marriage was required to make the marriage legal. Persons desiring no religious service could be married at the office of the superintendent registrar.⁵² The Act went a long way towards satisfying Nonconformist demands ; but the practical inconveniences which it inflicts on Nonconformists are considerable, and during recent years there have been efforts to amend it.

V

The attempt to open the national Universities to Nonconformists was for a long time unsuccessful. From Oxford, since 1581, Dissenters had been wholly excluded ; subscription was required of every student on matriculation. At Cambridge Dissenters were allowed to enter and to matriculate ; but since 1616 they had been prevented from taking degrees.⁵³ The honours of the University, and its emoluments, scholarships, fellowships, honours, and offices, were reserved for men who subscribed to the Articles of the English Church. This exclusion from the Universities inflicted special injury on Nonconformists belonging to the professions of law and medicine. University graduates entering the Inns of Court were called to the Bar at the end of three years ; non-graduates had to wait two years longer. A similar disadvantage was inflicted on non-graduates articulated to attorneys. And none but graduates could become Fellows of the College of Physicians or the College of Surgeons.

In 1830 so moderate a Nonconformist as John Angell James had protested vehemently against the injustice. In his pamphlet on *Dissent and the Church of England* he said :—

“ Though excluded from the Universities, and denied access to the national fountains of literature, by a bigoted and narrow-minded

⁵¹ 6 and 7 Will. IV. cap. 85, 86.

⁵² *Ibid.*, cap. 85, §§ iv., xx., xxi.

⁵³ Erskine May, *Const. Hist.*, iii. 31. The exclusion was gradual ; in 1613 from degrees in Divinity, Law, and Medicine, and in 1616 from the Master's degree in Arts. This last restriction is said to rest on an informal letter written by James I. from Newmarket, where he was attending the races. Dyer, *Privileges of the University of Cambridge*, i. 234, 347. *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, xxii. 502.

policy, and thus left to provide as we can for the education of our own ministry, we have among us some who, in the departments of Biblical Criticism, the Greek and Hebrew languages, Systematic Theology, and English Literature, would be referred to as splendid ornaments of any Church.”⁵⁴

And to “the man who would lead us back to the Church of England,” he replied :—

“Let him impeach our argument and not our style of writing, lest we should ask the question, so little to the credit of Episcopalian charity, who is it that excludes us from the seats of learning and then mocks our ignorance ? ”

It was the contention of Nonconformists that the national Universities were the Universities of the nation. When the nation was Catholic, the Universities were Catholic ; when the nation became Protestant, the Universities became Protestant—change of faith did not invalidate the national claim to the honours and the wealth of the national seats of learning. Nor—as the Nonconformists contended—had those who seceded from the creed and polity of the Anglican Church, as the Anglicans seceded from the creed and polity of the Roman Church, forfeited their inheritance in the great traditions and great resources of these national institutions : Oxford and Cambridge were the common property of all Englishmen.

In 1834 petitions were presented to both Houses of Parliament, praying that the university statutes relating to subscription might be relaxed. One petition, signed by sixty-three eminent members of the Senate of the University of Cambridge, prayed that Dissenters should be admitted to degrees in Arts, Law, and Physic. The petition was supported by the Prime Minister, Earl Grey. Mr. Stanley—afterwards Lord Derby—Colonial Secretary, Lord Palmerston, Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Spring-Rice, supported the petitioners in the House of Commons.⁵⁵ A Bill for giving effect to the petition was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. George Wood in April, 1834, and received the hearty support of the

⁵⁴ John Angell James, *Dissent and the Church of England*, 117.

⁵⁵ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, xxii. 497–522, 570–597, 623–637, 674–711, 899–927. Mr. Spring-Rice, afterwards Lord Mounteagle, became Colonial Secretary in Lord Melbourne’s first Ministry (formed July, 1834), and Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Melbourne’s second Ministry (formed April, 1835).

Liberal party. It passed the second reading by a majority of 321 to 174; and the third by 164 to 75. In the Lords it was opposed by the Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Gloucester, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Exeter. Before it reached the Lords, the Grey Ministry had been succeeded by the Ministry of Lord Melbourne; and Lord Melbourne, while supporting the Bill, acknowledged that he did not altogether approve of it. It was thrown out on the second reading by 187 to 85.⁵⁶

Some of the practical inconveniences which were inflicted on the Nonconformists by their exclusion from Oxford and Cambridge were removed by the establishment in 1836 of the University of London, whose degrees were open to men of all creeds. But the agitation against the religious tests imposed at Oxford and Cambridge did not cease, and after a few years the subject was again brought before Parliament. In the Universities themselves the Nonconformists had powerful allies; and one concession after another was made to their claims. In 1870 Sir John Coleridge, Solicitor-General in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, brought forward a Bill which met nearly all the demands of the most resolute opponents of the Tests. It was carried through the House of Commons by large majorities, but was referred by the Lords to a Select Committee, and was thereby lost for the session. In the session of 1871 the measure was reintroduced in the same terms. It passed both Houses and became law. It is entitled *An Act to alter the Law respecting Religious Tests in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham, and in the Halls and Colleges of those Universities*, and is commonly known as the *University Tests Act*.⁵⁷ The preamble declares that whereas it is desirable to render accessible to the whole nation the benefits of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham, it is expedient to remove, under proper safeguards, the restrictions, tests, and disabilities which at present debar Her Majesty's subjects from the enjoyment of the same. Clause 3 enacts that no person taking lay academic degrees—*i.e.* other than degrees in divinity—or holding lay academical or collegiate offices,

⁵⁶ Leave to bring in the Bill was given by a vote of 185 to 44. *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T. S.)*, xxii. 927. For the other stages of the Bill and the issue, *ibid.*, xxiv. 632-714; xxv. 635-653, 815-886. *Annual Register*, 1834, lxvi. 169-205.

⁵⁷ 34 and 35 Vict. cap. 26.

shall in future be required to subscribe any formulary of faith. But it is expressly declared that nothing in this section shall render a layman or a person not a member of the Church of England eligible for an office hitherto restricted to persons in holy orders, or shall remove the obligations for those who fill such offices to enter holy orders; nor shall it open offices hitherto filled by members of the Church of England holding a degree in divinity to persons not so qualified. Divinity degrees and divinity professorships, the headships of those colleges whose heads were required to be in orders, and some other offices, were still closed against Nonconformists.⁵⁸ Another clause relieves any person from attendance at college or university lectures, if he, being of age, or his parent or guardian, if he be a minor, object to such attendance on religious grounds.⁵⁹ The Act was a great achievement, and it is less injured than most other great measures of reform by the spirit of compromise which is characteristic of English legislation.

VI

Before the year 1852 the only public burial-places in England were the graveyards of the national Church. There were graveyards connected with many Nonconformist chapels, and cemeteries had been formed by private companies; but the provision for burial afforded both by the Nonconformist chapels and by the cemeteries was accidental and partial—in a very large proportion of English parishes the only burial-place within reach of the parishioners was the churchyard. The churchyard of the parish church was the public burial-place in which the Common Law of England gave to every parishioner the right to be buried.

But the churchyard, like the church, was under the control of the rector or vicar. He received the fees which were payable for interment, and in many cases they yielded him a large income. The only Burial Service that could be used in the churchyard was the Burial Service of the English Church, and the service had to be read either by the clergyman of the parish or by some other clergyman approved by him. Occasionally he refused to read it himself or to allow any other

⁵⁸ 34 and 35 Vict. cap. 26, § 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, § 7.

clergyman to read it. The Burial Service is intended for those who die in the communion of the Church. It gives thanks for their deliverance from "the miseries of this sinful world"; it declares that Almighty God in His great mercy has taken them to Himself; and expresses the hope that they rest in God, waiting for the Resurrection. But according to the theory of the Prayer-Book, membership of the Church, union with Christ, remission of sins, and spiritual regeneration are given in Baptism; and the rubric of the order for the burial of the dead therefore directs that the Service with its great words of hope and thanksgiving shall not be read over persons who have died unbaptized. Clergymen who refused to read the Burial Service over the little children of Baptist parents, and over other persons who had never been baptized, provoked great resentment; but they were not only obeying the formal rule imposed by Parliament on all the Established clergy—they were acting in harmony with the theology of their Church.⁶⁰

It was not, however, simply to remove or lessen the Non-conformist grievance in connection with the burial of their dead that Parliament, in 1852, passed the first of a series of Burial Acts. The churchyards in many large towns were so full that they were a danger to the public health, and it had become necessary to take compulsory measures to close them; and when the churchyards were closed, it was the duty of Parliament to enable town-councils and other local authorities to provide public cemeteries.⁶¹

⁶⁰ But they sometimes forgot that Lay-Baptism is valid, and is recognised as valid even by the Roman Catholic Church. To refuse to read the Service over a person who had been baptized by a Nonconformist minister was, therefore, illegal—if the reason alleged for the refusal was that the person had not been baptized.

⁶¹ Lawyers were uncertain whether a church rate could be levied to enlarge a churchyard. Mr. Alfred Wills—now Mr. Justice Wills—in his *Treatise on the Powers and Duties of Parish Vestries*, etc. (1855), 85, note (e), says, "At common law, there is no power to make a rate to enlarge the churchyard, and it is very doubtful whether it can be done even under the Church Building Acts, *Reg. v. Abney*, 3 E. and B. 773." But in the *Addenda* to the *Treatise* he says, "When the case of *Reg. v. Abney* was decided in the Queen's Bench, the attention of the court was not directed to 3 Geo. IV. c. 72, s. 8, under which powers exist for enlarging the churchyard, and for making a rate for the expense thereof. See *Reg. v. Isleworth*, C.P., H. T., 1855. . . . During the discussion of the latter case, Lord Campbell, speaking of the complexity and intricacy of the Church Building Acts, observed that they were a disgrace to the statute book."

The Acts provided that the public cemeteries should be divided into a consecrated and an unconsecrated portion. In the unconsecrated portion Nonconformists could bury their dead with their own rites. If a chapel was built in the consecrated portion "for the performance of the Burial Service of the Church of England," another chapel was to be built in the unconsecrated portion.⁶² The plan of the one chapel was to be approved by the bishop of the diocese; the plan of the other by the Home Secretary.⁶³ In the great towns, and in those rural districts in which public cemeteries were provided, Dissenters were now able to bury their dead with their own religious services; but there were thousands of parishes in England and Wales where the churchyard was sufficiently large to render the provision of a public cemetery unnecessary; in these the old grievance remained unredressed until the passing of the Burial Law Amendment Bill of 1880 under the Government of Mr. Gladstone.⁶⁴ By this Act a burial in a churchyard may take place "at the option of the person . . . having the charge of or being responsible for the same . . . either without any religious service, or with any such Christian and orderly religious service at the grave, as such person shall think fit; and any person or persons who shall be thereunto invited, or be authorised by the person having the charge of or being responsible for such burial, may conduct such service or take part in any such religious act thereat." The words "Christian service" are defined as including "every religious service used by any church, denomination, or person professing to be Christian."⁶⁵ The limitation to Christian services was resisted in the House of Commons, and "though it was defended by Mr. Bright, on the ground that some concession should be made to the feelings of hostility to the measure

⁶² In the Burials Amendment Act of 1885 it was provided that if a majority of three-fourths of the vestry declared that a chapel for the unconsecrated part of the cemetery was undesirable or unnecessary, the Home Secretary could release the Burial Board from the obligation to erect a second chapel. This provision was intended to apply in cases in which from the nearness of the Dissenting chapels, or from other causes, the second chapel was not required. 18 and 19 Vict. cap. 128, xiv.

⁶³ 16 and 17 Vict., cap. 134, § vii. For the questions arising out of burial fees, see Note B, pp. 644-645.

⁶⁴ 43 and 44 Vict. cap. 41.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, § 6.

honestly felt by many clergymen of the Established Church, it was carried only by a majority of 3.”⁶⁶

VII

In securing the ecclesiastical reforms enumerated in this chapter the Dissenting Deputies took an active and distinguished part ; but a large share of the honour is due to a succession of Associations, most of which are now dissolved, created for the purpose of agitating for the repeal of oppressive laws and instructing the nation in the principles of Religious Freedom.

The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty was formed in 1811, and directed its chief strength to the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts ; it was supported by the recognised leaders of the Whigs.⁶⁷ The Society for Promoting Ecclesiastical Knowledge was formed in 1829 for the publication and distribution of literature on Tithes, Church Establishments, and the principles of Dissent. The publications issued by this Society have considerable interest and value. Among its founders were some of the most eminent Evangelical Nonconformists of that time—Dr. Pye-Smith, of Homerton ; Dr. Bennett, who had recently resigned his chair at Rotherham to become the pastor of the Silver Street Church in the City of London ;⁶⁸ Samuel March, of the Baptist College at Stepney ; Dr. Cox, the eminent minister of the Baptist Church at Hackney ; John Blackburn, of Pentonville, editor of *The Congregational Magazine* ;⁶⁹ Dr. Andrew Reed, the fervent pastor of Wycliffe Church in the east of London, and the founder of several great Asylums ; Dr. Thomas Price, of the Baptist Chapel in Devonshire Square, and afterwards editor of *The Eclectic Review* ; John Burnet, of Camberwell, whose humour, kindness, and masculine sense made him one of the most effective popular speakers ever heard on

⁶⁶ *Annual Register*, 1880, 96.

⁶⁷ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 48-49 ; *Evangelical Magazine*, 1811, 278-284 ; Skeats, *Free Churches*, 558-559. See *ante*, p. 575.

⁶⁸ During Dr. Bennett's pastorate the Church removed to Falcon Square.

⁶⁹ Mr. Blackburn conducted *The Congregational Magazine* with great ability, and in the volumes which appeared under his editorship there is very much that is permanently interesting and valuable.

Nonconformist platforms; Thomas Binney, of the Weigh House; the eloquent Robert Vaughan, of Kensington; Arthur Tidman, then of Barbican College, afterwards the vigorous and able Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society; and John Hopkins, who a few years later held a Chair at London University College. At the formation of the Society, Benjamin Hanbury, the author of the *Memorials relating to Independents*, and editor of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, occupied the chair.⁷⁰

A few years later a great controversy in Scotland on the Scottish Church Establishment led to the formation of Voluntary Church Associations in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and elsewhere. The struggle attracted general attention among English Nonconformists; and in the year 1834 similar Associations, bearing the same name, were formed in Liverpool, Birmingham, and other large towns in England. They mark the beginning of a new Nonconformist movement: their object was to agitate, not for the redress of Dissenting "grievances," but for the disestablishment of the English Church. The Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society, which aimed at the same end, relied on the quiet agency of literature; the Voluntary Church Association adopted bolder measures, and advocated disestablishment in great popular meetings. Both were dissolved about 1843.⁷¹

In 1838 Josiah Conder, editor of *The Eclectic Review* and of the *Patriot* newspaper, issued proposals for a general union for the promotion of religious equality. The scheme secured a large measure of sympathy; and at the public dinner held to inaugurate the Society, Churchman and Dissenter, Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Christian, declared their common hostility to the union of Church and State, and pledged themselves to agitate for disestablishment. Charles Lushington was chairman of the new association, which was called the Religious Freedom Society; Edward Baines, of Leeds, Dr. Cox, John Howard Hinton, for many years the eminent pastor of the Baptist Church in Devonshire Square, David King, Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow, and Josiah Conder, were

⁷⁰ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 353-354. Skeats, *Free Churches*, 583-584.

⁷¹ *Congregational Magazine*, 1834, xvii. 377. Skeats, *Free Churches*, 588-590.

on the Council. It was supported by several Radical members of the House of Commons. But it was dissolved in 1843 after a brief history of four years. In the judgment of Mr. Skeats, "it failed, like the Voluntary Church Society, for lack of practical wisdom and strength of leadership."⁷²

Another Society was founded about the same time on very different principles. The Religious Freedom Society included men of various religious creeds, and proposed to secure its ends by political agitation. The Evangelical Voluntary Church Association, of which Sir Culling Eardley, a Churchman, Dr. John Young, a Presbyterian, Dr. Cox, a Baptist, and Dr. John Campbell, a Congregationalist, were the leaders, aimed at uniting the members of all evangelical denominations in a religious movement for the disestablishment of the English Church. The Society never acquired any great strength, and was broken up in course of a few years.⁷³

A more vigorous and persistent assault on the Establishment began with the formation of The British Anti-State-Church Association in 1844. Mr. Edward Miall, the pastor of a Congregational Church in Leicester, had been so deeply impressed by the pernicious influence of the Establishment on the religious life of the nation, that in 1841 he resigned his pastorate and went to London, where he established a weekly newspaper for the advocacy of the principles of Religious Equality, and for the illustration of the practical evils of the Established Church. Mr. Miall had many great qualities which are rarely combined in the same person. He was singularly gentle, but absolutely fearless; kindly and affectionate, but unsparing in his criticism and denunciation of every form of injustice and tyranny. While he held with resolute firmness the substance of the evangelical faith, he was charitable and generous to men of every religious creed and of none; but he was intolerant of those moral and spiritual evils which are encouraged by the political ascendancy of a priesthood, and equally intolerant of the illegitimate influence which may be exerted over the conscience and spiritual life by highly organised and powerful voluntary Churches. In his own religious life there were strong tendencies to mysticism, but he cared nothing for the religious emotion and sentiment that left men

⁷² Skeats, *Free Churches*, 604. See *ibid.*, 602-604.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 604.

indifferent to the authority of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. He was an enthusiast, and the ardour of his enthusiasm never cooled; but he had a patience that nothing could exhaust. He was the leader of a great popular agitation, and was regarded with passionate admiration by tens of thousands of people in every part of the country; but his personal life was lonely and meditative. In his intellectual powers there was a similar combination of elements that are seldom found together. He had a faculty for speculation, and his mind was at home in the cold, stern solitudes of abstract principles; but he had a warm imagination and a graceful fancy. He was a most effective orator, and could fascinate and thrill immense popular audiences; but in terseness, felicity, vigour, and literary finish, his "leaders" in *The Nonconformist* were hardly surpassed by *The Times* or *The Examiner* in their best and happiest days. For many years the distrust and dislike with which he was regarded by the recognised leaders of Congregationalism were almost as intense as the hostility and anger which he provoked among the friends of the Establishment. For his attacks on the Dissenters who, in his judgment, were wanting in fidelity to those great principles with which they had been entrusted were as keen and as vehement as on the Establishment itself. They recall the hot and vigorous assault of Robert Browne on the Puritan clergy in his *Reformation without tarrying for Anie*; and some of the Congregational leaders between 1841 and 1846 regarded Edward Miall very much as Cartwright and his friends regarded the audacious leader of the Elizabethan Separatists. His politics were another cause of offence. The leading Congregationalists, with very few exceptions, were Whigs—faithful followers of the House of Russell, satisfied with the measure of Parliamentary Reform which had been achieved in 1832. Edward Miall was a Radical; he stood on the same platform with the men who were agitating for manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, and other measures which were then regarded as dangerous and revolutionary.

Among many eminent Congregationalists the severity with which Mr. Miall exposed many of the grosser abuses of the Establishment—abuses which during the last forty years have largely disappeared—was regarded with deep disapprobation. The Tractarian Movement, which at first had been regarded

with scorn, was now exciting the most serious alarm, and many distinguished Evangelical Nonconformists had come to believe that there were urgent reasons for a great confederation of men of all Churches who were loyal in their attachment to Evangelical Protestantism, in order to defend the faith of the Reformation. At the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union held in London in May, 1842, John Angell James, in seconding a resolution of fraternal welcome to Christian brethren from Berlin, Canada, Van Diemen's Land, Scotland, and Wales, proposed the scheme for the union of all Evangelical Christians that ultimately led to the formation of the Evangelical Alliance.

He asked, "Is it not in the power of this Union to bring about, by God's blessing, a Protestant Evangelical Union of the whole body of Christ's faithful followers, who have at any rate adopted the voluntary principle?" But he thought that the Union might perhaps include "the Voluntaries that are to be," as well as those who were Voluntaries already. His real hope was to draw the Evangelical clergy into closer comradeship with the Evangelical Nonconformists:—"Let us only carry out the principle of a great Protestant Union; and we may yet have representatives from all bodies of Protestant Christians to be found within the circle of our own United Empire."⁷⁴ Mr. James's earnest desire for a great Alliance of all Evangelical Christians was shared by a considerable number of Congregationalists; they thought that the creation of a League for the defence of Evangelical Protestantism was of more urgent practical importance than a movement for the disestablishment of the English Church; and they very naturally feared that the keen, relentless, and incessant attacks on the Establishment which were appearing week after week in the columns of *The Nonconformist* would so embitter the relations between the Evangelical clergy and the Evangelical Nonconformists as to make an Evangelical Alliance, on a great scale, impossible.

But on the Baptists, and on a large number of the younger and more militant Congregationalists, Mr. Miall made a profound impression. They saw that the Tractarian Movement was extending from parish to parish in nearly every diocese

⁷⁴ *Congregational Magazine*, 1842, 435-436.

in England, and they believed that the Tractarian clergy, entrenched in their ecclesiastical privileges and commanding the immense revenues of the ecclesiastical Establishment, were a menace to the Protestantism, and even to the civil liberties, of the kingdom. To them, it seemed that the immediate and most pressing duty of all Protestant Englishmen was to dislodge the clergy from the positions of authority and power which they derived from the existence of a State Church, and to secure a fair field for the great conflict between Evangelical Protestantism and the sacerdotal pretensions of the followers of Dr. Pusey and John Henry Newman. In 1843 the Government created another reason for an immediate attack on the Establishment. The education clauses of Sir James Graham's Factory Bill proposed to establish throughout the manufacturing districts a system of popular schools that were to be largely in the hands of the clergy.⁷⁵ Lord John Russell thought that for the sake of the English people Nonconformists should make this fresh concession to the Church; it did not seem to occur to him that for the sake of promoting the education of the English people the Church should be willing that the State should create popular schools in which the clergy should have no exceptional authority, and the Catechism and Liturgy of the Church no exceptional place of honour. The Nonconformists were at first astonished, and then fiercely indignant. Excited meetings were held in every part of the country protesting against the measure. The *Nonconformist* newspaper was first in the fray, and led the agitation with characteristic boldness, vigour, and vehemence. Men like Mr. James and Sir Culling Eardley, who were sighing for the union of all Evangelical Christians, took their share in the conflict. The Government was forced to yield, and the audacious attack on the liberties of Nonconformists was repelled.⁷⁶

But the agitation had revived that hostility to the Establishment which, notwithstanding the efforts of the Ecclesiastical Knowledge, Religious Freedom, and Voluntary Church Societies, had been gradually cooling ever since 1832. Large numbers of Dissenters were convinced that, while the State Church existed, there was no safety even for that measure of religious freedom which they and their fathers, at a great cost,

⁷⁵ See *infra*, pp. 654-659.

⁷⁶ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, lxxvii. 93.

had been able to achieve. It was resolved to organise a new assault on the Establishment, and on April 30, May 1 and 2, 1844, a conference numbering 800 delegates was held in London. The Baptist Churches were represented by many of their leading ministers and laymen. Dr. Pye Smith, Mr. Burnet, of Camberwell, Dr. John Campbell,⁷⁷ and Mr. Miall himself, represented the Congregationalists; but a large number of the most influential leaders of Congregationalism, both in London and in the country, were absent. The Conference resulted in the constitution of The British Anti-State-Church Association, which has been known since 1853 as The Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control.⁷⁸

The Association has taken a leading part during the last forty years in every agitation for the redress of Dissenting "grievances"; but its real and avowed object is to disestablish and disendow the clergy of the State Churches of the United Kingdom. In 1856 Mr. Edward Miall submitted a motion and made a powerful speech in the House of Commons for the partial disendowment of all sects in Ireland; and when in 1869 Mr. Gladstone brought forward his Bill for the disestablishment and partial disendowment of the Irish Church, the Society, although it disapproved of some of his proposals, gave him hearty support. In successive Parliaments it has encouraged the bringing forward of resolutions in favour of similar legislation in relation to the Church of England.

The Society has been served with singular enthusiasm. In Mr. Edward Miall it had a leader whose stainless character, purity of motive, and conspicuous ability commanded the respect of intelligent and fair-minded opponents and the affectionate loyalty of his friends. Under him a considerable number of able men—among whom Mr. Carvell Williams, for many years the secretary of the Society, and since Mr. Miall's death the chief director of its policy, deserves special mention—worked with a patience, persistency, and courage largely derived from the inspiration and example of their leader, believing that they were promoting the best interests of the nation and of the Christian faith. Nor has the delay of their triumph

⁷⁷ Dr. Campbell did not long remain a member of the Anti-State-Church Association.

⁷⁸ Skeats, *Free Churches*, 609-610.

abated the hope and the energy of those who have inherited the principles and responsibilities of the men by whom the Society was founded. They confidently believe that in the days of their children, if not in their own, the English people and Parliament will resolve to deal fairly with Englishmen of every form of religious belief.

VIII

One other act of ecclesiastical legislation is left to record. When Unitarian opinions began to spread among the Presbyterians and the Independents, in some cases whole congregations abandoned the Trinitarian faith, though they still retained the buildings in which they had been accustomed to worship. The orthodox Dissenters resented a loss that they found it difficult to resist. Relations between the two bodies were strained, and the hostile camps awaited only an occasion for conflict. The occasion came. In August, 1824, the Unitarians of Lancashire met at the Spread Eagle in Manchester, and the Rev. George Harris made a speech in keeping with the title of the house. It is not necessary to quote at length. Two sentences of his address contain the pith of it. "Orthodoxy," he said, "is gloom, and darkness, and desolation: Unitarianism is light, and liberty, and joy."⁷⁹ The speech was a challenge; it provoked rejoinders. Soon the conflict swept from the platform and the press into wider fields, and the issues of it are to be found in the records of the Law Courts and the statutes of Parliament. While some of Mr. Harris's critics contested the Unitarian claims to moral and spiritual superiority, others pointed out that the Unitarians held chapels built by orthodox believers, and designed for preaching the orthodox faith.

In the four counties of Lancaster, Chester, Derby, and Nottingham, it was asserted, the Unitarians possessed but six chapels by legal and equitable means; and to the remaining fifty-six chapels, with all their endowments, they had no legal or equitable right or title whatever.

"In Great Britain, the Unitarians possess two hundred and twenty-three places, of which one hundred and seventy-eight—

⁷⁹ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 311, from *The Manchester Socinian Controversy*, 12.

that is to say, four-fifths of the whole— were originally orthodox. In England alone they have two hundred and six chapels, of which thirty-six—or little more than one-sixth part of the whole number—were built by Unitarians.”⁸⁰

It was also asserted that they had obtained possession of funds left by Lady Hewley to which they had no claim; and that Unitarian trustees, improperly appointed, had diverted the endowments of her charities from their original purpose. A suit for recovery was instituted, as the result of inquiries in which Dr. James Bennett had taken an active part.⁸¹ It happened that a test case was already before the courts. A chapel at Wolverhampton had passed into the hands of the Unitarians in 1782, and had been held by them till 1816, when the minister, the Rev. John Steward, announced his conversion to the Trinitarian faith. A struggle followed for possession of the building; and after some episodes of disorder and violence, proceedings in Chancery were taken, which dragged on for nearly twenty years before the case reached its last stage; and at that point the Lord Chancellor held back his decision until the House of Lords should have given judgment in the larger case, still pending, of Lady Hewley's charities.

It was an undoubted fact that Lady Hewley had been a Presbyterian—her convictions and sympathies were notorious; and it might reasonably be supposed that her bequests for the maintenance of “godly preachers,” for “the relief of godly persons in distress,” for “poor widows of poor and godly preachers of the gospel,” and for educating young men “to be preachers of Christ's holy gospel,” were intended to promote the form of faith which she herself was known to have held.⁸² But the trustees, who represented Unitarian interests, held their ground with tenacity. They contended that the trusts were not specifically applied to any particular form of Protestant dissent; that the Presbyterians of Lady Hewley's time disliked formal articles and confessions of faith; and they produced evidence from the works of representative Presbyterians to show that they were less rigid in their

⁸⁰ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 312, from *The Manchester Socinian Controversy*, xlvi., xlvii.

⁸¹ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 293—297.

⁸² Bogue and Bennett, *History of Dissenters* (second edition), i. 505—512. Bennett, 294.

orthodoxy than those who claimed to be their successors and their heirs.

Such pleas, however elaborate and ingenious, did not prevail; and in 1842 the House of Lords gave judgment against the trustees and in favour of the claimants. They decided that orthodox Dissenters alone were qualified to act as trustees and to share in the endowments. The Wolverhampton chapel case was settled on the same lines; and it seemed as if the Unitarians at a single stroke might lose almost all the places of worship which were then in their possession.⁸³

In their alarm, the Unitarian leaders laid their case before the Government, and appealed for some measure of relief. Sir Robert Peel and his Ministry came to their aid, and brought in the Bill generally known as the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. This Act was intended to secure undisturbed possession of any place of worship to a congregation that had occupied it continuously for a certain period, and it provided that "the usage of twenty-five years should be taken as conclusive evidence of the right of any congregation to the possession of their place of worship, and of the schools, burial-ground, and endowments pertaining thereto."⁸⁴

The Bill was resisted both by the orthodox Dissenters and by the bishops. But it passed through both Houses by decisive majorities—in the Lords, by a vote of 44 to 9; and in the Commons, of 307 to 117—with the combined support of Peel, Lyndhurst, Brougham, Russell, Gladstone, and Macaulay.⁸⁵

The Law, it is known, gives weight to the fact of possession: the Lord Chancellor, in his advocacy of the Bill, illustrated

⁸³ "The suit being at an end," wrote Mr. Aspland to his son, "we must look for something more, the event having thrown down all our fences, and exposed us to inroads from our enemies. The opinion of almost all our professional friends is, that, according to the law as now declared, all our foundations before 1813 are endangered, say even the Gravel Pit"—his own place of worship—"and also Dukinfield"—where his son preached—"you having built upon a Trinitarian foundation, as the law, 'the perfection of reason,' will have it." *Life of Aspland*, 577, in Stoughton, *Religion in England*, 1800—1850, ii. 302. And see *Aspland*, 578—582, for the subsequent history.

⁸⁴ *An Act for the Regulation of suits relating to Meeting Houses and other property held for religious purposes by Persons dissenting from the United Church of England and Ireland.* 7 and 8 Vict. cap. 45, § 2.

⁸⁵ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, lxxiv. 831; lxxv. 391. *Annual Register*, 1844, lxxxvi. 206—213. See also Stoughton, *Religion in England*, 1800—1850, ii. 301—305; Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 310—312;

the maxim. Evidence is lost, he said, with the lapse of time. It may be no longer possible to establish a claim by direct testimony. But what time takes with the one hand it restores with the other; for "the lapse of time establishes by continued possession another title balancing and confirming the title that has been lost."⁸⁶ The Unitarians got the benefit of legal tradition, and the wisdom of the settlement is no longer seriously challenged. A rigid enforcement of rights would have led to serious injury, if not to serious injustice. A mass of litigation would have ensued, involving enormous expense—the costs in the Hewley case alone amounted to £30,000—which would have drained the Churches of resources better applied to other purposes. And strife prolonged would have left lamentable results in bitter exasperation and lasting enmity between men pledged by their principles to unity of spirit in spite of divisions in doctrine. For the Churches of the orthodox faith any material gain would have been immeasurably outweighed by moral loss.

NOTE A

Marriages in Dissenting Chapels before Hardwicke's Act

Sir Erskine May (*Constitutional History*, iii. 151) and Mr. Taswell-Langmead (*Constitutional History*, 589) use language which implies that for all legal purposes marriages celebrated in Dissenting chapels before Hardwicke's Act were valid. According to the canon law it is no doubt true that "the absence of the solemnities prescribed by that law did not violate a marriage once contracted";⁸⁷ and the canon law largely governed the practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts which had cognisance of marriage cases. But in the case of Haydon and Gould, determined in the ninth year of Queen Anne, the Court held that a marriage performed by the minister of a Sabbatarian congregation, in the presence of the congregation, was void. At the end of seven years the reputed wife died, and the administration of her effects was granted by the Ecclesiastical Court to her next of kin in preference to her reputed husband. "And it was observed,

Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 293-299; Joseph Hunter, *Shore versus the Attorney General* (a defence of the Hewley Trustees); and T. S. James, *History of the Litigation and Legislation respecting Presbyterian Chapels and Churches in England and Ireland*.

⁸⁶ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, lxxiv. 579-588.

⁸⁷ Phillimore, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 552, note n.

that if the same advantages attended marriages solemnised by Dissenters, as those celebrated by the Established Church, there would then be no occasion for licence or banns, for giving security that there were no legal impediments, but every one who should get himself introduced into a Dissenting Congregation might do what was right in his own eyes."⁸⁸

In the article referred to above there is a copy of a "Marriage Covenant," engrossed on parchment and stamped with a five-shilling stamp, attesting the marriage of Francis Smith and Elizabeth Toone at the Independent Meeting-house at Melbourne in the county of Derby. The document is drawn up with a great show of technical legal accuracy, and is signed by twenty-two witnesses. It bears the date August 20, 1753. Lord Hardwicke's Act came into operation on March 25, 1754.⁸⁹ The true state of the law before 1754 seems to be described in the following words:—"A Marriage by mere consent of parties, until the passing of the Marriage Act in 1753, constituted a binding engagement; though if application were made to the ecclesiastical courts for letters of administration, etc., under a title derived through such irregular marriage, these courts sometimes showed their resentment of the irregularity by refusing their assistance, *more especially where the non-compliance with the usual formalities could be traced to disaffection to the Established Church.*"⁹⁰

NOTE B

Cemetery Fees

The churchyard was a source of considerable income to the clergy. In addition to their fees for reading the Burial Service, they received special fees for the right of making bricked graves and constructing vaults; for the right to reopen bricked graves and vaults; for the right to erect gravestones, tombstones, and monuments; and the fees were proportioned to the size of the stones and the monuments. When the churchyard was closed because it was filled, there were some persons who thought that this source of clerical revenues would naturally come to an end. But the Acts declare that the consecrated part of a public cemetery is "to be deemed the Burial Ground of the parish or parishes" for which it has been provided; and the incumbent is entitled to claim the same fees for performing the service in this part of the cemetery that he could claim for performing the service in the closed churchyard; and he is to receive such fees in respect to vaults, monuments, gravestones, tablets, monumental inscriptions, etc., in the consecrated portion as shall be fixed by the Burial Board, "with the approval of the bishop"; and, if

⁸⁸ *Sidhold's Reports*, 119; *Congregational Magazine* (April, 1837), 232.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 231-232. The details are taken from *The General Baptist Magazine*, i. 453.

⁹⁰ *Standard Cyclopædia of Political Knowledge*: s. v. *Marriage*.

no scale of fees is agreed upon between the Board and the bishop, he is to receive such fees as he would by law or custom have been entitled to in the parochial churchyard. The claims of the parish clerk and sexton were also maintained.⁹¹ The interments in the consecrated portion of the cemetery ought, therefore, to be more expensive than the interments in the unconsecrated; for in the unconsecrated portion the only charges are the charges due to the Burial Board; in the consecrated portion there are, in addition to these, the charges due to the clergy. In some cases the Boards equalised the total fees, and some Boards gave to the Dissenting minister performing the service in one part of the cemetery the same fees for monuments, etc., that were given to the clergy of the parish in the other. But irregular charges still continued, and the attention of the Select Committee on Burial Fees (1882) was called to the fact that some Burial Boards illegally charged the same fees in unconsecrated as in consecrated ground, by including the clerical fees, and that the Home Secretary had improperly sanctioned the tables. The following table, dated March 1, 1883, and sanctioned by the Home Office, was in force at Mitcham, Surrey:—

	Board.			Vicar.			Clerk.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Ground for brick grave	6	6	0	15	15	0	1	1	0
Ditto for non-parishioners ..	12	12	0	26	5	0	1	10	6
For head and foot stone	0	10	6	2	2	0	0	5	0
„ with body stone	0	10	6	3	3	0	0	7	6
Monument or tomb	3	3	0	10	10	0	1	1	0

“Every one of the sums in the second and third columns is charged in the unconsecrated ground in distinct violation of the Act of Parliament.”⁹² It will be noticed that in every case the clerical fees are more than double the fees of the Board acting for the inhabitants who had paid for the ground.

⁹¹ 15 and 16 Vict. cap. 85, §§ xxxii., xxxiii.; and 16 and 17 Vict. cap. 134, § vii. The payment of fees to the clergy, except for services actually rendered in the consecrated part of public cemeteries, was abolished by the Burial Act, 1900. But monumental and other fees (not being service fees) in the consecrated part of cemeteries provided prior to July, 1900, were continued until the Incumbency was vacated, or for fifteen years, whichever was the longer period. The Act of 1900 did not apply to churchyards, where ecclesiastical fees are still payable.

