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The Bohlen Lectures, 1890

THE GENERAL
ECCLESIASTICAL CONSTITUTION
OF THE
AMERICAN CHURCH
ITS HISTORY AND RATIONALE

BY
WILLIAM STEVENS PERRY
BISHOP OF IOWA

DELIVERED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
PHILADELPHIA, IN APRIL AND MAY,
1890

NEW YORK
THOMAS WHITTAKER
2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE
1891

THE JOHN BOHLEN LECTURESHIP.

JOHN BOHLEN, who died in Philadelphia on the 26th day of April, 1874, bequeathed to trustees a fund of One Hundred Thousand Dollars, to be distributed to religious and charitable objects in accordance with the well-known wishes of the testator.

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The money shall be invested in good, substantial, and safe securities, and held in trust for a fund to be called The John Bohlen Lectureship, and the income shall be applied annually to the payment of a qualified person, whether clergyman or layman, for the delivery, and publication of at least one hundred copies, of two or more lecture-sermons. These Lectures shall be delivered at such time and place, in the city of Philadelphia, as the persons nominated to appoint the lecturer shall from time to time determine, giving at least six months' notice to the person appointed

The Bohlen Lectureship.

to deliver the same, when the same may conveniently be done, and in no case selecting the same person as lecturer a second time within a period of five years. The payment shall be made to said lecturer, after the lectures have been printed and received by the trustees, of all the income for the year derived from said fund, after defraying the expense of printing the lectures and the other incidental expenses attending the same.

The subject of such lectures shall be such as is within the terms set forth in the will of the Rev. John Bampton, for the delivery of what are known as the "Bampton Lectures," at Oxford, or any other subject distinctively connected with or relating to the Christian Religion.

The lecturer shall be appointed annually in the month of May, or as soon thereafter as can conveniently be done, by the persons who, for the time being, shall hold the offices of Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese in which is the Church of the Holy Trinity; the Rector of said Church; the Professor of Biblical Learning, the Professor of Systematic Divinity, and the Professor of Ecclesiastical History, in the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

In case either of said offices are vacant, the others may nominate the lecturer.

Under this trust, the Rt. Rev. WILLIAM STEVENS PERRY, Bishop of Iowa, was appointed to deliver the lecture, for the year 1890.

BISHOP'S HOUSE,
DAVENPORT, IOWA, Easter, 1891.

LECTURES
ON THE BOHLEN FOUNDATION.

DELIVERED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
PHILADELPHIA.

1877. By the Rev. Alexander H. Vinton, D. D.
Inaugural Series.
1878. By the Rt. Rev. Frederick D. Huntington, D. D.,
LL. D., Bishop of Central New York.
The Fitness of Christianity to Man.
1879. By the Rev. Phillips Brooks, D. D., *Oxon.*
The Influence of Jesus.
1880. By the Very Rev. John F. Howson, D. D., Dean of
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The Evidential Value of the Acts of the Apostles.
1881. By the Rt. Rev. Thomas U. Dudley, E. D., Bishop
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The Church's Need.
1882. By the Rt. Rev. Samuel S. Harris, D. D., LL. D.,
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The Relation of Christianity to Civil Society.
1883. By the Rev. Alexander V. G. Allen, D. D.
The Continuity of Christian Thought.
1887. By the Rev. Joseph F. Garrison, D. D.
The American Prayer Book.
1890. By the Rt. Rev. William Stevens Perry, D. D., *Oxon.*,
LL. D., D. C. L., Bishop of Iowa.
Constitutional History of the American Church.

TO MY FRIEND,
R. Y. COOK, ESQ., M. A.,
THESE LECTURES,
MOSTLY WRITTEN UNDER HIS HOSPITABLE ROOF
AT WYNNEMERE,
ARE
GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED
IN MEMORY OF COUNTLESS
KINDNESSES.

THE HISTORY AND RATIONALE OF
THE GENERAL ECCLESIASTICAL
CONSTITUTION OF THE
AMERICAN CHURCH.

I.

“*THE CASE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCHES
CONSIDERED.*”

THE leading incidents of the history of our ecclesiastical organization centre around a single man,—a single name. The story of our progress from a condition of dependency upon the Mother Church of England, to independence and autonomy as a branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, is told in the life-history of William White, who for upwards of half a century was the guiding spirit and the judicious head of the Communion he had done so much to found and shape. It is with the purpose,—as we enter upon the second century of our united independent existence as a Church,—of recalling attention to the wise master-building of the first Bishop of Pennsyl-

vania that we would review the history, and examine the underlying principles, of our Ecclesiastical Constitution—that instrument which, with but trifling changes, has been our bond of union and our bill of rights for one hundred years. To trace the gradual development of the principles which have guided our ecclesiastical legislation and shaped our ecclesiastical condition during these years of growth and prosperity is a duty, owed to the memory of those who have secured for us these privileges. To find in the broad, comprehensive and logical statements of an almost forgotten pamphlet,—the production of a young man,—rector of the United Congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's, Philadelphia, the germ of an ecclesiastical system so full as to require but little change to make it adapted to all the needs of a century of life and constant increase, is surely a matter of interest to those who care at all about the foundation principles of our ecclesiastical government and the philosophy of our history. To learn that we have yet to reach, as a Church, in its fulness the entire system thus indicated with far-

seeing astuteness and consummate wisdom, should lead us to recognize the great ability of this leader of our Israel from the state of pupilage to ecclesiastical independence and autonomy. Our theme, then, is *The History and Rationale of the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the American Church*. We propose to treat it in the following order:

First, William White and his pamphlet, *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*.

In considering this, the first ecclesiastical state paper of the period of our Church's organization, we shall examine the positions, and trace the development of the principles, set forth in this pamphlet written by William White at a period of the Church's depression and partial overthrow,—prepared and published at a juncture in civil and ecclesiastical affairs when other men's minds failed them for fear and for looking for that which was so likely to come—the utter extinction of the Church which had been planted on American shores two hundred years before.

Secondly, we propose to review the methods and plans for organization taken by the

Churchmen in the Northern States and by those of the Middle and Southern States, noting the gradual recognition and adoption of the principles so clearly set forth in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, and necessarily bringing into prominence as a leader and guide the author of this remarkable ecclesiastical state paper.

In this connection we shall naturally reach the question of the nature of the Episcopate sought and secured by our fathers; and it will be the object of our investigations to ascertain the scope and powers of the Episcopal Office as revealed by the history of the measures through which this office and administration was obtained.

Our next purpose will be the consideration of the union of the Churches in 1789, and the influence of this confederation on the Ecclesiastical Constitution which now took its final shape and is, with slight variations, the charter of our Church organization to-day.

And lastly, we shall consider the *rationale* of the Constitution—noting its dominant ideas; tracing its successive modifications; and con-

sidering the suggestions of William White as to its further development and its adaptation to the Church's needs in the time to come.

In this order, and with these purposes in view, we propose to treat the theme we have chosen as a contribution to the centenary literature of the American Church.

The eminently wise and judicious Bishop Alonzo Potter, in his sketch of William White, uses this language respecting his predecessor in the see of Pennsylvania:—

“The peace of 1783 had not been concluded before he had sketched out, in a pamphlet entitled ‘The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered,’ a plan for the organization of our infant Communion, which shows the comprehensive skill of a statesman, and which ultimately commended itself to general acceptance. The essential unity of the whole American Church as a national Church; its independence of any foreign jurisdiction; the entire separation of the spiritual and temporal authority; the participation of the laity in the legislation and government of the Church, and in the election of its ministers of every grade; the equality of all parishes, and a threefold organization (diocesan, provincial, and general), were funda-

mental principles in his plan, as they were in that which was finally adopted.

“To conceive such a plan, however, was much easier than to secure its adoption. The difficulties which had to be encountered were such as might well have appalled any spirit less calm and patient, less resolute and trustful than his own. This is not the place, nor is now the time, in which to set forth the unyielding serenity of soul, the unfailing courtesy and kindness, the true modesty and self-forgetfulness, the calm sobriety of judgment, the independence of personal considerations, and the straightforward honesty and zeal which gradually won to him the confidence of all hearts, and which enabled him at length to secure the cordial acceptance of every important feature in his original plan. To develop these services in full will be the duty of the future historian; and upon that historian will devolve the grateful task of showing how his steady hand guided the system as it went into operation; and how, through the gracious goodness of God, he was permitted for more than forty years to be in every emergency its most honored and trusted administrator.”*

*Discourses, Charges, Addresses, Pastoral Letters, etc., etc., by Alonzo Potter, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, 1858; pp. 209, 210.

It is in the spirit of these well-considered words, and in memory of Bishop White's own claim that the "incipient measures" were taken by himself "for the organizing of our Church out of the wreck of the Revolution," and that "those measures began with the author's pamphlet, entitled 'the Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered,'"* that we would attempt to give the history and rationale of the General Ecclesiastical Constitution of the American Episcopal Church.