⁹² *Liberator*, Nov., 1883. The Act referred to is the Act of 1857, the 17th Section of which enacted that “No fees shall be charged or received by any Burial Board in respect of any service done or right granted in the unconsecrated portion of any burial ground provided by such Board, but such as are identical in amount with the fees charged and received in respect of the same service or right in the consecrated portion of such ground, less any such portion of such corresponding fees or payments which may be received for, or on account of, any Incumbent, Churchwarden, Clerk, or Sexton.” This section was repealed by the Burial Act of 1900, the provisions of that Act rendering it no longer necessary.

CHAPTER II

CONGREGATIONALISTS AND NATIONAL EDUCATION

BRITISH SCHOOLS—BROUGHAM'S COMMITTEE ON THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR IN LONDON—BROUGHAM'S BILL—LORD MELBOURNE'S PROPOSALS—SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S BILL—CONGREGATIONALIST OBJECTIONS TO A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION—CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION—MINUTES OF COUNCIL, 1846—THE CLERGY AND THE SCHOOLS—MOVEMENT OF NONCONFORMIST OPINION—THE NATIONAL EDUCATION LEAGUE—AGITATION FOR A COMPULSORY AND AN UNSECTARIAN SYSTEM—W. E. FORSTER'S BILL : DEFECTS IN THE FIRST DRAFT—NONCONFORMIST OPPOSITION—CONFLICT IN PARLIAMENT—THE AMENDED BILL—NONCONFORMIST REVOLT—THE TWENTY-FIFTH CLAUSE—MANCHESTER CONFERENCE—EFFECTS OF THE ACT.

CONGREGATIONALISTS were among the most ardent advocates of popular education at a time when large and powerful classes of English society were sincerely afraid that if the children of the great masses of the people were taught to read and to write they would become a serious peril to the State. The British and Foreign School Society, established in 1808, found among Congregationalists some of its most earnest supporters. There were some Congregational Churches that opened day schools of their own ; but as the day school was never regarded by Congregationalists as an institution for training children in the principles of Congregationalism, it was more usual for them to unite with persons of other religious denominations in order to create and maintain what were called " British Schools." ¹

¹ The original name of the British and Foreign School Society was " The Royal Lancastrian Institution." It is described in the Rules and Regulations adopted in 1817—twelve years after its foundation—as " The Institution for Promoting the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of every Religious Persuasion." The National Society, founded in 1811, was established for the education of the children of the poor in the principles of the Church of England.

But on several critical occasions it has been their duty, in the interests of religious liberty, to offer the most vigorous opposition to measures which had for their object the extension and improvement of elementary education.

I

Their first struggle on this field was with a statesman who had many titles to their confidence and honour.

In 1816 Henry Brougham, who at that time was the boldest and most liberal as well as the most eloquent of the Whigs, obtained a Select Committee of the House of Commons for inquiring into the Education of the Poor in the Metropolis. It was his impression that there were educational endowments in London and elsewhere which, if honestly used for the purposes to which they were destined by their founders, would meet the whole cost of a system of popular education. The State might have to build schools; but he believed that the expense of their annual maintenance could be borne by existing educational endowments which for many years had been either administered inefficiently, or wholly diverted from their original purposes. The inquiries of the Committee were mainly directed to this subject.² The Committee was reappointed in 1818, and its attention was again directed to the subject of Charity abuses. "The interest," says Lord Brougham—

"excited by this investigation soon became so great, as to interfere with the other objects of the Committee's appointment; and everything that related to the extension of Education, otherwise than by improving the application of endowments, was either neglected, or lost in the anxiety to prosecute an inquiry which, detecting abuses of those endowments, promised to the curiosity or the malignity of the public, or the spirit of faction, the discovery of individual delinquency in persons of eminent condition."³

Although the Committee was appointed to inquire into the education of the poor, it found occasion—or, its enemies said, found excuses—for calling before it very eminent persons

It was incorporated by Royal Charter six years later. See Horace Mann, *Education in Great Britain* (Census Report, 1851), 12-13.

² *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xxxiv. 633-636, 1230-1235.

³ *Brougham, Speeches*, iii. 4-5. *Parl. Debates (Hansard: F.S.)*, xxxvii. 817.

connected with some of the great public schools. Eton, Winchester, and the Charterhouse were compelled to answer questions about their charters and their revenues. The Fellows of Winchester declined to give evidence; and in justification of their refusal pleaded their oath, by which they were sworn not to reveal the secrets of their House; the plea was overruled.⁴ The Committee even ventured to call before it the Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, to give an account of a school, with a large endowment, of which the Fellows of St. John's were the Visitors, and of which they had the exclusive patronage. Forty or fifty years before, the school had a hundred scholars; William Wilberforce was educated there; of late years it had taught only a single boy, and the schoolroom had been used as a saw-pit. That so distinguished a person as the Master of an ancient College should have been called before the Committee raised a great outcry; "and it was much increased by the reverend person himself happening to burst into tears, upon a very simple and civil question being addressed to him in very respectful terms."⁵

All the crimes of the Committee were laid to the account of Mr. Brougham, its chairman, who was charged with insulting and browbeating some of the most eminent men in the kingdom, and with intending to confiscate the property of the most ancient and venerable institutions.⁶ When he brought forward an Education Bill in 1820, he appears to have thought it necessary to soothe the fierce hostility which had been provoked by the proceedings of his Committee.

The necessity of some great measure for placing the means of education within the reach of great masses of the people was apparent. According to Parliamentary returns obtained

⁴ The Committee heard the objection, examined the oath, and found it to contain a saving clause, "*Nisi aliqua necessitate cogente, seu utilitate suadente, de qua necessitate et utilitate ipsi judicent*"; whereupon the Committee intimated to the witnesses that the necessity had arisen, and that it was expedient for them to decide upon complying therewith; but it also laid down as clear law, that, although there had been no such saving clause at all, the oath never could have protected them from answering whatever questions were put by a competent authority, such as a Court of Justice, or a Committee of either House of Parliament. Brougham, *Speeches*, iii. 5.

⁵ Brougham, *Speeches*, iii. 5-6; and see the *Letter to Sir Samuel Romilly*, *ibid.*, 28-39, 53-55.

⁶ For Brougham's defence of the Committee against Peel, see *Speeches*, iii. 181-213.

in 1818, there were only 674,883 scholars in day schools—or one in 17·25 of the population. Many of the schools—perhaps most of them—were inefficient, and they were very unequally distributed : in Middlesex the scholars were only one in twenty of the population ; in Lancashire one in twenty-four. In Sunday schools there were 477,225 scholars—or one in 24·40 of the population ; but it was believed that three-fourths, or four-fifths, of these were also in day schools.⁷

Mr. Brougham proposed that a parochial rate should be levied for the erection of school buildings and the maintenance of teachers. The rate was to be administered by the magistrates in quarter-sessions ; the teachers were to be members of the Church of England ; they were not to be appointed without a recommendation of the clergymen of the several parishes in which their schools were situated ; and they were required to “ qualify ” for their office by receiving the Lord’s Supper at church within a month previous to their appointment. It was provided that no religious “ formulary ” should be used in the schools, but that the Bible should be read with necessary explanations.

The Dissenters had endured much from their avowed enemies ; they were resolved not to submit to this new encroachment on their rights by one who claimed to be their friend. The Bill was vigorously opposed, and had to be dropped after the first reading.⁸

II

In the next great educational controversy the Congregationalists, with the great body of Nonconformists, were on the side of the Government. It seemed impossible to construct any large educational measure that would satisfy the Church without provoking the opposition of the Dissenters, and it was therefore resolved to adopt a modest and tentative policy. From 1833 to 1839 Parliament voted £20,000 a year to assist in the erection of school buildings. The grant was administered by the Treasury ; applications for assistance were made through the British and Foreign School Society and the

⁷ Horace Mann, *Education in Great Britain* (1851 *Census Report*), 13.

⁸ *Parl. Debates* (*Hansard : N.S.*), ii. 50–90. *Annual Register*, lxii. (i), 49–57. Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 54–55.

National Society; and the grant was divided between the two sets of applicants—those who proposed to erect “British” or undenominational schools, and those who proposed to erect Church of England schools.

At first the arrangement gave satisfaction to all concerned. But in course of time it began to work in the interests of the Established Church. The grants were made to supplement local contributions; where one of the two societies concerned raised one-half of the sum required to build a school—for the grants were for building, and not for maintenance—the Government found the other half. In the race the National Society easily outstripped its rival: it had wealthier supporters, the longer purse. And by degrees it got three-fourths or more of the grant, instead of one-half.⁹

In 1839 the Government of Lord Melbourne proposed to increase the annual grant from £20,000 to £30,000, in order to establish and maintain a Normal School for the training of teachers. At the same time Her Majesty was advised to entrust the administration of future Parliamentary grants for educational purposes to a Committee of the Privy Council.

These proposals raised a great storm. Lord Francis Egerton thought it was “an insult or slight, put upon the Church,” that none of its leading members or any of its most distinguished ministers were to have a seat upon the Committee. The late Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, declared that the Committee was “irresponsible, unfettered, and despotic”; that its powers were “not checked, not restrained, not limited by Parliament”; and that to take education out of the hands of the clergy and to transfer it to laymen, “would gradually lead to general scepticism, and from general scepticism to national infidelity.” The late Earl of Shaftesbury—then Lord Ashley—declared that the Committee was “hostile to the Constitution, to the Church, and to revealed religion itself.” Education, he maintained, was necessarily and divinely connected with religion, and the Government, in establishing their Committee, were setting the divine law at defiance. “What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” Mr. Disraeli struck hard at the whole policy of the Government, and maintained that “to diminish the duties of the citizen is

⁹ Horace Mann, *Education in Great Britain*, 13–14. *Parl. Debates* (*Hansard*: T.S.), xx. 730; xxxviii. 448.

to peril the rights of the subject ” ; that those who insisted on State education sanctioned the theory of a “ paternal Government ” ; and that the result of this theory might be seen, in the East, in the stagnation of China, and, in the West, in the stagnation of Austria—“ the China of Europe.”¹⁰ Sound old Tories like Mr. Thomas Dyke Acland appealed to the statistics which a few years later were worked so vigorously by Mr. Edward Baines, of Leeds, and insisted that the progress of popular education during the present century had been so satisfactory that new measures were unnecessary.¹¹

The worst crime of the Government in the judgment of its opponents was the scheme for establishing the Normal College. The College was to be open to persons of all religious creeds. The Bible was to be read every day ; but all definite, dogmatic religious instruction was to be given at special times by ministers of religion who had no place on the College staff.¹²

Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, who for many years was Secretary to the Education Department, and who was largely responsible for the Minutes of 1846, and for subsequent legislation which provoked strenuous Dissenting opposition, gives an accurate account of the struggle :—

“ The existence of Lord Melbourne’s administration was endangered in 1839 by the attempt to lay the foundations of the education of the people, on the recognition of the equality of their civil rights in matters of religion. The Church was probably less alarmed by the recognition of this civil equality, than by the absence from that scheme of any definition of the limits of the civil power. Such definition was then impossible, but its absence aroused the most extravagant terror. Impelled by this fear, the Church, in defence of her traditional privileges, assumed the responsibility of resisting, by the utmost exercise of her authority and influence in the country, in both Houses of Parliament, and at the foot of the Throne, the first great plan ever proposed, by any government, for the education of the humblest classes in Great Britain.”¹³

The Congregationalists, and those with whom they were accustomed to act, stood by the Government. A meeting of the Ministers of the Three Denominations, held at the

¹⁰ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, xlvi. 295 ; *ibid.*, 231, 232, 259 ; 270, 276 ; 578, 580.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 565–566.

¹² *Ibid.*, 256–258.

¹³ Shuttleworth, *Public Education as affected by the Minutes of Council*, 3–4.

Congregational Library in March, 1840, passed the following Resolution :—

“ That the number of petitions presented of late to both Houses of Parliament, declaring the established clergy to be the persons in whom the superintendence of any system of national education should be mainly vested, exhibits an attempt to revive a long obsolete branch of priestly power, betraying a spirit as arrogant as it is unjust, and that should be resisted to the utmost, not only by the Protestant Dissenter, but by every friend to general liberty : that, as a matter of expediency, we should regard the placing of a system of that nature in such hands as tending rather to perpetuate than to remove the popular ignorance, discontent, and irreligion, and as adapted to strengthen every prejudice unfavourable to our intelligence, virtue, and greatness, as a people : that on the ground of justice, we are no less convinced that if any portion of the public money be granted for such purposes, it should be for the advancement of that secular education concerning which all are agreed, and not for education in religion, on which we are so much divided, and which, in such cases, will be best provided for in being left to the judgment of persons locally interested in school management : that we accordingly hail with peculiar satisfaction the fixed resolution evinced by her Majesty’s ministers to proceed upon these principles in the application of the late grant for this object.”¹⁴

But the support which the Government received from the Congregationalists and other Nonconformists was not sufficient to enable them to defy the formidable power of the Church. The hostility to the Normal College was so fierce, that Lord John Russell announced to the House, before the great fight in Parliament began, that the Government had abandoned that part of their scheme ; and Lord Stanley’s motion in the Commons, praying Her Majesty to revoke the Order appointing the Educational Committee of the Privy Council, was lost by only two votes—273 to 275—in a House of 548.¹⁵ In the House of Lords, under the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops and the Conservative peers opposed the Government plan with equal energy and resoluteness, and by a large majority carried an Address to the Queen, praying that effect might not be given to the plan until it had been laid before the Upper House for consideration.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Congregational Magazine*, 1840, *n.s.*, iv. 265.

¹⁵ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T. S.)*, xlvii. 1380–1381 ; xlviii. 793.

¹⁶ The numbers were 229 to 118. *Ibid.*, xlviii. 1332, xlix. 308. In reply the Queen said that while she appreciated their zeal for religion

This was in 1839. In August, 1841, immediately after the General Election, which had been fought on the question of Tariff and Free Trade, the Ministry was badly beaten on the Address both in the Lords and in the Commons. Lord Melbourne resigned, and was succeeded by Sir Robert Peel.

Early in the session of 1843—on February 28—Lord Ashley delivered a long and powerful speech in the House of Commons on the ignorance, immorality, and infidelity of the manufacturing districts, and concluded with a motion for an Address praying the Crown to take into instant and serious consideration the best means of securing for the working classes the benefits of a moral and religious education. As soon as Lord Ashley sat down, the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, announced that the Government had already agreed upon a scheme for the compulsory education of pauper children and children working in factories; and he gave an outline of the Government proposals. He appealed to men of all parties and of all creeds to rise above their political and religious prejudices, and to unite on neutral ground to build up a scheme of national education.¹⁷

But it was apparent that the intention of the Government was to create, largely at the public cost, a system of Church of England schools under the control of the clergy—schools in which the distinctive doctrines of the Church were to be taught, and in which no Dissenting teacher would have any chance of an appointment. The education policy of 1839 had been thwarted; the Government which had proposed it had been almost wrecked by the hostility of the Church; and it was plain that the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel had determined to avoid the mistake of their predecessors.

and their care for the Church, she regretted that they should have thought it necessary to take such a step. She was sensible of the special duty binding her to the support of the Established Church, and she should always use the power vested in her by the Constitution to fulfil that obligation. But, with a deep sense of that duty, she had thought it right to appoint a committee of the Privy Council to superintend the grants made for education. Their proceedings would be annually submitted to the judgment of both Houses, and "I trust," she added, "that the sums placed at my disposal will be found to have been strictly applied to the objects for which they were granted, with due respect to the rights of conscience, and with a faithful attention to the security of the Established Church." *Ibid.*, xlix. 128; *Annual Register*, 1839, lxxx. 140-172.

¹⁷ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, lxvii. 47-91.

On March 7 Sir James Graham laid his Bill before the House. It was entitled *A Bill for Regulating the Employment of Children and Young Persons in Factories, and for the Better Education of Children in Factory Districts*.¹⁸ The object of the educational clauses of the measure was to create schools in manufacturing districts—schools at which the children might receive a religious and useful education—and to enforce attendance. Under these clauses the Committee of the Privy Council might provide one-third of the cost of building a school; one-third was to come from the poor rate; and the remaining third from voluntary contributions. Any deficiency in the funds for the annual support of a school so created was to come from the poor rate. The main points to which the Dissenters objected were these:—

1. That the rate-payers, who were to find a large part of the cost of building the schools, and who were to find part—perhaps a large part—of the cost of their annual maintenance, were to have no control, direct or indirect, over their management or expenditure.

2. That the whole management of the schools was practically placed in the hands of the Established Church. There were to be seven trustees: the clergyman of the parish; two churchwardens—and where any parish had more than two, the clergyman was to choose which two were to act; four nominated trustees, to be appointed by the justices of the peace.

3. That the clergyman of the parish was to be the permanent chairman of the managing body; was to have a casting vote; was to have the sole and exclusive superintendence of the religious instruction; was to direct the master as to the religious instruction to be given; was to have the exclusive selection of the religious books to be used in the school; was to instruct, catechise, and examine the children on the principles of their religion; and in the exercise of these powers he was to be irresponsible—even Her Majesty's Inspector was forbidden to inquire into the religious instruction, unless he received authority from the archbishop or bishop.

4. That the Church Catechism and such portions of the Liturgy as the clergy might select might be taught for one

¹⁸ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, lxvii. 422-444, 1411-1477.

hour out of three on the morning and afternoon of certain days in the week, except to the children whose parents objected.

5. That the parents who wished their children exempted from this teaching were required to specify that they had a religious objection to it.

6. That the schools were to be Sunday schools as well as day schools, and that every scholar was to be required to attend a service of the Established Church once every Sunday—in addition to attending the school for religious instruction—unless the parent gave notice to the master that on the ground of religious objection his child was to be exempted from this obligation.

7. That no teacher could be employed either as master or assistant without the approval of the bishop of the diocese, who was to be satisfied as to his competency to give the religious instruction required.

8. That no children were to be employed in a factory unless they attended (1) one of the schools created by the Act, or (2) a National school, or (3) a British and Foreign school, or (4) a school in the factory where they worked; and that it was made unlawful for children working in factories to attend Wesleyan, Independent, or Baptist day schools, unless the school was in connection with the British and Foreign School Society.¹⁹

9. That no assistance was provided for any other schools than those which were to be created by the Act.

The worst apprehensions which had been created among the Dissenters by the speech of Sir James Graham on Lord Ashley's motion were more than confirmed, and a great agitation was at once begun which set the whole country on fire. Wesleyans, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Roman Catholics were all of one mind, and were equally vehement in their denunciation of the measure and of its author. Petitions against the Bill, with more than two million signatures, were presented to the House of Commons. The Government saw that they could not carry it without making some concessions to the

¹⁹ This provision of the Bill was intended to secure the efficiency of the schools at which the children attended. But as the Act allowed for the attendance of Roman Catholic children at Roman Catholic schools, provided that they were "efficiently conducted," the affront to the schools of all Protestant Dissenters was the more marked.

Dissenters ; and on May 1 Sir James Graham laid before the House a series of amendments by which he hoped that the opponents of the Bill might be conciliated.²⁰ (1) He proposed to substitute for the clause under which the attendance of children at school and divine worship on Sunday, Christmas Day, and Good Friday was made compulsory, a permissive clause, providing religious instruction in the principles of the Church of England for "every young person who may wish to attend school at these times," the children receiving such instruction being required to attend the divine worship of the Church of England once in each day at a place to be selected by the clerical trustee.²¹ (2) Dissenters who wished their children to be withdrawn from instruction in the Church Catechism and the Liturgy had been required by the original Bill to state specifically the grounds on which they rested their objection : but now, said Sir James, "I have provided that it shall be competent for any person, even a Church of England man, to object to the mode of instruction without stating particulars."²² (3) The Dissenters had complained that during the hours which were to be appropriated to the Catechism and the Liturgy their own children who were withdrawn from the instruction would be wasting their time in idleness ; but under the amended Bill, the Church of England teaching was to be given in a separate room, and only on three days a week ;²³ and while it was going on, the Dissenting children were to receive secular instruction. Sir James assumed that Dissenters would not object to their children receiving Biblical instruction from the master.²⁴ (4) To meet the objection that while the tenets of the Church of England were to be taught in the school to Church of England children, the children of Dissenters were to receive no instruction in the tenets of their own religious communion, Sir James read a new clause which provided that, during three of the usual school hours on one day of the week, children who were not taught the Catechism and Liturgy of the Church of England might receive religious instruction (either in the school or elsewhere) from the licensed minister of the chapel in which

²⁰ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, lxxviii. 1104-1118.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1108.

²² *Ibid.*, 1110-1111.

²³ The number of days had been left blank in the original Bill.

²⁴ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, lxxviii. 1111-1112.

the parent attended divine worship, or from any person whom such licensed minister might appoint. "I propose," he said in effect, "that the children of Dissenters shall have instruction in the tenets of their own creeds, even during working-days, and that the whole matter shall be at the disposal of their parents or guardians."²⁵ (5) The Roman Catholics had been as severe in their condemnation of the Bill as the Protestant Nonconformists; and to lessen their hostility, it was now proposed that where there happened to be no Roman Catholic school the parents of Roman Catholic children were to have power to object to their being present at the reading or teaching of Scripture, or at divine service.²⁶ (6) The original Bill had given absolute power over the religious instruction to the clerical trustee; and the Dissenters, who were watching with alarm and indignation the rapid growth of what was then called the "Puseyite" party in the national Establishment, had pointed out that in rate-supported schools, which hundreds of thousands of English children would be compelled to attend, Puseyite clergymen would teach more than half the doctrines of the Church of Rome. This argument had been used in the popular agitation against the measure with great effect, and in one of his amendments Sir James Graham attempted to break its force. He said, "It is in the power of the ecclesiastical trustee to make the selection [of books to be used in the school], and as it is to be expected *that the selection will vary according to the peculiar opinions of each clerical trustee*, I have taken the precaution to provide that the selection of all religious books shall be made by the two Archbishops of our Church."²⁷ (7) As the Dissenters had objected that the Bill would practically place all the schools in the hands of Church of England trustees, it was now proposed that the trustees should be (a) the clergyman of the parish, (b) one churchwarden, (c) a person to be elected by those persons who should have been donors or subscribers of a certain amount to the school, (d) four persons to be elected by rate-payers assessed at £10; but, to secure a representation of the minority, no rate-payer was to vote for more than two candidates. As the Dissenters were supposed to be in a majority in the factory districts, to which alone the Act applied, this "minority vote"

²⁵ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, lxxviii. 1111-1112.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1112-1113.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1110.

was not regarded by them with any satisfaction.²⁸ (8) The appointment of the head master of every school was to be left subject to the veto of the bishop, but all the assistants were to be appointed at the discretion of the trustees.²⁹

In submitting these amendments, Sir James Graham declared that if the amended measure failed to effect the great object of "a combined system of education," all further attempts to attain that end would be hopeless, and he predicted that any educational scheme which divided from each other during their school life the children belonging to different religious communities would aggravate the bitterness of existing religious dissensions, and would produce the most fatal consequences.³⁰ In the course of a subsequent debate on a resolution of Mr. Roebuck's which declared, "That in no plan of education maintained and enforced by the State, should any attempt be made to inculcate peculiar religious opinions," Sir James defended the position of supremacy which he had given to the Established Church. He said that the very fact that it was *established* presumed a preference; and he asked, supposing there were a school with but one master, was it a hardship that his creed should conform to that of the Established Church of this country? He, for his own part, thought that the Church would not do its duty if it made any concession upon this point, and it was one upon which he felt he could not conscientiously give way.³¹

The position of the Government was perfectly logical. The clergy to whom the State has entrusted the gravest responsibilities for the religious faith and life of the nation naturally claim control of the schools of the State. If religious toleration—not religious equality—is the principle which guides the general national policy, it is not unreasonable that there should be religious toleration—not religious equality—in the schools which are supported by public funds, and which children are obliged to attend by a compulsory law. But the Dissenters were not convinced. Their hostility was in no degree abated. The agitation continued, and it was as vehement as before. The signatures to petitions against the amended clauses were nearly as numerous as those against the original Bill; they

²⁸ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, lxxviii. 1114-1115.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1115.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1117-1118.

³¹ *Ibid.*, lxxix. 544-545.

reached the enormous number of 1,977,829. The measure was withdrawn.³²

III

In the course of this brief but sharp controversy some influential Congregationalists advanced the theory that the education of the people lies beyond the province of the State. At the meetings of the Congregational Union held at Leeds in October, 1843, Mr. Edward Baines, who had led the Congregationalists in their opposition to the Bill of Sir James Graham, stated the grounds on which this theory rested.

“ I am compelled,” he said, “ to declare my opinion, that it is *not* the province of a government to educate the people ; and that the admission of the principle that it *is* its province would lead to practical consequences fatal to civil and religious liberty. The subject is too wide to be discussed at length, but I would respectfully suggest a few considerations in support of the view which I have taken. They are these :—first, that the proper province of government is to make and administer laws, to protect person and property, and to conduct the external relations of a country ; but that it is *not* its province to train the mind and morals of the people, any more than it is to supply them with food, or to govern their families. Second, that if we grant it to be the province of government to educate the people, we must on the same principle grant that government ought to provide for the religious instruction of the people—which admits the whole principle of state-establishments of religion ; and also to provide for the future supply of their intellectual wants—which involves a censorship of the press. Third, that if it be the province of government to educate the people, it must be at once its right and its duty to do all that is requisite for that end, which involves a direct or indirect control over all the machinery of education, over the systems of tuition, over the teachers, over the school-books, over the raising and administering of the funds, over the parents and the children, and the employers of labour. It involves both *compulsion and prohibition*, and the enforcing of both by the only instrument which the civil power can wield, namely, fines and penalties. Fourth, that therefore the consistent carrying out of the principle, that it is the province of government to educate the people, would reduce the people of this country to a state of pupilage as complete as that of the people of Prussia, or even of China ; it would annihilate freedom of education,

³² *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, lxi. 1567–1569. *Annual Register*, 1843, lxxxv. 196, 201–202, and 192–203. Torrens, *Life of Graham*, ii. 233–241. It is said that in all 25,000 petitions, containing 4,000,000 signatures, were sent up against the Bill. Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest*, 122,

freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, and freedom of industry. Fifth, that it would interpose the most serious obstacles in the way of improvements in education, as is shown by the history of the endowed schools. Sixth, that it would put into the hands of the government an enormous amount of patronage, which would be assuredly used for party and corrupt purposes, and which would endanger public liberty.

“There are those who would shrink from the idea of entrusting the education of the whole people to government, who yet think it right for government to provide for the education of the poor. But if the principle be once admitted, that it is the province of the government to educate any portion of the people, I do not see how we could stop short till it had the entire work in its own hands. I would also remind you that one of the arguments most relied upon, in defence of national establishments of religion, is, that they are for the benefit of the poor—an argument which we feel to be altogether insufficient. There are also those who condemn us for our opposition to the late Factories Bill, saying that education is of such immense value, that it was worth while to make a small sacrifice for the sake of diffusing it more generally. I reply that nothing can compensate for the sacrifice of liberty, which itself is the best of all educators, because it is the nurse, if not the parent, of all that is great, generous, and good in a community, and the all but omnipotent ally of truth.”³³

At the same meeting the Rev. John Kelly of Liverpool, a man whose high integrity and masculine intellectual vigour gave him great authority, referring to the Bill of Sir James Graham said :—

“Happily, the principles on which that measure was founded were in a high degree objectionable. I say *happily*, because it is my conviction—recently formed, I will avow, but still it is *now* my conviction—that any system of national education, on almost any principles which could have been acceded to generally, would have been injurious in its results.”³⁴

It does not appear that any protest was made in the course of the debate against the abstract principle which had been asserted by Mr. Edward Baines ; but as yet the Union was not prepared to affirm it. The Resolutions adopted by the Assembly deal with the practical position of the question and declare—

“That without pronouncing a decided opinion on the propriety of Government interference in the education of the people, this

³³ *Congregational Magazine*, 1843, n.s., vii. 835–836.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 832.

meeting entertains the gravest doubts whether any compulsory interference can take place without establishing principles and precedents dangerous to civil and religious liberty, inconsistent with the rights of industry, and superseding the duties of parents and of Churches; while all the plans of national education by the agency of Government, suggested of late years, have been very objectionable, either to the friends of the Established Church, or to the Dissenting bodies. This meeting, therefore, concludes, without despondency or regret, that both the general and the religious education of the people of England must be chiefly provided and conducted by the voluntary efforts of the various denominations of Christians.”³⁵

It was determined that a Committee of General Education should be established in London in connection with the Congregational Union, and that Congregationalists throughout the country should be urged to make an immediate effort to establish new day schools. The Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, said, “We have defeated a great measure. Whether for good or harm, it was a gigantic proposal. . . . We are bound in honour to do all in our power to promote the education of the people.”³⁶

In December of the same year (1843) a great Conference on the subject of Education was held in the Congregational Library, at which there were present the most distinguished representatives of the Congregational Churches in every part of England. The Resolution which expressed the principle and policy on which the members of the Conference were agreed was moved by the Rev. Algernon Wells, Secretary of the Congregational Union, and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton, of Leeds. It affirmed—

“That this meeting, utterly repudiating, on the strongest grounds of Scripture and conscience, the receipt of money raised by taxation and granted by Government, for sustaining the Christian religion, feels bound to apply this principle no less to the work of religious education; and considering that the education given by the Congregational Churches must be religious education, advises most respectfully, but most earnestly, that no Government aid be received by them for schools established in their own connexion; and that all funds confided to the disposal of the central committee, in aid of schools, be granted only to schools sustained entirely by voluntary contributions.”³⁷

³⁵ *Congregational Magazine*, 1843, *n.s.*, vii. 842-843.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, vii. 839.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, vii. 79.

But, with apparent inconsistency, the Conference declared in the very next Resolution its "warm attachment" to the British and Foreign School Society, and advised that "the exertions of the Congregational Churches for general education be conducted as far as practicable, in connection with, and so as to sustain and strengthen the Society."³⁸ How was it possible for the Conference to protest against the application of money raised by taxation for the creation or maintenance of schools which were intended to give "a religious education," and yet to support the British and Foreign School Society, in whose schools, which had been largely aided by the Annual Parliamentary Grant, such instruction was regularly given? The explanation seems to be this:—The Conference consisted of "the representatives of Congregational Churches." It proposed to establish Congregational schools. Its promoters had come to believe that the objections to receiving Government aid for the maintenance of religious congregations were valid against receiving Government aid for the maintenance of schools connected with religious congregations. In all cases, therefore, in which a school was established by a Church, they recommended that no Government aid should be received. But they saw no objection to granting Government aid to a school which was not connected with a particular Church, and in which the religious instruction given to the scholars was of the kind that is required by the constitution of the British and Foreign School Society.

The Conference did not content itself with the discussion of principles. The contributions for the establishment of new schools promised during its meetings amounted to £17,000. Within six months they rose to nearly £50,000; and in the sixteen years from 1843 to 1859, the Congregational Board of Education raised £173,677; this was in addition to funds which were raised and spent locally, and which were not reported.³⁹ Schools were opened in connection with a large number of Congregational Churches, and a College was established at Homerton for the training of teachers who

³⁸ *Congregational Magazine*, 1843, *n.s.*, viii. 78–79.

³⁹ *Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Popular Education in England* (*Newcastle Commission*), 1861, vi. 273; and Horace Mann, *Education in Great Britain* (1851 *Census Report*), 15, *note*.

disapproved of Government interference with the education of the people.⁴⁰

IV

During the next three years—1843 to 1846—mainly in consequence of the energy and ability with which the principle of Voluntaryism was advocated by Mr. Edward Baines and Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds, and by Mr. Miall, Mr. Henry Richard, and Mr. Burnet, of London, the great majority of Congregationalists and Baptists had come to believe that, according to the true theory of the functions of the State, no grants of public money for educational purposes could be justified; except, of course, for the building and maintenance of schools for pauper and criminal children.

The new Minutes of Council, dated August and December, 1846, which proposed a great extension of the grants, were opposed mainly on the principle that under no circumstances can it be right for the State to assist in establishing or maintaining popular schools.⁴¹ When the Minutes were laid before the House of Commons in 1847 by Lord John Russell, there were prolonged debates, but the Government proposals were carried by a large majority.⁴² An attempt to require all schools receiving aid to adopt a conscience clause was defeated.⁴³ At the General Election, in the summer of 1847, many Liberal candidates who had voted for the Minutes were opposed by the Dissenters.⁴⁴

It had become the settled conviction of large numbers of Congregationalists that the whole scheme of assisting denominational schools by Parliamentary grants was necessarily inequitable in its operation. The denominational character of an aided school depended—not on the denominational preferences of the parents for whose children it was provided, but on the denominational preferences of the persons by whom the

⁴⁰ The Homerton College received no Government grants till the year 1869. Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest*, 131.

⁴¹ See Note A, p. 684.

⁴² A motion of Sir William Molesworth to admit Roman Catholic schools to a share of the grant was lost. *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, xci. 1369–1380, 1412. Roman Catholic Schools were excluded till 1848, and Jewish schools till 1852.

⁴³ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, xci. 1414–1418.

⁴⁴ F. Adams, *Elementary School Contest*, 130.

school was partly built and maintained. The children of a district were sold to the Church which was willing and able to find the funds to buy them. The scheme was open to another objection. It greatly intensified the denominational element in national education. Those Churches which cared most about teaching their own definite creed to children of their own adherents and of the adherents of other religious communities, had a motive for establishing schools and obtaining the grants which was not felt by Churches which had no desire to make the day school an instrument for the propagation of a denominational creed.

The alarm with which the Nonconformists regarded every fresh extension of the system of grants was increased by the claims which were asserted by a large and powerful section of the clergy to the absolute control of their schools. The clergy were willing to receive from the Government any amount of money, but resented every attempt on the part of the Government to exercise control.

A Minute of the Privy Council, passed in 1840, had provided that in the conveyance of the sites of the schools erected with aid from the Parliamentary grant, the trustees should avail themselves of one or other of certain prescribed forms. A few years later it was reported that—

“when an inquiry was made into the constitution of schools requiring assistance, it appeared that the provisions for school management in the trust deed comprised every form of negligent or discordant arrangement. Often there was no management clause ; in which case the government of the school devolved on the individual trustees and their heirs, who might be non-resident, minors, lunatics, or otherwise incapable. When a management clause was inserted, there was seldom any provision for the supply of vacancies or re-election, nor any qualification for the office of manager.”⁴⁵

In the course of 1844 or 1845—under the Government of Sir Robert Peel—a practice grew up of recommending to the founders of schools the insertion in the trust deeds of a certain clause, intended to define the authority by which the schools should be governed ; and from the year 1847 the adoption of one of the “management” clauses prepared by the Privy

⁴⁵ *Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Popular Education in England (Newcastle Commission), 1861, i. 57.*

Council was made one of the conditions for obtaining a building grant. Supplementary Minutes on this subject were issued in 1852 and 1853. Special clauses were prepared for Church schools, Wesleyan schools, Jewish schools, Roman Catholic schools, and Undenominational schools; and the clauses for Church schools were to vary with the number, wealth, and intelligence of the districts in which the schools were to be built. The clause for a Church school in populous districts, where the well-educated and wealthy were numerous, provided that the principal officiating minister of the parish or ecclesiastical district should have the superintendence of the religious and moral instruction of all the scholars attending the school, with power to use the premises for the purposes of a Sunday school under his exclusive control and management.

“ In all other respects it vests the government of the school and the selection, appointment, and dismissal of the teachers, in a committee consisting of the principal officiating minister for the time being, his licensed curate or curates, if he shall appoint them, and a certain number of other persons, being residents or having real property to a certain extent in the parish. These last mentioned members are to be elected annually by persons who have contributed to a certain amount to the funds of the school during the current year, are members of the Church of England, and qualified by residence or estate as persons to be elected. Each contributor so qualified has a number of votes proportioned to his subscription, but no one is to have more than six votes. The minister if present is chairman of the Committee. . . . No person is to be appointed or continue to be the master or mistress of the school who shall not be a member of the Church of England.”⁴⁶

If the promoters of the school wish it, they are at liberty to provide in the deed that the lay members of the Committee shall be required to qualify for serving upon it by signing a declaration that they are members of the Church of England, or that they have been communicants of the Church of England for three years. If differences arise between the clergyman and the Committee on any question affecting the religious instruction of the scholars, or the prayers used in the schools, or the dismissal of a teacher for defective or unsound religious instruction, there is to be an appeal to the bishop of the diocese. Differences between the clergyman and the Committee on other

⁴⁶ *Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Popular Education in England (Newcastle Commission), 1861, i. 58.*

subjects are to be finally determined by arbitrators, one of whom is to be nominated by the President of Council, and may be an inspector of schools ; another is to be nominated by the bishop, and may be a beneficed clergyman of the diocese ; and the third, who is to be a justice of the peace and a lay member of the Church of England, is to be nominated by the other two. The decision of any two of the arbitrators is to be final.