The condition of the Church of England in the confederated American States, as the war for independence wore to its close, is summarily expressed in Bishop White's own words:

"The congregations of our Communion throughout the United States were approaching to annihilation. Although within this city (Philadelphia) three Episcopal clergymen, including the author, were resident and officiating, the Church over the rest of the State had

**Vide MS. Note on The Church in America, by William White, published in photo-lithography by Thos. H. Montgomery, Esq., of Philadelphia.*

become deprived of their clergy during the war, either by death, or by departure for England. In the Eastern States, with two or three exceptions, there was a cessation of the exercises of the pulpit, owing to the necessary disuse of the prayers for the former civil rulers. In Maryland and in Virginia, where the Church enjoyed civil establishments, on the ceasing of these, the incumbents of the parishes, almost without exception, ceased to officiate. Further south, the condition of the Church was not better, to say the least. At the time in question, there had occurred some circumstances which prompted the hope of a discontinuance of the war; but, that it would be with the acknowledgment of American Independence, there was little reason to expect." * * *

“It was an opinion commonly entertained, that if there should be a discontinuance of military operations, it would be without the acknowledgment of independence, as happened after the severance of the Netherlands from the Crown of Spain. Of the like issue there seemed probable causes, in the feelings

attendant on disappointed efforts for conquest; and in the belief cherished that the successes of the former colonists would be followed by dissensions, inducing return to the domination of the mother country. Had the war ended in that way, our obtaining of the Succession from England would have been hopeless. The remnant of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, laboring under penal laws not executed, would not have ventured the bringing down on themselves of the arm of government. Fear of the like offence would have operated in any other quarter to which we might have had recourse. In such a case, the obtaining the Succession in time to save from ruin, would seem to have been impossible.”*

**Vide MS. Note on the Church in America, by William White.*

Bishop White begins the concluding paragraph of his “Episcopal Charge on the Subject of Revivals, delivered before the Forty-eight Convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania,” with the following words:—

“Brethren, it is bordering on the half of a century since the date of the incipient measures of your bishop, for the organising of our Church out of the wreck of the Revolution.”

On a copy of this charge in the possession of Thomas H.

It was under these circumstances that there appeared in Philadelphia, from the pen of William White, then a young man of thirty-four years of age, a pamphlet† which exerted a

Montgomery, Esq., of Philadelphia, the Bishop has added on the last blank pages the following note:—

“Those measures began with ye Author’s Pamphlet, entitled ‘The Case of ye Episcopal Churches in ye United States Considered.’

“The Circumstances attached to that Publication are ye following:—”

The words we have quoted are from the photo-lithographic reproduction by Mr. Montgomery of Bishop White’s MS. Note.

† Bishop White’s account of the appearance of this pamphlet is as follows:—

“On ye sixth of August 1782, ye Congress, as noticed on their printed Journal of that Day, received a Communication from Sir Guy Carleton & Admiral Digby, dated ye 2d of that Month, which gave ye first Opening of ye Prospect of Peace. The Pamphlet had been advertised for Sale in ye *Pennsylvania Packet* of ye 6th & some Copies had been previously handed by ye Author to a few of his Friends. This suspended ye intended Proceedings in ye Business; which, in ye Opinion of ye Author, would have been justified by Necessity, & by no other Consideration.”

Copies of this pamphlet were advertised for sale, as has been stated, in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of August 6, 1782. This statement is conclusive as to the original appearance of the pamphlet. Bishop White tells us, in the paragraph quoted above from the “MS. Note” reproduced by Mr.

most important effect on the organization and the very existence of the American Church. Eliciting, as it did, the most careful consideration and the most unsparing criticism, it secured for all but a single, and that an unnecessary, feature, a general approval and the final acceptance of the plan proposed. This pamphlet was "The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered." It must be borne in

Montgomery from the original manuscript in his possession, that "some copies" had been previously handed by the author to a few of his friends. Copies bearing the date of 1782 are to be found in the public libraries in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Bishop White, in his *Memoirs* [second edition, p. 89], speaks of the pamphlet as "published in the summer of 1783," and the reprint by Stavelly in 1827, together with that issued by Hamilton, in 1859, and that appended to Perry's *Reprint of the Early Journals*, iii. pp. 416-435, give the date of Claypole's edition as 1783. There seems every probability that, since the prospect of peace opened, as it did, almost contemporaneously with the first appearance of this pamphlet, rendering its plea of necessity no longer serviceable, its distribution was suspended, and it was withheld from general circulation till the time named in the Bishop's *Memoirs*, the summer of 1783. One of the early copies must have fallen into the hands of the Convocation of the Connecticut Clergy. The original editions of 1782 and 1783 are exceedingly rare, and of the Stavelly reprint but few exist.

mind that this paper was originally published during the first week in August, 1782. When it was written and even when it first appeared from the press, there had been no acknowledged negotiations between the contending parties looking to an amicable settlement of differences between the two countries on the basis of a recognition of American independence. It was prepared at a time when the author, in common with the great body of American churchmen, both clergy and laity, were "despairing of a speedy acknowledgment of our independence although there was not likely to be more of war."*

The communication of Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby to the American Congress changed at once the aspect of affairs. The pamphlet was at once withdrawn from sale, and such copies as were within the author's reach were destroyed. Some had been distributed among friends and were consequently in circulation; and early the following year some additional copies were issued from the press, evidently to enable persons whose curiosity

* Bishop White's letter to Bishop Hobart.

had been excited, to judge as to the nature of the propositions advanced by the writer of the work.

It does not appear that any pains were taken by the writer to secure either the sale or the further circulation of copies of this pamphlet, which in its original form has become one of the rarest of our Ecclesiastical "Americana." While giving, as he did, his best efforts to further the adoption of the other measures so clearly set forth in this pamphlet, William White recognized at once the fact that, with the acknowledgment of American independence, the expedient of a temporary departure from the Church's rule and practice "from the Apostles' times" of the historic Episcopate, was no longer necessary. The proposition advanced was confessedly an expedient. It stood alone on the plea of necessity, and that plea failing, it was never urged again. In fact, it is to William White more than to any other man, and to his unremitting labors in its behalf, that the coveted "succession" in the English line was at length obtained; and the "historic Episco-

pate," in its completeness, was secured for the infant American Church.

In the preface to this remarkable ecclesiastical state-paper the author assumes "that the members of the Episcopal Churches, some from conviction, and others from the influence of ancient habits, entertain a preference for their own communion; and that accordingly they are not a little anxious to see some speedy and decisive measures adopted for its continuance." The writer "believes, therefore, that his undertaking needs no apology to the public, and that those for whom it is designed will give him credit for his good intentions." He regards his purpose as "subservient to the general cause of religion and virtue; for a numerous society, losing the benefit of the stated ordinances within itself, cannot but severely feel the effect of such a change, on the piety and morals of its members." "In this point of view," proceeds our author, "all good men must lament that cessation of public worship, which has happened to many of the Episcopal Churches, and threatens to become universal." The writer

claims that his present work is "connected with the civil happiness of the community." He next strives to correct a popular fallacy. "A prejudice has prevailed," he proceeds, "with many, that the Episcopal Churches cannot otherwise exist than under the dominion of Great Britain." He therefore claims that "A church government that would contain the constituent principles of the Church of England, and yet be independent of foreign jurisdiction or influence, would remove that anxiety, which at present hangs heavy on the minds of many sincere persons." The writer concludes with the expression of the hope that if "this performance" should "fail of effect on account of the insufficiency of the author, it may nevertheless be of advantage, by drawing to the subject the attention of others, better qualified for the undertaking."

Thus modestly introducing the work he has taken in hand, the writer of "The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered," proceeds to enable his readers "to form an idea of the situation of the Episcopal Churches in the present crisis" by calling their attention to

“the change their religious system has undergone in the late Revolution.” Laying down the axiom that “on whatever principles the independence of the United States may be supposed to rest * * * * there results from it the reciprocal duties of protection and allegiance, enforced by the most powerful sanctions of natural and revealed religion,” the writer calls attention to the fact “that in general, the members of the Episcopal Churches are friendly to the principles on which the present governments were formed, a fact particularly obvious in the Southern States, where the Episcopalians were,” as he asserts, “a majority of the citizens,” and “engaged and persevered in the war with as much ardor and constancy as their neighbors.”* “Many even of those whose sentiments were at first unfavorable to the Revo-

*This testimony to the patriotism of American churchmen from one who could not have been mistaken is confirmed by abundant evidence. The men who won for us independence by their bravery on the field of battle or contributed to the same result by their wisdom in the halls of Congress, were largely members of our Communion, and were as earnest Churchmen as they were patriots.

lution," proceeds the writer, "now wish for its final establishment as a most happy event; some from an earnest desire for peace, and others from the undistinguishing oppressions and ravages of the British armies. Such persons accordingly acknowledge allegiance and pay obedience to the sovereignty of the States."

With this clear and concise statement of the case of the Episcopal Churches, at the time of his writing, the author proceeds to lay down logically and forcibly the postulates on which his further arguments depend.

"Inconsistent with the duties resulting from this allegiance," he proceeds, "would be their subjection to any spiritual jurisdiction, connected with the temporal authority of a foreign state. Such a dependence is contrary to the fundamental principles of civil society, and therefore cannot be required by the Scriptures; which, being accommodated to the civil policy of the world at large, neither interfered with the constitution of States, as found established at the time of their promul-

gation, nor handed down to succeeding ages any injunctions of such a tendency.

“To apply these observations to the case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States,” is the writer’s next object. “They,”—these Episcopal Churches,—“have heretofore been subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the Bishop of London. This authority was derived under a commission from the crown; which, though destitute of legal operation, found a general acquiescence on the part of the Churches, being exercised no farther than to the necessary purposes of ordaining and licensing ministers. Hereby a connection was formed between the spiritual authority in England and the Episcopal Churches in America, the latter constituting a part of the Bishop of London’s diocese.

“But this connection is dissolved by the Revolution. Had it been matter of right, it would have ceased with the authority of the crown; being founded on consent, and the ground changed, it cannot be allowed of in future, consistently with the duties resulting from our allegiance. Even suppose the Bish-

op of London hereafter exempted, by Act of Parliament, from the necessity of exacting the oaths, a dependence on his lordship and his successors in that see would be liable to the reproach of foreign influence, and render Episcopalians less qualified, than those of other communions, to be entrusted by their country;* neither (as may be presumed) will it be claimed after the acknowledgment of the civil independence, being contrary to a principle clearly implied in many of the institutions of the Church of England, particularly in the XXXIVth Article of Religion, which asserts that ‘every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish ceremonies or rites in the Church, ordained only by man’s authority, so far that all things be done to edifying.’ Though the

* The name of the communion alluded to being changed, how clearly and with what foresight do the words and arguments of William White indicate the position of the Roman Catholic Church in this country—an alien Church dependent on a foreign potentate, and committed by the *Syllabus* to principles hopelessly at variance with our Constitution and laws. How little can such a body lay claim to the title, reiterated with applause at the recent Baltimore Congress, of “The American Catholic Church.”

Episcopal Churches in these States will not be national or legal establishments, the same principle applies, being the danger of foreign jurisdiction.

“The ecclesiastical power over the greater number of the Churches, formerly subsisting in some legislative bodies on this continent, is also abrogated by the Revolution. In the Southern States where the Episcopal Churches were maintained by law, the assemblies might well have been supposed empowered, in conjunction with the other branches of legislation, to regulate their external government;* but now, when the establishments are overturned, it would ill become those bodies, composed of

* This was attempted by the civil authority at least in a few instances. In Virginia, on the day after the Declaration of Independence, the State Convention “altered the Book of Common Prayer to accommodate it to the change in affairs,” and by subsequent legislation restrained the clergy from consenting, directly or indirectly, “to any alterations in the order, government, doctrine or worship of the Church.” Maryland, at a later date, attempted by civil legislation to effect the organization of the Church, and the appointment of persons to exercise Episcopal functions. *Vide Perry’s Reprint of the Early Journals*, III., 103, 104; *Hawks’ Eccl. Contributions*, I. *Virginia*, 239; II. *Maryland*, 284; *Hoffman’s Law of the Church*, p. 31, etc.

men of various denominations (however respectable collectively and as individuals), to enact laws for the Episcopal Churches, which will no doubt, in common with others, claim and exercise the privilege of governing themselves."

This initial chapter of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, from which we have quoted so fully in view of the broad and pertinent principles it lays down, concludes as follows:—

"All former jurisdiction over the Churches being thus withdrawn, and the chain which held them together broken, it would seem that their future continuance can be provided for only by voluntary associations for union and good government. It is therefore of the utmost consequence, to discover and ascertain the principles on which such associations should be framed."

In these pregnant words, "voluntary associations for union and good government," we have the germ of the General and Diocesan Conventions of the American Church.

In the second chapter of *The Case of the*

Episcopal Churches Considered,” attention is called to the fact that in the view of the State “all denominations of Christians are on a level, and no Church is farther known to the public than as a voluntary association of individuals for a lawful and useful purpose.” “The effect of this,” it is urged, “should be the avoidance of whatever may give the Churches the appearance of being subservient to party, or tend to unite their members on questions of a civil nature.” “This,” proceeds the judicious writer, “is unquestionably agreeable to the simplicity of the Gospel; it is conceived to be also, under the present circumstances, agreeable to good policy; for whatever Church shall aim at such objects, unless on account of an invasion of their religious privileges, will be suspected by all others, as aiming at the exclusive government of the country.” With this introductory reference to the position of the Episcopal Churches in the eye of the law, after stating that “in the parent Church,” though “whatever regards religion may be enacted by the clergy in convocation,” it “must afterwards have the sanction of all

other orders of men comprehended in the Parliament," the principle is laid down that "it will be necessary to deviate from the practice (though not from the principles) of that Church by convening the clergy and laity in one body." The enunciation of this fundamental principle of the organization of the American Church which originated in the active mind of William White, and of which these words are the first expression in public or in print, is supported by references to the judicious Hooker and is accompanied by the following practical application of the principle involved, to-wit:—"The power of electing a superior order of ministers ought to be in the clergy and laity together, they being both interested in the choice." It is further urged that "deprivation of the superior order of clergy, should also be in the Church at large."

Supporting these principles,—that the people should exercise the right of representation, and the amenability of even Bishops to "an authority entirely ecclesiastical," by references to early, as well as to English, ecclesiastical history; the second chapter of *The Case of the*

Episcopal Churches Considered closes with the statement of the principle of "the equality of the Churches" as distinguished from "the subjection of all parish churches to their cathedrals," as in England. It is further urged, that in any association of Churches, each Church retains "every power that need not be delegated for the good of the whole." The importance of these principles, and their bearing on the questions involved, will be seen later on in this discussion. In passing, reference is made to the absence of any provision for the support of the "superior order of clergy," and consequently it is suggested that "the duty assigned to that order, ought not materially to interfere with their employments in the station of parochial clergy." The result of this combination of the exercise of the Episcopal office with the duties and labors of the parish priest, would, in the judgment of the writer, involve the limitation of the territory assigned to each Bishop. As the writer expresses it, "The superintendence of each will therefore be confined to a small district—a favorite idea with all moderate Episcopalians."

In the third chapter of this remarkable pamphlet, the author offers a "sketch of a frame of government." It is as follows:

"As the Churches in question extend over an immense space of country, it can never be expected, that representatives from each Church should assemble in one place; it will be more convenient for them to associate in small districts, from which representatives may be sent to three different bodies, the continent being supposed to be divided into that number of larger districts. From these may be elected a body representing the whole.

"In each smaller district, there should be elected a general vestry or convention, consisting of a convenient number (the minister to be one) from the vestry or congregation of each Church, or of every two or more Churches, according to their respective ability of supporting a minister. They should elect a clergyman their permanent president, who, in conjunction with other clergymen, to be also appointed by this body, may exercise such powers as are purely spiritual, particularly that of admitting to the ministry; the presiding clergyman and others to be liable to be deprived for just causes, by a fair process, and under reasonable laws; meetings to be held as often as occasion may require.

“The assemblies in the three larger districts may consist of a convenient number of members, sent from each of the smaller districts severally within their bounds, equally composed of clergy and laity, and voted for by those orders promiscuously; the presiding clergyman to be always one, and these bodies to meet once in every year.

“The continental representative body may consist of a convenient number from each of the larger districts, formed equally of clergy and laity, and among the clergy, formed equally of presiding ministers and others; to meet stately once in three years. The use of this, and the preceding representative bodies, is to make such regulations, and receive appeals in such matters only as shall be judged necessary for their continuing one religious communion.”

We have here laid down in clear and immutable language, the frame-work of our ecclesiastical government as it appeared to the prophetic vision of the young incumbent of the united congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's, Philadelphia. Sitting in that humble study, where all these schemes were thought out and carefully weighed, there arose before the mind of this seer of God the glo-

rious fabric of our Jerusalem in a majesty and completeness yet, after a century of growth and development, to be fully realized. The parish, the diocese, the province, the national Church, all are here; the priest and people deliberating in congregation or vestry; the associated congregations and clergy meeting in state or diocesan synod, the proctors of the clergy and the representatives of the laity of the associated, confederated dioceses assembled in provincial synods, and the great continental representation of Bishops, clergy and laity gathering in the national Council, the General Convention of the American Church, covering the entire domain of the United States and at once national, independent, Catholic:—ah! it was a revelation from above that filled the heart and inspired both the mind and pen of William White to grasp and record so fair a vision,—our New Jerusalem descending in its beauty from the hand of God!

In addition to these outlines of a frame of Church government, the writer proposed the exaction of “an acknowledgment of the

scriptures as a rule of faith and life," in lieu of the subscription to the XXXIX. Articles demanded in the mother Church. To this might be added "some general sanction" of the articles "so as to adopt their leading sense" without "exacting entire uniformity of sentiment." In respect to divine worship, it was wisely urged that "the power of making necessary and convenient alterations in the service of the Church" should be "used with great moderation." In regard to discipline, it is suggested as, "perhaps" "sufficient, if an immoral life were followed by exclusion from the sacrament and ecclesiastical employment." The chapter concludes with these words: "In the preceding pages, the idea of superintending ministers has been introduced; but not a word has been said of the succession supposed necessary to constitute the Episcopal character; and this has been on purpose postponed, as demanding a more minute discussion."

We shall recur again and again to the remarkable power of forecasting the future needs and purposes of the Church in the United States, shown by the young and com-

paratively inexperienced author of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. Already we have seen clearly indicated in the chapters of this pamphlet of a score or more pages, the autonomy and essential unity of the Episcopal Churches in the respective states, and the possession of those qualities and powers constituting the several Episcopal Churches a national, American Church, the independence of this national Church of any foreign jurisdiction, the separation of the temporal and spiritual power, the inclusion of the laity in the legislation and government of the Church, the choice by the people of their spiritual teachers and rulers of every grade, the equality of parishes and congregations, and the retention by the local, state Church—the “one common flock subject to a Bishop” and his presbyters, of all power not delegated for the good of the whole; and the complex representative system of organization, diocesan, provincial, general—providing for government, self-perpetuation and the due exercise of each individual, as well as every collective, right and power. There was now

to be met the gravest difficulty of all, the continuance of Episcopacy when, humanly speaking, the Episcopal order and office were not to be had. Reviewing the experiment proposed when Providentially all obstacles to the introduction of a valid Episcopate had been surmounted, Bishop White in 1807 expresses his firm conviction "that under the state of things contemplated, some such expedient as that proposed must have been resorted to;" while at the same time acknowledging that "had the proposal been delayed a little longer, the happy change of prospects would have prevented the appearance of the pamphlet, unless with considerable alterations."