In districts where the intelligent and wealthy inhabitants are less numerous, the Managing Committee is not to be elected every year by the subscribers, but an election is to take place when it is necessary to fill up vacancies occasioned by death, resignation, or incapacity. In districts still less fortunate, one of two clauses is to be adopted. A Committee of Management having been once appointed is to fill up its own vacancies until the bishop directs election by subscribers ; or the clergyman of the parish is to be the sole manager until the bishop directs the election of a Committee by the subscribers.

Under any of these clauses it might appear that the authority of the clergyman over the school was supreme ; but they called forth the most passionate protests. The following extracts from speeches, charges, pamphlets, petitions, and resolutions illustrate the principles and spirit of the clerical party ⁴⁷ :—

“ I believe that their principle is vicious—the principle of entrusting the effective control of a Church school to a committee of management, however such committee may be composed, instead of to the parish clergyman—and that so long as this principle is retained these clauses cannot be made *safe* by any process.” (Rev. G. A. Denison, *Church Education, a Pamphlet* [1849], 13.)

“ Parochial Education was a portion of the parochial charge. It was as much a part of the system of Church government and discipline as parochial worship ; and when the State asked the Church to extend the benefits of education, it ought not to impose any condition which, in the slightest degree, could fetter parochial efforts, or mar parochial duties through the length and breadth of the land.” (Joseph Napier, Esq., M.P., *at Church Education Meeting held in Willis's Rooms on February 12, 1850.*)

“ The clergy have a divine commission to teach the children.”

⁴⁷ All these extracts, with many others of a similar kind, are given by Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, *Public Education*, 7–11. And see also Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest*, 142–143.

(The Rev. Mr. Barter, Warden of Winchester College, *at the same meeting.*)

“ We shall be obliged to go to Government and to Parliament, not to ask for a participation in the grants of money distributed on the present principle, but to tell them, backed by the voice of three-fourths of the empire, of all denominations, that the State shall not, without a creed, without a sacrament, and without any ministerial authority from God, undertake the education of the people of this country.” (The Rev. W. Sewell, *at the same meeting.*)

“ We feel it necessary to say that, by the term *Education*, we mean training for time and eternity, and that, according to our belief, the Church of England is the divinely appointed teacher of the English nation.” (*Petition to the Queen, adopted at this meeting.*)

“ He would add to the end of his resolution the words—‘ and in particular, when they should desire to put the management of their schools solely in the hands of the clergy and bishop of the diocese.’ ” (*Archdeacon Manning’s amended Resolution, which was adopted at the Annual Meeting of the National Society, June 6, 1849.*)

“ The desire to constitute the bishop as sole judge in appeal rests upon a principle inherent in the Church, etc.” (*Archdeacon Manning’s Charge, July [1849], 20.*)

“ The power of appointment and dismissal of the schoolmaster, schoolmistress, and assistant teachers, is still withheld from the clergyman ; and so long as this is so, it is surely quite idle to say that the clergyman has ‘ the moral and religious superintendence of the school,’ as claimed for him by the National Society, or even of ‘ the moral and religious instruction of all the scholars attending the school,’ as ‘ conceded ’ by the Committee of Council.” (Rev. G. A. Denison, *Church Education, a Pamphlet* [1849], 12.)

“ That in the nineteenth century of our redemption, here, in England, a department of the civil power should forget God, and do dishonour to Christ, by proclaiming openly that the ministers of Christ are no longer fit to be trusted, solely and exclusively, with the education of His people ; that they must be watched and interfered with, checked and thwarted, in the discharge of that duty for which they are solely and exclusively responsible before God and man : that it is a mistake to suppose, as has been supposed for eighteen centuries, that all education is religious.” (Rev. G. A. Denison, *Church Education Meeting, Feb. 12, 1850.*)

“ The schoolmaster was as important to the clergyman as his curate. . . . Thus it is, that the original terms of the Society leave it free to the promoters of schools to make the clergyman the main organ of the schools ; to give to him the power of appointing or excluding the masters if he pleased.” (Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, Canon of Westminster, *at the Meeting of the National Society, June 6, 1849.*)

“ The parish school of the English Church is the nursery of Catholic truth and Apostolic Discipline.” (Rev. G. A. Denison, *Church Education, a Pamphlet* [1849], 35.)

“ They were anxious to affirm the great principle of the right

of the Church to unconditional assistance in the matter of education, and he trusted that the Church was roused to a sense of its duty and would never lay down its arms until it obtained the victory." (Joseph Napier, Esq., M.P., at *Church Education Meeting, Feb. 12, 1850.*)⁴⁸

These extravagant pretensions deepened the alarm with which Congregationalists and other Nonconformists regarded the rapid increase of the grants for the building and maintenance of elementary schools. Nor was the alarm diminished by the fact that in the National Society itself the claims which were asserted by Archdeacon Manning, Mr. Denison, Dr. Sewell, and Mr. Napier, were opposed by a large and powerful minority, for it was apparent that even under the "management clauses" of the Privy Council the parish school would be part of the equipment of the parish church, and the parish schoolmaster would be practically under the absolute control of the parish clergyman. The scheme of the Privy Council was regarded by large bodies of Dissenters as a scheme for extending and strengthening the Established Church. Nor, in the presence of the immense political power of the clergy, who were supported by the united strength of the Conservative party, and who were regarded with terror by the leaders of the Whigs, did it seem possible to secure any more equitable system for the distribution of the annual grants. The Congregationalists, therefore, became increasingly hostile to any interference on the part of the Government with the education of the people. Relying on the statistics of Mr. Edward Baines, they believed that voluntary effort was equal to the task of meeting the educational wants of the country; and they were convinced that every plan for granting State aid to popular schools would

⁴⁸ Mr. Gladstone was a member of Lord Aberdeen's Government, and was suspected of "heresy" on the education question. The resolution to oppose his election for the University of Oxford in 1852 was taken at a meeting of the National Society. Archdeacon Denison wrote from Mr. Dudley Perceval's Committee Room,— "It should, I think, have been sufficient to ascertain and fix a Churchman's vote, to see Mr. Gladstone in the same Committee of Council with Lord John Russell and Lord Lansdowne; who, as they sit in the Cabinet, nominally without office, but in effect as joint Ministers of public instruction, will have ample leisure, and be the better enabled to devise and mature a scheme for employing the power and influence of the Coalition Government to undermine, and finally to destroy by law, the parochial system of the Church of England." In Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest*, 165; from G. A. Denison, *Notes of My Life*, 101.

be a fresh endowment of the English Church, and a fresh encroachment on religious liberty.⁴⁹

V

Some eminent men, indeed, held fast to the belief that the education of the people does not lie beyond the true province of the Government. This position was maintained with great energy by Dr. Vaughan, of Lancashire College, in *The British Quarterly Review*, by Mr. Henry Rogers, of Spring Hill, in *The Edinburgh Review*, and Mr. Binney.⁵⁰ Many of the younger Congregationalists were wholly dissatisfied with the theory that the State has no other function than to protect the subject against force and fraud. They had taken their degrees at the London University, which was partly supported by a Parliamentary grant; they had no scruples to prevent them from looking at the pictures in the National Gallery, or from working in the Reading-Room of the British Museum. They were quite clear that it was no part of the duty of the State to teach religion; but they were also quite clear that it was no necessary and permanent part of the duty of the Church to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. The Church had created hospitals, and had taught Europe to care for the sick; when the lesson was learnt, the Church had ceased to maintain hospitals of its own, and left their support and management to the general community. The Church had created schools for giving secular as well as religious instruction; but if the nation had learnt to care for education, the Church, liberated from a task which had been a severe strain on its resources, might leave to the nation the support and management of schools for giving secular instruction, and devote all its strength to the evangelisation and religious instruction of the people.

These considerations were powerfully enforced by the

⁴⁹ See extracts in Shuttleworth, *Public Education*, 25-26, representing the opinions of Nonconformist bodies; E. Baines, *Life of Edward Baines*, 330-331; and *Crosby Hall Lectures on Education*, by Mr. Baines and others, directed to show "That it is neither the duty of Civil Government, nor would it be for the interest of its subjects, to make legal provision for the education of the people," *ibid.*, 141. Both Mr. Edward Miall and Mr. Henry Richard were among the lecturers.

⁵⁰ Shuttleworth, *Public Education*, 27-29, 47-50, and notes.

extreme difficulty of maintaining voluntary schools,⁵¹ especially in country districts, in the presence of schools which were aided by the State. The Church of England, the wealthiest of denominations, with an endowed clergy, received grants to enable it to build its schools, and grants to enable it to maintain them. The village Congregationalists, few of them with a larger income than that of the village carpenter or the agricultural labourer, unable to raise the small salary of their minister without aid from a County Association, would have generally found it difficult to build a school, even with the aid of a building grant, and still more difficult to make the school efficient, even with the aid of an annual grant for maintenance. Without the grants no school was possible to them. Even in large towns the maintenance of efficient day schools, where the grants were refused, became an intolerable burden. Some congregations maintained the struggle; but many more abandoned it, and their schools were closed.

With a curious inconsistency, large numbers of Congregationalists who were theoretically opposed to Government interference with education, continued to sit on the Committees of "British" schools, and to subscribe to their funds, although they received Government aid. But even "British" schools, in country districts, found it hard to live. The fees and the grants did not nearly cover the cost of maintenance, and the squires and wealthier farmers gave their contributions—though not on a very generous scale—to the clergyman of the parish.

Was it not possible to create a system of schools, supported by local rates, and managed by local committees elected by the rate-payers, for imparting secular instruction only, leaving religious instruction to be provided by parents and the Church? This question was raised by the Lancashire Public School Association,⁵² which was founded in Manchester in 1847, twenty years before the foundation in Birmingham of the National Education League. Mr. Cobden gave to the new movement

⁵¹ Before 1870, "voluntary schools" were schools built and maintained without Government aid. Since 1870, the name has been usurped by schools which were partly built and are largely maintained by Government grants, and which are filled with children by a law of compulsory attendance.

⁵² In 1850 the Association changed its name to that of "The National Public School Association." Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest, 151-152*.

his powerful support. In its general outlines it had the approval of Dr. Vaughan and some other eminent Congregationalists. Several Bills, varying in their details but constructed on the general principles of the Association, were submitted to Parliament, but they were all defeated. The "religious difficulty" seemed insuperable. In the debate on the Bill of 1850, Lord Arundel exclaimed, "The two armies are drawing up their forces, and the battle is now between religion and irreligion, the Church and infidelity, God and the devil, and the reward for which they must contend is Heaven or Hell."⁵³

Many Congregationalists still believed that education is incomplete without religious instruction—which is true; and that religious instruction should be given (1) by the school-master, and (2) in the day schools—both of which propositions are disputable. While they held these convictions it was impossible for them to consent to any system of education originated or aided by Parliament. They thought that secular schools were condemned by the spirit and principles of the Christian faith; and they thought that schools in which religious instruction was given ought not to be aided by the State.

The passing of the Reform Bill of 1867 compelled men of all parties to reconsider their position. Mr. Lowe, who had been one of the most strenuous opponents of the Bill, condensed into an epigram the irresistible reasons created by the enfranchisement of a million of working people for dealing vigorously and promptly with the educational deficiencies of the country; he insisted that the time had come to "educate our masters." The new voters themselves regarded with impatience and resentment a system which practically made the provision of elementary schools dependent on the charity of the Churches, and they were eager and earnest in demanding that efficient schools should be established wherever they were required.

Early in 1869 the National Education League was founded in Birmingham. Mr. Dixon, one of the members for the Borough, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings, who were taking a leading position in the Town Council, Mr. Bunce,

⁵³ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, cx. 450.

the editor of *The Birmingham Daily Post*, with Mr. William Harris, one of the ablest of the leaders of the Liberal party in Birmingham, and Mr. J. Skirrow Wright, for many years President of the Liberal Association, were its most important members. The League was established on the following basis :—

OBJECT

The establishment of a system which shall secure the education of every child in the country.

MEANS

1. Local authorities shall be compelled by law to see that sufficient school accommodation is provided for every child in their district.

2. The cost of founding and maintaining such schools as may be required shall be provided out of local rates, supplemented by Government grants.

3. All schools aided by local rates shall be under the management of local authorities, and subject to Government inspection.

4. All schools aided by local rates shall be unsectarian.

5. To all schools aided by local rates admission shall be free.

6. School accommodation being provided, the State, or the local authorities, shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age not otherwise receiving education.⁵⁴

A guarantee fund of £60,000 was subscribed, and great meetings were held in every part of England and Wales. The principles of the League were accepted by the Radical section of the Liberal party with enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which was made more passionate by the fierceness with which it was opposed by the clergy and their political allies. The proposal to empower local authorities to create and to manage schools was a direct blow at the claims of the High Church clergy to be trusted “solely and exclusively” with the education of the people. It was feared that the existing schools, which had to rely in part on voluntary subscriptions, and which had to charge fees, would be destroyed by the Free Schools which were to derive assistance from the rates. The scheme of the League was denounced as irreligious and godless, because it proposed to limit the religious instruction in

⁵⁴ Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest*, 197.

rate-aided schools to the reading of the Bible without note and comment.⁵⁵

The principle of compulsory attendance was attacked with extraordinary vehemence—partly, perhaps, because it was supposed that any interference with “the rights of parents” would be unpopular. The principle was denounced as “un-English.” Tory magistrates declared that if a law compelling parents to send their children to school were passed, they would never convict the parents that disregarded it. But “the rights of the children” proved to be a better cry than “the rights of the parents,” and in the great towns the orators of the League were never surer of tumultuous applause than when they insisted that every English child had a right to education, and that the right should be protected by law.

To resist the agitation of the League, which rapidly became formidable, the friends of denominational education founded the National Education Union, which had the support of the bishops, the clergy, and the whole of the Conservative party.

The overwhelming majority of Congregationalists accepted the general principles of the League; though a considerable number remained doubtful about the expediency and even the justice of abolishing school fees. Mr. Edward Baines, whose zeal for religious education in day schools made him regard the Birmingham movement with alarm, joined the Union; and there were several of the oldest and most distinguished ministers and laymen connected with the Congregational Churches who shared his apprehensions, though they shrank from associating themselves with the party to which both in general politics and in the special question of popular education they had always been opposed.

Towards the end of 1869, Mr. W. E. Forster, the Vice-

⁵⁵ In 1872 the League gave up its “unsectarian” platform. The compromise it had offered had been rejected, and it adopted the following declaration—“In all schools provided by School Boards out of local rates, periods entirely separate and distinct from the time allotted to ordinary school-teaching may be set apart for religious instruction on week-days. Such religious instruction to be given by denominations at their own cost, and by their own teachers appointed for that purpose, but no privilege to be given to one denomination over another. In cases of dispute appeal to be made to the Education Department.” This was the principle of the Irish system. Francis Adams, *op. cit.*, 277.

President of the Council in Mr. Gladstone's Government, saw that if the conflict between the League and the Union were permitted to continue, the excitement would become so hot that it would be impossible to get any Education Bill through the House of Commons. Mr. Forster was not at that time a member of the Cabinet, but he pressed his views with such vigour and resoluteness that though some very eminent members of the ministry believed that the subject was not yet ripe for legislation, he was permitted to draw up a Bill; and on February 17, 1870, immediately after the opening of the session, he submitted it to the House of Commons.⁵⁶

In its original form the Bill provided that the country should be divided into school districts; that the Education Department should have power to determine whether in any district there was a deficiency of public school accommodation; that where a deficiency was declared to exist, twelve months' grace should be allowed to the denominations to supply the deficiency; that if at the expiration of the twelve months the required accommodation was not supplied, a School Board should be created with powers of rating to establish schools; that in boroughs the School Boards should be elected by the Council, and in parishes by the Vestries; that School Boards should have power to remit fees on the ground of poverty, and in special cases to establish Free Schools, the consent of the Department being first obtained; that School Boards should have power to frame bye-laws for compelling the attendance of children between five and twelve years of age.

In its general provisions for the extension of elementary education the Bill was framed on the principles of the League; but the principles were applied timidly and with excessive deference to the interests of the denominations. School Boards were to be established with rating powers—but only where the denominations, after a year's delay, failed to guarantee the supply of the necessary school accommodation. Free schools might be established—but only in special cases, and with the consent of the Department. The attendance of children at school might be enforced—but the powers given to School Boards were only permissive; and where there were no School Boards there was no authority that could compel attendance.

⁵⁶ T. Wemyss Reid, *Life of W. E. Forster*, i. 463-471, 473-477.

The provisions of the Bill in relation to "the religious difficulty" were regarded by the League with deep dissatisfaction, and provoked the earnest resistance of the Congregationalists and of other Nonconformist communities. It contained a "conscience clause"; but whenever a parent wished "on religious grounds" to withdraw his child from any "lesson, instruction, or observance," he was required to send his objection "in writing" to the managers or the principal teacher of the school.

The liberty of School Boards to provide religious instruction, and to institute religious services in Board schools, was unrestricted. A Board, the majority of whose members were Churchmen, was to be free to determine that the masters and mistresses in Board schools should teach the Church Catechism to every child in their schools, whose parents had not sent a written objection to the school authorities. The Boards were also at liberty to grant pecuniary assistance to the denominational schools in their several districts, "provided that such assistance is granted on equal terms to all such schools upon conditions to be approved by the Department." They were also to have power to "pay the whole or any part of the school fees" for poor children attending denominational schools. While the Bill declared that inspectors should, as a general rule, cease to inquire into the religious instruction given in the schools, or to examine the scholars in religious knowledge, it allowed the religious inspection to continue, "with the permission of the Education Department, and on the request of the managers of the school." The Bill made one concession to those who believed in secular schools: it proposed that annual Parliamentary grants might, in future, be obtained by schools which were not in connection with any religious denomination, and in which no religious instruction was given.⁵⁷

The Nonconformist agitation against the proposals of the Government was led by "The Central Nonconformist Committee," which had its offices in Birmingham and was able to secure the hearty support of the leaders of the National Education League. Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, the younger Methodist communities, were almost

⁵⁷ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, cxcix. 438-466. For summary of proposals, see Francis Adams, *op. cit.*, 211-212.

unanimous in protesting against the religious injustice which would be inflicted by the Bill ; and they were supported by a considerable section of the Wesleyan Society. Petitions praying for amendments were signed by an immense number of ministers of all Dissenting denominations ; deputations waited on members of the Cabinet ; and there was a strong belief that Mr. Gladstone, in whose desire to deal fairly with the Nonconformists there was unlimited confidence, would insist on the changes which were demanded. The presence in the Cabinet of Mr. Bright, who made no secret of his objections to several parts of the Bill, was also a ground of hope that important amendments would be conceded.⁵⁸

At the meeting of the Congregational Union on May 16, 1870, after a long discussion, the following resolution, moved by the Rev. J. G. Rogers and seconded by the Rev. Paxton Hood, was adopted, with two or three dissentients :—

“ That the Assembly, cherishing a strong confidence in the attachment of Her Majesty’s Government to the principles of religious equality, recognises in their measure for the advancement of primary education an anxious desire to respect the conscientious convictions of all classes of the people, as shown especially in the proposal to abolish denominational inspection, to admit undenominational schools to the enjoyment of Government grants, and in the application of a conscience clause to all schools in which religious instruction is given ; but, at the same time, is compelled to express a decided conviction that the conscience clause, as at present framed, will prove inadequate ; that the liberty given to inspectors, in certain specified circumstances, to enquire into the religious teaching in Government schools is inconsistent with the principles of the measure ; and that the power entrusted to local boards to determine the religious character of the schools they establish, and to aid denominational schools at present existing, out of the rates, is open to very serious objection. The Assembly has learned with great satisfaction that the Government are willing to reconsider the provisions of the Bill, and hopes they will adopt and carry out such amendments as will secure a satisfactory settlement of the question.”⁵⁹

On the motion for going into Committee on the Bill (June 20, 1870), Mr. Henry Richard moved—

⁵⁸ For the agitation of the Nonconformists and the Education League, see Francis Adams, *op. cit.*, 235-301 ; and *Life of R. W. Dale*, 274-299.

⁵⁹ *Congregational Year Book*, 1871, 27-28

“That the grants to existing denominational schools should not be increased; and that in any national system of education the attendance should be everywhere compulsory, and that religious instruction should be supplied by voluntary effort and not out of public funds.”

The motion was defeated by 421 to 60.⁶⁰

On Mr. Cowper-Temple's clause, which was accepted by the Government,⁶¹ Mr. Jacob Bright moved an amendment to the effect that in rate-supported schools in which the Scriptures were taught, the teaching should not be used or directed in favour of, or against, the distinctive tenets of any religious denomination. Mr. Bright's amendment was supported by 132 Liberals, representing 1,063,579 electors; 133 Liberals walked out of the House without voting; and the clause was carried by the coalition of 121 Liberals (including 25 Government officials) and 132 Conservatives.⁶²

In support of Mr. Walter's motion for the universal establishment of School Boards, 112 Liberals voted against the Ministry.⁶³ An amendment of which Mr. Winterbotham had given notice, that in rate-aided schools “no religious instruction shall be given or religious observances practised other than the reading of the Scriptures,” was not moved, owing to the decision to which the House had already come upon the matter.⁶⁴ Mr. Candlish's motion, that the annual Parliamentary grant should not be made to any denominational school that was not in receipt of the grant at the date of the passing of the Act, was defeated by 190 to 70.⁶⁵

The Government proposed some amendments and accepted others; but the concessions to the Nonconformists were, for the most part, more apparent than real.⁶⁶

1. The conscience clause, imposed on all schools aided by Government grants, was modified. (a) In the amended clause

⁶⁰ *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, ccii. 518, 949.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ccii. 275-276, 648. Mr. Cowper-Temple's clause provided that in “schools hereafter established by means of local rates, no catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught.”

⁶² *Ibid.*, ccii. 1271, 1282. The numbers as given include Tellers. With some others that follow, they are taken from Francis Adams, *op. cit.*, 226-227.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ccii. 1011, 1023.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ccii. 1265.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, cciii. 66, 70.

⁶⁶ Most are contained in Mr. Gladstone's Speech (June 16, 1870), *ibid.*, ccii. 266-285.

a parent is authorised to withdraw his child from any religious instruction or observance without being compelled to state in *writing* that he objects on religious grounds to the instruction or the observance. (b) The amended clause provides that "The time or times during which any religious observance is practised or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the school shall be either at the beginning or at the end, or at the beginning and the end, of such meeting, and shall be inserted in a time-table to be approved by the Education Department, etc."⁶⁷

The *principle* of what is commonly called the "time-table conscience clause" was suggested by the League; but the form in which it was adopted by the Government destroyed its efficiency. The League proposed that if the religious instruction and religious worship preceded the ordinary work of the school, parents should be at liberty to send their children to school after the religious instruction and worship were over; and that if the religious instruction and worship followed the ordinary work of the school, the children should be at liberty to leave before they began. The clause was to be "automatic" in its action. No notice was to be given by the parent that he wished his child withdrawn from the religious instruction or observances to which he objected. But the Act of 1870 requires all children to be present at school during the time appropriated to religious instruction and worship; and it requires the objecting parent to give notice, in one form or another, that he wishes his child to be withdrawn from them. Experience has shown that in this form the clause is almost inoperative. Out of more than 2,000,000 children attending the schools connected with the National Society, only 2,200 asked for total exemption from all religious instruction, and only 5,690 from partial exemption.⁶⁸ As an enormous number of the children of Nonconformists are obliged by the compulsory law to attend Church of England schools, it is obvious that the present conscience clause is practically worthless.

⁶⁷ 33 and 34 Vict. cap. 75, § vii.

⁶⁸ Evidence of the Rev. J. Duncan, Secretary of the National Society, before the Royal Commission on Education. Answer 10,971. The witness implied in another Answer (10,970), that the children whose parents asked for "partial exemption" were exempted on days when the Church Catechism was taught. *Royal Commission on Education, Report, 1886, i. 410-411.*

2. The liberty of School Boards under the original Bill to provide whatever religious instruction and to institute whatever religious services they pleased in Board schools was restricted by the clause proposed by Mr. Cowper-Temple, declaring that "no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught" in any school provided by a School Board.⁶⁹ The clause excludes denominational formularies, but it does not exclude denominational teaching. The great School Boards placed a further restriction on the religious teaching in Board schools by passing bye-laws which direct their masters and mistresses to make no attempt to "attach children to, or detach them from, any particular denomination." But there was nothing in the Act itself to prevent any religious denomination that happened to be in a majority in any School Board District from returning a Board pledged to impress on the religious teaching and services of the Board schools a definite denominational character.

3. The clause enabling School Boards to grant pecuniary assistance to denominational schools out of the rates was withdrawn; but to compensate the denominational schools for this *possible* loss of income, Mr. Gladstone announced that the grants of the Privy Council would be very largely increased.⁷⁰ The advantage which this change gave to the Denominationalists was enormous.⁷¹ Under the original proposal only those denominational schools which were situated in districts where School Boards might be established had a chance of deriving fresh aid from public funds; and in many School Board Districts this aid would not have been given: the Government now pledged itself to give to every denominational school in the country larger aid from the national exchequer. Mr. Gladstone stated that, according to the usual estimate, about one-third of the annual cost of maintaining a school was derived from the grant; one-third from school fees; and one-third

⁶⁹ 33 and 34 Vict. cap. 75, § xiv.

⁷⁰ *Parl. Debates (Hansard: T.S.)*, ccii. 279-282.

⁷¹ In 1870 the voluntary subscriptions were 7s. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per head for every child attending Church of England schools; in 1885 only 7s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; although the cost of maintenance per head had risen from 25s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 35s. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. The school pence had risen from 7s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per head in 1870, to 10s. 8d. per head in 1885; the grant from 9s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per head to 16s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. *Royal Commission on Education, Report, 1886, i. 519, appendix.*

from subscriptions ; the Government proposed to increase the grant so as to make it cover half the cost.⁷²

4. Under the amended Bill the permission granted to Inspectors in special cases to examine in religious subjects was withdrawn.⁷³

5. The "time of grace," during which the Denominationalists might engage to supply deficient school accommodation, and so prevent the establishment of a School Board, was reduced from twelve months to six.⁷⁴

6. The amended Bill enacted that after December 31, 1870, no applications would be received for building grants.⁷⁵ But this limitation acted as a stimulus rather than a check on the extension of the denominational system. In the Report of the Committee of Council for 1870-71 appear the following remarkable statements :—

"In the year 1870 grants were made for building 78 and enlarging or improving 96 schools.

"From the commencement of the operations of our Committee in 1839 to the end of 1870, grants were made for building 5,016 and enlarging or improving 2,319 schools.

"In the year 1870 we received upwards of 5,000 applications for building grants, and, though a considerable number of these applications were not proceeded with, complete memorials were sent in for aid to erect 1,723 new buildings, and to enlarge or improve 1,479 schools. In 28 cases it was doubtful whether the applicants wished to enlarge or rebuild. Of these 3,230 applications, no fewer than 3,111 were received between the 1st of August and 31st of December, and the great majority in the last two months of the year."⁷⁶

The National Society estimated that four-fifths of the applications were on behalf of Church schools. In a very large number of cases the schools were not built till many years later ; but the object of the clergy was accomplished ; they kept the education of large districts of the country in their own hands, and prevented the establishment of School Boards.

The settlement was regarded by the great majority of Congregationalists not only with disapproval, but with resentment. A strong resolution condemning it was passed at the meeting

⁷² *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, ccii. 280.

⁷³ 33 and 34 Vict. cap. 75, § vii. 3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, § 10.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, § 96.

⁷⁶ *Report of the Committee of Council on Education, 1870-1871*, xix.

of the Congregational Union at Plymouth in October (1870), and the following passage occurred in the Report submitted to the Annual Assembly in the following May (1871):—

“ Your Committee have in the course of the past year deliberated and given judgment on several of the great questions of the day. The Elementary Education Bill was in their opinion a striking instance of the influence of an Established Church in vitiating the legislation of the country, and they did their utmost, during its *urgent* progress through the House of Commons, to purge it of the evil leaven of denominationalism which, in the interests of the Established Church, had been introduced into it. At the last Annual Meeting a hope was expressed, by resolution, that the Government would adopt such amendments of the Bill as would secure a satisfactory settlement of the question. The Committee, acting in the spirit of this resolution, memorialised the Prime Minister and petitioned the House of Commons against the creation of a new religious establishment under the name of a national provision for the education of the people, and against the extension by State aid of the denominational system of education in any form. They regret to say that they memorialised and petitioned all but in vain. Certain not unimportant concessions were made out of respect for conscience ; but the Bill, when it became law, was an undeniable triumph for those who contend that provision should be made by the State for the religious education of the people. There are many signs, however, that a settlement has not yet been reached, and your Committee are not without hope that their own hands may be stronger, and those of their opponents weaker, in coming conflicts.”⁷⁷

The struggle was now transferred from Parliament to the country. Wherever School Boards had to be elected, Congregationalists were active in promoting the return of candidates who pledged themselves that the religious teaching in the Board schools should not have any denominational bias. In some cases, with complete consistency, they supported candidates who were in favour of making the new schools absolutely secular. They also insisted that the “ Twenty-fifth Clause ” should not be put into operation. This clause enabled School Boards, if they thought fit, to pay out of the school rate the fees of children attending denominational schools.⁷⁸ Singularly enough, this clause had been permitted to pass the House of Commons without an amendment and without a division.

⁷⁷ *Congregational Year Book*, 1872, 25-26.

⁷⁸ 33 and 34 Vict. cap. 75, § 25.

It had been so closely associated with Clause 23 of the original Bill, which enabled School Boards to subsidise denominational schools in their districts, that it had been overlooked in the resistance which was offered to the more important clauses. Indeed, it was the contention of the Nonconformists, that when Mr. Gladstone declared that it was the intention of the Government to strike out Clause 23, and promised that by way of compensation the grants should be increased by 50 per cent., he had distinctly declared that there was to be a complete separation between the Boards and the denominational schools.⁷⁹ But the clause stood in the Act, and there were some School Boards that resolved to use the power which it conferred on them. Before any Board school was built, money derived from the education rate was being paid to the managers of denominational schools. The excitement which this created in some parts of the country was intense. A rate for the support of Church schools was regarded by many Nonconformists as being the old church rate in another form. Some refused to pay, and in default of payment their goods were seized and sold by public auction.⁸⁰

In January, 1872, a great Nonconformist Conference, in which the Congregationalists were largely represented, was held at Manchester, and resolutions were passed strongly condemning the action of the Government.⁸¹ But these remonstrances had no effect. Mr. Forster, the Vice-President of the Council, was not content to leave it—as the Act had left it—to the discretion of School Boards to determine whether they would pay fees to denominational schools; he employed the authority of the Department to induce them to do it.⁸² The Nonconformists broke out into open revolt against the Liberal

⁷⁹ His words were (June 16, 1870), "We shall sever altogether the tie between the local boards and the voluntary schools." *Parl. Debates (Hansard : T.S.)*, ccii. 279.

⁸⁰ The agitation was sufficiently menacing to prevent most of the Boards from using the powers conferred by the clause. The total payments made from the rates to denominational schools in 1872 were a little over £5,000, of which about two-thirds was voted in Manchester and Salford. Lord Sandon's Act (1876) repealed the clause, and required Boards of Guardians to pay the fees of poor children attending any public elementary school. 39 and 40 Vict. cap. 79, §§ 10, 52.

⁸¹ *General Conference of Nonconformists held at Manchester*, January 23-25, 1272, 9-10.

⁸² Francis Adams, *cb. cit.*, 258-259.

party ; and this revolt was one of the principal causes of the Liberal defeat in the General Election of 1874.⁸³

Experience has confirmed the judgment of those who saw in the Education Act of 1870 a heavy blow at religious liberty. It gave an immense impetus to the development of the denominational system. In 1870 the accommodation in denominational schools was for 1,878,584 children ; in 1885 it had risen to 3,398,000. The number of scholars on the registers of these schools in 1870 was 1,693,059 ; in 1885, 2,859,082. The average number in attendance in 1870 was 1,152,389 ; in 1885 it was 2,183,870. The average grant per head in 1870 was 9s. 9½d. ; the additional 50 per cent. was almost secured in 1876, when the grant rose to 13s. 3¼d. per head ; in 1885 it had risen to 16s. 8¼d.⁸⁴

In the Board schools, in 1885, the accommodation was for 1,600,718 scholars—less than one-half of the accommodation in the denominational schools ; the number of scholars on the registers 1,553,066—very little more than one-half of the number on the registers of the denominational schools ; the average attendance 1,187,455 ; and the average grant per head 17s. 7d.⁸⁵

The Liberal Government of 1870 might have arrested the development of an educational system which placed the majority of the schools receiving aid from the State under the power of the clergy ; they might have secured the rapid growth of a system founded on more equitable principles ; but their courage failed them. They were more anxious to conciliate their political opponents than to be loyal to their political friends ; and within four years they had to bear the penalty of their unfaithfulness. That the legislation of 1870, with the supplementary Act of 1876, has enormously extended the area of elementary instruction is a great compensation for the injustice which it has inflicted on Nonconformists. In 1870 the percentage of children on the registers of Public Elementary Schools to the population was 7·66 ; in 1885 it was 16·04 ; and

⁸³ For the history of the education conflict during the years 1870—1872, see the *Annual Register*, 1870, 50–73 ; 1871, 132–133 ; 1872, 36–39 ; T. Wemyss Reid, *Life of W. E. Forster*, i. 471–574 ; Francis Adams, *Elementary School Contest* ; and the references, p. 676, note 58.

⁸⁴ *Royal Commission on Education, Report*, 1886, i. 537 ; and *Report of the Committee of Council on Education*, 1885—1886, ix.

⁸⁵ *Report of Committee of Council on Education*, 1885—1886, ix.

the percentage of the average attendance of the children on the registers had risen from 68·07 to 76·41.⁸⁶

But, even apart from the religious injustice, these great results have been purchased at a heavy cost. Clause 97 of the Act provides that the Code under which the Parliamentary grants are distributed “ shall not give any preference or advantage to any school on the ground that it is or is not provided by a School Board ” ; and the iron rigour of the regulations which are necessary to prevent the abuse of public money when entrusted to the administration of irresponsible school-managers, but which might safely be relaxed when the money is administered by School Boards whose members are elected by the rate-payers, and whose proceedings are open to public criticism, has inflicted, and continues to inflict, serious injury on the education of the country. Those regulations stand in the way of improvement in educational methods and organisation, and they impose an undesirable uniformity on schools which are situated in districts where the social and economic conditions of the population and their educational requirements are very dissimilar from the type that prevails elsewhere.⁸⁷

NOTE A

Education Grants

The history of the educational grants falls into four principal periods.

(1) The first period (1833—1846) falls into two sub-divisions. (a) From 1833 to 1843, the grants, first of the Treasury, then of the Privy Council, were for the building of schools, and for no other purpose. (b) From 1843 to 1846, grants were also made for the building of teachers' houses and training colleges ; and for school furniture and apparatus ; and some special provision was made for supplying the deficiencies in the poorer districts of manufacturing towns. This may be described as the period of *building grants* only.

(2) From 1846 to 1853, the grants were for providing and maintaining the educational *machinery* of schools, as well as buildings.

⁸⁶ *Royal Commission on Elementary Education, Report, 1886, i. 518, appendix.*

⁸⁷ It must be kept in mind throughout that this account of the struggle on elementary education was written before the passing of the Act of 1902, which materially modified the system previously existing.

The Minutes of 1846 provided annual grants for the payment of the stipends of pupil-teachers ; allowances to head masters and mistresses for the instruction of pupil-teachers ; and grants, dependent on the reports of the inspectors, in aid of teachers' salaries. They also established Queen's Scholarships, which were to enable pupil-teachers at the expiration of their apprenticeship to enter a training college for one, two, or three years. The salaries of teachers who had passed through a training college were to be increased by an "augmentation grant," varying from £15 a year to £30, according to the length of time they had remained in the college. The Minutes also contained provisions for the pensioning of teachers (*cancelled* in 1862).

(3) The third period extends from 1853 to 1861. Under the Minutes of 1853 and 1856, capitation grants were made to school managers ; a sum per head was paid for every scholar that had attended school a certain number of times. To obtain the grant, it was necessary that the school should be under a certificated teacher, and that three-fourths of the children should be presented to the inspector for examination. These Minutes made a large part of the grant dependent on the *actual number of children receiving education*.