Assuming "that the succession cannot at present be obtained;"—and that "from the parent Church most unquestionably it cannot; whether from any, is presumed to be more than we can at present be informed;" the writer proposes "to include in the proposed form of government, a general approbation of Episcopacy, and a declaration of an intention to procure the succession as soon as conven-

iently may be." In the mean time, the writer suggested the adoption of the plan of "organizing the Church by the appointment of superintendents with powers similar to those of Bishops," but "without waiting for the succession."

With the discussion of the question whether "the dropping of the succession even for a time would be a departure from the principles of the Church of England" which follows, occupying in fact the remaining pages of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, we are not specially concerned. The argument proceeds on the ground of necessity—"that ordination by Bishops *cannot be had*." It is "the exigence of necessity" that our writer pleads, quoting the judicious Hooker's language and arguments in support of these words. The "*necessity* of the present times" is all that is urged by the writer of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. The query is raised "whether Episcopalians will not be thought scarcely deserving the name of Christians, should they, rather than consent to a temporary deviation, abandon

every ordinance of positive and divine appointment." The answer of the writer is, that, as he conceives, "it will not be difficult to prove that a temporary departure from Episcopacy in the present instance would be warranted by the doctrines of the Church of England," "by her practice, and by the principles on which Episcopal government is asserted." The distinction is carefully made "between cases where the necessity is real, and those where Episcopacy had been willingly and expressly rejected, as by the people of Scotland and the English dissenters."

There can be no question as to the views of William White at this period of his life and as expressed in this memorable pamphlet. His opinions were those of moderate Churchmen who laid little stress upon the "divine right" of Episcopacy, but were ready to "venerate and prefer that form" of Church government "as the most ancient and eligible." Nor was William White alone in holding these sentiments. His own statement, which we quote, is undoubtedly correct as to the opinion of his fellow Churchmen in the Middle and

Southern States. “This the author believes to be the sentiment of the great body of Episcopalians in America; in which respect they have in their favor, *unquestionably*, the sense of the Church of England, and, *as he believes*, the opinions of her most distinguished prelates, for piety, virtue, and abilities.” That with further study and added years of experience and investigation, his views of the obligation of the threefold ministry and the historic Episcopate strengthened, is equally certain. It is more than probable that at this peculiar juncture of affairs when *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* appeared, the moderate views of the writer and the singularly temperate and apposite citations from acknowledged authorities with which he enforced his opinions went far to allay popular prejudices and correct unreasonable misconceptions, which else might have seriously hindered the revival and organization of the American Church. It must be conceded that at the time of the appearance of this pamphlet, and in view of the existing state of public and ecclesiastical affairs, any

proposition for the organization and perpetuation of a Church whose very name was a reproach and whose recourse to English prelates for its power to perpetuate its ministry, could not fail to be misunderstood and consequently misrepresented, must be both conciliatory in tone and free from advocacy of disputed or apparently arrogant claims. The student of the history of the period directly preceding the Revolution, is well aware of the bitter opposition excited by the efforts of the clergy of the New England States and New York and New Jersey, with the countenance of a few of their brethren at the southward, to secure the appointment of Bishops for America. We have the testimony of no less an authority than Samuel Adams, that this proposition was one of the moving causes of the war for independence. Wisely, then, did William White, in meeting the assertion "that the very name of 'Bishop' is offensive," concede the point and say, "if so, change it for another; let the superior clergyman be a president, a super-

intendent, or, in plain English, and according to the literal translation of the original, an overseer." The sturdy common-sense of the writer could not but accompany this concession to unreasoning and obstinate opposers by adding:—"However, if names are to be reprobated because the powers annexed to them have been abused, there are few appropriated to either civil or ecclesiastical distinctions which would retain their places in our catalogue." The pamphlet, we need not say, was written, not as a literary effort, but under a deep sense of the gravity of the questions it discussed. Its earnest tone thus finds expression: "Are the acknowledged ordinances of Christ's holy religion to be suspended for years, perhaps as long as the present generation shall continue, out of delicacy to a disputed point, and that relating only to externals?" It proceeds with fervor,—“All the obligations of conformity to the Divine ordinances, all the arguments which prove the connection between public worship and the morals of a people,

combine to urge the adopting some speedy measures to provide for the public ministry in these Churches." All this is certainly no more radical than the language of Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, (Book vii., p. 14,) which White himself quotes with full approval: "When the exigence of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the Church, which otherwise we would willingly keep; when the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath, nor can have possibly, a Bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity, the law of God hath oftentimes and may give place; and therefore, we are not, simply and without exception, to urge a lineal descent of power from the apostles by continued succession, in every effectual ordination." It was provided in case the measures proposed were temporarily adopted "and the Episcopal succession afterwards obtained," that any supposed imperfections of the proposed intermediate ordinations might, if it were judged proper, be supplied without acknowledging their nullity, by a *conditional*

ordination resembling that of *conditional baptism* in the liturgy."* *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* concludes with the following statement and appeal:—"The great majority of Episcopalians, believing that their faith and worship are rational and Scriptural, have no doubt of their being supported independent of state establishments; nay, it is presumed there are many, who, while they sincerely love their fellow-Christians of every denomination, knowing (as one of their prayers expresses) that the 'body of Christ' comprehends 'the blessed company of all faithful people,' are more especially attached to their own mode of worship, *perhaps* from education, but *as they conceive* from its being most agreeable to reason and Scripture, and its most nearly resembling the pattern of the purest ages of the Church. On the consciences of such above all others, may be pressed the obligation of adopting speedy and

* White enforces this proposition by adding these words:—

"The above was an expedient proposed by Archbishop Tillotson, Bishops Patrick, Stillingfleet, and others, at the Revolution, and had actually been practiced in Ireland by Archbishop Bramhall."

decisive measures to prevent their being scattered 'like sheep without a shepherd,' and to continue the use of that form of divine service, which they believe to be worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

To the principles set forth in this pamphlet, Bishop White clung with characteristic consistency to the latest years of his long and honored life. In a note appended to a letter addressed to Bishop Hobart, under date of December 21, 1830, he thus alludes to this production of his youth:—

In agreement with the sentiments expressed in this pamphlet, I am still of the opinion that in an exigency in which a duly authorized Ministry cannot be obtained, the paramount duty of preaching the Gospel, and the worshipping of God on the terms of the Christian Covenant, should go on in the best manner which circumstances permit. In regard to Episcopacy, I think that it should be sustained in the government of the Church from the time of the Apostles, but without criminating the ministry of other Churches, as is the course taken by the Church of England.*

* Referring to this publication, Dr. Bird Wilson, in his *Memoir of Bishop White*, thus proceeds:—

The impression produced by the appearance of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* was profound. The breadth and comprehensiveness of its suggestions, and the grave importance of the measures it proposed, together with the soberness of judgment and the unfailing courtesy and consideration for the views of others it displayed, compelled a hearing even for those proposals happily rendered unnecessary by the prospect of peace. The reception of the pamphlet at the North

“Before his visit to England for consecration, he (the Bishop-elect) knew that his pamphlet had been in the hands of the Archbishop of York, a predecessor of the prelate who assisted at his consecration. It had been enclosed also to Mr. Adams, the American minister, when the address of the Convention of 1785 to the Archbishops and Bishops of England was officially sent to him, and was delivered by him to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Moore. The latter did not express any dissatisfaction with the pamphlet, or with the author on its account; nor has any other prelate, so far as is known. After the publication of it, a copy was sent to Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Provoost, at Dr. White’s desire, by Mr. Duane, then in Congress. This produced a letter from that gentleman to Mr. Duane, approbatory of the pamphlet, and mentioning some facts which the author thought much to the purpose of the main object of it.” *Letter to Bishop Hobart of October 17, 1805.*

is a matter of record. A few months after its appearance, ten of the clergy of Connecticut assembled in convocation at Woodbury, and after making choice of Samuel Seabury to go abroad for consecration as their bishop, gave to what was already known as "the Philadelphia plan" a patient and careful consideration. Without communicating the momentous action they had taken towards solving the very problem under discussion,—for this they kept as "a profound secret even from their most intimate friends of the laity,"*—"the clergy of Connecticut" empowered their secretary, the Rev. Abraham Jarvis,† to address to Dr. White in their name a letter of remonstrance. This letter Dr. White has given in full in the appendix to his *Memoirs of the Church*.‡ It admits "that the chain which connected this with the mother-Church is broken;" and that "the American Church is

* *Vide* Rev. Daniel Fogg's letter to the Rev. Samuel Parker, printed in Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 214.

† Afterwards the second Bishop of Connecticut.

‡ Second edition, pp. 282-286.

now left to stand in its own strength." It deprecates "as premature and of dangerous consequence" any proposal to enter upon a "change in its regulations" till there are "resident bishops (if they can be obtained) to assist" in effecting the "new union in the American Church" which should take the place of the old connection with Great Britain. It assails with warmth the proposition to effect an organization and a "frame of government" without the presence of the Episcopal order. It regards "the general approbation of Episcopacy," and "the declaration of an intention to procure the succession as soon as conveniently may be," as occasioned rather by policy than principle. It argues that the author of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* would not have "proposed to set up the ministry without waiting for the succession," if he had "believed the Episcopal superiority to be an ordinance of Christ, with the exclusive authority of ordination and government." It claims that "an Episcopal Church without Episcopacy," if not "a contradiction in terms," would certainly be "a new thing under the

sun." It proceeds to discuss the concessions with respect to Presbyterian ordination made by "the venerable Hooker" and others, and to combat the plea of "necessity," claiming that the succession is "as essential to the Church as the sacraments." It argues that "it has been the constant opinion of our Church in England and here, that the Episcopal superiority is an ordinance of Christ," and it appeals to "the uniform practice of the whole American Church, for near a century, in sending their candidates three thousand miles for Holy Orders," as "more than a presumptive proof that the Church here" has ever held "this opinion." The instances of occasional toleration of Presbyterian ordination by the Church, it is urged, have been explained and "answered again and again." It submits that "our Church has ever believed bishops to have the sole right of ordination and government, and that this regimen was appointed by Christ Himself," and adds that those who advocate even a "temporary departure" from this rule, and thus "set aside the ordinance of Christ for conveniency," "scarcely deserve

the name of Christians." It argues that the plea of necessity cannot be urged "with any propriety" till "we have tried to obtain an Episcopate, and have been rejected." It takes the ground that the present time offers "a more favorable opportunity for the introduction of Bishops than this country has before seen." They will have "no civil authority." They will be "purely ecclesiastics." It believes "that the whole civil authority upon the continent (should their assistance be needed) will unite their influence with the Church to procure an office so essential to it. It adds its conviction that the Bishops in England will not be "so totally lost to a sense of their duty, and to the real wants of their brethren in the Episcopal Church here, as to refuse to ordain Bishops to preside over us, when a proper application shall be made to them for it." It further asserts that "the present" is "a favorable opportunity for such an application." In this "frank and brotherly way" the Connecticut clergy sought to express their "opinion of the mistaken and dangerous tendency of the pamphlet." The letter concludes

with these words:—“We fear, should the scheme of it be carried into execution in the Southern States, it will create divisions in the Church at a time when its whole strength depends upon its unity: for we know it is totally abhorrent from the principles of the Church in the Northern States, and are fully convinced they will never submit to it. And indeed, should we consent to a temporary departure from Episcopacy, there would be very little propriety in asking for it afterwards, and as little reason ever to expect it in America. Let us all then unite as one man to improve this favorable opportunity, to procure an object so desirable and so essential to the Church.”

Bishop White in his *Memoirs of the Church* * refers to this communication from the clergy of Connecticut as “mistaking the object” of “the Philadelphia plan.” “There pervades” the Connecticut letter, writes Bishop White, “the defect of not distinguishing between the then state of public concerns and as they stood when the pamphlet was

* Second edition, p. 90.

published. Nearly a year, and the acknowledgment of independence had intervened. The intimation in the letter, that the author of the pamphlet regarded Episcopacy no further than that, for the satisfying of the people, the prospect was to be held out of obtaining it at a future time, would have been wounding to his feelings, had his brethren of Connecticut possessed a knowledge of him. They were at that time strangers to one another. The intimated suspicion was then resolved, and is now resolved by him on whom it fell, into a difference of apprehension as to the means of accomplishing the same end."

There can be little doubt, however, from letters written by the Rev. Charles Inglis, D. D., afterwards first Bishop of Nova Scotia, who was then about starting for England, to Dr. White, that suspicions arising from the perusal of the pamphlet which detailed "the Philadelphia plan" had prevented an invitation to White, and the clergy still further to the southward, to unite in the efforts made at this meeting at Woodbury for obtaining an American Episcopate, as well as in those con-

sultations in New York out of which grew the establishment of the see of Nova Scotia and the founding of King's College at Windsor, in the same province.

Elsewhere than at the North *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* became the manifesto of those who were desirous of the organization and perpetuation of the Church on principles akin to those of the American revolution and the independence of the nation of all foreign control.

The ideas and principles, the arguments, the conclusions, the very language of this able ecclesiastical "state paper," are reproduced at each meeting for organization, and in each declaration of "fundamental principles" set forth by the various assemblies of the clergy and laity, in the Middle and Southern States. The young clergyman of Philadelphia was already a marked man. The gentleness and urbanity of his manners, and his abundant intellectual qualifications and attainments, his habits of calm and deep reflection, his singular caution in decision and action, his sound judgment, together with the possession of ex-

tensive, varied and accurate information not only as to the principles of government both civil and ecclesiastical, but of the particulars of ecclesiastical law and primitive precedent, together with the well-known moderation of his own views in the matters of Church order and discipline; all combined to point him out as one fitted to act as a mediator between the clergy of the East, whose Churchmanship was pronounced and aggressive, and the clergy of the South, where great laxity of opinion even on fundamental points of doctrine and order, obtained. With these advantages and with the disposition to spend and be spent in the behalf of the Church, he gave himself to the work of securing the union of all the Episcopal Churches in the United States under a common ecclesiastical constitution and fully equipped as an autonomous national Church for self-perpetuation and aggressive work.

The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered, and the letter of the Connecticut clergy in reply to its proposals and conclusions, brought prominently into view the two rival plans for effecting the organization and

perfecting of the American Church. That of the young Philadelphia rector was the association of the individual local Churches in small districts, in each of which there should be a convention composed of deputies chosen by the vestries or congregations of the several Churches within its limits, the minister of each congregation being a member of the convention, while the whole Church throughout the land should have its representative body of clergy and laity meeting triennially and being empowered to make such regulations and enact such laws and decisions as shall be judged requisite for the common good. This plan presupposed immediate action without waiting for the superior order of the ministry which was to be obtained, after the general organization was effected, by the united appeal of an united Church complete, save with respect to its head, asking of the parent Church the supply of this acknowledged need.

The other plan contemplated as the initial step in the direction of organization, the obtaining, first of all, a Bishop, under whose au-

thority and guidance alone, it was conceived, could any measures for the completion of the system of the Church be properly taken.

The objects and ends in view in each case were the same. White deemed it wiser to collect and unite the scattered adherents of the Church that there might be a body over which the spiritual head, when obtained, might be placed, than to seek first a Bishop, who, if obtained, might find himself without a flock. The necessity for a resort to a temporary expedient for the historic Episcopate being removed through the acknowledgment by Great Britain of American independence, the union of the scattered Churchmen and the isolated Churches throughout the land in an application to the English hierarchy for the Episcopal succession, seemed almost a matter of necessity if the end desired were to be obtained. It could hardly be expected that the Bishops of the mother Church would pay any regard to the petition or the action of unassociated individuals in a matter of such moment. The rejection in England of Seabury's application for consecration, although supported

by the signatures not alone of the Connecticut clergy, but also of those of New York, is a proof of the wisdom of this conclusion. As it happened, the plans and purposes of each party were successful. In the Providence of God the one scheme, in place of embarrassing, actually furthered the other. Neither plan was of itself alone complete. In the efforts for organization in which the Churchmen of the Middle and Southern States engaged, the principles enunciated in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* were carefully followed. The union of the laity with the clergy in conference and in associated effort for the organization of the Episcopal Churches in the respective States, commended itself to all who were interested in the perpetuation of the Church and secured for the efforts inaugurated in its behalf a wide approval and a generous support. As early as November 9, 1780, clergymen and laymen met at Chestertown, Kent County, Maryland, in informal Convention, for the purpose of petitioning the General Assembly to enact a bill for the support of public worship. The clergymen were

three in number and were the Rev. Samuel Keene, rector of St. Luke's, Queen Anne County; the celebrated Dr. William Smith, formerly Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, and then rector of Chester Parish, Kent County, and President of Washington College; and the Rev. James Jones Wilmer, rector of Shrewsbury Parish, Kent County. The laymen were chiefly vestrymen of parishes in Kent and Queen Anne Counties, in all twenty-four in number. The object in assembling appears to have been simply the furtherance of the petition to the Assembly they had in hand. They do not seem to have been accredited by their respective parishes, and yet the only recorded action of this meeting gives to this November Convention in Maryland, in the year of grace 1780, an interest and importance all will allow. This action was as follows:—"On motion of the Secretary (Rev. James Jones Wilmer), it was proposed that the Church known in the province as Protestant be called the Protestant Episcopal Church, and it was so adopted." With this record the minutes

of the meeting end. To this action of three Maryland clergymen and the assembled vestrymen of the parishes of two Maryland Counties, the name of the Church borne for a hundred years is due.* It is evident that this union of clergymen and laymen in associated effort was not for ecclesiastical organization, but simply for the accomplishment and legalizing of certain matters of a temporal nature in which both rectors and vestrymen were concerned. Consequently, although a similar Convention was held in the year 1781, and again in 1782 and 1783, the assembling of the clergy as incumbents of livings and the laity as vestrymen, for the consideration of the temporal affairs of their respective parishes, does not in any sense contravene the claim of Bishop White to be the originator of the idea of uniting the clergy and laity in Conventions for ecclesiastical purposes. As we shall see later, the Philadelphia rector not only evolved the theory of the introduction of the laity into our ecclesiastical councils, but he carried his

* *Vide Perry's History of the American Episcopal Church*, II., pp. 21, 22.

plan into operation and, "as the proposer of the measure," presided—a fact he was careful to record in his *Memoirs* in "the first ecclesiastical assembly in any of the States, consisting partly of lay members."* Were this his only claim to remembrance and fame, the name of William White would stand among the foremost of ecclesiastical statesmen and among the leaders of American religious thought.

The earliest attempts at ecclesiastical organization on the part of the members of the Church of England in America subsequent to the declaration of independence, were made in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, each proceeding from ideas totally at variance with the others and consequently threatening for a time to cause a permanent disruption of the American Church.

In Connecticut, early in the spring of 1783,† ten clergymen met in Convocation at

* Bishop White's *Memoirs of the Church*, 2nd ed., p. 86. De Costa's edition, p. 94.