(4) From 1861 a wholly new principle was introduced. In the preceding periods the grants were (*a*) for buildings, (*b*) for the machinery of education, (*c*) for the number of children under education ; but in Mr. Lowe's Revised Code (1861), though the building grants were continued, grants for the machinery of education were abandoned, and the principle of "payment by results" was introduced—a large part of the grant was made to depend on the number of children that satisfied the inspector at the annual examination. This principle, though varied in details, has—except in the case of infant schools—determined the principal part of the aid given by the Privy Council both to denominational schools and to Board schools ever since 1861.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See *ante*, p. 684, note 87.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

FIRST PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES—MR. SEDGWICK'S ATTACK—FAILURE OF THE EXPERIMENT—THE SECOND ATTEMPT TO FOUND A UNION—MOVEMENT IN DORSET AND IN LONDON—OBJECTIONS TO THE SCHEME—CONFERENCE IN LONDON—GENERAL PROPOSALS—THE PLAN ADOPTED—CHARACTER OF THE UNION AS THEN ESTABLISHED—ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION MODIFIED—THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS.

I

AMONG the many schemes originated by the fervour of the Evangelical Revival was one for the promotion of a general union of Congregational Churches. The Churches in each county were beginning to discover the strength which they derived from their County Associations—would not their strength be still further augmented if all the Congregational Churches in the kingdom were drawn into one great confederation? There were some ardent and sanguine men who believed that such a confederation might found and support colleges for the education of the ministry; establish grammar schools, schools for the education of the children of ministers, schools for the education of the poor; and might raise funds for supplementing the inadequate salaries of the pastors of poor Churches; might have one fund for relieving ministers who were disabled, and another for the relief of ministers' widows and their destitute families; might build chapels; might send itinerant preachers to the parts of England where they were most needed; and might even undertake the maintenance of Christian missions in foreign countries. What was desired was a Union—not for discussion, but for work.¹

¹ See Joseph Gilbert, *Memoir of Edward Williams*, 445-450.

In 1806 the London Board of Congregational ministers passed a resolution approving the formation of such a Union ; a committee drew up a scheme defining its constitution and objects ; and shortly after, the Union was actually established, though its immediate objects were not sufficiently ambitious to satisfy its more ardent friends. It was formed mainly for the promotion of the spiritual growth of the confederated Churches and the evangelisation of neglected villages. Dr. Edward Williams, who was at that time Tutor at Rotherham, preached the annual sermon on behalf of this organisation in May, 1808 ; but he did not altogether approve of some of the objects for which it was founded, and he objected to the scheme of management.²

The scheme was fiercely assaulted in a pamphlet by Mr. James Sedgwick, a barrister,³ who declared that it was “ a most illegal, as well as insulting, violation of the spirit of [the British] Constitution, that any class or order of men in the kingdom, should *dare* to erect themselves into a Society for exterminating doctrines, which in *their* judgment, are unsound, and introducing, by means of agents and emissaries employed for that purpose, a certain system of religious belief, which *they* arrogantly pronounce to be the only true faith.” What made the matter worse, in Mr. Sedgwick’s opinion, was that the men who had “ assumed this sort of sovereignty ” were “ not an enlightened, liberal, well-educated, moderate clergy,” but “ a bloated race of LAY priests, propagating, with importunate and unceasing zeal, doctrines drawn not from that gospel which is the pure fountain of light and life, but from the absurd and irrational institutes of John Calvin, imbibed at second-hand from an Assembly’s Catechism.”⁴ To this zealous defender of the Constitution the organisation had the appearance of a political conspiracy ; and the times were too perilous to allow

² See Joseph Gilbert, *Memoir of Edward Williams*, 451. Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 218, gives May 18, 1809, not 1808, as the date of the sermon. For Dr. Williams’s opinions and objections, see Gilbert, *Memoir of Edward Williams*, 451—453, and Williams’s own pamphlet, published anonymously, and entitled *Thoughts on a General and Explicit Union of Congregational Churches ; occasioned by an Address from the London Committee, to Ministers and Churches of the Congregational Order : in a Letter to the Gentlemen of that Committee.*

³ *Hints to the Public, and the Legislature on the Nature and Spirit of Evangelical Preaching.* By a Barrister. Part the second, 1808.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 172—174.

it to grow in strength until it became formidable:—"It is wise to take precaution while the wind whispers—it may be too late when it roars."⁵

But the Union justified neither the hopes of its founders nor the fears of its foes; it had no vital force, and soon ceased to exist. In 1827—less than twenty years from the date of its foundation—it was decided to merge it in the Home Missionary Society.⁶

II

In the course of the year 1829 "the Necessity of a General Union of Congregational Dissenters" was discussed in Dorsetshire; and within a few months the discussion extended to the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire and Hampshire. A committee appointed by the Dorsetshire Association, "to promote the General Union of the Churches of the Independent Association," addressed a circular to all the County Associations in England and Wales, inviting their attention to the scheme. The members of the committee appear to have shown great energy and zeal in the advocacy of their proposals. They sent letters to *The World*—a newspaper which at that time was the organ of the Congregationalists, and to *The Congregational Magazine*; they wrote privately to influential ministers and laymen in different parts of the country; and, when the opportunity offered, they discussed the subject at meetings of Congregationalists held in the southern counties for other purposes. Other Associations expressed their concurrence in the Dorsetshire proposals, and the plan stirred much interest and enthusiasm. The committee were so eager in pressing their views that they thought it necessary to disclaim "the absurd idea" that it was their wish to make Dorsetshire the centre of the national Union—"as well, *indeed*, might the project have been entertained of establishing a Bank for England in the Isle of Purbeck."⁷ But Dorset, though most active, and at the outset perhaps most zealous, was not alone in the

⁵ *Hints to the Public, and the Legislature on the Nature and Spirit of Evangelical Preaching. By a Barrister. Part the second, 1808, 198; and see ibid., 183 foll.*

⁶ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 323.

⁷ The Rev. James Brown, Secretary of the Dorsetshire Association, in *Congregational Magazine, 1831, 376.*

field. The subject was in the minds of many men. The denominational magazines and newspapers were full of schemes and suggestions.⁸ And during the spring and summer of 1830 “the desirableness and practicability of a General Union of Congregational Ministers and Churches” were under the consideration of a “Provisional Committee,” which included a considerable number of the principal ministers and laymen of the London Churches. The ministers were Dr. James Bennett, Thomas Binney, John Blackburn, Dr. H. F. Burder, John Clayton, jun., J. Dean, J. P. Dobson, Dr. Joseph Fletcher, John Morrison, Andrew Reed, Dr. Robert Winter, Joseph Turnbull. The laymen were Dr. J. Baldwin Brown, Thomas Challis, William Hale, Benjamin Hanbury, W. A. Hankey, J. Remington Mills, Henry Parker, Apsley Pellatt, Thomas Piper, Thomas Wilson, Robert Winter, and William Yockney. Arthur Tidman and Joshua Wilson were the secretaries. All communications for the committee were to be addressed to “Pinner’s Hall,” Old Broad Street—a name which recalls some of the earlier events in the history of English Congregationalism.⁹

III

Although there was a very general approval of the scheme, a considerable number of Congregationalists regarded it with distrust and even alarm. It was alleged that the Union threatened the equality of pastors and the independence of Churches:—

“It is for us to profit by the past. Episcopacy arose out of the presidency of the more influential men in the assemblies of presbyters holding equal rank; and the churches lost their internal

⁸ See *Congregational Magazine*, 1830, 1831, *passim*, and especially 1830, 305–311, 362–365; 1831, 208–213.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1831, 120–122. For Pinner’s Hall, see *ante*, pp. 474, 484. It is unnecessary to dredge up the details of the controversy between the Dorsetshire Association and the London Committee. The two material documents are the Editor’s *Postscript*, *Congregational Magazine*, 1831, 66–68, condemning the action and the circular of the Rev. James Brown, of Wareham, pointing out that the proposal for the establishment of a Union was already in the hands of a committee appointed for the purpose, and urging that the representatives of the Churches must meet in London, not at a provincial centre; and the statement of the Dorsetshire case, *ibid.*, 1831, 373–376. See also Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 348–357.

rights by appealing to the wisdom of such assemblies. Metro-
politans next claimed priority of provincial bishops. Patriarchates
were at length erected; and the pastoral chair of a single church
became, in the end, a throne lifted high in supremacy over all the
churches. Hierarchies have sprung from the most inconsiderable
beginning.”¹⁰

It was alleged that the projected Union would make
the Congregationalists a sect :—

“It is our glory that hitherto we have been no sect. We
subscribe no creed. We submit to no synod or conference. We are
not properly a body. We recognise but two definitions of the term
church. It designates the separate assemblies of believers united
together for the observance of religious ordinances; and it desig-
nates the whole number of the redeemed. We know no intermediate
sense. By courtesy we may speak of the episcopal church, or
the Lutheran church; but we could not arrogate to ourselves
the name of the independent church; it would seem to us to savour
of schism. But incorporation would go far to constitute us a
sectarian church, whether we accept the designation or reject it.”¹¹

The promoters of the Union were most earnest in declaring
their intention to respect the absolute independence of the
confederated Churches, and to prevent the Union from assuming
any “legislative or executive power,” but it was asserted by
the opponents of the scheme that “legislative and executive
power” would necessarily be assumed on the very formation
of the Union :—

“On what principle are the churches to be admitted into union?
Shall every separate society, bearing the designation of an Independ-
ent Church, be entitled to admission? Then how many com-
munities, from which, in our separate state, we have been compelled
by conscience to withhold fellowship, will be incorporated? This
is too startling a proposition to be entertained. But what, I ask,
shall be the rule of admission? What symbol of orthodoxy shall
be proposed? And what tribunal shall be erected to decide the
question of Christian purity? And supposing the Union happily
organised, and every difficulty overcome, is the church once united
to be considered as bearing an indelible character? Is the seal
of incorporation never to be broken? Should error insinuate
itself, or should an unholy ministry be tolerated, what steps shall
the national Union take? Unless we are to give the sanction of
the Incorporated Body to every such case of error or immorality,

¹⁰ *Roffensis*, in *Congregational Magazine*, Feb. 1831, 95.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 96.

an investigation must be instituted, and a court of inquiry must be erected; evidence must be received on the one side, and appeal cannot be refused on the other. In cases also of division . . . I cannot conceive how appeal is to be avoided; should division of feeling issue in the formation of a separate church, such an investigation must take place as shall determine whether the separating community is to be recognised or rejected; that is to say, whether it shall be authoritatively pronounced a true church, or visited with sentence of excommunication."¹²

On the other hand it was urged that the isolation of the Independent Churches of England had enfeebled their evangelistic efforts, and seriously hindered the full and public assertion of their ecclesiastical principles; that the ministers and Churches were ignorant of each other, and that mutual acquaintance would promote mutual sympathy and help; that only by a "Union" could fraternal intercourse be maintained with Congregational Churches and other bodies of Christians in foreign lands; that the Union would procure accurate statistical information relative to the Congregational Churches of England and Wales and of other countries; might assist in the extension of Congregationalism through the British colonies; might not only "inquire into the present method of collecting funds for the erection of places of worship"—a subject which sorely exercised Congregationalists in the early part of the century—but might "consider the practicability of introducing some improved plan"; and might assist in maintaining and enlarging the civil rights of Protestant Dissenters. In reply to the practical difficulty which was pressed with remarkable force in the extract given above, that the Union would be compelled to erect "a court of inquiry" to determine the orthodoxy and the purity of Churches claiming incorporation, it was possible to point to the County Associations, which had maintained a vigorous existence without assuming or exercising any power inconsistent with the independence of the associated Churches.

IV

On January 24, 1831, the London Provisional Committee

¹² *Roffensis* in *Congregational Magazine*, 1831, 284; and see also *ibid.*, 94-97, 158-165, 282-288.

issued a circular to the Secretaries of the County Associations of England and Wales, explaining the objects of the proposed Union and inviting the Associations to send deputies to a meeting to be held in London in the month of May for considering the scheme. Each Association was invited to send at least two delegates, a minister and a layman. Invitations were also addressed to the members of the London Congregational Board and some other persons.¹³

The meeting was held in the Congregational Library, Finsbury Circus, on Tuesday morning, May 10, and, by adjournment, on Friday morning, May 13, 1831. There were present eighty-two ministers and nineteen laymen. Fourteen counties had sent deputies; letters were read from six others approving of the object of the Conference. The associated ministers of Cambridgeshire and of Lancashire sent communications expressing doubts as to the practicability of the project and asking for further information.

The Rev. A. Douglas, of Reading, was called to the chair, and the first resolution, declaring it to be "highly desirable and important to establish a Union of Congregational Churches throughout England and Wales," was moved by the Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, seconded by J. Baldwin Brown, LL.D., of London, and "after considerable discussion" carried unanimously. The second resolution, "That such Union consist of County and District Associations," was moved by the Rev. Dr. Burder, of Hackney, and seconded by the Rev. G. Redford, of Worcester. A large committee was then appointed to draw up "a plan for the formation of the Union," to be submitted to an adjourned meeting on the following Friday.

On Friday the Rev. Joseph Fletcher was in the chair, and the committee submitted the following "plan," which was discussed article by article:—

"I. That it is highly desirable and important to establish a Union of the Congregational Churches *and Ministers* throughout England and Wales, founded on [a full] recognition of their own distinctive principle, namely, the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs; *and therefore that*

¹³ *Congregational Magazine*, 1831, 121-22.

*the Union shall not in any case assume legislative authority, or become a court of appeal.*¹⁴

“ II. That such Union consist of County and District Associations.

“ III. That the following be the objects contemplated in its formation :—

“ 1. To promote Evangelical Religion in connection with the Congregational denomination.

“ 2. To cultivate brotherly affection and sincere co-operation in every thing relating to the interests of the associated Churches.

“ 3. To establish fraternal correspondence with Congregational Churches, and other bodies of Christians, throughout the world.

“ 4. To address an Annual Letter to the associated Churches, accompanied with such information as may be deemed necessary.

“ 5. To obtain accurate statistical information relative to the Congregational Churches, throughout the kingdom and the world at large.

“ 6. To enquire into the present methods of collecting funds for the erection of places of worship, and to consider the practicability of introducing any improved plan.

“ 7. To assist in maintaining and enlarging the civil rights of Protestant Dissenters.

“ IV. To promote the accomplishment of these objects and the general interests of the Union, That an Annual Meeting shall be held consisting, if practicable, of an equal number of ministers and laymen, and that each Association may appoint such a number of representatives as it may deem necessary ; and that the Annual Meeting be held in London, or such other town or city, as may from time to time be appointed ; that at the Annual Meetings of Delegates, every minister and officer connected with any Association, united in the general body, shall be eligible to attend and vote.”¹⁵

A Provisional Committee was appointed, and was directed to obtain the judgment of Congregational ministers and laymen throughout the country on the proceedings of the Conference ; to revise the plan, and then to submit it for adoption at a meeting to be convened in the May of the following year.

This meeting was held in the Congregational Library on Tuesday, May 8, and, by adjournment, on Friday, May 11, 1832. On the first of these days the Rev. William Chaplin, of Bishop's Stortford, was in the chair. There were present

¹⁴ The words in italics were *added* by the Committee to the first resolution adopted by the Conference on Tuesday ; and for the words “ the broadest,” which appeared in the original resolution, were substituted the words in brackets.

¹⁵ *Congregational Magazine*, June, 1831, 370-373.

83 ministers and 25 laymen. Three distinguished Americans, the Rev. Asa Nettleton, the famous revivalist preacher, the Rev. Austen Dickson, and the Rev. Calvin Colton, were received as visitors. The Rev. Noble Shepperd, of Newry, and two other ministers were there as visitors from Ireland, and Pastor Theodore Fliedner as a visitor from Prussia. A layman, Mr. R. M. Beverley, was present also. The Provisional Committee reported that "of the thirty-four counties in England in which there were County Associations, twenty-six were most favourably disposed to the object; four had declined for the present; and from the remaining four no answer had been received."

The Report contained a long and interesting letter from the Rev. Dr. Snell, Secretary of the General Association of Massachusetts, in which, with personal experience of organised church union in his own State, he criticised the draft scheme. He suggested the expediency of limiting the representation of County and District Associations, (1) to prevent the Assembly becoming too unwieldy for the despatch of business, and (2) to secure that the members present at a meeting should represent general and not merely local opinion. For the scheme as a whole he had nothing but sympathy, and the difficulties that made some timid had no weight with him.

After the report of the committee had been approved on the motion of the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, seconded by the Rev. John Burnett, of Camberwell, it was moved by Dr. J. Baldwin Brown, of London, and seconded by Mr. John Brown, of Wareham—

"That in conformity with the following Resolutions of the General Meeting held in this Library, in May, 1831, for the purpose of considering the propriety of forming a General Union of Congregational Churches and Ministers throughout England and Wales,—
THE UNION BE NOW FORMED."

Then followed the resolutions passed in May, 1831, defining the constitution and objects of the Union.¹⁶ In one of these resolutions, however, the Provisional Committee had introduced an important change. In May, 1831, it had been determined that the Union should consist of "County and *District Associations*," and it seems to have been the original intention

¹⁶ See *ante*, pp. 692-693.

of some, at least, of the promoters of the scheme to make the County or District Association the unit of the new organisation, and the Congregational Union an assembly of the representatives of Associations. In the revised resolution, as accepted in May, 1832, it was determined that the Union should “ consist of County and District Associations, *together with any Ministers and Churches of the Congregational Order recognised by an Association.*”¹⁷

This addition changed the whole character of the Union. An Assembly representing the Associations might have consisted of two or three hundred members, with an ordinary attendance of a hundred or a hundred and fifty. It might have originated schemes of work, and maintained a really effective control over their management. From its constitution and limited numbers, it would have had very much of the spirit usually attributed to officials; it would have been practical in its aims and methods, perhaps timid; it would have been impatient of eloquent speeches, and would have listened most eagerly to men who were distinguished for their administrative experience, their knowledge of details, and their sagacity in affairs.

But a Union of “ the *Ministers and Churches* of the Congregational Order,” with an Assembly of eight hundred or a thousand, consisting of ministers and delegates representing individual Churches, is something altogether different. It may project schemes of work, but must transfer the actual control of them to independent committees; if it assumes any responsibility for their administration, it will attempt an impossible task. Many of the troubles of the Union have arisen from the attempt of the Assembly to exercise power for which by its constitution it is unfitted. It is not a Committee or a Council—it is a Public Meeting at which any member of a Congregational Church connected with the Union has a right to be present on the payment of five shillings. Even the “ Business Meeting ” of the Union, which is restricted to “ Representative Members,” is much too large, meets too seldom, and has too little time, for the discussion of details of administration.

The theory that the Union should be a Union of County and District Associations determined the constitution of the

¹⁷ *Congregational Magazine*, June, 1832, 377-381.

first committee; it consisted of the treasurers and secretaries of all the united Associations, together with certain gentlemen resident in London. Mr. Benjamin Hanbury was appointed treasurer; and the Rev. Arthur Tidman, the Rev. Joshua Turnbull, and Mr. Joshua Wilson, secretaries. These gentlemen had held the same offices in the Provisional Committee.¹⁸

V

In the course of a few years the Union discovered that it could not be a Union of "County and District Associations" and also a Union of "Ministers and Churches." Its constitution was revised and greatly modified in 1852, 1866-7, 1871, and to a still greater extent in 1904.¹⁹

Although the change in the constitution of the Congregational Union does not fall within the period of time to which this history is limited, an account, however brief, of an existing constitution is likely to be of more service and larger interest than the account of the organisation that it superseded. And so it may be allowed in this instance to depart from the ordinary plan of the book.

The Congregational Union is a Federation of Congregational Churches. To be included in it, a Church must satisfy the following conditions: (a) It must have a separate roll of members. (b) It must be connected or associated with the Union of its own County, or with the Union of Welsh Independents. (c) It must make an annual subscription to the funds of the Union.

The constitution of the Union makes provision for (a) a Council, (b) an Assembly, (c) a Chairman.

(a) The Council directs the general business of the Union, and presents an annual report of its proceedings to the Assembly for confirmation. It includes (i) as nearly as possible three hundred Representatives, elected annually by the County Unions with which they are connected. (ii) The Chairman, the ex-Chairmen, the Treasurer, and the Secretary (or Secretaries) of the Union, who are members *ex officio*. (iii) Fifteen persons annually co-opted by the members

¹⁸ *Congregational Magazine*, June, 1832, 381.

¹⁹ *Congregational Year Book*, 1906, xviii.-xxv.

defined in (i) and (ii). Of the members so appointed, one at least must be a representative of the London Missionary Society and the Colonial Missionary Society respectively; and, pending a change in constitution, one of the Congregational Total Abstinence Association.

No County Union has less than three representatives; but the larger Unions appoint representatives in proportion to their numerical strength. It is also provided that at least one-half of the representative members elected by the County Unions—and where possible, two-thirds—shall be other than those who are pastors of Churches.

(b) The Assembly includes the following members:—

(i) The members of the Council.

(ii) Ministers of Churches connected with County Unions and subscribing to the funds of the Union.

(iii) Representatives appointed by such Churches, in the proportion of one to every hundred members or part of a hundred, with a maximum limit of four.

(iv) Honorary members, nominated by the Council and appointed by the Assembly, who must be ministers either retired or without pastoral charge; Professors of recognised Congregational Colleges; duly accredited evangelists or lay pastors; duly accredited ministers and representatives of Congregational Churches in the Colonies; or missionaries of the London Missionary Society. Honorary members can speak, but cannot vote, in the meetings of the Assembly.

(c) The Chairman of the Union is elected annually by ballot in the Assembly. Nominations for such office may be made either by the Council, or by a County Union at a general meeting, or by any twenty-five members of the Assembly acting jointly. (The Council elects its own Chairman.)

The following points should be noticed:—

(1) The close relation of the Union to the County Unions, ensured by the election of the representative members of the Council. The arrangement, on the one hand, enlarges the authority and influence of the local organisations; and, on the other, it places the central body in touch with the Churches throughout the kingdom. When the Council speaks or acts, it can be sure of having a force behind it.

(2) The large administrative powers vested in the Council which, acting through committees, can exercise effective control

and oversight as regards both general policy and detailed administration.

(3) The new policy that has come in with the new organisation. For many years, as shown elsewhere,²⁰ the Union carefully avoided incurring any responsibility for the maintenance or direction of the various societies organised to serve denominational interests. Societies once connected with the Union were cut adrift, and left to take their own course in practical independence. But now the tide has turned again. The policy of the last half-century is discarded, and "it is hoped that at an early date the work of the Congregational Church Aid and Home Missionary Society, of the Congregational Pastors' Retiring Fund, and of the English Congregational Chapel Building Society, may be transferred to the Union." It is also suggested that the work of two other societies—the Young People's Union and the Congregational Total Abstinence Association—should be transferred to committees of the Council of the Union.²¹ The policy of the future, it is clear, is to be a policy of centralisation.

(4) As an Incorporated Body—it was incorporated in November, 1902—the Union can now act as trustee for property, whether in chapel buildings or in other forms; and it is making use of its powers. Such an arrangement has some distinct advantages. For (a) it provides an efficient safeguard against loss, alienation, neglect, and the various accidents to which a changing body of local trustees must always be liable. And (b) the trust is permanent. No vacancies are created by death or removal, and the expense and trouble of new appointments are avoided. Against some of the risks and responsibilities that trusteeship might be held to involve, the Union has been careful to protect itself. It does not undertake to erect, maintain, or insure buildings on sites held in trust; it accepts no liability for debts, however incurred; it declines to carry on the work of a Church, or to administer its affairs. But, such restrictions notwithstanding, the effect of the new arrangement must be to increase the power of the central body, and to strengthen its influence, if not its actual authority.

²⁰ See *infra*, pp. 718–720.

²¹ *Congregational Year Book*, 1906, xxi.–xxii.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECLARATION OF FAITH AND ORDER

THE DECLARATION OF 1833 NOT A CREED OR A CONFESSION, BUT A STATEMENT INTENDED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION—MODIFICATIONS IN THE FIRST DRAFT—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE DECLARATION OF 1833 AND THE SAVOY DECLARATION OF 1658—WANING OF CALVINISM—CHANGE IN CONCEPTIONS OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

I

THE Congregational Union was formed and its constitution determined by a vote of the General Meeting of Congregational Ministers and Delegates held on Tuesday, May 8, 1832. Towards the close of the meeting the Rev. John Angell James submitted a paper containing a Declaration of the Principles of Faith and Order of the Congregational Body,¹ which, he said, had been drawn up by “an individual”² at the request of several brethren in town and country. The Declaration was read by the consent of the Assembly. At the adjourned meeting on Friday, May 11, with the Rev. T. P. Bull in the chair, it was resolved unanimously, on the motion of the Rev. H. F. Burder, D.D., seconded by the Rev. Thomas James—

“That this meeting respectfully invite the opinion of the Associated Ministers and Churches on the following questions:—

“Whether, in accordance with the example of our Nonconformist

¹ This phrase—“the Congregational Body”—frequently occurs in the contemporary accounts of the proceedings connected with the formation of the Union and its early history. The phrase was likely to provoke the just suspicion and hostility of those who were zealous for the independence of the Churches. It was alien not only to Congregational traditions, but to Congregational principles. See p. 690.

² The Rev. George Redford. Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 361, note. Stoughton, *Reminiscences of Congregationalism*, 48-49.

ancestors,³ it be desirable to *present to the public* a declaration of the leading articles of our faith and discipline; and whether, if it be deemed desirable, that declaration should be made by such a statement as the following, which has been read, but not discussed, in the meeting of the Union, subject to such modifications as may be suggested, and generally agreed on at the next annual meeting."

It was also moved by Dr. J. Baldwin Brown, seconded by the Rev. Dr. Bennett, and carried unanimously—

"That the Committee be instructed to prepare a letter to accompany the proposed declaration, carefully stating its object to be, the communicating of information to the public on the doctrines generally held and maintained by the Congregational denomination, at a period when so much ignorance and misinterpretation prevail upon these subjects."⁴

At the first meeting of the Union on May 7, 1833, of which the Rev. Joseph Gilbert, of Nottingham, was chairman, the committee were able to report that the Declaration had "met with the general approbation of the Churches," and it was referred to a sub-committee consisting of the Rev. Joseph Gilbert, the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, and the Rev. G. Redford, with the secretaries, for final revision; the sittings of the sub-committee were to be "open" sittings. On Friday, May 10,

³ In 1596 the Congregational exiles in Holland and their brethren in London published, in a small quarto of twenty-two pages, *A True Confession of their Faith*, to clear themselves from "those unchristian slanders of heresy, schism, pride, obstinacy, etc." to which they had been subjected. On September 29, 1658, about two hundred Congregational ministers and "Messengers" met in London, and agreed upon *A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England*. This was the Savoy Declaration. See *ante*, pp. 383-390.

⁴ *Congregational Magazine*, June, 1832, 381-382. In the letter which accompanied the declaration, it is said that such a document "was but little required for our own information, and must necessarily be an imperfect statement of the sentiments held by us, in proportion as it may descend in its application to individuals. Still it was concluded that, for the information of others, not of our denomination, it was essentially requisite, at the present time, when such revolutions of opinion and extraordinary changes are occurring, and also while such misapprehension, and even gross misrepresentation, exist, respecting our real character. It was stated by several brethren, that they were persuaded a very large proportion of our countrymen take us to be either Socinians or Methodists." *Ibid.*, July, 1832, 442.

the sub-committee brought up its report, and it was moved by the Rev. Archibald Douglas, of Reading, and seconded by Mr. R. Law, of London, and resolved unanimously—

“That the Declaration of Faith and Order, as revised by the Sub-Committee and the present meeting, be adopted as the Declaration of the Congregational Body.”⁵

The Declaration, as finally adopted, consists of seven Preliminary Notes, twenty Doctrinal Propositions described as “Principles of Religion,” and thirteen “Principles of Church Order and Discipline.”⁶ It is remarkable that a document covering so large a number of controversial subjects should have passed such an Assembly with so brief a discussion. But it was not a creed to be subscribed by ministers and Churches as a condition of membership of the Union. It was not even a confession of the belief of the ministers and delegates who adopted it. It was simply a statement, “for general information,” of “what is commonly believed” among Congregationalists;⁷ and in one of the Preliminary Notes of the original document the Assembly was pledged to nothing more than its general and substantial accuracy as a statement of fact. This Note, which was cancelled before the Declaration was finally adopted, was in the following terms:—

“It is not to be understood that the particular wording of the following statement has been approved by the whole Body,⁸ but that it is merely the language of an individual, and approved in the main by those who submit it⁹ as a declaration of what is believed and practised throughout the Congregational denomination.”¹⁰

With the exception of verbal amendments, the changes

⁵ *Congregational Magazine*, June, 1833, 377-378.

⁶ For the *original draft* of the Declaration, see *ibid.*, July, 1832, 442-446. The Declaration, as adopted by the Union, was published for the Congregational Union in 1833—*Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters, adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union, May, 1833*. It is published annually in the *Congregational Year Book*: e.g., 1906, 604-608.

⁷ *Preliminary Notes*, 5; *Declaration*, 4.

⁸ *i.e.* of Congregationalists.

⁹ *i.e.* to the Assembly.

¹⁰ *Preliminary Notes*, 5, in original draft of the Declaration. *Congregational Magazine*, July, 1832, 443.

made by the committee of revision were very few, and only two or three of these were of any serious importance.¹¹

In defining the belief of the Congregational Churches concerning God, the draftsman of the Declaration—Dr. Redford, of Worcester—had spoken of “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to each of which *Divine Persons* are attributed the same infinite and immutable properties, perfections, and prerogatives.” He added, “The mode of the divine existence as a *Trinity in Unity* they profess not to understand; the fact they cordially believe.”¹² In the revised Declaration the definition is reconstructed so as to avoid the use of the terms “Divine Persons” and “Trinity in Unity.”¹³

The revisers, while accepting Dr. Redford’s statement that, according to the theology of Congregational Churches, “all mankind are born in sin, and that a fatal inclination to moral evil, utterly incurable by *human*¹⁴ means, is inherent in every descendant of Adam,” appear to have been doubtful whether Congregationalists believed that the fall of Adam “*involved himself and all his posterity in a state of guilt and depravity.*”¹⁵ About the theory of hereditary “depravity” they seem to have been certain; but about the theory of hereditary “guilt” they felt hesitation; and instead of the words italicised, which appeared in the original document, they preferred the vague statement that Adam “involved all his posterity in the consequences of that fall.”¹⁶

¹¹ Clause 7 of the *Preliminary Notes* in the original draft was also dropped. It ran as follows: “They deprecate the use of the following statement as a standard to which assent should be required, though they have no doubt as to the general prevalence of these principles throughout the Churches.” *Congregational Magazine*, 1832, 443.

¹² *Principles of Religion*, iii.; *ibid.*, 443.

¹³ “They believe that God is revealed in the Scriptures as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that to each are attributed the same Divine properties and perfections. The doctrine of the Divine existence, as above stated, they cordially believe, without attempting to explain.” *Principles of Religion*, iii.; *Declaration*, 5.

It would be inaccurate to attribute this change of wording to any Sabellian tendencies; it probably arose from an unwillingness to employ, in relation to the mystery of the divine life, terms which are not found in Scripture, and which are confessedly inadequate.

¹⁴ Dr. Redford had written “finite,” and probably meant it. He wanted to say that no power less than the divine could recover man from sin. *Principles of Religion*, vi.; *Congregational Magazine*, 1832, 443.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, v.; *ibid.*, 443.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, v.; *Declaration*, 6.

Some changes were also made in the definition referring to the Atonement of our Lord and to Justification by faith. Dr. Redford had written that "by His obedience to the divine law while He lived, and by His sufferings unto death, He (our Lord) meritoriously 'obtained eternal redemption for us,' having thereby *satisfied divine justice*, 'magnified the law,' and 'brought in everlasting righteousness.'" As finally adopted, the words in italics were replaced by the words "vindicated and illustrated divine justice."¹⁷ Dr. Redford had written that, according to the belief of Congregationalists—"We are justified through faith in Christ, and that not of ourselves; 'it is the gift of God.'" The revisers preferred to say that—"We are justified through faith in Christ, as 'the *Lord our righteousness*,' and not 'by the works of the law.'" ¹⁸

To the statement that "Christ will finally come to judge the whole human race," they added the important words "according to their works."¹⁹

The change in the article on Justification was probably made in the interest of the traditional doctrine, that God justifies all believers by imputing to them the righteousness of Christ, although the theory of imputation is not explicitly asserted. All the other changes were intended to cover the dissatisfaction with which many Congregationalists had come to regard some of the definitions of the orthodox and Calvinistic theology.

II

The contrast between the Declaration of 1833 and the Declaration of 1658 is very remarkable and instructive. The men who met at the Savoy had been educated at Oxford and Cambridge; many of them had been Fellows of their Colleges; some of them had held high University offices; they were scholars and theologians. It was hardly possible for them to make a declaration of their faith except in elaborate definitions and in the technical phrases which had been tried and tested by the fires of controversy. The men who met in

¹⁷ *Principles of Religion*, x.; *Congregational Magazine*, 1832, 444; *Declaration*, 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xiii.; *ibid.*, 1832, 444; *ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xix.; *ibid.*, 1832, 444; *ibid.*, 8.

the Congregational Library, though there were scholars and theologians among them, were for the most part popular preachers, children of the Revival; the early education of some of them had been imperfect; very few of them had had the leisure for deep research; very few of them had been disciplined to severe accuracy of thought. They cared very little for the subtleties and refinements which had divided Protestant theologians. They were anxious about the substance of Christian truth; they were indifferent—perhaps too indifferent—to the intellectual forms in which it was expressed. The Savoy Declaration was described by the secretaries of the Congregational Union as “almost obsolete,” as “most orthodox,” but “too wordy and too much extended, for the purpose” which the new Declaration was intended to accomplish.²⁰ The differences between the earlier and the later Confessions are partly explained by the differences in intellectual cultivation and intellectual habits which separated the Congregationalists of the seventeenth century from the Congregationalists of the nineteenth.

But only partly. For two generations the Congregational Churches had been gradually drifting away from their traditional Calvinism.

Among the ministers who were present in the Congregational Library when the Declaration was adopted, there were some who “could not be called Calvinists in any proper sense of the designation. Rather, they approached the Arminian standpoint.”²¹ It is probable that a still larger number—perhaps the majority—supposed that they were Calvinists, but had admitted into their creed beliefs which were inconsistent with the fundamental assumptions and characteristic conclusions of Calvinism. They had not consciously and frankly rejected the theology of their ecclesiastical ancestors, but it was no longer the accurate expression of their true faith. When they approached the critical articles of the system they were ill at ease. They clung to the substance of the old faith, but the traditional and authoritative definitions seemed too hard and uncompromising: they thought it possible to express the same truth in a form more tolerable by expressing it more vaguely. They did not know that their Calvinism

²⁰ *Congregational Magazine*, 1832, 442.

²¹ Stoughton, *Reminiscences of Congregationalism*, 53.

was decaying, and that as yet they had found no other system that satisfied them.

There were some vigilant theologians, like Richard Winter Hamilton, of Leeds, who saw clearly the drift of Congregational thought. "I am no accuser," he said, "but I do fear that there is creeping among us a refining method as to the great propoundings of the gospel. The full-blooded dogma of the old school must be revived. . . . Our Congregational Union symbol of faith is to me unsatisfactory and lamentable."²² Hamilton was a man of singularly vigorous intellect, a great wit, an excellent classical scholar, and a learned dogmatic theologian. With a style which sometimes became Asiatic in its ostentatious glitter and splendour, he had a masculine understanding, and was very impatient of vagueness of doctrinal thought and doctrinal statement; and he saw that many of the articles of the Declaration were intentionally vague. They were meant to be Trinitarian, but they wanted the firmness and courage of genuine Athanasianism; a Sabellian who was not too scrupulous might accept them without difficulty. They were meant to be Calvinistic; but the Calvinism was timid, almost apologetic, as if there had been an anxiety on the part of the Union not to provoke Arminian hostility.²³ And this want of theological precision in the Declaration accurately represents the mind of the English Congregational Churches in 1833.

²² Letter to Algernon Wells, quoted by Dr. Stoughton, *Reminiscences of Congregationalism*, 53.

²³ The halting English of Article XIV. probably resulted from the want of firmness and decision in the theology of the revising committee. "They believe that all who will be saved were the objects of God's eternal and electing love, and were given by an act of divine sovereignty to the Son of God; which in no way interferes with the system of means, nor with the grounds of human responsibility; being wholly unrevealed as to its objects, and not a rule of human duty." *Declaration*, 7. Why the revision committee gave the article this form, or what it means, is not very apparent. Dr. Redford had written it differently:—"They believe that all who will be finally saved were the objects of God's eternal and electing love, and were given by an act of divine sovereignty to the Son of God; but that this act of sovereignty in no way interferes with the system of means, nor with the grounds of human responsibility, being wholly unrevealed as to its objects, and therefore incapable of becoming a rule of human duty." *Principles of Religion*, xiv.; *Congregational Magazine*, 1832, 444.

III

Another instructive illustration of the great change which had passed upon Congregational theology since the Commonwealth, is to be found in the article on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Savoy Congregationalists had adopted, with some modifications, the three definitions of the "Sacraments," "Baptism," and "the Lord's Supper," drawn up by the Westminster Assembly. These definitions contain an elaborate theory of the nature and power of the Christian Sacraments, and express the conclusions at which Calvinistic theologians had arrived as the result of protracted controversies with Romanists and Zwinglians. The article in the Declaration of 1833 is very brief. It reads:—

"They believe in the perpetual obligation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the former to be administered to all converts to Christianity and their children, by the application of water to the subject, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'; and the latter to be celebrated by Christian Churches as a token of faith in the Saviour, and of brotherly love."²⁴

The Calvinistic conception of the two Sacraments which had been held by Robert Browne and all the earlier Congregationalists, by John Owen and the great Congregationalists of the Commonwealth, had been abandoned; and no other definite theory had taken its place.

The elder Congregationalists believed—to quote the words of the Savoy Declaration—that—

"Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ to be unto the party baptized a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace; of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life. . . . The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this Ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age, or Infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own Will in his appointed time."²⁵

²⁴ *Principles of Religion*, xviii.; *Declaration*, 8.

²⁵ *Declaration of the Faith and Order*, etc., chap. xxix., 20.

They saw that their conception of the Sacrament might easily be perverted into the coarse, mechanical conception of it which was prevalent in the Roman Church and the English Church, and they therefore inserted the following caution :—

“ Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this Ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it ; or that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated.”²⁶

That they should have thought it necessary to insert this caution is a decisive proof of the objective value which they attributed to the Sacrament.

The Declaration of 1833 makes no attempt to explain the meaning of baptism ; it does nothing more than define its subjects—“ converts to Christianity and their children ” ; its mode—“ by the application of water to the subject ‘ in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ’ ” ; and its “ perpetual obligation.”²⁷

Its account of the Lord’s Supper is, if possible, still more unsatisfactory. It affirms a theory of the rite which leaves absolutely nothing in it but the expression of the subjective religious life of those who take part in it ; it is “ to be celebrated by Christian Churches *as a token of faith in the Saviour, and of brotherly love.*” This is to make it nothing more than the signing of a Confession of Faith, and the singing of a hymn containing expressions of love for the saints. The characteristic idea of a sacrament as a revelation of Christ in a symbolic act, is wholly lost.²⁸

The Savoy Declaration, on the other hand, gives this account of Sacraments in general :—

“ I. Sacraments are holy Signs and Seals of the Covenant of Grace, immediately instituted by Christ to represent *him* and *his benefits*,²⁹ and to confirm our interest in him, and solemnly to engage us to the service of God in Christ according to his Word.

²⁶ *Declaration of the Faith and Order, etc.*, chap. xxix., 20

²⁷ *Principles of Religion*, xviii. ; *Declaration*, 8. For a statement of a theory of baptism which is probably now held by a considerable number of Congregationalists, see the chapter on the Christian Sacraments in R. W. Dale, *Manual of Congregational Principles*, 126-141.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xviii. ; *ibid.*, 8.

²⁹ Not to represent *our* faith and love.

“ II. There is in every Sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental³⁰ union between the sign and the thing signified ; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

“ III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments rightly used, is not confined by any power in them,³¹ neither doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it,³² but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of Institution, which contains together with a Precept authorising the use thereof, a Promise of benefit to worthy receivers.”³³

Of the Lord's Supper the Savoy theologians declare that—

“ I. Our Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in his Churches unto the end of the world—[Why ? As a token of our faith in the Saviour and of our love for each other ? No ; but]—for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth of the Sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him and with each other.”

“ VII. Worthy Receivers outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this Sacrament, do then also inwardly by Faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death ; the Body and Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the Bread or Wine ; yet as really, but spiritually present to the Faith of Believers in that Ordinance, as the Elements themselves are to their outward senses.”³⁴

The transition from the doctrine of the Sacraments contained in the Savoy Declaration to the doctrine of the Declaration of 1833 had been gradual. Early in the present century the traditional theory of the objective element in the Sacraments still survived, but the subjective theory of their

³⁰ Hanbury, *Historical Memorials*, iii. 543, has “ fundamental ” for “ sacramental ”—an obvious misprint, as “ sacramental ” is not only in the original here, but also in the corresponding passage of the Westminster Confession.

³¹ But there is *grace* confessed ; and to “ exhibit ” does not mean merely to “ show,” but to “ administer ” or “ impart.”

³² But there is *efficacy*, of which the Declaration of 1833 says nothing.

³³ *Declaration of the Faith and Order*, etc., chap. xxviii., 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. xxx., 20-21.

meaning was securing ascendancy. Dr. Pye Smith and Dr. Halley frankly renounced the earlier position, and they were followed by the overwhelming majority of the Congregational ministers of the last generation. In more recent years there has been a reaction in favour of the central principle of the Savoy theology, which insisted on the objective value both of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper ; but it is probable that the sacramental article of the Declaration of 1833 still represents the general belief of English Congregationalists.

CHAPTER V

THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

VISIT OF DR. REED AND DR. MATHESON TO THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA—CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN CANADA—APPEALS FOR HELP FROM CANADA AND AUSTRALIA—PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT SOCIETY FOR COLONIAL MISSIONS—THE SOCIETY ADOPTED BY THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION—WORK OF THE SOCIETY—ITS RELATIONS TO THE UNION—THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY; ITS ADOPTION BY THE UNION—THE IRISH EVANGELICAL SOCIETY—THE CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION—CHAPEL BUILDING SOCIETY—PASTORS' INSURANCE AID SOCIETY—THE SOCIETIES SEPARATED FROM THE UNION—PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNION—MAGAZINES TRANSFERRED TO TRUSTEES—HYMNALS ISSUED BY THE UNION—CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY—CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE—THE MEMORIAL HALL—JUBILEE OF THE UNION.

I

AT the meeting held in May, 1832, for constituting the Union a long and cordial letter was read from the Rev. Dr. Thomas Snell, Secretary of the General Association of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts; at the meeting held in May, 1833—the first annual meeting—an equally friendly letter was read from the Rev. Dr. Ezra Stiles Ely, the “Stated Clerk” of the Presbyterian Church of the United States; and the Rev. Dr. Samuel Cox, an eminent Presbyterian minister from New York, addressed the Assembly. Dr. Ely proposed an “interchange of delegates” between the Churches of America and England, and the proposal was immediately accepted.¹ The committee were directed to “make the requisite arrangements for endeavouring to procure two or three brethren to proceed to America, in the spring of 1834,

¹ See *ante*, pp. 693–695, and *Congregational Magazine*, March, 1833, 184–186.

so as to be present at the meetings of the General Assembly in Philadelphia; and also at such meetings of the Congregational Body in New England as they may be able to visit; and to collect and communicate such information as will be mutually interesting respecting the state of religion in both countries.”² Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Andrew Reed, of London, and Mr. (afterwards Dr.) James Matheson, of Durham, consented to undertake what Mr. Reed, in his farewell address, described as “the hazardous service.”³ They sailed from Liverpool in March, 1834, spent several months in the United States and in Canada, and on their return published an account of their journey.⁴ Their report on the religious condition of Canada gave a powerful impulse to the formation of the Colonial Missionary Society a year or two later.

A few Congregational Churches had been founded by emigrants from New England—Churches at Liverpool and Chebogue in Nova Scotia, in 1760 and 1767; at Sheffield, in New Brunswick, in 1762; at Stanstead, in East Canada, in 1816.⁵

In 1770 a house for Congregational worship was hired at St. John's, Newfoundland, and a Mr. Jones, who belonged to a company of artillery stationed in the town, became its pastor. In 1775 he obtained his discharge, and was regularly ordained to the ministry. A chapel was built in 1790; and when Mr. Reed and Mr. Matheson visited the colony, it was under the pastorate of the Rev. D. S. Ward, who had been a student at Hackney College. In 1819 a Church was formed in what were called the Talbot settlements, by Mr. Joseph Silcox, who, before he left England, had been a member of the Church at Frome under the pastorate of the Rev. Timothy East. The Church consisted of fifty-two members; they were scattered over three townships, in each of which a log house or a barn was used for a preaching-station. It was under such conditions as these that a few Congregational Churches were founded in Canada before 1830.⁶

² *Congregational Magazine*, March, 1833, 379.

³ *Ibid.*, April, 1834, 240.

⁴ *A Narrative of the Visit to the American Churches*, by Andrew Reed and James Matheson, 1835.

⁵ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 436—440.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 432—435, 440—442.

In December, 1827, a Conference of Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists was held at Montreal, and it was determined to establish the Canada Education and Home Missionary Society. The principal objects of this Society were to give aid to weak and struggling Churches and to train young men for missionary and pastoral work in the Canadian colonies. Mr. Henry Wilkes, a young man about to sail for England to enter the University of Edinburgh in order to prosecute his studies for the ministry, was a member of the committee; and he was authorised to do his best to induce suitable ministers—Presbyterians, Baptists, or Congregationalists—to emigrate to Canada. He was also authorised to collect money to pay for their outfit and passage money. The final and formal decision on the suitability of any particular minister for colonial work lay with the committee at Montreal; but the powers entrusted to Mr. Wilkes seem to have been practically unlimited: the committee had good reason for relying on his sagacity and zeal. Within a very short time he induced four ministers to go out; the Rev. J. Gibbs, of Banff, became pastor of the Congregational Church at Stanstead in 1830; the Rev. John Smith, of Glasgow, became pastor of Union Church, Kingston, and undertook the charge of two students; the Rev. Richard Miles, who had recently returned from the Cape, formed the first Congregational Church at Montreal; and the Rev. Adam Lillie, who had been a missionary in India but had recently become assistant to the Rev. John Watson, of Musselburgh, settled in Brantford, and became the chief promoter of an institution for the education of young men for the ministry. Mr. Wilkes himself had intended to settle at Toronto, but, through some mismanagement, the negotiation for the purchase of the building in which he was to preach fell through, and he became pastor of the Albany Street Church at Edinburgh. He continued, however, to urge the religious claims of the colonists on the sympathy of the Scotch and English Churches, and he probably did more for Canada at Edinburgh than he could have done at Toronto.⁷

But a young and unknown man, however zealous and able, could, after all, do very little towards providing ministers

⁷ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 446-451.

for a rapidly increasing population, scattered over a vast extent of territory. When Dr. Reed and Dr. Matheson, on their return to England, appeared before the Committee of the Congregational Union, and made their report on the condition of Canada, the committee resolved (Dec. 4, 1834)—“That the claims of the Canadas be brought under the notice of the Directors of the London Missionary Society.” As early as 1811 that Society had sent out the Rev. Duncan Dunbar as a missionary to Canada, and it had recently voted £100 to Mr. Wilkes. In response to the appeal of the Committee of the Congregational Union, they now voted £1,000 to aid in supplying the religious necessities of those British colonies in which the English language was spoken. The money was to be distributed by a sub-committee of the Directors of the Society. Two men were sent out: Mr. William Hayden, who was a Home Missionary in the neighbourhood of Hull, to Coburgh; and Mr. David Dyer, who seems to have been a lay-preacher connected with Barbican Chapel, London, to Hamilton.⁸

About the same time, the Rev. William Jarrett, the pastor of a small Church at Sydney, New South Wales, and the Rev. Frederick Miller, pastor of a Church of sixty-three members at Hobart Town, appealed to the Union on behalf of Australia. The committee decided (Feb. 3, 1835) that as the London Missionary Society had just voted £1,000 for colonial purposes, the Congregational Union could, for the present, do nothing.

But the subject was not allowed to drop. It came up at least three times at committee meetings held in the course of 1835. At a meeting held on November 3, “reference was made to some plans adopted or under consideration, *by committees distinct from the Union*; but no resolution was adopted.”⁹

It was this independent movement that led the committee to take action. The scheme for founding the colony of South Australia was attracting considerable attention, especially among Congregationalists, and several young men belonging to Mr. Binney’s congregation were thinking of becoming colonists. Mr. Binney became deeply interested

⁸ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 440, 457-458.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 459-464.

in the whole question of colonisation ; his imagination was filled with visions of the greatness to which the young nations that were being created by British enterprise and adventure were destined ; he believed that in a century or two they would have immense populations and immense material resources ; and it seemed to him that to endeavour to inspire them in the early years of their history with loyalty to Christ and a hearty faith in those spiritual principles which lie at the foundation of the Congregational polity was one of the most urgent duties of the Congregational Churches in England.

As the Congregational Union hesitated to do anything, and as the London Missionary Society declined to accept any permanent obligations to maintain missionaries and to aid Churches in the colonies, he determined to take action himself. He and a few of his friends determined to establish a Colonial Missionary Society. A Provisional Committee was formed, and a meeting for constituting the Society was advertised for Friday, May 13, 1836.

But the men who were anxious that the Congregational Union, as representing the Congregational Churches of England, should exercise a firm control over all schemes and enterprises depending on the Congregational Churches for support, regarded the project of a separate Society for colonial missions with disapproval. At the meeting of the Union on Tuesday morning, May 10—three days before the date of the meeting advertised by Mr. Binney—it was moved by Dr. Morison, of Chelsea, and seconded by Dr. Matheson, of Durham :—

“ That this Union, having for its first object the promotion of evangelical religion, rejoices in the proposed formation of a Colonial Missionary Society, to establish churches of our order in the British Colonies ; also, that in the opinion of this meeting, the state of religion in our own country requires that the Union should undertake Home Missionary operations ; and that the Committee be instructed to make arrangements accordingly.”

The resolution was opposed by Dr. Redford, of Worcester, and by the Rev. Algernon Wells, who urged that the Colonial Mission should be undertaken by the Union itself, and should be dependent on it. After a long discussion, the Assembly accepted the following amendment, moved by Dr. Ross, of

Kidderminster,¹⁰ and seconded by the Rev. G. B. Kidd, of Scarborough :—

“That a Committee be now appointed to confer with the brethren engaged in the proposed Colonial Mission Committee, and report the result during the present sitting.”

On their return Dr. Brown, the chairman, reported—

“That the Provisional Committee of the projected Colonial Missionary Society have consented to be regarded as a Committee of this Union, and that the Society shall, on Friday next, be formed in consistency with this consent.”

Dr. Morison then moved, and Dr. Matheson seconded, a resolution declaring that—

“It is desirable that the [? a] Colonial Missionary Society be formed in connection with the Congregational Union, and that the Colonial Missionary Society as arranged by Messrs. Wells, Reed, Binney, and Gull, and convened by public advertisement for Friday next, be adopted by this Union accordingly.”

On Friday morning the Union appointed the committee and officers of the new Society; and at twelve o'clock, when the meeting assembled at the Weigh House to constitute a Colonial Missionary Society, it was informed by Mr. Binney that the Society was already constituted. Dr. Morison and Dr. Matheson, who had moved and seconded the resolution of sympathy with the proposal for forming an independent Society, and Mr. Algernon Wells and Dr. Redford, who had moved and seconded the successful amendment, were among the most prominent speakers.¹¹

The first minister sent out by the Society was Mr. Wilkes, who sailed for New York at the end of June, within six weeks after the Society was constituted. He had accepted a call from the Church at Montreal, whose previous pastor, the Rev. R. Miles—according to *The Congregational Magazine* of May, 1836—“having been painfully impressed with the melancholy destitution of the British settlers in the ‘bushes’ of Canada, has nobly resigned the comforts of a city pastorate

¹⁰ Three years later, Dr. Ross went out to Sydney, and under his pastorate the Church in Pitt Street acquired great strength.

¹¹ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 464-467.

that he might go after the neglected settlers in the wilderness." The same magazine states that in taking this step Mr. Wilkes was greatly influenced by the hope of receiving permanent help from the Colonial Missionary Society.

In 1837 the Union again appointed the Committee of the Society; but in 1838 a scheme was adopted under which the Committee were appointed by the Society, while its officers were *ex-officio* members of the Committee of the Congregational Union and the officers of the Union were *ex-officio* members of the Committee of the Colonial Missionary Society. This change made the Society in some measure independent of the Union, though retaining an organic relation between the executive committees of the two bodies.

At the beginning of 1841 the Society reported that it had sent out fourteen ministers to the colonies; that it was sustaining thirty—twenty-four in actual labour and six in preparatory studies; that its agents had erected twenty chapels, and gathered into church communion more than twelve hundred communicants.

II

The same general policy which suggested the endeavour to make Colonial Missions a department of the work of the Union, and which, when the original scheme broke down, secured the retention of an organic relationship between the Union and the Colonial Missionary Society, soon led to another important movement. In 1819 the Home Missionary Society had been founded for evangelising the villages and smaller towns of England. Eight years later—in 1827—the original Congregational Union, then in a very feeble condition, was merged in the new Society. Mr. Thompson, of Pontefract Park, a wealthy member of the Stock Exchange, who was one of the founders of the Society and its Treasurer, served it with great energy, and for a time secured for it a considerable amount of support. But the Society drifted into financial difficulties, and in 1837 it was proposed that the Congregational Union should form a Congregational Home Mission to be conducted by the Union and the County Associations. Prizes were offered for the best essays on Home Missions, and the two successful essays—"Jethro" by Dr. Campbell,

and "Our Country" by Dr. Matheson—attracted very general attention. At the Autumnal Meeting of the Union, held in Birmingham in 1839, it was resolved that the Union should create an organisation for Home Missionary purposes. But in 1840 it was resolved that the Union should adopt the existing Home Missionary Society, and that it should stand in the same relation to the Union as the Society for Colonial Missions.¹²

III

In the same year the Irish Evangelical Society was "affiliated" to the Union on the same terms. This society was founded in 1814 by persons belonging to different religious denominations. Its principal object was to support an Institution in Dublin for the training of Evangelical ministers, which after a few years was closed for want of funds. In 1832 it was revived. The Rev. Dr. Urwick and the Rev. William Haweis Cooper were appointed Tutors, and Mr. Owen Connellan gave instruction to the students in Erse. Mr. Cooper, who was a man of fervid eloquence, came over from Ireland every year to preach for several weeks at Hoxton Academy Chapel, and created so deep an interest in Irish missions that the Institution derived a larger part of its support from the Hoxton Hibernian Association.¹³ Dr. Urwick was also a man who, by his force of character and his power as a preacher and speaker, had a great influence among the Congregational Churches of England.

The association of the Irish Evangelical Society with the Congregational Union was followed by a sharp controversy. A Congregational Union had been formed in Ireland, and it was the wish of a large number of Irish Congregational ministers that the Irish Union should have the control of Irish missions. They resented the interference of the English Union with a Society intended for the evangelisation of Ireland. In their general contention they were supported by Mr. James, of Birmingham—of whose Church Dr. Urwick had been a member—Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow, and Dr. Clunie, of Manchester. On the general question at issue it does not

¹² Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 524—528.

¹³ See *ante*, pp. 603—604.

appear that there was any strenuous resistance to the Irish claims; the Committee of the Congregational Union were willing to concede to the Irish Union the practical control of Congregational missions in Ireland; but the Irish ministers wished to have an unrestricted right to appeal to English Congregational Churches for contributions to the Irish Union. The Committee of the English Union maintained that this would be the cause of great confusion and, perhaps, of ill-feeling; and they insisted that whatever funds were collected from English Churches for Irish purposes should be collected by the Irish Evangelical Society. At a meeting held in Liverpool, in June, 1841, Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, Dr. Wardlaw, Mr. James, Mr. Blackburn, of London, and Mr. Kelly, of Liverpool, proposed terms of adjustment which were accepted on both sides; but the sore feeling of the Irish ministers and Churches was not altogether removed, and for many years they retained the impression that Irish Congregational missions would have been more vigorous if they had been wholly under the control of a committee sitting in Dublin. It is possible that this impression still survives.¹⁴

IV

When the Congregational Board of Education was formed in 1843,¹⁵ it was regarded as an integral part of the Union. The Committee was appointed by the Annual Assembly and was responsible to it. In 1847 it was placed on the same basis as the three Societies for maintaining missions at home, in the colonies, and in Ireland; except that, while the officers of the Union were *ex-officio* members of the Board of Education, the officers of the Board were not *ex-officio* members of the Committee of the Union. This inequality, however, was remedied in 1852.

V

In 1853 there were signs of a decisive change of policy. At the Autumnal Assembly in 1852 a scheme had been submitted and approved for the creation of an English Congrega-

¹⁴ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 528—546.

¹⁵ See *ante*, pp. 661—663.

tional Chapel Building Society. The scheme was remitted to a special committee, which met at Birmingham in December of the same year, and at Derby on March 9, 1853: at the Derby meeting the Society was formally constituted.

In the Annual Report of the Committee of the Union submitted to the Assembly on May 10, 1853, there occurs this significant passage:—

“Your Committee cheerfully undertook the expenses involved in originating this Society, in the hope of repayment at an early day. At the same time they deliberately declined to be responsible in future for its movements, or in any way to stand connected with its operations, beyond that of friendly, affectionate concern, believing, as they do, that while *the Union should aid, according to its ability, in forming Societies intended for our denominational advantage, it is in every way desirable that your organisation should not exert any controlling power over their operations, but leave them at perfect liberty to pursue their own plans without the influence of any centralising power.*”

VI

In the same year—1853—The Congregational Pastors' Insurance Aid Society was founded on a plan approved by the Autumnal Assembly; but this, too, was to be without any organic connection with the Union. For some years, however, both the Chapel Building Society and the Pastors' Insurance Society were expected to submit to the Union an annual report of their proceedings.

VII

It was now becoming apparent that the Assembly of the Union was too large, and the time at its disposal too brief to allow it to exercise any real control over the “affiliated societies.” If the annual reports had been sufficiently long to enable the Assembly to form any trustworthy judgment on their policy and efficiency, and if after the reports had been read they had been seriously discussed, the Societies would have occupied nearly the whole time of the May and Autumnal Meetings, and would have excluded the consideration of other subjects in which many of the members of the Union were keenly interested. To prevent the Assembly

from becoming impatient, the Reports were usually condensed into a few paragraphs, and were, therefore, uninteresting and worthless. Even if the Union had cared to interfere with the proceedings of the Societies, it could only have given advice ; it had no authority to enforce its decisions. It could not change the constitution of the committees by which the business of the Societies was conducted ; nor could it dismiss or elect any of the secretaries. The responsibility for societies which it could not govern caused considerable irritation. In the case of the Congregational Board of Education there was a special cause of dissatisfaction. There were members of the Union who believed that Congregationalists were making a grave mistake in resisting all Government interference with elementary education, and who therefore disapproved of the principle on which the Board was constituted.

In May, 1858, a Special Committee was appointed to consider the connection between the Union and the Societies ; and at the Autumnal Meeting at Cheltenham, in October, the Committee recommended that with the concurrence of the Committees of British Missions and of the Board of Education the arrangement which made their officers *ex-officio* members of the Committee of the Union and the officers of the Union *ex-officio* members of the Committees of the Societies, should be terminated ; and that the three Societies for British Missions, the Board of Education, the English Congregational Chapel Building Society, and the Pastors' Insurance Aid Society, should be released from all obligation to present any statement or report of their proceedings to any meeting of the Union. The Committee also recommended that in future any Societies the Union might originate should stand in only a friendly relation to it and should not be " subject, in any degree, to legislative control or official interference." The recommendations were unanimously approved ; and the principle on which they were based has governed the policy of the Union from 1858 to the present time (1891).¹⁶

VIII

In another case the Union followed the same policy that it adopted in dealing with the denominational societies. In

¹⁶ *Congregational Year Book*, 1858, 44-45, 58-61. But see p. 698.

1844 it determined to publish a periodical entitled *The Christian Witness*, and to make it the official organ of the Congregational body. Dr. Campbell, who had not yet withdrawn from the ministry, was appointed editor, and he also took charge of *The Christian Penny Magazine*, more popular in character, and in its scope more closely confined to questions of faith and conduct. The experiment cannot be said to have proved successful. The editor was a man of boundless vigour, of restless and untiring energy. While responsible for the management of the official publications, he also conducted a periodical of his own—*The British Banner*, in which he impeached and pilloried any deviation from what he held to be evangelical orthodoxy. It was an impossible position. Many men resented the criticism that appeared in the periodicals for which the Union was responsible, and which it was supposed to control: they resented still more bitterly the utterances of the official editor when he wrote as a free-lance in the *Banner*. On more than one occasion the Union found itself dragged into hot debates over the management of its official publications; and at last, without condemning the editor, they decided to hand over the two magazines to a separate body of trustees.¹⁷

IX

In preparing and publishing a hymn-book for the use of the Churches, the Union did not meet with the same difficulties; and they were able to maintain a more consistent policy. During the earlier years of the nineteenth century Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns were in general use among the Congregational Churches throughout the kingdom. They had long since ceased to be regarded as an innovation, and had become a part of the established order. But the time came when the fate that had overtaken Patrick overtook Watts in turn.¹⁸ His voice was the voice of the past—there were new thoughts, new emotions, that he did not express, or that he expressed inadequately; preachers had adapted their sermons to the

¹⁷ Stoughton, *Religion in England* (1800—1850), ii. 280—82. Waddington, v. (1850—1880), 12—17, 182. *Congregational Year Book*, 1858, 8—16, 38—40.

¹⁸ See *ante*, pp. 509—510.

changed conditions of the time—they spoke to the new generation in its own tongue of “the mighty works of God.” It was natural—it was inevitable—that worship should follow the same law.

At the meetings held in 1833 the Union resolved to issue a supplement to Watts’s Psalms and Hymns. Watts was not to be dethroned; but he was to reign alone no longer. Three years later, in 1836, the new book—*The Congregational Hymn-Book*—was issued under the editorship of Josiah Conder. It made its way steadily; and by 1844, 90,000 copies had been sold. In that year it was reprinted, with a few changes in the earlier versions. In 1855 a fresh demand was made. Some congregations had expressed an opinion that one book would be better and more convenient than the combination of Dr. Watts and a supplement; and the Union decided that a new book should be prepared, which “should include all the poetical compositions of Watts best adapted to congregational worship, and such other superior hymns and psalms as the language could supply.” In accordance with the resolutions of the Union, *The New Congregational Hymn-Book* was prepared by a committee—perhaps by two—and was issued in 1859. More than 120,000 copies of it were put in circulation in less than two years.¹⁹ A supplement was called for in the early seventies; and the Union took the matter up—“with a reluctance,” they say, “that they do not care to disguise.” But as the Union had already published a hymnal, it might reasonably be expected to make improvements in it from time to time, “to secure its property, and to prevent undue multiplication of hymn-books.” On this occasion, the committee to whom the work was entrusted, in their anxiety to make the book complete and serviceable, placed the first draft of it in the hands of “a number of pastors and others, whose tastes and studies made it desirable that they should be consulted.” As a result, there was discussion and delay; but the book at last appeared in 1873.²⁰

After an interval of years dissatisfaction again made itself felt. The existing collections, it was urged, were out of date. Many of the hymns included in them were never

¹⁹ *Congregational Year Book*, 1860, 22; 1861, 15; 1862, 27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1872, 23–24, 30; 1874, 6. Julian, *Hymnology*, 256–261.

used in public worship ; and it did not include noble hymns with which the Church had been enriched of late years. In some cases, too, it was felt that the original text had been handled with a freedom that set editorial ethics at defiance.

The Union, again with reluctance, determined to issue a new hymnal, but without withdrawing the book at that time in use. The Rev. George Barrett, of Norwich, was appointed editor, with an advisory committee to help him. But the editor had the last word ; and to his knowledge and skill the success of *The Congregational Hymnal* is largely due ; though the services of E. J. Hopkins, Mus. Doc., who was responsible for the musical part of the book, should not be overlooked. The Hymnal, including a selection of chants, anthems, and litanies, was published in 1887, and by December, 1905, the sale had amounted to nearly 1,500,000 copies. A mission hymn-book issued a little later, and a Sunday-school hymn-book published ten years earlier, have had sales of 250,000 and 800,000 copies respectively.

X

In 1833 the leaders of the London Congregational Churches came to the opinion that they must have a central meeting-place of their own. Dr. Williams's Library, which had served the Three Denominations for many years, was in the hands of "Presbyterian" trustees ; and though the trustees were willing that the building should still be used by the representatives of the orthodox Churches, the associations of the place led to the refusal of their offer. To meet in the rooms of the London Missionary Society in Austin Friars, it was felt, would have been an unwarrantable encroachment, as that Society at that time was strictly undenominational. And yet it was unseemly that the Congregational Board and other similar societies should be forced to frequent taverns and coffee-houses, for lack of better accommodation.

It was resolved, therefore, to establish a Congregational Library, with rooms attached to it that would house the societies of the denomination. A building in Blomfield Street was bought, that had been a concert-room. It was adapted to its new purposes ; and by degrees, mainly through the activity of the Rev. John Blackburn, Joshua Wilson, an

Benjamin Hanbury, a collection of books relating to the history of the denomination was got together.²¹

XI

The year in which the Congregational Library was acquired also saw the establishment of the Congregational Lecture. In its origin the Lecture was closely associated with the Library, and the first course was delivered in that place. The foundation was designed "to illustrate the evidence and importance of the great doctrines of revelation, to exhibit the true principles of philology in their application to such doctrines, to prove the accordance and identity of genuine philosophy with the records and discoveries of Scripture, and to trace the errors and corruptions which have existed in the Christian Church to their proper sources, and by the connection of sound reasoning with the honest interpretation of God's holy word, to point out the methods of refutation and counteraction." The first lecturer, Dr. Wardlaw, took for his subject "Christian Ethics." He was succeeded by Dr. Vaughan, who at that time was minister of a Church in Kensington, and Professor of Ancient and Modern History in University College, London. Other lecturers in the same series were Mr. Gilbert, of Nottingham, Dr. Henderson, and Dr. Redford. After 1860 the series, which had not been continuous throughout, was closed.²² In 1873 a fresh start was made. The Union itself appointed lecturers and assigned subjects, and, to mark the change, the Lecture was now entitled "The Congregational Union Lecture." Mr. Henry Rogers, then living in retirement, was the first to hold office; and his book on *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible* was published in that capacity. It was understood from the outset that the state of his health would not allow him to stand the strain of delivering his lectures before a public assembly; but they were written as if they were to be actually delivered; and in writing, he had an imaginary audience before him

²¹ Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 351—353; Stoughton, *Religion in England* (1800—1850), ii. 102—103; *idem*, *Reminiscences of Congregationalism*, 27—30.

²² Stoughton, *Religion in England* (1800—1850), ii. 130—133. Waddington, iv. (1800—1850), 353.

instead of an imaginary reader.²³ The precedent was followed by his successor in the lectureship, the Rev. Dr. Reynolds, who took as his subject "John the Baptist." The other lecturers in the series—Dr. Mellor, Dr. Guinness Rogers, Dr. John Brown, Dr. Eustace Conder, Dr. Cave, and the author of this history—delivered their lectures at the Memorial Hall. After a few years, the new series, like its predecessor, came to an end; and the lectureship is at present in abeyance.

XII

The reference made above to the Memorial Hall recalls the fact that the Union had now secured a more spacious and worthy home. At the autumnal meetings held in Birmingham during October, 1861, Mr. Joshua Wilson laid before the Assembly various proposals for commemorating the bicentenary of the ejection of 1662. He suggested that a fund should be raised to build fifty new chapels in the larger towns of the kingdom, and a Congregational Hall in London that might serve as a centre of administration and a place of conference. The scheme was adopted, and funds were raised to carry it out. But for many years the new chapels engrossed interest and energy; and the project for erecting a Hall made no way. At last action was taken. A site was bought in New Earl Street, which was sold again. About the same time the Metropolitan Railway Company paid £8,530 for the Congregational Library—a substantial addition to the funds available for meeting the cost of a new building. Another site was then secured in Farringdon Street, once occupied by the Fleet Prison; and the foundation-stone was laid on May 10, 1872. Mr. J. Remington Mills, Mr. Samuel Morley, and others, carried the plan through; and the Memorial Hall was completed and opened on January 19, 1875. The total cost was £75,520, including £28,000 for the site.²⁴

The Memorial Hall has now become the headquarters not of the Congregational Union only, but of all the various societies associated with Congregationalism. The Library is housed there; and since the transfer has been enlarged by

²³ Henry Rogers, *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, lviii.-lix.

²⁴ *Congregational Year Book*, 1862, 60-72; 1867, 37-44; 1868, 32-33; 1873, 36-38; 1881, 51.

important additions, especially by the bequests of Mr. Joshua Wilson and the Rev. T. W. Davids, of Colchester ; and under the care of the Rev. T. G. Crippen, the Librarian, it is becoming every year a more complete and valuable collection of the literature relating to the history of English Nonconformity.

XIII

In the year 1881-2 the Congregational Union celebrated its Jubilee. The occasion was commemorated at the Autumnal Meetings, held in Manchester, and courses of lectures and addresses dealing with the principles of the Congregational polity and its progress were delivered in every part of the kingdom. A special fund, which amounted ultimately to £400,000, was organised to strengthen the position of the Churches, and to enable them to undertake new work. The greater part of it was applied in the districts where it was raised, to remove existing debts on chapels and colleges. But a large sum was voted to the Home Missionary and Church Aid Society ; and the Congregational Union had several thousand pounds placed at its disposal for general purposes.²⁵

²⁵ *Congregational Year Book*, 1882, 17 ; 1886, 21.

CHAPTER VI

INSTITUTIONS AND ENTERPRISES OF MODERN CONGREGATIONALISM

- (1) COLLEGES: PROPOSALS FOR REFORM—THE “SENATUS ACADEMICUS”
—RISE AND EFFECT OF THE NEW UNIVERSITIES—MANSFIELD
COLLEGE AND THE RETURN TO OXFORD—(2) SCHOOLS: CATER-
HAM—SILCOATES—MILTON MOUNT—(3) HOMERTON COLLEGE—
(4) SCHOOLS IN WHICH CONGREGATIONALISTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH
OTHER CHURCHES—(5) CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETIES—(6) CHAPEL
BUILDING SOCIETIES—(7) PROVIDENT AND BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES
—(8) SETTLEMENTS, LARGELY, BUT NOT WHOLLY, CONGREGA-
TIONAL.

TO include in a work of this kind any detailed account of the various enterprises and organisations associated with the Congregational Churches, or originated by them, would be impossible. All that can be attempted is to deal, and that briefly, with the various types and classes of institutions and to indicate their general character and aim.

I

An account of the Colleges established to train students for the ministry of the Congregational Churches has been given in a previous chapter.¹ But the changes of the last sixty or seventy years should be recorded.

In London the three foundations of Homerton, Coward, and Highbury (or Hoxton) were united in 1850 to form New College; and in the following year the institution was removed to new buildings in St. John's Wood. Hackney College was not included in the scheme of amalgamation, and retained a separate existence. But in 1887 it was transferred from its earlier home to Finchley Road; and of late years, by mutual agreement, the two Colleges have combined their

¹ See *ante*, pp. 593 foll.

professorial staffs for some subjects of instruction. In Yorkshire the two Colleges at Airedale and Rotherham were amalgamated in 1888 to form the Yorkshire United College at Bradford. In Lancashire the College established at Manchester still occupies the buildings of which it took possession in 1843, but enlarged by important alterations and extensions in 1876. Western College has been removed from Plymouth to Bristol, and united with the Theological Institute established there in 1863.² That Institute, like the similar foundation at Nottingham, which dates from the year 1861, was designed for students of a special type who wished to give less time to literary studies than was given in the Colleges, and to place theological instruction and practical service in the foreground of their preparatory work.

These changes must not be regarded as casual or fortuitous : they are the outcome of a policy more or less definitely planned, and followed out with some measure of consistency. For many years the subject of College reform had engrossed much attention and had given rise to much discussion. At a large and representative conference of delegates appointed by the Colleges and Institutes, held in 1865, the whole question was considered at length—methods and details, as well as principles and aims ; the minimum of education which the Colleges ought to furnish, and which all ministers trained in them should be expected to possess ; the best means of securing a higher standard of Theological and Biblical scholarship for students of special gifts ; the possibility of combining the educational courses of the separate Colleges in some common system ; the probable effect of the new Theological Institutes at Bristol and Nottingham on the Congregational ministry ; and the formation of a Federal Board empowered to grant degrees in theology to candidates of distinction. Some of the papers dealt with the relation of students to the Churches, the cultivation of personal character and conviction among them, and the value of an organised system of co-pastorates.³

Fifteen years later, in 1880, the same subject was brought

² The removal and union took place in 1901.