† Bishop White says "in March, 1783." (*Memoirs of the Church*, 2nd ed., p. 93). We may reasonably infer from the

Woodbury and, as the first step towards an organization, made choice of the Rev. Samuel Seabury, D. D., a missionary of the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as their Bishop-elect.* The clergy of New York united with their brethren of Connecticut in their approval of this act, and the few clergy of the Church in New England outside of the limits of Connecticut, followed with kindly sympathies and hearty prayers the indefatigable Seabury across the ocean on his difficult and doubtful errand. Once entered upon the effort to secure the Episcopate as the foundation of the Church, the Connecticut clergy never relaxed their labors till the end was gained.

Undertaken by the clergy alone, and kept profoundly secret even from the laity who were well-affected toward the Church both

date affixed to a letter addressed by the Convocation at Woodbury to the Rev. Dr. White, that the day on which this choice was made was "Lady-day," the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1783. *Vide White's Memoirs*, p. 286.

*Hawks' and Perry's *Church Documents*—Connecticut. II., pp. 211-219.

from motives of prudence and principle, these measures were solely concerned with the selection of a Bishop and comprised no scheme for the organization of the Church or the reform of the liturgy. It is evident both from the remonstrance addressed to the writer and from the action actually taken, that the Convocation of the Connecticut clergy at Woodbury on the Feast of the Annunciation, in the year 1783, was influenced in their debates and decisions by the pamphlet entitled *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. It is far from unlikely that the determination of these ten clergymen to proceed to the choice of a Bishop, and the instructions given to their choice to seek consecration first in England and, if refused, to apply for it in Scotland, were intended to make clear their conviction that a temporary departure from Episcopacy on the plea of necessity was not warranted by the existing state of affairs. That this was now the conviction of the writer of the pamphlet in question, they evidently were not aware. The course pursued by the Connecticut clergy

could not have been taken with any prospect of success had not the negotiations for peace removed the necessity contemplated in White's essay. The conservative Churchmen of Connecticut were yet to find, in the author of the pamphlet they so signally reprobated, the one ally through whose persistent labor and generous self-forgetfulness the work they had undertaken in secret, and solely in obedience to the dictates of principle and duty, was finally crowned with a success beyond their fondest hopes. It was through the exertions and by the self-abnegation of William White that the subsequent union of the Churches was effected and the first Bishop of Connecticut became the first Presiding Bishop of the united American Church.

The step once taken, there was no looking back on the part of these ten Connecticut priests. Seabury, despatched across the ocean on his difficult and doubtful errand to secure the coveted Episcopal succession, had the unflinching sympathy and the unfailing support of those who had sent him on his mission. The laity, who had been trained to "trust

matters purely ecclesiastical to their clergy,"* waited the result with no attempt or desire to interfere. And so both clergy and laity consistently declined to unite in schemes for organization, or the formation of ecclesiastical constitutions, or the consideration of alterations in the liturgy, until they had secured the completeness of their Church government in the possession of a valid Episcopacy. Their efforts were not in vain. Denied success in England, Seabury, agreeably to the instructions of his constituents, turned to Scotland for the boon he desired, and on the 14th of November, 1784, the first Bishop of Connecticut received consecration in an "upper room," at Aberdeen, at the hands of the Primus and two other Bishops of the Scottish Church.†

**Vide* an interesting letter from the Rev. Abraham Beach to Rev. Dr. White, reporting the result of a visit to the meeting of the Connecticut Clergy in 1784. Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents Illustrating the Organization of the Church in the U. S.*, appended to the *Reprinted Journals of Convention*, iii., 12.

† Hawks' and Perry's Church Documents, Connecticut, ii., 247-254.

In Maryland, where, prior to the war, the Church of England had been established by law, the temporal necessities of the various parishes induced action on the part of "a very considerable number of Vestries, wholly in their lay character," in uniting in a petition to the General Assembly of the State to enact a law providing for "the support of the Christian Religion." The passage of an Act was proposed enabling any Vestry and Church Wardens, "by rates on the pews, from time to time, or otherwise, * * to repair and uphold the Church or Chapel, and the Church Yards and Burying Grounds of the same." The consideration of this Act was not pressed during the war, but on the coming of peace, the question of a religious establishment was brought before the Assembly by an address from the Executive warmly commending the provision of a "public support for the Ministers of the Gospel." A copy of this Address came into the hands of a number of the clergy assembled at the commencement of Washington College in May, 1783. These clergymen, under the lead of the celebrated Dr. William

Smith, then President of Washington College, at once took measures for securing "a council or consultation" of their own order for the purpose of considering, to quote their own language, "what alterations might be necessary in our Liturgy; and how our Church might be organized, and a succession in the Ministry kept up." At a "meeting or Convention of the clergy," which, with the permission of the Assembly, was held at Annapolis in pursuance of these measures, besides the preparation of a draft of an Act or charter of incorporation to be submitted to the Assembly, "A Declaration of certain fundamental rights and liberties of the Prot. Epis. Church of Maryland" was "unanimously agreed upon and signed, August 13, 1783." The language of this Declaration of fundamental rights and liberties is as follows:

"Whereas by the Constitution and form of government of this State all persons professing the Christian Religion are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty, and no person by any law (or otherwise) ought to be molested in his person or estate on account of his religious per-

suasion or profession, or for his religious practice; unless under colour of religion, any man shall disturb the good order, peace, or safety of the State, or shall infringe the laws of morality, or injure others in their natural, civil or religious rights; and whereas the ecclesiastical and spiritual independence of the different religious denominations, societies, congregations and Churches of Christians in this State necessarily follows from, or is included in, their civil independence;—

“Wherefore we the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland, (heretofore denominated the Church of England as by law established), with all duty to the civil authority of the State and with all love and good will to our fellow Christians of every other religious denomination, do hereby declare, make known and claim the following as certain of the fundamental rights and liberties inherent in and belonging to the said Episcopal Church, not only of common right but agreeably to the express words, spirit, and design of the Constitution and form of government aforesaid, viz:—

“1st. We consider it as the undoubted right of the said Protestant Episcopal Church, in common with other Christian Churches under the American Revolution, to compleat and preserve herself

as an *entire* Church, agreeably to her antient usages and profession; and to have the full enjoyment and free exercise of those purely spiritual powers which are essential to the being of every Church or congregation of the faithful; and which, being derived only from Christ and his Apostles are to be maintained independent of every foreign or other jurisdiction, so far as may be consistent with the civil rights of society.

“2nd. That ever since the Reformation it hath been the received doctrine of the Church whereof we are members (and which by the Constitution of this State is entitled to the perpetual enjoyment of certain property and rights under the denomination of the Church of England), that there be these three orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church: Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and that an Episcopal ordination and commission is necessary to the valid administration of the Sacraments and the due exercise of the Ministerial functions in the said Church.

“3rd. That without calling in question, or wishing the least contest with any other Christian churches or societies concerning their rights, modes and forms, we consider and declare it to be an essential right of the said Protestant Episcopal Church to have and enjoy the continuance

of the said three orders of Ministers forever, so far as concerns matters purely spiritual, and that no persons in the character of Ministers, except such as are in the communion of the said Church and duly called to the Ministry by regular Episcopal Ordination, can or ought to be admitted into or enjoy any of the Churches, Chapels, Glebes or other property formerly belonging to the Church of England in this State, and which by the Constitution and form of government is secured to the said Church for ever, by whatsoever name she, the said Church, or her superior order of Ministers may in future be denominated.

“4th. That as it is the right, so it will be the duty, of the said Church, when duly organized, constituted and represented in a Synod or Convention of the different Orders of her Ministry and people, to revise her liturgy, forms of Prayer, and publick worship, in order to adapt the same to the late Revolution, and other local circumstances of America, which it is humbly conceived may and will be done without any other or farther departure from the venerable Order and beautiful Forms of Worship of the Church from whence we sprung than may be found expedient in the change of our situation from a *daughter* to a *sister* Church.”

We have given this paper in full in view of the important principles in enunciates. In its opening sentence we find the first public assumption of the present legal title of "the Protestant Episcopal Church." It affirms "the ecclesiastical and spiritual independence of this Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland" as necessarily following, and included in, the civil independence of the State. It claims for this Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland the right to "preserve herself as an *entire* Church agreeably to her ancient usages and profession." It asserts the right of this Church to the free enjoyment and exercise of her "spiritual power" derived "from Christ and the Apostles," independently of "every foreign or other jurisdiction," so far as "consistent with the civil rights of society." It lays down the principle of the necessity of "Episcopal ordination and commission" to the "valid administration of the Sacraments and the due exercise of the Ministerial functions in the said Church." It claims that "the Ministry by regular Episcopal Ordination" has the sole right to be "admitted into or enjoy

any of the Churches, Chapels or other property belonging to the Church of England" in Maryland. It asserts for the Church in Maryland the right, "when duly organized, constituted and represented in a Synod or Convention of her Ministry and people, to revise her liturgy, forms of prayer and public worship, in order to adapt the same to the late revolution and other local circumstances of America." It deprecates "any other or farther departure from the venerable order and beautiful forms of worship" of the mother Church "than may be found expedient in the change of situation from that of a daughter to a sister Church." In this important declaration of rights and liberties we cannot fail to recognize the arguments, the order and the very language of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*.

In fact this Maryland declaration, while in the handwriting as well as in the style of the President of the Convention, the celebrated Dr. William Smith, reveals from first to last the ideas and the influence of William White. There were not a score of clergymen who met

in Convention at Chestertown, under the presidency of Smith, and thus laid the foundations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland. There were no laymen in attendance at this meeting, although the declaration of rights and liberties recognized the propriety of admitting the "people" as well as the clergy to the councils of the Church, as suggested by William White. It was, however, at this August meeting of the Maryland clergy that Dr. Smith was chosen,—as Thomas John Claggett writes to a friend a few days after the meeting,—“to go to Europe to be ordained an *Antistes*, President of the Clergy, or Bishop (if that name does not hurt your feelings).” “He will probably be back some time next spring,” continues the writer, little dreaming that he, and not the able and distinguished President of Washington College, would, in God’s good time, be the first Bishop of Maryland.