³ *Minutes of the Proceedings of a Conference of Delegates from the Committees of the Theological Colleges and Institutes connected with the Congregational Churches of England, held in the Congregational Library, Blomfield Street, London, on January 24-5, 1865.*

before the Congregational Union for serious consideration. The points on which stress was chiefly laid were (1) the desirability of a more complete separation between literary and theological studies ; (2) the necessity of a higher standard of general knowledge as a qualification for entrance ; (3) the possibility of federating Colleges for educational purposes, and of interchanging the members of their staffs, thereby lessening the range of instruction required of individual teachers. As the outcome of the discussion, it was agreed to establish two Boards—one for the northern, and one for the southern counties—which should represent the Colleges included in their respective areas, and should carry out so far as they could the policy that had secured a large measure of common assent. The Boards were duly elected. They lasted for a few years, reporting to the Union at intervals. But after a time they seem to have become extinct.⁴

At the same time the movement was making itself felt in another form. In 1879 the Congregational Colleges through their Professors and representatives had formed themselves into an association, known as the *Senatus Academicus*, with the object of raising the standard of theological education among students in training for the ministry. It was the conviction of those who took the lead in this enterprise, that the age, with its new intellectual developments, needed a larger amount of theological knowledge in those who were to lead its religious thought and to shape its religious life ; and they were assured that they would serve the Churches and strengthen the hold of the Christian faith upon the minds of men, if in any way they could induce those who had given themselves to the ministry to undertake a wider range of study, and to equip themselves for their work by a more thorough mastery of the progress and development of speculative thought. To students of theology outside the Established Church the Universities of that day offered neither encouragement nor recognition. The only practicable method of making good this defect was to establish a system of study and examination on a scale sufficient to command respect. In carrying out their scheme, they sought to secure as examiners men of approved learning, whatever their Church might be. In this they

⁴ *Congregational Year Book*, 1881, 39-41, 62-65.

succeeded beyond their hope. The list of examiners, as it grew, came to include the names of the foremost scholars of England and Scotland : Churchmen, such as Cheyne, Gwatkin, Wace—now Dean of Canterbury,—and the late Dr. Hatch, of Oxford ; the theologians of other Nonconformist Churches, such as Dr. W. F. Moulton, and the Rev. J. Agar Beet ; the most eminent scholars of the Scottish Universities, such as Professors Milligan, A. B. Bruce, and Flint, Dr. W. L. Alexander, Principal Donaldson, and Principal Salmond ; to say nothing of the men within the Congregational Churches of England whose services they could command.⁵ The examination was divided into two parts—one for the diploma of Associate, the other for the diploma of Fellow ; the second being taken at two stages with at least a year's interval between them. The plan of study was so arranged as to ensure that those who presented themselves for examination should possess an adequate knowledge of subjects that were primary and essential, while leaving them free to specialise in those branches of study to which they were most strongly attracted.

The experiment may be said to have proved thoroughly successful. For though comparatively few presented themselves for the higher test, a large number of students showed themselves qualified for the title of Associate, and the lists contained in the Calendar show how many men now actively engaged in the service of the Churches have been stimulated by its influence.⁶

But the educational movement of recent years, and the new conditions that now prevail, have affected the whole position of the Theological Colleges. The establishment of a University in London that teaches as well as examines, and of Universities and University Colleges in many parts of the kingdom, enables the Theological institutions to concentrate their strength upon the work that is really theirs. And at the same time the new Theological Faculties, with their examinations and degrees, now provide an authoritative test and hall-mark of theological learning.

Already the effect of the change is making itself felt. In

⁵ *Report of the Senatus Academicus of Associated Theological Colleges*, 1901, 8-12.

⁶ *Congregational College Calendar*, 1881. *First Report of the Senatus Academicus*, 9-11, 14-17.

London both New and Hackney Colleges have become integral parts of the University. Their students, while receiving instruction in the subjects of dogmatic theology within their own walls, can go elsewhere for teaching in other parts of their course of study. And if their attainments are sufficiently high, they can graduate in the theological examinations of the University. At Manchester, again, the Lancashire Independent College is affiliated to the Victoria University. Many of the students, if not all, take their Arts course in the classes of its Professors and Lecturers. And Manchester, like London, confers degrees in theology—restricted, however, in this case to those who receive instruction in the University, or in the various institutions affiliated to it, and not open to candidates wherever and however trained. In Yorkshire, where the College is affiliated to the University of Leeds, a similar arrangement holds good for literary and scientific studies; and at Bristol the University College provides instruction in the subjects of general education.

At present, it must be admitted that the system is incomplete. Some of the students who enter the Theological Colleges are unable, owing to defects in their earlier education, to profit by the teaching that is offered them. But the development of secondary education throughout the kingdom may be expected within a few years to produce a race of students that will not have to do in the college the work that should have been done in the school. The burden that has weighed so heavily upon the Colleges will be lightened, if not wholly removed. They will be able to leave literature, and language, and history to University teachers and to devote their undivided energies to theological studies. And the examinations and degrees of Universities free from sectarian restrictions will render other examinations and diplomas superfluous.

The association of the Theological Colleges with the new Universities is rich in possibilities. But the last twenty years have witnessed another change of even greater interest and importance. In 1838 Mr. George Storer Mansfield, and his two sisters, Mrs. Glover and Miss Elizabeth Mansfield, provided funds to establish a Congregational College at Spring Hill, Birmingham. Eighteen years later, the College was removed from the heart of the town where it then stood, to a new building at Moseley, where it remained for thirty years.

In its early days, Henry Rogers, a brilliant man of letters, was one of its Professors; and though it had no other man of equal eminence again upon its staff, it was well served, and sent out a few men of distinction, and many men of worth. After the passing of the Act that opened the ancient Universities to Nonconformists in 1872, some of its more promising students were allowed; and indeed encouraged, to graduate at Oxford or Cambridge before returning to take their theological course at Spring Hill. The experiment was not satisfactory. Some men drifted away from the ministry, if not from Nonconformity: others became restless and unsettled. A bolder policy, it was felt, would be both wiser and safer. The suggestion of the Committee on College Reform that one or more of the Colleges should be removed to Oxford or Cambridge took definite shape, and an attempt was made to act upon it. At Cambridge the plan met with no encouragement. At Oxford it was received more cordially by men like Jowett, the Master of Balliol, and Dr. Hatch. Mr. T. H. Green⁷—the philosopher, not the historian—urged that the step should be taken, not merely for the sake of the Nonconformist ministry, but for the sake of Nonconformist laymen. The opening of the Universities, he contended, as it had given the Free Churches new opportunities, had also laid upon them new responsibilities, to which they had shown themselves indifferent; and he spoke very frankly of the mischief that their indifference was doing.

“The opening of the national Universities to Nonconformists has been, in my judgment, an injury rather than a help to Nonconformity. You are sending up here, year after year, the sons of some of your best and wealthiest families; they are aften altogether uninfluenced by the services of the Church which they find here, and they not only drift away from Nonconformity—they drift away and lose all faith; and you are bound, as soon as you have secured the opening of the Universities for your sons, to follow them here when you send them here, in order to defend and maintain their religious life and faith.”⁸

Other men of influence at Oxford—Mr. James Bryce among them—confirmed the appeal. Spring Hill College

⁷ Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, afterwards Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford.

⁸ *Life of R. W. Dale*, 496.

was closed, and established at Oxford as Mansfield College—so called in memory of its original founders—at the beginning of the autumn term of 1886. And three years later, in 1889, it took possession of its new buildings, the cost of which was defrayed by a fund amounting to more than £40,000, specially raised for that purpose.

Mansfield College has an individual character of its own. It is not a residential College, on the model of Keble at Oxford, or Selwyn at Cambridge. The design of its founders was that its members should be graduates of Oxford, or men pursuing their literary course either in connection with existing Colleges or as unattached students of the University. It was established to give a theological, not a literary, training; to supplement, not to supersede, the work of the University. And its students, even during their course in theology, attend the lectures provided by the University and the Colleges as well as those given by its own Principal and Professors.

Other Churches have followed the same policy. At Oxford the Unitarians have established Manchester New College in close proximity to Mansfield. The English Presbyterian College was removed from Regent's Park to Cambridge, a few years ago, and, as Westminster College, has taken a firm root in the place. More recently still, Cheshunt College—not a Congregationalist foundation, though to a large extent under Congregational influences—has been transferred to Cambridge also. Cheshunt was originally one of Lady Huntingdon's foundations, and it is still open to students belonging to the Established Church as well as to Nonconformists.⁹

II

In dealing with the problem of secondary education the policy of Congregationalists has been less definite, especially during the last forty years. In the great centres of population public opinion has usually been strong enough to curb intolerance and to restrain, if not to suppress, sectarian proselytising. The Grammar Schools in the City of London, in Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford, and Leeds, were full of the sons of Nonconformists, even in the days when head masters almost without

⁹ *Congregational College Calendar*, 1885, 82–85.

exception were required to have taken holy orders, and members of the assistant staff to conform to the doctrine and ritual of the Established Church. Indeed, when the change came that swept such restrictions away, one of the most telling arguments advanced in the discussion was drawn from the conspicuous contrast between fact and theory—from the numbers and successes of Nonconformist pupils in the schools that were supposed to give Anglican teaching and to be subject to Anglican control. And in the High Schools for girls established during the same period of time, the religious difficulty, though not wholly absent, has rarely given cause of serious offence. In many of the large towns, other schools of a different type have provided an undenominational education for the children of parents who were unwilling to expose their children to the risks of unfriendly influence.

Some special provision, however, was necessary for the children of Nonconformists living in rural districts, out of the reach of city schools; for others whom the conditions of a day school did not suit; and for the sons and daughters of ministers serving country Churches upon a small salary. The Congregational Churches have recognised the need, and have done their best to meet it. But while they have established schools of their own, distinctively denominational in character, for particular purposes, they have preferred as a rule to join with other Nonconformist Churches wherever such united action was possible.

The only schools that are distinctly and avowedly Congregationalist schools are those which were originally designed to educate the children of Congregational ministers. The oldest of these is the Congregational School, Caterham. Its origin dates back nearly a century. In September, 1810, the Rev. John Townsend, of Jamaica Row, Bermondsey, who had already taken an active part in founding an asylum for the deaf and dumb, issued a circular in which he proposed to establish a school for the sons of Congregational ministers. His original plan was that the boys should be taught by twelve 'decayed' ministers, but this idea was soon dropped. A public meeting in support of the scheme was held on April 18, 1811, at the King's Head in the Poultry. A small fund was collected; six boys were elected in the following October, and on January 20, 1812, the school—"the Congregational

School for the Board and Education of the Sons of Ministers" —was opened at West Square, Newington. Two years later the school was removed to Manor House, Clapham; and in 1815 freehold premises were bought at Lewisham, which, with successive additions and extensions, were held for nearly seventy years. During that period the school had grown; Lewisham had become a crowded suburb; and the value of property had increased. It was felt that the time had come to move to a site in the country. Land was bought at Caterham, Surrey, and a school-house built, at a total cost of £23,000. The new home was ready for occupation in the autumn of 1884. Since then three acres and a half have been added to the original thirteen, to extend the playing-field. The school is maintained partly by endowment, partly by the contributions of individuals and the Churches. A certain number of boys, elected on the foundation, are received without payment; others, being sons of ministers, are received at a reduced fee; sons of laymen are also admitted, but under safeguards to secure that they shall not crowd out those for whose benefit the school was designed. Since its foundation in 1811, 2,000 ministers' sons have been educated there; 1,500 on the foundation, and the other 500 on payment of a comparatively small fee. Only the Governors of the school, who receive the applications for admission, with full details of the parent's income, the number of his children, and the conditions of his work, can measure the value of the service that the school is rendering to the ministers of the poorer Churches throughout the kingdom.¹⁰

Silcoates School was the outcome of a previous enterprise. In the spring of 1820 it was agreed to set up a "Yorkshire Dissenters' Grammar School" at Wakefield. Silcoates House was secured for the purpose. In July of the same year the school was opened, but before long financial difficulties arose, and it was determined to wind it up. But Mr. George Rawson, of Leeds, a man of decision and energy, made up his mind that the scheme should not be allowed to end in failure. After a preliminary canvass, a meeting was held on August 24, 1831, at which it was resolved to establish a Congregational School for the counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire. In the following

¹⁰ *Congregational Year Book*, 1861, 20-23. *Caterham Congregational Magazine*, October, 1906, 76-78.

year, by a change of title, the school became the Northern Congregational School. For more than twenty years only sons of ministers and missionaries were received, but after 1855 the sons of laymen were admitted as well. The school met a genuine need. It grew in numbers, and in 1871 the Silcoates estate, containing 100 acres, was bought for £16,000. In 1874 new buildings were erected at a cost of £8,000. Thirty years later, in 1904, the school was totally destroyed by fire—happily in vacation time—and was left in ruins. There were strong reasons against rebuilding on the same site, and Silcoates School—still keeping its name—was removed to Saltburn-on-Sea. Its work, though on a smaller scale, has been very similar to the work of Caterham, and has proceeded on much the same lines. Since its foundation it has educated more than 800 boys, who owe to its influence no slight share of any success that they have achieved in after-life.¹¹

The boys' schools had been established for many years before any serious attempt was made to provide for the daughters as well as for the sons of ministers. And yet the case of the girls was even harder than that of the boys. At that time the endowed schools of the kingdom, with rare exceptions, were closed to them; and while the proportion of women to men among those supporting themselves by professional work was as 1 to 7, their share of educational endowments was as 1 to 92. The daughters of ministers, as a rule, belonged to the class that suffered most from this inequality. Their parents were not wealthy: they had to make their own living. Unless they married, or until they married, they had to find work, and to find work for which they were fitted. A good school education was indispensable to them; and few of them could get it. But in 1873 a girls' school, Milton Mount, was opened at Gravesend, mainly through the exertions of the Rev. William Guest, who devoted himself to its service with exceptional earnestness. He raised funds for building and equipment; and the College as it now stands, with the additions made during later years, represents a total capital expenditure of more than £33,000. Mrs. Joseph Crossley raised an endowment fund of £3,000, which has since been increased, by legacies for founding scholarships, to about £7,700. Following the precedents of Caterham

¹¹ *Silcoates School Magazine*, October, 1900, 1-3; June, 1904, 1-5.

and Silcoates, Milton Mount reserves a certain number of places for the children of laymen, an arrangement that tends to breadth and variety in the corporate life of the school. As to its success there can be no doubt. At the present time the College—including the Junior School more recently established in Berkeley House—has 180 pupils. It has done pioneer work of more than one kind. Its gymnasium was the first gymnasium built specially for girls in England. It has also combined the functions of a Training College with those of a secondary school, and the older students receive systematic instruction in the theory and practice of education. Between the time of its foundation and the year 1889, the College educated about 700 girls—the number must have doubled since then—who have gone out into the world to do sound and useful work wherever their way in life might lead them.¹²

III

Reference has already been made to Homerton College. Historically it is connected with the King's Head Society established in 1695 and the Congregational Fund Board; and it preserves the name of the Academy formed by the two societies after their amalgamation, and carried on successfully at Mile End and Homerton. But, as now organised, it can hardly be said to go back to an earlier date than 1843, when the Congregational Board of Education was founded and a fund of £250,000 raised for educational purposes. Originally Homerton College had undertaken to train teachers as well as ministers; but during the last quarter of the eighteenth century that part of its work had been abandoned. But when new schools began to rise in all parts of the kingdom, the demand for efficient teachers suddenly increased. The Congregational Board of Education set itself to meet these requirements, and opened Colleges in Liverpool Street, Jewin Street, and Rotherhithe. In the course of a few years it was decided to concentrate the work, for the sake both of efficiency and economy, and in 1850 Homerton College was bought, and the separate institutions were amalgamated. The Board at that time distrusted the system of State aid.

¹² Waddington, v. (1850—1880), 575—581.

They believed that the education of the people was no part of the duty of the State, and for many years the College did not accept Government grants. This position it consistently maintained till 1869, when the earlier tradition had died out and the leadership of the Churches had passed into the hands of a new generation. In 1894 Cavendish College, Cambridge, was in the market and was bought by the Board. At first both men and women were admitted for training; but the numbers of men fell off to such an extent as to justify the Board in restricting its work, and for several years the College has received women only. It has been enlarged, and now provides accommodation for 204 students in addition to the members of the staff. Though a Congregational institution, and under Congregational control, it is absolutely unsectarian in its work. It imposes no religious test of any kind, and draws its students from all Churches; and while making due provision for their religious needs, it does not seek to attach them to any particular denomination.

IV

The institutions described above are Congregational institutions, established mainly, if not wholly, by Congregationalists, largely maintained by the Congregational Churches, and designed for special forms of service. But in providing schools for more general purposes, Congregationalists have preferred as a rule to act with others rather than alone; and from the earliest years of the nineteenth century they have combined with members of other Nonconformist Churches to establish schools that should not be restricted either in theory or in practice to children belonging to any one denomination. In pursuance of this principle, Mill Hill School was established in 1807, Taunton in 1847, Tettenhall College, on the outskirts of Wolverhampton, in 1863, and Bishop's Stortford College in 1868. But none of these schools, it must be repeated, are distinctively Congregational schools, and their growth and development, and the changes that they have undergone, belong to the history of English Nonconformity and not to a history of English Congregationalism.

There is, however, one other institution, undenominational in character, but of such value to the Churches that it serves

as to require at least a passing reference—the Institution for the Education of the Daughters of Missionaries. It began its work in a house at Walthamstow in 1838, but was removed to Sevenoaks in 1882, where it now provides accommodation for ninety girls. A missionary's life is one of sacrifice; and the hardest sacrifice is the sacrifice that touches the home. In most cases, conditions of climate and conditions of society compel missionaries to send their children away at an early age, lest health and morals should be permanently injured by life at the mission station. Those of them who have relations or friends in England shrink from imposing the burden of their children upon others, even where the burden would be willingly borne. And there are others who have no one to whom they can look for help in their difficulty. Walthamstow Hall meets their need. Those who organised it at its foundation, and those who have directed it since, have never failed to keep in mind the fact that for most of the children whom it receives it must be not only a school, but a home; and that the teacher has to take the parents' place. The Home and School for the Sons and Orphans of Missionaries, established in 1842 at Blackheath, resembles it both in character and in aim.

V

An account has been given in an earlier chapter of the older Congregational institutions—the Home Missionary and Church Aid Society, the Irish Evangelical Society and Congregational Home Mission, and the Colonial Missionary Society, all of which were established in the years 1814—1836, though since then their constitution and organisation have been modified or even reconstructed.¹³ The Congregational Total Abstinence Association, founded in 1874, has taken its place at their side. Its purpose is clear; its principles are uncompromising. It enrolls abstainers, and abstainers alone, in its membership; and seeks to extend the practice of total abstinence among those associated with Congregational Churches—and especially amongst the young—by all the various means that have proved effective in the experience of kindred enterprises.

¹³ See *ante*, pp. 603–605, 714–715.

VI

With the rapid growth of population, especially in the great towns, it became necessary to build new chapels in districts where such accommodation did not exist, or had become inadequate. In the earlier part of the last century the task had been left to individual enterprise and to personal munificence. Men like Mr. Thomas Wilson and others had done what they could; and the Metropolitan Building Fund which they raised built Westminster Chapel and four others. Mr. Green built Trinity Chapel, Poplar, in 1842; and Mr. Seth Smith Eccleston Square Chapel, Pimlico, a few years later. But there was no vigorous and combined effort to make the provision that was required. Waddington asserts that the most powerful Churches were indifferent, or even hostile, to chapel extension. "The ministers," he says, "with large flourishing congregations monopolised the districts around them, willing to establish a network of schools and preaching stations, but discouraging every attempt to provide additional accommodation, even when all the elements for a working Christian Society were prepared." They were willing to extend evangelistic work from the existing centres, but were averse "from making a new centre for an active Church."¹⁴

Such a statement is misleading because it is incomplete. And much might be said on the other side as to the risk of dividing efficient organisations, and of draining away the energies of some of their most active workers. But the fact remains—after dismissing all imputations of indifference, blindness, and selfishness—that in the years between 1840 and 1850 the Churches were failing to discharge an obvious and imperative duty; that they were not adding to what they had received, not enlarging what they had inherited.

In 1848, as the outcome of a series of letters published by the Rev. Charles Gilbert, the London Chapel Building Society was formed in Mr. Joshua Wilson's house. It began its work with the erection of a new chapel at Notting Hill, and has taken an active part in the work of chapel extension in the metropolitan area. Rather more than three years later, the

Rev. J. G. Gallaway read a paper before the Congregational Union at Northampton, directing attention to the needs of the kingdom as distinct from the needs of London. In 1853 the English Congregational Chapel Building Society was founded for England, Wales, and the Channel Islands. A manse fund has been added to the original scheme; and special contributions are received for kindred enterprises in Ireland and the Colonies. The Society makes grants in some cases, and loans in others. But an important part of its work takes the form of advice and guidance. It examines plans and specifications, contracts, and title-deeds, so preventing many mistakes and much needless outlay. During the fifty-two years of its existence the Society has given help, by loans or grants, in 987 cases (874 churches and 113 manses), to an amount of £205,444.¹⁶

Similar work, on the same lines, has been carried on since 1852 by the Lancashire and Cheshire Congregational Chapel and School Building Society; and since 1872 by the Liverpool Congregational Chapel Building Society, which has helped to clear off all the chapel debts existing at the time of its foundation, and to raise large sums for church extension, in addition to contributions from its own resources.

VII

The Churches have not disregarded the obligation resting upon them to make provision for the support of aged or infirm ministers and for the relief of pastors' widows and orphans. But the various organisations established for this purpose are not co-ordinated in the way that one could wish. Some societies serve particular districts, or even particular counties. Gloucestershire, Lancashire, North Bucks, and the West Riding of Yorkshire have Provident Societies of their own, similar if not identical in character, and all working on much the same lines. Another society includes Notts, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire. In addition to these societies there are trust funds in many parts of the kingdom applicable to kindred objects. The most important of these—it is impossible to give a complete list—are the Woodward Trusts, to enable

¹⁶ The London and the English Congregational Chapel Building Societies were amalgamated about twenty years ago.

pastors of Churches in Lancashire and Cheshire to insure for the benefit of their widows and children, to provide help in cases of exceptional need, and to pension ministers after retirement from the pastorate; and in the West Riding of Yorkshire Balme's Charity for retired ministers, ministers' widows, and their unmarried daughters. In Sussex another local fund exists to encourage and assist life insurance; while Stonard's Trust gives similar aid to ministers educated at New College, and to others. London, again, has special funds of its own; notably the Widows' Fund of Congregational Ministers in Greater London, which in less than forty years has paid out more than £8,000 to widows and orphans.

There are other societies and trusts, less restricted in their range. The oldest of these is the Ministers' Friend or Associate Society, formed in London, in the year 1822.¹⁵ Its annual income now amounts to nearly £1,400, and grants are made to ministers in all parts of England, the six northern counties (included in Lady Hewley's Charity) alone excepted. The sum so distributed in 1905 exceeded £1,200. The Christian Witness Fund gives allowances to ministers over sixty years of age, whether retired or not, and also in cases of temporary disablement or exceptional distress. The average number of beneficiaries is about forty, and the total average grants for the last five years have exceeded £300. The Congregational Fund Board also applies part of its income to the relief of poor ministers. The Pastors' Retiring Fund provides annuities for ministers who are over sixty and have been in charge of Churches for twenty-five years. Its income is about £6,300, and at the present time it has more than 200 beneficiaries who in 1905 received between them more than £6,850. The Pastors' Widows Fund, with an income of £1,400, has about 100 annuitants. In 1905 the grants amounted to £1,180; and since the Fund began in 1871 the total amount distributed has been about £34,500. Both of these Societies are Provident Societies, and their benefits are limited to members. The Pastors' Insurance Aid Society, with comparatively slight resources—its income barely exceeds £400 a year—gives help of another kind by paying part of the insurance premiums, usually about one-half—for its beneficiaries, now rather less than one hundred in number.

¹⁵ Bennett, *History of Dissenters*, 278

The foregoing account is illustrative, not exhaustive. But it is sufficient to show the outlines of the existing system—if system be the right word. No one will maintain that the provision now made for old age or for death is adequate in amount or satisfactory in method. All that can be said is that what is possible in a closely organised system, such as Wesleyan Methodism, is impossible under different conditions ; and that no practical suggestion has been offered for the remedy of admitted defects. The fact remains, that a man may spend his life in the pastorate of humble Churches, on a small salary, unable to make provision for his own old age or for those who may survive him, and without any definite assurance that the time of need will bring with it the help that the need requires.

VIII

One other class of institutions calls for notice—the Settlements supported mainly by Congregationalists, though not really denominational in character, and wholly undenominational in aim.

The Hall founded in East London by Arnold Toynbee's friends in memory of the man, and to carry on his work, led the way. It was an attempt to bridge the gulf of class separation to bring together men and women of different types upon the basis of a common life ; and to leaven the dull uniformity of the crowded quarters of our great cities, long since deserted by the professional classes, and cut off from all contact with men of education and men of leisure, by introducing an element of a different kind. The Settlement was designed to be a means of restoring the broken relationship ; a centre not only of recreation and instruction, but of personal help, of human intercourse and human sympathy. Men and women were to *live* there, and by living to know the people among whom they lived, and to be known of them.

The movement has spread since then. Many Churches have recognised that the work is their work, and the Congregational Churches have had their part in it. The Settlement at Browning Hall, Walworth, was the first of several enterprises. There are now two others in Canning Town ; one, for men, associated with Mansfield College, Oxford ;

another, for women, organised on a separate basis ; but both united in many parts of their common work. At Manchester the Lancashire Independent College has a settlement in Embden Street, Hulme ; the Yorkshire College has one in the Wapping District of Bradford. Kindred institutions have been established in Ipswich, Sheffield, and Middlesbrough. It is not necessary to enter into minute details of their work. Medical and legal advice, recreation for mind and body, the encouragement of thrift, guidance in the countless problems and perplexities of daily life—such are the requirements that claim to be satisfied. With poverty as poverty the Settlements do not profess to deal : they are civilising, not relieving, agencies.

In some places the religious element is stronger and more conspicuous than it is in others. But in all the religious element is present. Already the Churches are beginning to feel the influence of the work. The residents are in actual touch with the people ; and through them the Churches are coming not merely to sympathise with the people whom as yet they have failed to reach, but to understand the conditions under which the people live—the first step to any real solution of the social problem. And with larger knowledge has come a larger sense of obligation to social service, a stronger conception of the function of the Church as a redeeming force. The Churches are beginning to understand that they must go out to the masses, before they can hope to see the masses coming in to them.

Some Churches have gone a step further. They are grafting this social work upon their religious organisation, and are making the development of social institutions an integral part of their religious work. But the experiment of the “institutional Church” is at present only in its beginning, and belongs rather to prophecy than to history.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

PROPOSALS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL—FIRST MEETING IN LONDON—CATHOLICITY OF THE ASSEMBLY—ITS PURPOSE AND CHARACTER—THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

I

ON Monday, July 13, 1891, an International Congregational Council met in London, and continued in session until the evening of Tuesday, July 21. As the first assembly of its kind, it marks a stage in the history and growth of the Congregational Churches. The first proposal for such a gathering dates back to 1874, when Dr. Hastings Ross published in *The Congregational Quarterly*—an American magazine—an article entitled “An Ecumenical Council of Congregational Churches.” His article was reprinted, and was circulated widely in Canada as well as in the United States. A few years later, the subject was discussed by Dr. Dexter, the historian of Congregationalism, and Dr. Hannay, at that time Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. A further step was taken when on June 7, 1884, the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, meeting at Montreal, passed a resolution affirming the desirability of holding a General Congregational Council, and asking the Congregational Union to convene one if it should seem feasible. In 1888, when Dr. Hannay and Mr. Henry Lee visited the Australian colonies as delegates of the Union, a similar resolution was adopted by the representatives of the Churches of Victoria, which was afterwards endorsed by the Congregational Union of New South Wales. In 1889 these resolutions were formally considered by the Union of England and Wales, and accepted with enthusiasm. The concurrence of the

American Churches was secured, and action was taken to give effect to the proposal.

It was agreed that the Council should meet in London ; that it should be International in the truest sense ; that while representing the Congregational Churches of all lands, it should not be so large as to be unwieldy. Finally, after careful consideration, it was decided that the delegates should not exceed three hundred in number—a third being assigned to the American Churches, a third to the Churches of England, and a third to Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the British Colonies, and the rest of the world. In the appointment of representatives care was taken to include both local and national organisations as constituent elements. In England forty members were assigned to the Congregational Union, as representing the Churches in general ; an equal number to the Church Aid and Home Missionary Society, as representing the County Unions ; and twenty to the Theological Colleges. In the United States more than half the representatives were elected by the National Council ; but each of the State Associations had the right to appoint a member, and the same privilege was granted to the Theological Seminaries and certain benevolent institutions.

Special committees in America and England, acting together, drafted the constitution and the programme of proceedings, which on this occasion were accepted by the other organisations concerned, a wider consultation having proved impracticable.¹

II

The first meeting of the Council, held in the Memorial Hall, was a stirring and inspiring scene. As the roll was called, and each delegate rose in his place and answered to his name, even those who were most loyal to the principles of Congregationalism received a new impression of the greatness of the Churches with which they were associated. The men who had helped to shape the religious life and thought of the Churches on either side of the Atlantic were there—known to all by name, but seen by many for the first time. But there were

¹ *The International Congregational Council (authorised record of proceedings)*, xxiii.-xxv.

others—men from the countries of Europe : Austria, Denmark, Holland, Russia, and Sweden ; men from the colonies of Britain far spread across the world ; men from the provinces of the Dominion of Canada ; from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick ; from the Australasian States, New South Wales, Victoria, Southern and Western Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, and Queensland ; men from South Africa and Natal ; from Jamaica and British Guiana ; men from Madagascar and the islands of the South Seas—Samoa, Raratonga, and Hawai ; men from northern India, and China, and Japan ; “brethren—brethren in Christ—from many lands.”

Each and all had their own record of conflict and of victory ; some in the distant, others in the nearer past. But among them there were men who had a story to tell of what they had seen accomplished in their own days. Dr. Waldenström, the delegate from Sweden, gave an account of an organisation, the *Forbundet*, that had grown up since the year 1879 ; congregations, 700 in number, and with a membership of more than 100,000, bound together by the principle that they would embrace only those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, without reference to different forms of faith or different types of doctrine ; desiring a distinct partition wall between the world and the Church, but none between those who believe in the same Lord and Saviour ; each association a Church, independent and self-governed, but uniting with others in evangelistic work ; possessing a Theological Seminary of their own ; and maintaining missionaries in Lapland, Russia, Persia, in the Congo State, in North Africa, and in China, and carrying on mission work at home by means of a large band of travelling preachers.²

Not less wonderful was the account given by Mr. Tasuku Harada of the spread of Congregationalism in Japan. When he spoke, only twenty-two years had passed since the first missionary of the American Board had settled in Japan ; and only seventeen since the first Congregational Church had been established with a little band of eleven members. Now there were seventy-one Churches, with a membership of 10,000, and among them men holding high positions in the state, in education, and in business. He spoke of Dr. Neesima—better

² *The International Congregational Council (authorised record of proceedings)*, 26-27.

known, perhaps, in America than in England—a loyal Congregationalist trained in the United States, who had returned to Japan and had founded a College that had seven hundred students in the Faculties of Theology, Arts, Science, Law, and Medicine, and in its Theological School seventy young men preparing themselves for the Christian ministry. And with a just pride in the sturdy independence of his people he referred to the offer made to his fellow Christians in Tokio by a man of wealth and position who proposed to build them a church at a cost of 150,000 dollars. But they said—“We should not be satisfied with a church until we could build it for ourselves,” and while acknowledging the offer with gratitude, they declined to accept it.³

III

The Council did not meet “to define creeds, to formulate articles of faith, or to draw up canons of discipline.” It came together to confer, not to legislate. The questions that it considered were many and varied, but all intimately affecting the life and work of the Churches. In the first place—dealing with Congregationalism in its domestic or internal relations—church organisation, church life, personal service, and the drift of theological thought among the ministers and members of the Churches. Secondly, the loss or gain in the spiritual influence of the Churches, and the best means of securing an efficient ministry in years to come. Thirdly, Congregationalism, as it is concerned not with its own internal affairs, but with the nation, and the needs of the nation; how it is affected by the relations of Church and State; its right attitude towards the social movements of the times; the righteous adjustment of the conflicting claims of labour and capital; the relations of the people to the land; and the perils arising from the growth of the liquor traffic. In the next place, the relation of Congregationalists to the Church Catholic; the possibilities of Christian unity; the duties of the Churches in view of the growing sacerdotalism of the Established Church in England. And, lastly, the responsibility of the Churches in relation to their Lord’s commission bidding

³ *The International Congregational Council (authorised record of proceedings)*, 346–347.

them go out into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.⁴

Such in outline were the problems submitted to the Council, and debated by men differing in standpoint, outlook, and conviction. The delegates, as was to be expected, differed—and differed widely—one from another on theological, critical, social, and economic questions. Some still clung to the Calvinistic creed which others—probably most—had abandoned. Some held that modern criticism was imperilling faith; while others contended that it was helping to restore not only the Living Christ, but the Living Scripture. Some asserted that the special mission of Congregationalism—though not its only mission—was to the educated classes of society, rather than to the ignorant, the vicious, and the degraded; a suggestion challenged and repudiated by the majority. Some, again, urged that the task of social reform should be undertaken by the Christian Churches acting as such; while others maintained that this work was work for Christian citizens acting individually, not for Christian Churches acting collectively, and that the Church would suffer serious injury if it set itself to service alien from the ends for which it had been established and organised. There were differences of other kinds as well—differences in temper and spirit; the buoyancy and ardour of the American delegates contrasting sharply with the sober and cautious attitude of their colleagues whose lives had been cast under less friendly conditions.

But in loyalty to the principles of the Congregational polity, in conviction that Congregational Churches embodied a truth that they were called to maintain before the world, in consciousness that the traditions of their past determined the measure of their debt to the present, the men who met in Council were of one mind and of one heart. Their forefathers had fought for freedom—for freedom to obey the will of God as it might be revealed to them. It was for them to use the freedom so dearly won for the regeneration of mankind. The Divine Life in man, the Divine Presence in the Church, were the sources from which they drew their faith and their hope, their strength and their peace. The glorious ideal of the Christian Church as a society and communion of saints

⁴ Dr. John Brown, *The International Congregational Council (authorised record of proceedings)*, 20.

they too believed that they might—that they must—make real in the life of their own days. In many matters, matters of moment—aims, methods, doctrines—the Council was not of one mind: the men who met there were men of many kinds, of differing experience, of varied knowledge; men of action, men of thought: men who saw visions, men busy with the needs and duties of the day; and they did not leave their minds and their characters outside in the lobby. But, with many minds, they had but one spirit. Twice, at least, during the sessions the consciousness of oneness with each other because they were one in Christ broke upon the assembly with overwhelming power: once when, after taking the bread and wine of the sacrament, brother gave to brother the right hand of fellowship, blessing God for their common redemption, and rejoicing in their kinship in Him; and once again in the closing service at the City Temple, when the whole assembly rose and with one voice declared their faith in Jesus Christ as the one Saviour of the world, their love of all that love Him in sincerity, and their desire to renew their covenant to serve Him with all faithfulness.

IV

Meeting where they met, while reaching out in aspiration to the things which were before, it was not for them to forget the things that were behind. The martyrs who perished in the flames of Smithfield; the men and women who withered in the Fleet prison—they could not forget these. For it was those who thought Congregationalism worth dying for that had made Congregationalism a living power; and it was through the faith, the courage, and the obedience of those obscure believers and humble societies that “the little one had become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.”

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INDEX

A

Abbot (Archbishop of Canterbury), 210-11
Abjuratio Magna, 58
 Abney, Sir Thomas, and occasional conformity, 487-8, 496
 Abraham, Mr., and Home Missionary Society, 604
 Academies, Dissenting, establishment of, 499-501—Attempts to suppress, 502-4—Influence, 509—Decay of Dissenting Interest, 551—New foundations, 559-61. *See* Congregational Colleges.
 Acland, T. Dyke, 651
 Adams, T., uses Prayer-Book after prohibition, 340
 Addington, Stephen, Tutor of Hoxton Academy, 593-4
Admonition to the Parliament; first, 107; second 108-11, 117-19
 Advertisements, Book of, 85-7
Æquity of an Humble Supplication, John Penry, 153
 Africa, Churches of, 18-22
Agreement of the People of England, 314, 316
 Ainsworth, Henry, 95, 168, 178, 201, 203, 363, 364, 366
 Airedale College, *see* Congregational Colleges.
 A Kempis, Thomas, 29
 Albigenses, 50
 Alexander, W. L., 750
 Allegiance, Oath of, 415, 430, 432, 439, 440, 443, 450, 463-4, 465-7
 Allen, Adjutant-General, 311-12
 Alliott, Dr. R., 560
 Alsop, V., 481
 Althorp, Lord, 611, 620
 America, first expedition of Separatists, 167-8
 Anglesey, Earl of, 398
 Ann, Princess, daughter of James II., 458

Anne, Queen, hostile to dissent, 485—For a general peace, 495—Dies before Schism Bill becomes law, 505-6
 Anne's, Queen, Bounty, 582
 Annesley, S., 431, 475
Answer to Master Cartwright his letter for joining with the English Church, Robert Browne, 131
 Antholin's, St. (Church), 240-1
 Antioch, Church at, 7
 Anti-State-Church Association, 635-40
 Antrim, Earl of, 246
Apologetical Narration, by the Five Dissenting Brethren, 279-84
Appellation, of John Penry, 155
 Argyle, Earl of, 246
 Arianism; penalty of death, 211—Controversy in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, 529-32—Controversy at Exeter, and in London (Salters' Hall), 532-9—English Presbyterians drifting towards, 541-3, 583
 Arles, Council of, 19
 Armada, Spanish, 81
 Arnold, Thomas, on Church and State, 135
 Arundel, Lord, 671
 Ash, Simeon, 394, 397
 Ashford (Kent), Separatists at, 219
 Ashley, Lord, *see* Shaftesbury, Earl of.
 Ashworth, Caleb, academy at Daventry, 596
 Aspland, R., 574, 642
 Assembly of Divines, Westminster, 261-6, 269, 270-89, 290-1, 294-9, 302-4
 Atterbury, Lewis, 340
 Augustine, 19, 20-4
 Avery, Dr., 536
 Axminster, Congregational Fund Academy, 560

B

- Bacon, Francis (Lord Keeper), 72, 88, 97—On "Propheysings," 104—On Barrowe, 142
- Baillie, R., 241, 269, 279, 291, 363-4
- Baines, E., 634, 651, 659-60, 663, 668, 669, 673
- Ball, John, 50-1
- Balme's Charity, 742
- Bancroft, Richard (Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury), at Hampton Court Conference, 182, 183—Represses Puritanism, 186, 187—Asserts bishops to be a separate order, 189-210, 214, 215
- Baptists and Toleration Act, 468—Indian missions, 578—Occasional conformity, 487
- "Barebones" Parliament, 318-19
- Barham Court (Kent), unlicensed worship at, 577
- Barlow, William (Dean of Chester), at Hampton Court Conference, 183
- Barrett, G. S., 723
- Barrowe, Henry, early life and conversion, 142-3—Separatist, 143—Arrested, and examined, 144-5—In prison, 147-8—*A Brief Discoverie of the False Church*, 148-50—Trial and execution, 151—Church buildings to be pulled down, 150—Authorship of Marprelate tracts, 162, 167, 169—Browne's "Answer to," 137-189, 199, 208, 512
- Barter, Dr., 667
- Barton, William, *Psalms for Public Worship*, 302
- Barwick, Bishops' messenger, 355
- Bastwick, 366-8
- Bates, W., 393, 400, 410, 419, 425, 438, 475, 481
- Baxter, Richard, on Parliamentary Army, 307-8—On "Principles of Faith," 323-5—On ejection of clergy, 337-9—Lecturer at Kidderminster, 338—Chaplain to Charles II., 393-4—Scheme of church government, 394-6—Declaration of Indulgence, 396-8, 402—Offered bishopric, 399-400—Revision of Prayer-Book, 410—Ejected, 419—Imprisoned, 434, 450—Lecturer at Pinners' Hall, 438—For union with Independents, 475-532
- Beaufort, proposes repeal of Test and Corporation Acts, 568
- Beaufoy, 568, 610
- Beet, J. Agar, 730
- Beghards, 27, 30
- Beguines, 26-7, 30
- Belsham, T., 574, 596
- "Benevolences," 237
- Bennett, J., 633, 641, 689, 700
- Bernard, Richard, 191-2
- Berriman, 144
- Berry, cashiered by Parliament, 348
- Berwick, treaty of, 230
- Beveridge, Archdeacon, 472
- Beverley, R. M., 694
- Beza, Th., 156
- Bible, Authorised Version, 184
- Bicentenary of Ejection (1662), celebrated, 725
- Biddle, John, 529
- Bilson, T. (Bishop of Winchester), 214
- Binney, Thomas, 597-8, 634, 669, 689, 713-15
- Bishops, impeachment of twelve (1641), 244, 255—Exclusion Bill, 242-3, 255-6; repealed, 408—Trial of Seven, 454-5
- Bishop's Stortford College, 738
- Blackburn Academy, 595
- Blackburn, John, 633, 689, 718, 723
- Blackburne, Archdeacon, author of *The Confessional*, 564
- Blackfriars, Separatist Church in, 218
- Blackheath Home and School for missionaries' children, 739
- Bocking (Essex), congregation at, 61
- Bogue, David, 594-5—Helps to found London Missionary Society, 600-1, 603
- Bolingbroke, 503, 516
- Bolton, appeal from Eldership of, 301
- Book of Common Prayer, 69, 73, 75, 78-9, 80, 84, 88, 89—Proposed amendment, 105, 245—Barrowe on, 149-50—Modified by James I., 184—Abolished, 292, 293—Prohibited 322, 330—Use made penal, 339-40—Used at Restoration, 354—Revision proposed, 395, 399—Revision, 409-11, 411-12—Use enforced, 414-417—Copies scarce, 418—Presbyterian objections to, 395-6, 419—Romanist influence, 421—Concessions in Comprehension Bill, 470-1-569
- Booke which Sheweth*, Robert Browne, 125-8
- Bowes, Sir W., 193
- Bowles, E., 400
- Bradbury, Thomas, 505-6, 514, 515, 536, 543, 559
- Bradford, William (Governor of New Plymouth), 192, 194—Quoted, 195-6, 205, 205-7]

- Bradshaw, excluded from Parliament, 323
 Braintree Church Rate Case, 621-2
 Breda, Declaration of, 353, 355, 393
 Bredwell, Stephen, on Robert Browne, 134
 Brethren of the Common Lot, 27-30
 Brewster, W., 194-6, 203, 204, 206
 Bridge, W., 265, 277, 279, 286, 287-8, 364, 365, 377, 383, 513
 Bridgman, Sir Orlando, 433
Brief Discoverie of the False Church, Henry Barrowe, 148-50
 Brierley, J., on early Sunday Schools, 598
 Bright, Jacob, 677
 —, John, 527, 622, 632, 676
British Banner, 721
 British School Society, 646, 649-50, 662
 Brook, B., on Robert Browne, 136
 Brooke, Lord, pamphlet against episcopacy, 370-2
 Brooks, T., 377
 Brougham, Lord, 609, 611, 642, 647-9
 Broughton, Hugo, 214
 Brown, Rev. James, 688
 —, Dr. J. Baldwin, 689, 692, 694, 700
 —, Dr. John (Bedford), 725
 —, John (Wareham), 694
 Browne, Robert, at Cambridge, 120—With Greenham, 121—Conception of church polity, 121-2—Forms Church at Norwich, 122-3—Work in eastern counties, 124—Arrested, 124—Settles at Middelberg, 125—*A Booke which Sheweth*, 125-8—*Reformation without Tarrying for Anie*, 129-30—*Treatise upon the 23 of Mattheue* (An Order of studying the Scriptures), 130-1—*Answer to Cartwright*, 131—Leaves Middelberg for Scotland, 132—Shielded by Burleigh, 124-5, 132-3—At Tolethorpe and Stamford, 132—Appointed master of St. Olave's, Southwark, on terms, 133—Rector of Achurch-cum-Thorpe, 133—Death, 133—Character, 133-4—Church principles, 135-6—Alleged submission, 134, 136—*Answer to Barrowe*, 137—Religious freedom, 170-189, 208, 217, 363, 366, 511-12, 706
 "Browning Hall" settlement, 743
 Brownists, numbers, 166—Confession, 169-70—Robinson's "Defence" of, 206—Increase, 276, 278-9—Treatises against, 215
 Brownrigge (Bishop of Chester), 264
 Bruce, A. B., 730
 Bryce, James, 732
 Bryennius, *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, 6
 Bucks, county of, restriction of preaching licences, 573
 Bull (Bishop of St. David's), retains living during Commonwealth, 340
 —, T. P., 699
 —, William, academy at Newport Pagnell, 595
 Bullinger, H. (Zurich), 90, 92, 98
 Burder, H. F., 593, 596, 689, 692, 699
 Burdett, Sir F., 615-16.
 Burgess, Anthony, 265
 —, Daniel (of New Court), 494, 536
 —, Daniel, suggests Regium Donum, 520
 Burke, Edmund; on Church and State, 135, 571—On subscription, 565-6, 569
 Burials Bills, 630-3
 Burleigh (Robert Cecil, Lord), 88, 97—Remonstrates with Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 115—Be-friends Robert Browne, 124-5, 132-3—Examines Barrowe, 144-5—Memorial from prisoners, 145-6—138, 188, 215
 Burnet (Bishop of Salisbury), 435, 457, 472-3, 490-1, 494, 505, 512, 529
 —, John, 633-4, 639, 663
 Burns, Abram, and early Sunday Schools, 598
 Burrage, C., on Robert Browne, 137
 Burroughs, Jeremiah, 265, 277, 279, 288, 373, 377
 Burton, Henry, 366-70, 373
 Bury, (Lancs), appeal to Classical Presbytery of, 301
 Bury-St.-Edmunds, disorders at, 138-41—Petition from Church, 377-8
 Bute, Marquis of, and Regium Donum, 522
 Button, R., 382
 Byfield, Adoniram, *Petition of Ministers*, 314

C

- Cæcilian (Bishop of Carthage), 19, 22
 Calamy, Edmund, 242, 243, 265, 278, 393, 397, 400, 410, 419, 425, 434, 473, 534, 536
 Calixtines, 39
 Calvinism, decline of, 583, 585-3, 704-5, 706-9

- Cambridge, Congregationalists at, 381—Roman Catholics at, 448-9
 Campbell, John, 635, 639, 716, 721
 Campeggio (Cardinal), 60
 Canada, Cong. Union deputation to, 710-11—Churches in, 711—Education and Home Missionary Society, 712-13
 Candlish, J., 677
 Canne, John, 361
 Canning, and Roman Catholic relief, 614, 615, 616
 Canning Town Settlements, 743-4
 Canons, Book of (1635), 223-4
 Canterbury, Nonconformists at, 434
 Careless, John, 62
 Carter, W., 279, 287, 314
 Carthage, Church at, 19
 — Council at, 20
 Cartwright, Thomas, controversy with Whitgift, 108-11—112, 113, 120, 170, 278—Death, 188
 Carver, John, 204, 206
 Caryl, J., 265, 349, 377, 383, 431, 512, 513
 Case, T., 354
 Castlereagh, Lord, carries the "New Toleration Act," 576-7
 Catechisms, Longer and Shorter, 302, 303
 Caterham School, 734-5
 Catholic Emancipation Act, 613-18
 Cave, Alfred, 725
 Cawdrey, J., 265
 Cemetery fees, 644-5
 Chaderton, L., at Hampton Court Conference, 182
 Chamberlain, Joseph, 671
 Chandler, Dr., 519-20, 521-2
 Chaplin, W., 693
 Chapman, C., Western College, 560
 Charles I., Attempt to force episcopacy on Scotland, 222-5—Resistance, 225-7—Attitude of the Assembly, 227-9—Campaign of Covenanters, 229-30—Treaty of Berwick, 230—Short Parliament, 231—Scotch again in arms, 232-3—Long Parliament, 234 foll.—Goes to Scotland, 244—Schemes in Scotland and Ireland, 246-7—Grand Remonstrance, 248-53—Conflict with Parliament, 253-4—Assents to Bishops' Exclusion Bill, 255-6—Standard set up at Nottingham, 257-9—Refuses to call an Assembly of Divines, 261-2—Breaks with Parliament, 262-3—Solemn League and Covenant, 266-70—Conference at Uxbridge, 293-4—Leaves Oxford and joins Scottish army, 300—Willing to accept Presbyterian settlement, 303—Surrendered by the Scotch, 305—Secret treaty with Scottish commissioners, 309—Negotiations at Newport, 311—Arrested, impeached, and executed, 312-13
 Charles II., Proclaimed King, 313—Army defeated, 313-14—At Middelberg, 326—Declaration of Breda, 353-4—Restoration, 355-6—Presbyterian position, 359—Appoints Presbyterian chaplains, 393-4—Proposed Indulgence, 396-9, 401-3—Rejected by Parliament, 400-1—Revision of Prayer-Book, 411—Breaks faith with Presbyterians, 420—Petitions for toleration, 425, 433—Treaty with France, 435-6—Issues Declaration of Indulgence, 436-7—Legislation against Nonconformity, 443-4—438, 439, 442, 445
 Charlton, John, Western College, 560
 Charnock, S., 382
 Chase, Thomas, 58
 Chatham, Earl of, on "ambition of dissenters," 567
 Chauncey, Charles, 501
 —, I., 474, 500, 501
 Chebogue (Nova Scotia), 711
 Cheshunt College, 733
 Chester, Bishop of (Scot), speech against Act of Uniformity (Elizabeth), 73-4, 75
 Chesterton (Cambs), Secret congregation at, 57-8
 Cheyne, T. K., 730
 Chichely (Archbishop), 56—Letter to Bishop of London, 57
 Chidley, Katherine, 370
Christian Penny Magazine, 721
Christian Witness, 721
 — — Fund, 742
 Church Building Commission (1818), 582
 — membership, admission to, 590, 605-6
 — Rates, abolition, 618-23
 Circumcelliones, 19-20
 Clarendon, Assize of, 49-50
 —, Lord, 210-11, 223, 234, 235, 236-7, 240, 244, 393, 396-7, 408, 431, 446, 464
 Clarke, John, 168
 —, Matthew, 514
 —, Samuel, and Trinitarian Controversy, 531, 532
 Clarkson, David, 501
 Clayton, J., 689
 Clement (Bishop of Rome), Epistle to Church at Corinth, 5-6, 8

- Clement VII. (Pope), appeal of Henry VIII. to, 60
 —, (a wheelwright), 62
 Clink (prison), 144, 217, 362
 Clyfton, Richard, 191, 194, 196
 Clunie, Dr., 717
 Cobden, Richard, 670
 Cockfield (Suffolk), meeting of Puritan clergy at, 113
 Cole, Robert, 88
 —, Thomas, 382, 479
 Coleman, T., 265
 Colepepper, Sir John, 256
 Coleridge, Sir John, and university tests, 629-30
 Collison, Tutor of Hackney College, 594
 Colonial Missionary Society, 713-16, 720
 Colton, Calvin, 694
 Comprehension Bill, 470-3
 Compton (Bishop of London), 448, 456, 472
 Conant, Dr., 347, 410
 Conder, E. R., 725
 —, Josiah, 634, 722
 Conellan, O., 717
 Confession of Faith (Assembly of Divines), 302-3, 385—Adopted by Parliament, 350—(Humble Petition and Advice), 327-8, 330
Confessional, The, by Archdeacon Blackburne, 564
 Congregational Board of Education, 661, 662-3, 718, 720, 737
 — Chapel Building Societies, 718-19, 720, 740-1
 — Colleges (*see* Academies):
 Airedale, 595, 728
 Blackburn, 595
 Bradford (Yorkshire), 728, 731
 Bristol Institute, 728
 Coward, 727-8
 Hackney, 594, 727-8, 731
 Highbury, 594, 727-8
 Homerton, 501, 727-8
 — Training College, 737-8
 Hoxton, 593, 727-8
 Lancashire, 728, 731
 Mansfield, 731-3
 New, 501, 727-8, 731
 Nottingham Institute, 728
 Rotherham, 728
 Spring Hill, 731-2
 Western, 728, 731
 — College reform, 728-9—*Senatus Academicus*, 729-30—Effect of new Universities, 730-1
 — County Associations, 603, 605
 — Fund Board, 501, 506, 559, 560, 737, 742
 Congregational ideas among foreign Protestants, 44
 — Lecture, 724-5
 — Library, 723-4
 — Licence, 442
 — Pastors' Insurance Aid Society, 719, 720, 742
 — Provident Societies, 741-3
 — Schools:
 Caterham, 734-5
 Milton Mount, 736-7
 Silcoates, 735-6
 — Schools, but not distinctively Congregational, 738-9
 — Settlements, not distinctively Congregational, 743-4
 — Total Abstinence Association, 739
 — Union (England and Wales), First attempt to form, 605, 686-8
 — Merged in Home Missionary Society, 688, 716—Second attempt 688-96—Objections to, 689-91—Objects, 692-3—Basis, 694-6—Constitution modified, 696—Incorporated, 698—Jubilee, 726—Declaration of Faith and Order, 699-700, 703-9
 — Societies:
 Colonial Missionary, 710-16
 Home Missionary and Church Aid, 604, 716-7, 720
 Irish Evangelical, 603-4, 717-8, 720
 — — Hymnals, 721-3
 — — Magazines, 720-1
 Congregational Union (Ireland), 717-18
 "Congregationalism" distinguished from "Independency," 374-6
 "Conscience clause" in schools, 663, 675, 677-8
 Constans (Emperor), 20
 Constantine (Emperor), 19, 20
 Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical (1604), 186-7
 Conventicle Acts, 427-9, 434-5—Modified, 468-9—Repeal, 576
 Conway, Lord, 232
 Cooper, W. Haweis, 717
 Copping, John, 140-2
 Corbet's committee for preaching ministers, 333
 Corinth, Church at, 5-6
 Cornbury, Lord, 458
 Cornelius (Bishop of Rome), 16-17
 Cornwall, "Supplication" for Church Reform, 115
 Corporation Act, 408-9, 466, 486, 489
 — Attempts to repeal, 517, 519-20, 568-9, 576—Relief from, 518
 Cosin, Robert, 59

Cotton, John, 372
 Council of Officers, 312, 314, 318, 320;
 346, 348-9
 —of State, 313, 314, 317, 318; 320,
 326, 349, 351
Country Parson's Address to his Flock,
 by F. Wollaston, 572
 Covenant (Scottish) 227-33
 Coward Trustees, and Doddridge's
 Academy, 584-5—Removal, 596—
 Troubles at Wymondley, 597-8
 Cowper-Temple clause, 677, 679
 Cox (Bishop of Ely), letter to R.
 Gualter on "the Admonition," 107
 — Dr., 633, 634
 —, S. (New York), 710
 Cradock, W., 219
 Crawford, Earl of, 246
 —, Major-General, rebuked by Crom-
 well, 290-1
 Crippen, T. G., on Robert Browne,
 137; 726
 Crisp, Dr. Tobias, 481, 483-4, 510
 Cromwell, Oliver, against intolerance,
 290-1—Distrusted by Presbyteri-
 ans, 306, 310, 358—Secures limited
 toleration, 309—Battle of Preston,
 311—Crushes Irish and Scotch
 insurrections, 313-14—Dismisses
 the "Rump," 316-17—Declaration
 convening New Parliament, 318—
 "Barebones" Parliament, 319-20
 —Protector, 320-1—Settlement of
 religion, 321-2, 328-31, 335, 376-7
 —Excludes members, 322-3—Re-
 jects articles for settlement of gov-
 ernment and dissolves Parliament,
 325—Refuses royal title, 326-7—
 Death, 344—nominates successor,
 345-356
 — Richard, 344-8, 356-7
 Crossley, Mrs. Joseph, 736
 Cudworth, R., 381
 Curle (Bishop of Winchester), 244
 Cyprian (Bishop of Carthage), on
 episcopacy, 9, 16

D

Dartmouth, Earl of, 457
 Daventry Academy, 596
 Davids, T. W., 726
 Davies (Archbishop of York), 517
 Davis, R. (of Rothwell), 479-80, 510
 Davison, 195
 Deadman's Place, Congregational
 Church, 361-2
 Declaration of Faith, of Exiles at
 Amsterdam (1596), 169-70, 700—
 (1603), 178-181

Declaration of Faith and Order—Sav-
 oyy Declaration (1658), 383-90, 700
 — — — — (1833), 700-9—com-
 pared with Savoy Declaration, 703
 foll.
 — of Rights, 463
 Defoe, Daniel, 487-8, 492-3
 Denison, G. A., 666, 667, 668
 Dennis, William, hanged, 142
 Dering, Sir Edward, committee for
 preaching ministers, 333
 Desborough, 319, 348, 356
 Devon, county, restriction of preach-
 ing licences, 573—Religious desti-
 tution, 604
 Devonshire, Earl of, 456, 461
 Dexter, H. M., 162, 745
 Dissenting Chapels Bill, 642-3
 — Churches and Congregations in
 London (1731), 540-1, 543
 — Congregations in England, 508-9,
 541, 580-1
 — Deputies, 519-20, 523-4, 568, 574,
 609-10
 — Interest, alleged decay of, 546-58
 Dickson, Austen, 694
 Digby, Lord, 239, 243
 Directory for Ordination, 272-3, 303
 — for Form of Church Government,
 291-2, 303
 — for worship, 270, 286, 303
 Discipline, Puritan scheme of, at
 Wandsworth, 111-12—113
 Disraeli, B., 650-1
 Divett, 619
 Dixon, G., 671
Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles, 6
 Doddridge, Philip, 518, 543-4, 545,
 546, 552, 584-5, 596
 Donaldson, Principal, 730
 Donatists, 18-24
 Dorset, Earl of, 219, 411
 Dort, Synod of, 204
 Douglas, A., 692, 701
 Drummond (Archbishop of York) on
 "ambition" of dissenters, 567
 Dublin, Unitarianism in, 530-1
 Dumbarton, Lord, 446
 Dunbar, battle of, 313
 —, Duncan, 713
 Duncan, J., evidence on conscience
 clause, 678
 Dunn, John, signs "ministers' peti-
 tion," 314
 Dyer, David, 713

E

Eames, John, 500
 Eardley (Smith), Sir Culling, 635, 638

- Earle, Jabez, 536
 East, Timothy, 711
 East India Company and missions, 578
 Ecclesiastical Commissioners (Elizabeth), 163-4
 Echard, quoted, 447, 451-2
 Education: Brougham's committee (1816), 647-8—Brougham's Bill (1820), 648-9 — Parliamentary grants, 649 — Melbourne's proposals, 650-2—Lord Ashley (Shaftesbury) on educational destitution, 653—Sir James Graham's Bill (1843), 654-9—Congregationalists' objections to State education (1843), 659-61, 663, 668-9—Attempt to supply, 662-3—Minutes of Council (1846) for extension of grants, 663—Management clauses in trust-deeds, 664-5 —Opposition of clergy, 666-8—Congregationalists in favour of State education, 669-70—Lancashire Public School Association (1847), 670-1—National Education League (1869), 671-3—National Education Union, 673—Attitude of Congregationalists, 673—Forster's Bill (1870), 673-80—Nonconformist hostility, 675-6, 680-3 —Results of Forster's policy, 680, 683-4—Education grants, history, 684-5—Statistics, 649. *See* Academies, Congregational Colleges, Congregational Schools, and Sunday Schools.
 Edward VI., legislation, 64
 Edwards, Pastor of New Queen Street Chapel, Leeds, 561
 Edwin, Sir Humphry, and occasional conformity, 487
 Egerton, Lord Fr., 650
 —, Stephen, 112
 Ejected ministers (1662), 419, 423-4, 430-1
 Eldership in Congregational Churches, 199, 201-3, 207-9, 387, 511-12
 Eldon, Lord, 612, 618
 Elizabeth, Queen: Protestant feeling at her accession, 66-7—Attacked by Romanists, 67—Proclamation against disorder in service, 67—Act of Supremacy (1559), 67-9, 72 —Oath of Supremacy, 68-9, 74-5 —Act of Uniformity (1559), 67, 69-71, 73-4, 75—Bishops oppose both Acts, 72-4—Excommunicated by the Pope, 75—Enforces subscription, 75-6—Revolts and plots, 76-7—Character and policy, 77-9—Her Protestantism, 79-80—Results of her policy, 80-2—Enforces Act of Uniformity, 85-6—Separatists' Appeal, 94—Vestments controversy, 96-100—Claims control of church legislation, 105-6—Suspends Grindal, 114—Penry attacks her supremacy, 158-9—Ecclesiastical legislation, 65-6
 Ely, Ezra Styles, 710
 Emlyn, Thomas, 530-1
 Ephesus, Church at, 7
 Episcopacy, development of, 7-13—Abolition of, 241, 243-4, 259, 260, 293-4, 311, 314, 328
 Episcopius, 204
 Erastians, in Westminster Assembly, 265, 270-1, 295
 Erastus, 265
 Erskine, Lord, and attempt to restrict preaching licences, 574-5
 Essex, condition of Church, 115-16
 —, Earl of, 258
 Establishment, Nonconformist Services in churches of, 365, 377-8
 Estates, Committee of, 229, 232, 266, 269, 303, 309
 Evangelical Revival, increase of sects, 581—Attitude of Congregationalists, 583-5—Effects on Church and Dissent, 586-92—Missionary zeal, 602
 —, Voluntary Church Association, 635
 Evans, John, 500, 536
 —, arrested with Greenwood, 144
 —, Nonconformist elected sheriff, and test case, 564
 —, early Sunday School, 598-9
 Exclusion Bill, 441, 442
 Exeter Academy, 560
 —, Earl of, a non-juror, 464
 —, Trinitarian controversy at, 528, 532-8
Exhortation unto the Governours and People of . . . Wales, John Penry, 154
 Eyre, John, and Hackney College, 594—London Missionary Society, 601-2

F

- Fairfax, Sir T., 306, 311, 312
 "Faithful Memorial," of a prayer-meeting at Windsor, 311-12
 Faius, Anth., 156
 Falkland, Lord, 239-40
 Farindon, A., 340
 Fausley Manor-house, secret press at, 154, 155
 Featley, D., 264

- Fecknam (Abbot of Westminster),
 speech against Act of Uniformity
 (Elizabeth), 73-4
 Felix (Bishop of Aptunga), 19, 22
 Fenner, Dudley, 112
 Fetter Lane Church, 505, 514, 543
 Feversham, Earl of, 446, 454
 —(Kent), Congregation at, 61
 Field, John (Lecturer at Wands-
 worth), 112
 —, (Minister of Aldermanbury), 107
 Fifth Monarchy Men, 407
 Finch (Lord Keeper), 231, 235
 Fire of London, 431
 Firmin, Thomas, 529
 Fitz, Richard (Pastor of Separatist
 Church), 92-5, 197
 Fitzgerald, Vesey, 616-17
 "Five Dissenting Brethren," in the
 Westminster Assembly, 265, 273,
 275, 277-89, 372
 "Five Members," attempted arrest,
 254
 Five Mile Act, 430, 433-4, 468, 470—
 Repeal, 576
 Flavel, John, 479
 Fleet (prison), 145, 150, 151, 725
 Fleetwood, 345, 346, 347, 348, 357
 Fleming, Caleb, 542
 Fletcher, Dr., of Blackburn Academy,
 595, 597, 689, 692
 Fliedner, Th., 694
 "Flight in Persecution," 212-13
 Flint, Professor, 730
 "Forbundet" (Sweden), 747
 Forster, W. E., 673 foll.
 Foster, James, 542, 550
 Fox, C. J., 568, 569, 570, 614
 Foxe, "Acts and Monuments" (*Book
 of Martyrs*), 44, 99
 Frampton (Bishop of Gloucester), a
 non-juror, 464
 Franchise and Distribution Bill
 (1653), 316
 Francis, Alban, 448-9
 Frankland, R., 499
 Freake (Bishop of Norwich), arrests
 Robert Browne, 124; letters to
 Burleigh, 124-5, 138
 Fuller, Andrew, and freedom for
 missions, 578
 —, Samuel, 204, 206
 —, Thomas, on Browne, 133—On
 dress of Westminster divines, 266—
 Befriended by Howe, 339-40
- G
- Gainsborough (Lincolnshire), 193, 196
 Gale, Theophilus, 377, 382, 500, 513,
 536,
 Galloway, Rev. J. G., 741
 Galloway, Patrick, at Hampton
 Court Conference, 182
 "Gathered" Churches, 376, 377-8
 Gayton, Richard, 138-9
 Geddes, Jeanie, 226
 Gellibrand, visits Oxford, 152
 General Assembly of the Scottish
 Church, 227-9, 230, 259, 260, 266,
 268, 303
 George I., Accession announced by
 Bradbury at Fetter Lane, 505-6—
 Nonconformist deputation, 515—
 Establishes Regium Donum, 520,
 526
 —, II., protects Doddridge, 518
 526
 —, III., and Roman Catholic
 relief, 614, 618
 Gerhard, 48, 50
 Gibbs, J., 712
 Gibson (Bishop of Lincoln), 517
 Gibson, Thomas, convicted and
 abjures, 142
 Gifford, Robert, 192
 Gilbert, C., 740
 —, J., 700, 724
 Gill, John, 559
 Gillespie, G., 241, 269
 Gilpin, R., 400
 Gladstone, W. E., 622-3, 642, 668,
 676, 679, 682
 Glover, Mrs., 731
 Godolphin, attacked by Sacheverell,
 494
 Goodman (Bishop of Gloucester), 244
 Goodwin, John, 314, 315, 361, 372-3,
 431
 Goodwin, Thomas, 265, 270, 277, 279,
 286, 287, 314, 323, 329, 350, 382,
 513, 529
 Gosport, Dr. Bogue's Academy at,
 594
 Gough, Strickland, on decay of
 Dissenting Interest, 546-52
 Graham, Sir James, 638, 653—Edu-
 cation Bill, 654-9
 Grand Army Remonstrance, 312
 Grand Remonstrance, 248, 250-3,
 260-1
 Gray, William (Bishop of Ely), 57
 Green, Professor T. H., 732
 —, Mr., and Trinity Chapel, Poplar,
 740
 Greenham, Richard, 121
 Greenhill, W., 265, 287, 314, 377, 383
 Greenwood, John, 143-4—Examined,
 145—Released, 150—Trial and
 execution, 151-167, 169, 189
 Grenvil, Sir John, 352
 Grenville, Lord, 614

Greyfriars' Church (Edinburgh), 227
 Grey, Earl, 574, 612, 628
 Grindal, E. (Bishop of London, and Archbishop of Canterbury), 85—Enforces Uniformity, 87-8—Examines Separatists, 89-90—On vestments, 90-1, 98, 100—Letters to Bullinger, 92, 98—Archbishop, 112-13—Suspension and death, 114
 Groot, Gerhard, 27-8
 Grosvenor, B., 536
 —, R., and Shrievalty of London, 563
 Guest, W., 736
 Gunning, Dr., 397, 410
 Gwatkin, H. M., 730

H

Haberdashers' Hall, Congregational Church at, 514
 Hacker (Informant), 60-1
 Hacket, J., 264, 340.
 Hackney College: *see* Congregational Colleges.
 Haldane, R., 594
 Hale, Sir M., 400, 433
 Hales, Sir E., 447
 Halifax, Marquis of, 452, 463, 504
 Hall, J. (Bishop of Exeter), 219, 241, 244, 362-3
 Hallam, Henry, on vestments, 98
 Hallet (of Exeter), 532-5, 538
 Halley, R., 709
 Hamilton, Marquis of, 227-8, 229, 246
 —, Richard Winter, 661, 663—On theological drifting, 705
 Hammond, H., 264
 —, Colonel, 309
 Hampden, John, 231, 235, 254, 258
 Hampton Court, Conference, 182-4—Charles I. escapes from, 309
 Hanbury, B., 634, 689, 696, 724
 Handson, John, 138-40
 Hankey, W. A., 689
 Hannay, Alex., 745
 Hanson, E., Idle Academy, 595
 Harada, Tasuku, 747
 Hardcastle, Church Rate Bill, 622
 Hardwicke's Marriages Act, 623-4, 625, 643-4
 Hardy, Nathaniel, 340
 Hare Court, Congregational Church, 514
 "Härlots," 50
 Harlow, Sir R., committee for preaching ministers, 333
 Harris, Rev. G., 640
 —, W., Highbury College, 594

Harrison, General, 319
 —, Robert, 122-3, 125, 141
 Harrowby, Earl of, 582, 612
 Harvard College (Mass.), 500-1
 Hatch, E., 730, 732
 Haweis, Dr., and founding of London Missionary Society, 601
 Hayden, W., 713
 Haselrig, Sir Arthur, 243, 254, 265, 323
 Heads of Agreement, between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, 475-9, 482, 588
 "Heads of Differences," between Separatists and English Church, 178-181
 Heckmondwike, Academy, 561—Lecture, 562
 Helwys, T., 194, 212
 Henderson, Alexander, 228-9, 241, 260-1, 267, 269, 285, 300
 —, Ebenezer, Tutor of Highbury College, 594, 724
 Henry III., Letters to Sheriffs, 50, 57
 —, V., Plots against, 56
 —, VIII., Appeal to Clement VII., 60—Legislation, 63-4
 Herbert, Admiral, 455
 —, Chief Justice, 448
 Heresy, *De Heretico Comburendo*, 54-5, 57
 Herle, C., 265
 Hesse, Church organisation in, 40-1, —, Philip, Elector of, 41
 Hewley, Lady, charity litigation, 497, 641-3, 742
 Heywood, Oliver, his father and Presbyterian discipline, 301
 Hewitt, Dr., 340
 Highbury College, *see* Congregational Colleges.
 High Commission, Court of, 155, 163-4, 228, 236, 259, 447-9
 Hildersham, A., 217
 Hinchman (Bishop of Salisbury), 410
 Hinton, J. Howard, 634
Histriomastix, 366
 Hoadly, B. (Bishop of Bangor), 517—On persecution of Unitarians, 531
 Houghton, Sir H., 566, 568
 Holdsworth, in Westminster Assembly, 264
 Holland, Earl of, 230
 —, Lord, on restriction of preaching licences, 574—On grants to the Established Church, 582-3, 609, 612
 —, War with, 435-6
 Holles, D., 254

Hollis, Lord, 398
 Holmby House, Charles imprisoned at, 305
 Homberg, Conference at, 40
 Home Missionary Society, *see* Congregational Union.
 Homerton College, Theological, 501, 727—For training of teachers, 662-3, 737-8
 Hood, Paxton, 676
 Hooker, Richard, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 112, 135, 265
 Hooper (Bishop of Gloucester), objects to vestments, 97
 Hopkins, E. J., 723
 —, J., 634
 Horsey, John, Academy at Northampton, 596
 Horsley (Bishop of Rochester), on revival and Sunday Schools, 572
 Hort, Josiah, 500
 Houlden, R., an aggrieved parishioner, 380
 How, Samuel, 361
 Howe, John, befriends Fuller, 339—Chaplain to Cromwell, 377—Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, 382—Ejected, 423—Opposes dispensing power of Crown, 451—Welcomes William of Orange, 461-2—For union with Presbyterians, 475—On occasional conformity, 486-8—On Unitarian controversy, 481
 Howel, F., 382
 Howick, Lord, 614
 Hoxton, Academy, *see* Congregational Colleges.
 Hoxton Hibernian Association, 717
 Hubbard, John, pastor of Church in Deadman's Place, 361
 Huddersfield, evangelical secession at, 586
 Huddleston, Roman Catholic priest, 445, 446
 Hughes, John, 500
Humble Petition and Advice (1642), 261; (1657) 326-32
 — Remonstrance (Bishop Hall), 241
 Humphreys (President of Magdalen College, Oxford), 87, 97
 Hunt, Jeremiah, 500
 Hunter, Joseph, on difference between Independent and Presbyterian systems, 482-3
 Huntingdon, Countess of, 565, 581, 601, 733
 —, Presbyterian, put in command of Cromwell's regiment, 306
 Huntley, Marquis of, 229
 Huskisson, 611, 616
 Hutchinson, Mrs., 247