There is reason to believe that William White, by birth a Marylander, had purposed attending this meeting at Annapolis in which he could not fail to feel a deep personal inter-

est, and for which, by correspondence and otherwise, he had prepared the way. A letter from Dr. Smith, dissuading him from coming, is still preserved among the White correspondence, and contains a statement of the measures to be proposed at the meeting, without, however, any allusion to the possibility of an election to the Episcopal Office. This letter brings clearly out the conviction of the Maryland clergy as to their rights, in common with the laity, when organized, "as forming one of the Churches of a separate and independent State." The same avowal of State or diocesan autonomy or independence appears in the Declaration of rights and liberties. It is plainly implied in the reference made to the change in the ecclesiastical relations of the Church in Maryland from that of a daughter of the mother Church of England to that of a sister Church. It was in keeping with this idea of absolute autonomy that the Maryland clergy felt justified in proceeding to the choice of a Bishop and the framing of a bill of rights without the aid or coöperation of any of the clergy of the neighboring States.

While these important matters were transpiring in Maryland, a correspondence had been opened by the Rev. Abraham Beach of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and the Rev. William White, in which the hope was expressed by the former, "that the members of the Episcopal Church in this country would interest themselves in its behalf,—would endeavor to introduce order and uniformity into it,—and provide for a succession in the ministry." A Corporation for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy had been formed prior to the war of independence, and the necessity of providing for the reorganization of this important charity was made the occasion of an informal gathering, at New Brunswick, of "clergy and laity from the States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania," on the 11th of May, 1784. A Committee of Correspondence was appointed at this Conference for the purpose of forming a continental representation of the Episcopal Church, and for the better management of the concerns of said Church. At this gathering, the presence of William White secured for his

policy the sympathy and support of all who were present.

On the 24th of May, 1784, there met at Christ Church, Philadelphia, under the chairmanship of the Rev. William White, now a Doctor in Divinity and recognized as among the foremost men in Church and state in the land, the first Convention of clergy and laity ever held in the country. This Convention assembled in pursuance of a recommendation issued by the Vestries of the United Churches of Christ Church and St. Peter's and St. Paul's, Philadelphia, after consultation "on the subject of forming a representative body of the Episcopal Churches in the State." The clergy appeared by virtue of their holding parochial cures. The laity had their appointment by delegation from the Church wardens and vestrymen of each Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania. There were four clergymen and twenty-one laymen present. The principle was recognized at the outset "that each Church shall have one vote, whether represented by one or more persons, or whether two or more united congregations be repre-

sented by one man, or set of men." The formal action of this Convention—the starting point of all our diocesan or general Conventions—appears in a report of a Committee consisting of the clergy present and five of the laity. This report, which was adopted, is as follows. It bears abundant evidence of its authorship and attests the influence already gained by William White over his colleagues. They report: “That they think it expedient to appoint a Standing Committee of the Episcopal Church in this State, consisting of clergy and laity; that the Committee be empowered to correspond and confer with representatives from the Episcopal Church in the other States, or any of them; and to assist in framing an ecclesiastical system; that a constitution of ecclesiastical government, when framed, be reported to the several congregations, through their respective ministers, church wardens, and vestrymen, to be binding on all the congregations assenting to it, as soon as a majority of the congregations shall have consented; that a majority of the Committee, or any less number by them ap-

pointed, be a quorum; that they be desired to keep minutes of their proceedings; and that they be bound by the following instructions or fundamental principles:

First. That the Episcopal Church in these States is, and ought to be, independent of all foreign authority, ecclesiastical or civil.

Second. That it hath, and ought to have, in common with all other religious societies, full and exclusive powers to regulate the concerns of its own communion.

Third. That the doctrines of the Gospel be maintained, as now professed by the Church of England, and uniformity of worship continued as near as may be to the liturgy of the said Church.

Fourth. That the succession of the ministry be agreeable to the usage which requireth the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons; that the rights and powers of the same, respectively, be ascertained, and that they be exercised according to reasonable laws, to be duly made.

Fifth. That to make canons, or laws, there be no other authority than that of a representative body of the clergy and laity conjointly.

Sixth. That no power be delegated to a general ecclesiastical government, except such as can not conveniently be exercised by the clergy and laity, in their respective congregations.

We have here the leading principles of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, formulated in clear and concise language, and adopted as the expression of the first meeting on the continent of clergy and laity assembled for purposes of an ecclesiastical nature.

On the 22nd of June, 1784, the clergy and laity of Maryland met in Convention, and in pursuance of the "Philadelphia plan" the lay delegates accredited to this meeting by the "different parishes or vestries," directly on organization, "desired leave to retire and consult" upon the Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Liberties which had been previously adopted at a meeting composed of clergy only. This paper, which we have earlier given in full, was then "read and discussed paragraph by paragraph, and unanimately approved" by the lay delegates, who thereupon returned to the convention, now

uniting both clergy and laity in one body under the provisions of the Declaration of Rights, for further deliberation and action. At a subsequent Convention, held in October of the same year, "additional constitutions" respecting "discipline and government" were agreed upon. These "constitutions" are interesting, as they afford evidence of the careful study both of the action of the meeting of the clergy and laity of Pennsylvania at Christ Church, Philadelphia, the preceding May, and the principles set forth in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. In the first of these additional Constitutions we have the following provision:—"General Conventions of this Church, consisting of the different orders of clergy and laity duly represented," "shall have the general cognizance of all affairs necessary to the discipline and good government of this Church, including particularly the following matters, viz:—The power and authority necessary for receiving, or excluding from Church privileges scandalous members, whether lay or clerical, and all jurisdiction with regard to offenders; the

power of suspending or dismissing clergymen (of all orders) from the exercise of their ministry in this Church; the framing, approving of, or confirming all canons or laws for Church government; and such alterations, or reforms, in the Church service, liturgy or points of doctrine, as may be afterwards found necessary or expedient," either by the Church in Maryland, or by the Church "of the United States in General Convention." It was further provided that "in all matters that shall come before the Convention, the clergy and laity shall deliberate in one body; but if any vote shall be found necessary, or be called for by any two members, they shall vote separately; that is to say, the clergy in their different orders, according to their own rules, shall have one vote, and the laity, according to their rules, shall have another vote; and the concurrence of both shall be necessary to give validity to any measure."

The second of the additional Constitutions provides for the appointment of "a Committee, consisting of an equal number of clergy and laity, including the Bishop when there

shall be one duly consecrated among the number of the clergy." This Committee was to "have standing authority, government and jurisdiction, agreeably to such rules as may be given them for that purpose, in all matters respecting the discipline and government of the Church" that may arise or require action, "during the recess or adjournment of general Conventions."

These important enactments of the Church in Maryland, the very phraseology of which in some instances has been impressed upon our present Constitution and Canons, were but amplifications of the provisions adopted in Philadelphia and earlier found in White's pamphlet of 1782. The style is that of the able President of the Maryland Convention, Dr. Smith, the Bishop-elect of the Church in this state; but the ideas and principles are still those of the "Philadelphia plan." In the toil undertaken at these successive meetings of clergy and the leading laymen of the day to secure freedom and fulness of action; in the care bestowed in preparing the various documents and papers discussed and adopted,

for which in most cases there were no precedents and no other guides than the action of the American assemblies in securing civil independence and framing the compacts of State government, we have abundant proof that our organization was effected in no haphazard manner, but was the result of prayer, of thought, of study, and of well-nigh infinite pains. And yet, as we have seen, the labors of all there, scholars, divines and statesmen, made little if any advance on the clear, simple principles set forth by White in 1782.

It should be borne in mind that these additional Constitutions of Maryland provide for the trial of clergyman of all orders; for the exercise of godly discipline upon the laity; for the suspension or dismissal from the exercise of the ministry of unworthy clergymen; for the enactment by the clergy and laity of canons; and for alterations in the liturgy and changes of doctrine if judged necessary or expedient. The coördinate authority of the laity in all these matters of discipline and government is affirmed, and the "vote by orders" is arranged for with

minuteness of detail. The provision of a Standing Committee to represent the Church in the recess or adjournment of the Convention is carefully made. Its composition of an equal number of clergy and laity is settled and the Bishop is recognized an *ex-officio* member of this body, to which the discipline and government is entrusted when the Church is not assembled in Convention. The limitations and extent of the powers of this Committee are well defined, and provision is made for the annual election of its members by the Convention.

The Churchmen in Virginia had not been idle while these steps toward ecclesiastical organization were being taken by their brethren at the northward. Early in 1784, a Convention of the clergy met in Richmond and continued in session for three days. No records of this meeting are preserved, though references to its proceedings are found in a letter, still extant, addressed to the Rev. Dr. White by the Rev. David Griffith, the rector of Fairfax Parish, and the friend of Washington. We learn incidentally from this

letter something of the pains taken by White to interest his brethren in the different States in the scheme for organizing and perpetuating the Church. His pen was never idle, and his correspondence with the leading men of the time, both clerical and lay, was almost wholly concerned with the measures he had at heart for the Church's good.