I

Idle Academy, 595
 Ignatius, Epistles on Episcopacy, 7-8
 Indemnity Bills for relief of Nonconformists, 518, 523
 Indulgence, Declaration of, 396-9, 400-3, 409; 425-7, 431-3; 436-7, 438-9; 449-51, 452-4
 Innocent III. (Pope), 33
 "Institutional" Churches, 744
 International Council of Congregational Churches, 745 foll.
 Ireton, General, 308
 Irenæus (Bishop of Lyons), on Episcopacy, 8
 Irish Evangelical Society, *see* Congregational Union and Societies.
 Irish Rebellion (1641), 247, 250, 253; (1649), 313, 320
 Ivimey, J., list of Baptists ejected at Restoration, 420

J

Jacob, Henry, 213-18, 220-1, 360, 363, 366
 Jacomb, T., 431
 —, W., 536
 Jackson, Arthur, 355
 James I. (of England), (VI. of Scotland), expels Penry, 156—Accession, 177—Issues proclamation against agitation and petitions, 178—Receives "supplication" of exiles at Amsterdam, 178-81—Summons Hampton Court Conference, 181-2—His behaviour there, 182-3—Modifies Prayer-Book, 184—Hostility to Puritanism, 185—His supreme ecclesiastical power asserted by judges, 187—On persecution, 211
 James II.; professes and encourages Romanism, 445-7—Restores Court of High Commission, 447-8—Forces universities to admit Romanists, 448-9—Declaration of Indulgence, 449-51—Efforts to repeal Test Act, 451-3—Second Declaration refused by the seven bishops, 453-5—Reverses policy, 456—Deserted and escapes, 457-8—Proposal to make William his Regent, 464
 James, John Angell, 594, 627-8, 637, 638, 661, 692, 694, 699, 717, 718
 —, Thomas, 699
 Japan, Congregationalism in, 747-8
 Jarrett, W. (N. S. Wales), 713

Jay, William, 595
 Jeffreys, Judge, 448, 450
 Jennings, Dr., 584
 Jerome, on Presbyters and Bishops, 13
 Jessey, Henry, 219, 361, 363, 420
 Jewel (Bishop of Salisbury), on vestments, 97-8, 100
 Johnson, Frances, 166-8, 178, 193, 198, 201-2, 208, 215, 220, 221, 363, 382, 476, 511
 —, George, 168, 198
 Johnston (of Warriston), 269
 Jones, Sir W., 441-2
 Jowett, B., 732
 Julian (Emperor), 20
 Justification by Faith, 38-9
 Justinian (Emperor), 14

K

Kelly, J., 660, 718
 Ken (Bishop of Bath and Wells), 454, 464
 Kennet (Bishop of Peterborough), 517
 Kent William (Childrey), fined for holding service, 576
 Kidd, G. B., 715
 Kidderminster, ejection of ministers, 337-8
 King, David, 634
 King's Head Society and Academy, 558-9, 737
 Knewstubs, John, at Hampton Court Conference, 182
 Knightley, Sir R., secret press, 154

L

Lake (Bishop of Chichester), 454
 Lambert, General, 311, 319, 348, 349, 356
 —, Francis, 40, 41-2, 43-4
 Lancashire Public School Association, 670-1
 Lansdowne, Lord, 574, 612, 615, 625, 668
 Lardner, N., 536
 Lathrop, J., 218
 Laud, W. (Archbishop of Canterbury), 218, 219, 222, 223, 235, 259, 360, 362
 Lavington (of Exeter), 532, 535
 —, J., 559-60
 Lecky, W. E. H., 518, 623-4
 Lee, Henry, 745
 —, Samuel, 382
 Legatt, B., 211, 528

Leicester (Earl of), 87
 Leigh, Sir Egerton, and foundation of London Missionary Society, 601
 Leslie, 229-30, 232
 Leyden, exiles at, 196, 203—Reasons for leaving, 204-5—206, 217
 Liberation Society, *see* Anti-State Church Association.
 Licences for preaching, attempt to restrict, 571-3—Form of, 579
 Lichfield, Earl of, 464
 Lightfoot, J., 265, 270-1, 381, 410
 —, J. Barber (Bishop of Durham), 8
 Lillie, Adam, 712
 Lime Street Lecture, 558
 Lindsey, Theophilus, relaxation of subscription, 565-6
 Lisle, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 306
 Liverpool, Lord, "New Toleration Act," 576—Grant to the Established Church, 582
 — (Nova Scotia), 711
 Lloyd (Bishop of Norwich), a non-juror, 464
 — (Bishop of St. Asaph), 454
 Lollards, 27, 53-4, 56, 57
 London, Lord Mayor on vestments, 90-1
 — Missionary Society, 578, 600-3, 713
 — Petition for Church reform, 115
 —, Separatist Church in, 92-5.
 And *see* Palmer (London) MSS.
 Louis XIV., treaty with Charles II., 435-6
 Love, Alderman, 439
 Lowe, R., 671
 Ludlow, General, 348
 Lumley, Lord, 456
 Lushington, C., 634
 Luther, Martin, 29-30, 36-8, 39, 41-3
 Lyndhurst, Lord, 642-3

M

McAll, S., Hackney College, 594
 Macaulay, Lord, 642
 McCrie, quoted, 112
 Mackintosh, Sir J., 456, 609
 Magnesia, Church at, 7
 Maitland, Lord, 269
 Majorinus (Bishop of Carthage), 19
 "Malignant" ministers ejected, 334, 336-7
 Man, Thomas, 58-9
 Manchester, Academy and School, 595-6
 —, Earl of, 393
 Manning, Archdeacon, 667, 668

Mansfield (C. J.), decision in Evans's case, 564
 — College, 731-3
 — House (Canning Town), 743
 —, Elizabeth and George Storer, 731, 733
 Manton, Thomas, 397, 400, 410, 425, 434, 438
 March, S., 633
 Mark Lane, Congregational Church, 501, 514
 Marryat, Dr., 536
 Mar-prelate Tracts, 155, 158, 160-2
 Marriages, in Dissenting Chapels, 623-7, 643-4; in Roman Catholic Chapels, 615, 625
 Marshall, Stephen, 242-3, 265, 278, 291, 297, 323
 Marston Moor, battle, 290
 Martin, Henry, 144
 Mary, Queen, Church legislation, 64-5—Protestant Martyrs under, 98-9
 Maskell, on authorship of Mar-prelate tracts, 161-2
 Massey (Dean of Christ Church, Oxford), 449
 Mather, Increase, 474
 Matheson, J., 711, 713, 714, 715, 717
Mayflower, 205-6
 Mayo, D., 536
 Mead, Matthew, 377, 474
 Melancthon, quoted, 90
 Melbourne, Lord, 629, 651, 653
 Melville, Lord, 615
 Memorial Hall, 725-6, 746
 Mensurius (Bishop of Carthage), 18-19
 Merchants' Lecture, 474, 481, 484
 Meredith, Sir W., and subscription, 565
 Miall, Edward, 635-40, 663, 669
 Middelberg (Zealand), Robert Browne and Harrison form Church there, 125; 167; 212, 215, 216—Charles II. at, 326
 Milan, Council at, 19
 Mile End, academy for lay preachers, 593-4
 Miles, R., 712, 715-16
 Miles's Lane, Congregational Church, 514
 Millenary Petition, 177-8, 181, 182, 188
 Miller, F. (New Zealand), 713
 Mill Hill School, 738
 Milligan, Professor, 730
 Mills, Benjamin, 593
 —, J. Remington, 689, 725
 Milton Mount College, 736-7
 Ministers' Friend or Associate Society, 742

Ministers, "Scandalous" and "unpreaching," in Cornwall, Essex, and London, 115-16
 —, of Three Denominations, 485, 496-8, 533, 580-1, 651-2
 Mixenden (Yorks), early Sunday School, 598
 Molesworth, Sir W., 663
 Monasticism, 25-6
 Monk, General, 348, 349, 351, 352-3
 Montanism, 14, 15
 More, Stephen, 361
 Morell, Thomas, at the Wymondley Academy, 597-8
 Morison, J., 689, 714, 715
 Morley, G. (Bishop of Worcester), 264, 410
 —, Samuel, 725
 Morrice (Secretary of State), 400
 Morton, Charles, 500, 502
 —, George, 194
 —, N., 194
 Mouldsey (Surrey), secret press at, 154
 Moulton, W. F., 730
 Mounsel, R., 217
 Murton, J., 194

N

Napier, J., 666, 668
 National Education League, formation, 671 foll.—Abandons unsectarian platform, 673
 National Society, 646-7, 650
 Neal, Daniel, 500, 508, 514, 536
 —, Nathaniel, letter to Doddridge, 584-5
 Neesima, Dr., 747-8
 Nettleton, A., 694
 Newcastle-under-Lyme, riots at, 485
 New College (London), 501, 727
 Newcomen, Matthew, 242, 265
New Congregational Hymn-Book, 722
 Newington, Separatists at, 219
 "New Model," army, 294, 300, 307-8
 Newport, Charles I. at, 311-13, 358
 Newport Pagnell, Academy, 595
 Newton, John, supports academy, 595
 Nicholson, W., 264
 Noel, Hon. C., fined for holding service, 577
 Non-jurors, 464, 466-7
 Non-subscribers, Salters' Hall, 536-9
 Norfolk, Duke of, and Catholics, 615
 North, Lord, subscription, 565—Test and Corporation Acts "the bulwark of our constitution," 568
 Northampton, Puritan experiment

at, 101-5—Penry at, 154—Whitefield at, 584—Doddridge's academy, 518, 596
 Northern Education Society, 560-1
 Norwich, Robert Browne founds a Congregational Church at, 122-3
 Nottingham, Charles I. raises his standard at, 257-9
 —, Earl of, 467, 470, 495
 Novatianism, 168
 Nugent, Lord, 611, 615
 Nye, Philip, 265, 269, 271, 277, 279, 284, 285, 286, 287, 289, 314, 323, 329, 351, 377, 383, 431

O

Oath *ex officio*, 163-4
 Occasional conformity, Act to prevent, 486-91, 495-6; repeal, 517-18—554
 O'Connell, D., 617, 618
 Oldcastle, Sir John (Lord Cobham), 56
 Oldfield, Dr. J., 536
 Ordination, Directory and rules for, 272-3, 292, 303
 Ormond, Earl of, 516
 Ottery St. Mary, Academy, 559
 Owen, John, signs "ministers' petition," 314-5—Principles of faith, 323-5—329, 339—Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, 340, 382—Opposes Richard Cromwell, 347-8—Supports Monk, 349—Dispossessed, 347, 350—351, 423—Accepts Congregationalism, 372—Rector of Coggeshall, 377—Savoy Declaration, 383—431, 434, 437, 438—Pastor of Mark Lane Church, 501, 512—511, 513, 558, 706
 —, Thankful, 382
 — (Bishop of St. Asaph), 244
 — (Bishop of Llandaff), 244
 Oxford, Council at, 48; Charles I. at, 262, 269, 300, 336—Fuller at, 339—Owen at, 340, 347—Congregationalists at, 381-2—Parliament at, 430, 441—Roman Catholics at, 449, 456—Sacheverell at, 491
 —, Earl of, 516
 —, Mansfield College, 732-3
 —, Manchester New College, 733]

P

Pack, Sir C., 326
 Painswick (Gloucester), Winter's Academy, 594

Palmer (or London) MSS., 539, 540-1, 543
 Palmer, Thomas, refuses Sacrament, 379-80
 Palmerston, Lord, 611
 Parker, Matthew (Archbishop of Canterbury), 85, 87, 98—Suppresses "prophesyings," 104—107—Death, 112
 Parliament (Henry IV.) and church property, 54
 — (Elizabeth), Conflict with Queen over church legislation, 105-6—Admonition to, 107-8, 117-19—Appellation of Penry, 155
 — (James I.), Protest on behalf of Puritans, 185
 — (Charles I.), "Short" Parliament, 231—"Long" Parliament, 234 foll.—Constitutional reform, 234-6—Religious reform, 236-40, 242-6, 254-6—Grand Remonstrance, 248-53—Struggle with King, 253-4—Breach with the King, 257-9—Episcopacy condemned, 259-60—Assembly of Divines convened, 260-4—Solemn League and Covenant, 266-70—Appeal of Five Dissenting Brethren, 279-81—Negotiations with King, 293-4—Struggle with the Assembly, 294-9—King surrendered, 305—Army reduced, 305-6—Final conflict with King, 309-10—Measures for church government, establishing Presbyterianism, 291-3, 300-1, 302, 310-11, 332-5, 373—Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne set free, 367-8—Visitation of Oxford and Cambridge, 381-2—Agreement of the People, 314-16—Commons dismissed by Cromwell, 316-17—Barebones Parliament, 318-19—Church government, 319-20
 — Cromwell Protector, 320—Instrument of government, 320-2—Cromwell's first Parliament, 322—Church government, 323-5—Cromwell's second Parliament, 326—Church government (Humble Petition and Advice), 327-30
 — Richard Cromwell, first Parliament, 346—Rump of the Long Parliament recalled and dismissed, 348-9—Protector abdicates, 348—Council of State appointed, 349—"Rump" recalled, 349—Secluded members return, 350—Presbyterian supremacy, 350-1—Charles II. restored, 352-3
 — (Charles II.), Declaration of Indul-

- gence rejected, 400-1—Dissolution, 404—Second Parliament, legislation, 408-9, 411-13—Against toleration, 426-9, 433, 434-5—Prorogued, 435—Against Indulgence, 438-9—Hostile to Romanists, less so to Protestant Dissenters, 440-1—Laws against Nonconformity, 443-4
- Parliament (James II.), Hostile to Romanists, 446-7—Dissolved, 451—(William III.), Convention, 463—Oath of Allegiance modified, 465-6—Toleration Bill, 467-70—Comprehension Bill, 470-2
- (Anne) Occasional Conformity Bill, 486-91, 495-6—Schism Bill, 503-6
- Parry, W., Tutor at Wymondley Academy, 596-7
- Parsons, S., King's Head Academy, 559
- , W., 340
- Pastors', Retiring Fund, 742—Widows' Fund, 742—Insurance Aid Society, 742
- Patchett, B., and early Sunday Schools, 599
- Patrick, J., Psalms in metre, 510, 721
- , S. (Bishop of Ely), 472
- Payne, G., at Exeter, 560—At Blackburn Academy, 595-6
- Peacock (Bishop of Chichester), 56-7
- Pearson, J., 340
- Peel, Sir R., 611, 616, 617, 626, 642, 653, 664
- Peirce, James (Exeter), 532-5, 538
- Pellatt, Apsley, 689
- , Thomas, 575
- Pennington, Alderman, 238
- Penry, John, 151-60—Birthplace, 151—Cambridge and Oxford, 151-2—Evangelisation of Wales, 153—Arrested, 153—At Northampton, 154—secret press, 154-5—“Appellation” to Parliament, 155—In Scotland, 155-6—Publications while there, 156—Joins Congregational Church, Southwark, 156-7—Arrested and condemned, 157-9—Protest, 159-60—Executed, 160—Mar-prelate tracts, 158, 160-2
- Petition, for church reform, 238; Ministers', 238, 239-40—Root and Branch, 238, 239-40—Propagation of Gospel, 314-15
- Petre, Father, 446
- Philadelphia, Church at, 7
- Philip, Elector of Hesse, 41
- Philippi, Church at, 6, 7
- Phillimore, Dr., 615, 625
- Pierce (Bishop of Bath and Wells), 244
- “Pilgrim Church,” Southwark, 217-19, 220-1
- Fathers, 205
- Pinner's Hall, Lectures, 438, 474, 481—Lord Mayor at, 487—Church, 500, 542-689
- Pitt, Test and Corporation Acts, 568, 569—Roman Catholic disabilities, 613-14
- Plague in London, 429-30
- Plumbers' Hall, congregation at, arrested and examined, 89-91, 94
- Plumer, repeal of Test Act, 519
- Plundered Ministers' committee, 333-4, 372
- Plunket, and Roman Catholic relief, 615
- Plymouth Rock, 206
- Pocock, Dr. E., 339, 340
- Polycarp, 6, 8
- Pool, pensioner of the Crown, 438
- Porter, George, 382
- Prayer-Book, *see* Book of Common Prayer.
- Preaching Friars, 50-1
- Ministers, committee, 332-3
- Presbyterians — Presbyterianism: Puritans ask for Presbyterian Establishment, 107-11—Suggested compromise with episcopacy, 111-12, 113, 182-3—Visit Oxford, 152—In Long Parliament, 237—Controversy in London, 241—Presbyterian church government set up, 301—Army and Presbyterianism, 306-7—Concurrent Establishment under Cromwell, 320-2, 329-30—Favoured by Richard Cromwell, 347, 350-1—At Oxford and Cambridge, 381-2—Charles II. and Presbyterians, 354, 355, 358-9, 393-4, 399-400—Proposed Compromises, 394-8 398-9, 400-3, 404-6—Commission to revise Prayer-Book, 409-11—Inducements to conform, 418-19—Effects of Conformity, 421-2—Attitude to Indulgence, 431-3, 437—Joint Lecture at Pinner's Hall, 438—Relations to Congregationalists, 474-84, 538, 543—Comparative strength, 508-9, 541, 581—Unitarian tendencies, 532-3, 541-2, 559, 560—Lady Hewley's Charity litigation, 640-2—Dissenters' Chapels Bill, 642-3. *See* also Assembly of Divines, Dissenting Deputies,

Parliament, Regium Donum, Three Denominations.
 Press, secret, 154-5, 161
 Pressensé, on spiritual indifference and clerical supremacy, 12-13
 Preston, provincial assembly, 301—Battles, 311, 516
 Pretzman (Bishop of Lincoln), 571
 Price, Dr., 569, 633
 Pride's Purge, 312-13
 Priestley, Dr. J., 569
 Private Judgment, Right of, 36-8
 Privy Council, members protest against suspension of godly ministers, 115-16—Education committee of, 650-2
 Propagation of Gospel, petition of Independents, 314-15
 "Propheysings," Object and character, 103-4; suppression of, 104; Grindal suspended for tolerating, 114
 Protestant Society, 575, 609, 633
 Protestation, against Popery, 368—Protested, 369
 Provident Societies for Congregational ministers, 741-3
 Prynne, 366-8
 "Publicans"—origin and history, 48-9
 Puritans—under Elizabeth, 75-6, 77—In Convocation (1562), 83-4—Irregularities in ritual, 84-5—Appeal to Leicester, 87—Ejected, 88—At Northampton, 101-3—At Wadsworth, 111-12—Attempt to adapt Church to Presbyterian organisation, 113—Ideas of religious freedom, 169-73—Supported by Parliament under James I., 185—Puritan clergy deprived, 187—Decline of enthusiasm, 188-9
 Pye, I., 561
 Pye-Smith, Dr., 561, 633, 639, 709
 Pykas (Informer), 61
 Pym, John, 235, 254, 258, 263

Q

Quakers, imprisoned, 407—Oaths of supremacy and allegiance, 468—Payment of church rates, 519—Repeal of Act against, 576

R

Raffles, Dr., 718
 Raikes, Robert, and Sunday Schools, 598-9

Rainbow (Bishop of Carlisle), 340
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, on Brownists, 166
 Ranke, on church organisation in Hesse, 40
 Rawson, G., Silcoates School, 735
 Reader, James, Academy at Taunton, 560
 Redford, G., 692, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 705, 714, 715, 724
 Reed, Andrew, 633, 689, 711, 713
Reformation without Tarrying for Anie, Robert Browne, 129-30
 "Reformed" Churches, 376-7
 Regium Donum, 520-3, 524-7
 Religious Freedom Society, 634-5
 Reynolds, H. R., 725
 —, John, at Hampton Court Conference, 182-393, 397, 399, 410, 431
 —, Thomas, 514, 534
 —, Owen's successor at Christ Church, 350
 Rich (Lord), imprisoned, 144
 Richard, Henry, 663, 669, 676
 Richelieu, 229
 Ridgeley, Dr., 500, 501
 Ripon, Conference at, 232, 240
 Rippon, Roger, 150-1
 Risby, Thomas, 58-9
 Roberts (Bishop of Bangor), 244
 — Lord, on royal Indulgence, 426
 Robins, T., Academy at Daventry, 596
 Robinson, B., 534
 — John, 95, 188, 194, 196, 197, 201-3, 204, 206-7, 207-9, 212, 220-1, 363-4, 366, 476, 512
 Rochester, Earl of, 446
 Rockingham, Lord, 522
 Roebuck, J. A., 658
 Rogers, Henry, 669, 724-5
 —, J. Guinness, 676, 725
 Roman Catholics; under Elizabeth, 75-7, 81, 106—Excluded from Parliament, 440-1, 450, 465—And Toleration Act, 469—Emancipation, 613-18—Marriages, 624-5
 Rome, Church at, 6, 7, 8
 Romney, Lord, informs against Noel, 577
 Rooker, James, Academy at Ottery St. Mary, 560
 "Root and Branch" petition, 238, 239-40, 243
 Ross, Hastings, 745
 —, Dr. (Kidderminster), 714-15
 Rotherhithe, Separatists at, 219
 Rothwell, Church at, 479-80
 Rowe, John, 513
 —, Thomas, 500, 514

Rowland, Thomas, 94
 Royal Lancastrian Institution, *see*
 British and Foreign School Society.
 Russell, Admiral, 457
 —, Edward, 456
 —, Lord John, 609, 610, 611, 626-7,
 642, 652, 663, 668
 Rutherford, S., 269, 285

S

Sabellius, doctrines of, 545
 Sacheverell, Dr., 491-5, 503
 Sacraments, suspension and exclusion
 from, 294-7, 300-1, 378-80—Con-
 gregationalist doctrines, 706-9
 St. Giles's (Edinburgh), disturbance
 at, 225-6
 — John, Oliver, 265, 291, 351
 — John's (Newfoundland), 711
 — Margaret's (Westminster), Assem-
 bly of Divines meets there, 269
 —, Paul's Cathedral, tax on coals for
 rebuilding, 582
 Salmond, Principal, 730
 Salters' Hall; controversy, 532-9,
 541, 548—Lectureship, 481—Ser-
 mon, 600
 Sampson (Dean of Christ Church,
 Oxford), 87, 97
 Sancroft (Archbishop of Canterbury),
 454-5, 464-5
 Sandys, E. (Bishop of Worcester, and
 Archbishop of York), on vestments,
 98, 100—Sons and connections, 195
 Sanderson, R., 264, 340
 Savoy, Conference, 342, 410
 —, Declaration, 383-90, 700
 Sawtre, William, 55
 Say, Lord, 237, 265
 —, Samuel, 500
 Scandalous ministers ejected, 321,
 326, 332-4, 337-9
 Schism Bill, 503-5
 Scone, Charles II. takes the Covenant
 at, 359
 Scot, *see* Chester, Bishop of.
 Scott, James, Tutor at Heckmond-
 wike Academy, 561
 Scottish Church and Charles I., 222
 foll.
 — Commissioners in London, 240-1,
 269, 279
 Scrooby (Notts), 188, 191-2, 194,
 195-6
 Seaman, L., 265, 381
 Secret (or Separatist) congregations
 during Mary's reign, 61-2—In
 London, under Elizabeth, 92-5
 Sectaries in Cromwell's army, 307-8

Sedgwick, James, attack on Congre-
 gational Union, 687-8
 —, O., 285
 Selden, John, 265, 295
 Self-denying Ordinance, 294
 Senatus Academicus, 729-30
 Separatists, imprisoned under Eliza-
 beth, 91—Sufferings, 94—Motives,
 96—Memorial from prisoners in
 London, 146—Clerical visitors,
 146-7—Treatment of prisoners,
 147-8—Legislation against (1593),
 165-6—Increase of, 166—Excom-
 municated, 186-7—211, 214, 216,
 219
 "Settlements," 743-4
 Seven Bishops, trial of, 454-5
 Sewell, Dr. W., 667, 668
 Shaftesbury, Earl of, 650, 653
 Sharp, Dr., extols James II., 445—
 Attacks Popery, 448
 Sheafe, and London Shrievalty, 564
 Shebbeare, attacks Dissenters, 522
 Sheffield (New Brunswick), 711
 Sheldon (Bishop of London), 410, 434
 Shepperd, Noble, 694
 Sherlock, W. (Dean of St. Paul's),
 529-30
 Shipdam, birthplace of Barrowe, 142
 Shipley (Bishop of St. Asaph), for
 relieving Dissenters from subscrip-
 tion, 567
 Ship-money, 231, 236
Shortest Way with the Dissenters,
 492-3
 Shower, J., 481
 Shrewsbury, Earl of, 456
 Shuttleworth, Sir J. Kay, 651
 Sidmouth, Lord, proposes restriction
 of preaching licences, 573-5
 Silcoates School, 735-6
 Silcox, J., 711
 Silver Street Congregational Church,
 514, 519
 Simpson, Dr., Tutor at Highbury
 College, 594
 —, Sidrach, 265, 277, 288, 314
 Sion College, Presbyterian Conference,
 399
 Skeats, H. S., 635
 Skinner (Bishop of Bristol), 244
 Smalridge (Bishop of Bristol), 517
 Small, James, Academy at Axminster,
 560
 Smectymnuus, 242, 243, 265
 Smith, Jeremiah, 534
 —, Rev. John, 712
 —, Seth, 740
 —, W., 577-8, 610, 624-5
 Smyrna, Church at, 7, 8
 Smyth, John, 188, 193-4, 196, 199-201

Snell, Dr. T. (Massachusetts), 694,
710
Societas Evangelica, 593-4
Society for Promoting Ecclesiastical
Knowledge, 633-4
Socinianism, 541-2, 560, 597-8
Solemn League and Covenant, 266-
70, 293, 297, 300, 306, 335, 336-7,
350-1, 359, 381, 408, 415-16
Some, Dr., 144, 155
Southwark, Congregational Church
in, 156, 160, 217-9, 220-1, 360
Sparkes, Thomas, at Hampton Court
Conference, 182
Speedwell, 205-6
Spey, Charles II. takes the Covenant
at, 359
Spring Rice (Lord Mounteagle), 620
628
Spurston, W., 242, 265, 393, 397
Stanhope, Earl, supports religious
liberty, 517, 569, 574, 582
Stanley, Lord, 650, 652
Stanstead (East Canada), 711-12
Stanton (or Staunton), 273
Star Chamber, Court of, abolished,
236, 366
State and Church, limits of inter-
ference, 170-3
Sternhold and Hopkins, Psalms, 548
Sterry, P., 265, 279
Steward, Rev. J., 641
Stil, Dr., 141
Stillfleet, 340, 431, 472
Stonard's Trust, 742
Strafford, Earl of, 222, 234-5, 242
Streatfield, and London Shrievalty,
564
Strickland, Bill for amending Prayer-
Book, 105
Strong, W., 377
Strype, on Browne, 134
Studley, Daniel, 168
Sturges, R., 362
Subscription to Articles enforced
(1570), 75-6—Petition for relief
from, 564-6
Sunday Schools, origin, 598-9
"Supplication" from Cornwall for
Church reform, 115—Of exiles at
Amsterdam, 178-81—For tolera-
tion (Jacob), 216
Supremacy, Act of (1559), provisions,
67-9—Bishops resist, 72—Bishops
and clergy deprived, 74
—, Oath of, 68-9, 74-5, 83; 403,
440, 450, 464, 467-8
Sussex, Duke of, 609
Sweden, Congregationalism in, 747
Sydney, Henry, 456
Sylvester, 475

T

"Tables," 226-7, 230
"Tackers," and Occasional Con-
formity Bill, 491
Talbot, Colonel (Earl of Tyrconnel),
446
— Settlements (Canada), 711
Taunton College, 738
—, Congregational Fund Academy,
560
Taverner, imprisoned, 434
Taylor, Abraham, and decay of
Dissenting Interest, 552, 554-5,
557, 559
Tenison (Archbishop of Canterbury),
472-3, 490
Tenter's Alley (Moorfields), Academy
in, 501
Tertullian, 9
Test Act, 440, 447, 450-1, 456, 466,
486—Relief from, 518, 523—
Attempted repeal, 517, 519-20,
568-9, 576—Repeal, 609-12
Tettenhall College (Wolverhampton),
738
Tewkesbury, Annals of, 48
Thacker, Elias, 141-2
Thomas, Caleb, 531
—, W., 219
Thompson, Josiah, account of dissent-
ing congregations (1772), 541
— T., Home Missionary Society, 604
Thornton, John, supports Academy,
595
Thorpe, William, executed, 55
"Three Denominations," 485, 496-8,
535—Numbers, 580-1—651-2
Tidman, A., 634, 689
Tilsworth, burnt, 58
Tillotson (Archbishop of Canterbury),
431, 465, 472-3, 529
Toleration Act (1689) compared with
Cromwell's Settlement, 330-1—
Provisions, 467-470—Effects of,
502, 507, 509, 513—Unitarians
excluded, 469, 530, 537-8—Viola-
tions of, 571, 576, 577
Toller, Thomas, 192
Tomber, John, 420
Tomlinson, in Barebones Parliament,
319
Tong, W., 534, 536
Tookey, Job, 377
Towers (Bishop of Peterborough), 244
Townsend, supports academies at
Gosport and Painswick, 594
— J., Congregational School, 734
Toynbee, Arnold, 743
Traditores, 19, 22
Tralles, Church at, 7

Traquair, 229-30
 Traskites, 276
 Travers, Walter, 112, 113
 Trelawney (Bishop of Exeter), 454
 "Triers," 321-2, 330, 338-40
 Tuckney, A., 381, 410
 Turnbull, J., 689
 Turner (Bishop of Ely), 454, 464
 Twisse, W. (Prolocutor of Assembly of Divines), 263, 266, 278

U

Udall, John, 152—Evidence on authorship of Mar-prelate tracts, 161
 Uniformity, Act of (1559); title, 67—Provisions, 69-71—Bishops resist, 73-4—In abeyance, 75—Enforced, 85-8
 — — — (1662), Numbers ejected, 341-3-409, 411-17, 419-20, 430, 499, 507
 Unitarians, excepted from toleration, 331; and Toleration Act, 469, 530—In seventeenth century, 529-30—Laws against, 570—Under Toleration Act, 577—Relations with Presbyterianism, 482, 583
 "United Brethren," 475-80
 Unity in the Church, Act for preservation of (1695), 530
 University tests, abolition, 627-30
 Urban V. (Pope), demands of, 51
 Urwick, Dr., 717
 Ussher (Archbishop of Armagh)—Scheme of church government, 243, 264, 340, 395, 399, 404-6
 Uxbridge, negotiations (1644), 293-4

V

Vane, Sir H., 237, 243, 265, 266, 291
 Vaughan, R., 634, 669, 671, 724
 Venn, Henry, of Huddersfield, 586
 Venner's Insurrection, 407
 Vestments; proposal to make use optional, 84 — Irregularities in usage, 85—Prescribed by "Book of Advertisements," 86, 88—Discussion before Grindal, 90-1—Object of enforcing, 96-7
 — Controversy, 97 foll.—Hooper on, 97—Lay opinion, 97—Episcopal opinion, 97-8—Hallam on, 98—Puritan scruples, 98—Mark of Rome, 98-9—Involve separation from foreign Protestants, 99-100
 Victoria, Queen, address to, against

Education Committee of Privy Council, 652-3
 Village Itinerancy Association, 594
 Vincent, Thomas, 431
 Vint, W., of Idle Academy, 595
 Virginia, Puritan Settlement, 204-5
 Voluntary Church Association, 634

W

Wace, H. (Dean of Canterbury), 730
 Waddington, John, quoted, 92-3, 740
 Wake (Archbishop of Canterbury), 517
 Waldenses, 31-3, 50
 Waldenström, Dr., 747
 Waldgrave, manager of secret press, 154-5
 Waldo, Peter, 32
 Wales, Penry's appeals for evangelisation of, 153, 154, 160—Independent Churches in, 219—Insurrection (1648), 310
 Walker, John, number of Anglican clergy ejected under the Commonwealth, 341-2
 — (Master of University College, Oxford), 449
 Waller, Sir W., 306
 Wallis, Dr., 397, 410
 Walpole, Sir R., and repeal of Test Act, 519-20
 Walter, J., 677
 Walthamstow, School for missionaries' daughters, 739
 Wandsworth, Puritan meeting to establish "Discipline" at, 111-12
 Ward, D. S., 711
 —, J., 264
 Wardlaw, Gilbert, of Blackburn Academy, 596
 —, Dr., 634, 700, 717-18, 724
 Warner (Bishop of Rochester), 244
 Waterford, taken by Cromwell, 313
 Waterland, D., 532
 Watson, John, Tutor of Hackney College, 594
 — — (Brantford), 712
 Watts, Isaac; chaplain to Abney, 496—Rowe's pupil, 500—Pastor of Mark Lane Church, 501, 512, 514—Hymns 509-10, 548—Salters' Hall, 536—On Arianism, 544-5
 — On decay of Dissenting Interest, 552, 556-7—Letter to Doddridge on the Revival, 584-591, 721, 722
 "Weavers," 48-9
 Weigh House Congregational Church, 514

- Welch, George, encourages lay preaching, 593-4
 Wellington, Duke of, 612, 616, 617, 618, 629
 Wells, Algernon, 661, 714, 715
 Wentworth, Peter, sent to the Tower for speech in Parliament, 105-6, 317
 Wesley, John, 529, 561-2—Lay preachers, 583—Doctrine, 585
 Wesley, Samuel, attacks academies, 502, 509
 Wesleyan Methodism, attitude of Congregationalists to, 561-2, 584-5—Growth, 581
 Western College, Plymouth, 560
 Westfield (Bishop of Bristol), 264, 266
 Westminster Abbey, Nonconformist services in, 377, 500
 — Assembly, *see* Assembly.
 — College (Cambridge), 733
 Wexford, siege, 313
 Wharton, Lord, 461, 500
 Whichcote, 381
 Whiston, W., 531-2, 533
 Whitby, D., 532
 White, J., 269, 333, 337
 — (Bishop of Peterborough), 454, 464
 Whitefield, G., 561, 583, 586—Relations with Doddridge, 584-5, Whitefield's Tabernacles, 584, 586
 Whitelock, Bulstrode, 265, 295, 351
 Whitgift (Master of Trinity College, Cambridge and Archbishop of Canterbury), controversy with Cartwright, 107-11—Arrests and examines Barrowe, 144-5, 146—Arrests Penry, 153—Further proceedings against Penry, 156, 158—At Hampton Court Conference, 183-177, 189, 214, 215
 Wickham Market (Suffolk), prosecution for holding service, 576
 Widows' Fund, London Congregational ministers, 742
 Wigginton, evidence on authorship of Mar-prelate Tracts, 161
 Wightman, E., 211, 528
 Wilberforce, William, 569, 578, 648
 Wilcox, and the first "Admonition," 107
 Wilde, Serjeant, 244
 Wilkes, Henry, 712-13, 715-16
 Wilkins (Bishop of Chester), 431
 Wilks, John, Protestant Society, 575—, Matthew, 575
 Williams (Bishop of Lincoln), 242-3
 —, Daniel, 451, 475, 481-2, 515, 530
 —, Edward, on decay of Calvinism, 587
 —, J. Carvell, 639
 —, Library, 723
 Willis (Bishop of Gloucester), 517
 Wilson, Joshua, 689, 723, 725, 726, 740
 —, Thomas, and lay preachers, 593
 —, T., 689, 740
 —, Walter, and missions, 602-3
 Wiltshire, Lord, 461
 Winchelsea, Lord, 612
 Winchester Cathedral, Gale ejected from, 500
 Windebank (Secretary of State), 235, 251
 Windham, Mr. Justice, on refusal of sacrament, 379-80
 —, Sir W., 503
 Windsor, prayer-meeting at, 311
 Winter, Cornelius, trains ministers at Painswick, 594-5
 —, Dr. R., 689
 Winterbotham, H. S. P., 677
 Withers (of Exeter), 532-5
 Wollaston, Francis, attacks local preachers, 572-3
 Wolsey (Cardinal), 60
 Wood, George, university tests, 628
 Woodward Trusts, 741-2
 Worcester, battle, 313, 445
 Wordsworth, Dr., 667
 Wren (Bishop of Norwich and of Ely), 223, 244
 Wright (Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield), 244
 —, Robert, 144
 Wroth, 219
 Wyclif, John; attacks Papacy, 51
 —Translates Bible, 52-3—Followers suppressed, 54-7
 Wymondley (Herts), Doddridge's academy established there, and subsequent troubles, 596-8
- Y
- Yarmouth, Separatists at, 219—
 Congregational Church at, 365, 377
 Yockney, W., 689
 Young, Thomas, 242, 243, 265, 381
- Z
- Zwingle, and Lambert, 44

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