“Your different letters to the Convention at Richmond and to myself,” writes Mr. Griffith, “on the subject of a general meeting of the Episcopal clergy at New York, were all received, but not in time to be laid before the Convention, which sat only three days. The Episcopal Church in Virginia is so fettered by laws, that the clergy could do no more than petition for a repeal of those laws—for liberty to introduce ordination and government, and to revise and alter the liturgy. The session is passed over without our being able to accomplish this. The few clergymen at Richmond to whom your letter was shown, approve of the plans and proceedings of the Pennsylvania Convention, and also of the General Meeting at New York, but no dele-

gates have been appointed to attend. In the present state of ecclesiastical affairs in this State, the clergy could not with propriety, and indeed without great danger to the Church, empower any person to agree to the least alteration whatever."

On the 8th of September, 1784, the clergy of the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, under the moderatorship of the venerable John Greaves of Rhode Island, met at Boston and adopted, with some verbal changes, the Fundamental Principles of the Pennsylvania Convention of the preceding May. Evidently fearful that the assertion of absolute ecclesiastical independence contained in these "Principles" might be interpreted so as to prevent or delay an application to the mother Church for the consecration of Bishops, the Massachusetts and Rhode Island clergy added the following words to the first Fundamental Principle: "But it is the opinion of this Convention, that this independence be not construed or taken in so rigorous a sense as to exclude the Churches in America, separately or collectively, from applying for

and obtaining from some regular Episcopal foreign power, an American Episcopate."

They also "voted that a circular letter be written, in the name of the Convention, to the Episcopal clergy in the States of Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania, urging the necessity of their uniting with us in adopting some speedy measures to procure an American Episcopate; as it is the unanimous opinion of this Convention that this is the primary object they ought to have in view, because the very existence of this Church requires some speedy mode of obtaining regular ordination." Parker of Boston, who was the leading spirit in the Convention, and in whose handwriting the "Fundamental Principles" and the "circular letter" of the meeting addressed to the "Committee of the Episcopal Churches in the State of Pennsylvania," are still preserved, was well aware of the action of the Connecticut clergy in the election of Seabury, and it was evidently with a view of effectually barring the idea of a temporary departure from Episcopacy, which was still remembered by Churchmen at the North, that the action at

Boston was taken. Bishop White, in his *Memoirs of the Church*, speaks of a "fluctuation of counsels" as characterizing the course of the clergy of Massachusetts, but the formal letter of this Convention, signed by the "Moderator," though written by Parker, contains the following additional reference to the feeling of the New England clergy:

"But it is our unanimous opinion that it is beginning at the wrong end to attempt to organize our Church before we have obtained a head. Our Churches at present resemble the scattered limbs of the body without any common centre of union or principle to animate the whole. We cannot conceive it probable, or even possible, to carry the plan you have pointed out into execution before an Episcopate is obtained to direct our motions, and by a delegated authority to claim our assent." Again and again is this point referred to in this important letter, and its "absolute necessity" asserted, while its practicability is also maintained. With this clear committal to the Connecticut as opposed to the Philadelphia plan there was no lack of

consistency in the reception of the Bishop of Connecticut, on his arrival in New England, as their "common head" by the Churches of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. At the same time Parker and his brethren furthered, by their presence and support, the measures adopted in the direction of securing the English succession by the Convention of the Southern and Middle States; and after the end had been attained, and there were Bishops in Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania, it was through Parker's instrumentality, seconding the suggestions and the pious wishes of White, that the steps were taken which resulted in the union of the American Churches under one constitution, one liturgy, and one system of discipline and government.

On the 6th and 7th of October, 1784, there assembled at New York, a Convention the importance of which, in view of the influence it exerted on the future of the American Church, can hardly be overestimated. We give the proceedings of this meeting in full, supplementing the "broadside" report published at the time with the manuscript record

of Dr. William Smith, who presided. These proceedings, together with the President's own annotations, as preserved in the archives of the Church, are full of interest :*

At a Convention of Clergymen and Lay Deputies, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, held in New York, October 6th and 7th, 1784:—Present as follows:

Revd. Samuel Parker, A. M., Massachusetts and Rhode-Island.

Revd. John R. Marshall, A. M., Connecticut.

New-York. Revd. Samuel Provoost, A. M., Revd. Abraham Beach, A. M., Revd. Benjamin Moore, A. M., Revd. Joshua Bloomer, A. M., Revd. Leonard Cutting, A. M., Revd. Thomas Moore, Hon. James Duane, Marinus Willet, John Alsop, Esquires.

New-Jersey. Revd. Uzal Ogden, John De Hart, Esquire, John Chetwood, Esquire, Mr. Samuel Spragg.

* These minutes, preserved by the care of William White, are endorsed in his handwriting as follows:

“Proceedings of the General Convention held in New York, October 6th, 1784, in ye hand-writing of Dr. Wm. Smith, who presided.”

The manuscript additions to the printed “broadside” issued at the time, are in the handwriting of Dr. William Smith, the President of the Convention.

Pennsylvania. Revd. William White, D.D., Revd. Samuel Magaw, D.D., Revd. Joseph Hutchins, A.M., Matthew Clarkson, Richard Willing, Samuel Powell, Richard Peters, Esquires.

Delaware State. Revd. Sydenham Thorn, Revd. Charles Wharton, Mr. Robert Clay.

Maryland. Revd. William Smith, D.D.

N. B. The Revd. Mr. Griffith, from the State of Virginia, was present by Permission. The Clergy of that State being restricted by Laws yet in force there, were not at liberty to send Delegates, or consent to any Alterations in the Order, Government, Doctrine, or Worship of the Church.

Oct. 6th, A.M.

Upon Motion, the Revd. Dr. William Smith was called to the Chair as President of this Convention, and the Revd. Mr. Benjamin Moore was appointed Secretary.

The Letters of Appointment and other Documents produced by the several Members above mentioned were read; and also the following Letters from the Clergy of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut:*

*In the original MS. we have a note, as follows: "It being voted that a Committee of Clerical and Lay Deputies be appointed to essay the fundamental Principles of a general Constitution for this Church, the following Gentlemen were appointed, viz:—Revd. Dr. Smith, Revd. Dr. White,

Oct. 7th. Present as above.

The Committee appointed yesterday to essay the fundamental Principles of an ecclesiastical Constitution for this Church, reported an Essay for this Purpose, which being read and duly considered and amended, was adopted as follows, viz:

The Body now assembled, recommend to the Clergy and Congregations of their Communion in the States represented as above, and propose to those of the other States not represented, That as soon as they shall have organized or associated themselves in the States to which they respectively belong, agreeably to such Rules as they shall think proper, they unite in a general ecclesiastical Constitution, on the following fundamental Principles.

I. That there shall be a general Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

II. That the Episcopal Church in each State, send Deputies to the Convention, consisting of Clergy and Laity.

Revd. Mr. Parker, Revd. Mr. Provoost, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. De Hart, Mr. Clay, Mr. Duane.

“The same Committee are desired to frame and propose to the Convention a proper Substitute for the State Prayers in the Liturgy, to be used for the Sake [of] Uniformity, till a further Review shall be undertaken by general Authority and Consent of the Church.”

III. That associated Congregations in two or more States, may send Deputies jointly.

IV. That the said Church shall maintain the Doctrines of the Gospel as now held by the Church of England, and shall adhere to the Liturgy of the said Church as far as shall be consistent with the American Revolution, and the Constitutions of the respective States.

V. That in every State where there shall be a Bishop duly consecrated and settled, he shall be considered as a Member of the Convention, *ex officio*.

VI. That the Clergy and Laity assembled in Convention, shall deliberate in one Body, but shall vote separately; and the Concurrence of both shall be necessary to give Validity to every Measure.

VII. That the first Meeting of the Convention shall be at Philadelphia, the Tuesday before the Feast of St. Michael next; to which it is hoped, and earnestly desired, that the Episcopal Churches in the respective States, will send their Clerical and Lay Deputies, duly instructed and authorized to proceed on the necessary Business herein proposed for their deliberation.

Signed by Order of the Convention,

WILLIAM SMITH, D. D., *President.*

Resolved that it be recommended to the Clergy in the respective Churches here represented to appoint in each State a Committee of not less than two Clergymen to examine Persons who in the present Exigency are desirous of officiating as Readers, and to direct them to such Duties as they are to perform; and that it be recommended to the Congregations not to suffer any Lay Persons to officiate in their Churches other than such as shall be certified by said Committee to be duly qualified.

WM. SMITH, *Pres't.*

This was the first *general* meeting of members of the Church in the various States with a view to organization. The Churches in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland were represented, the first three and the last by the clerical order only, the others by clergymen and laymen. The Rev. David Griffith of Virginia was in attendance by permission, but was not able to sit as a delegate, as the Virginia clergy were restricted by law from sending representatives to a meeting of this nature or from consenting "to any alterations in the Order, Government, Doctrine or Worship of the Church."

No stronger proof could have been given of the assertion made in this connection by the Rev. Dr. Hawks, that "Virginia asserted the entire independence of the Church within her limits of all control but her own."

This was evidently the judgment of the Convention. The Committee "appointed to essay the fundamental Principles of a general Constitution for this Church" began their report with the recognition of diocesan independency. They recommended to the clergy and congregations of the States represented, and proposed to those not represented, to organize or associate themselves "in the States to which they respectively belong, agreeably to such rules as they shall think proper," and this being done, that they should "unite in a general ecclesiastical Constitution" on the principles we have already given.

The general union, as this Convention judged, could only be effected when "the Episcopal Churches in the respective States" should "send their Clerical and Lay Deputies, duly instructed and authorized to proceed on the necessary business" proposed in the

“Fundamental Principles” set forth by the Convention. The coördinate authority of the laity was clearly maintained in these “Principles.” The “doctrines of the Gospel” as “held by the Church of England” were affirmed. The liturgy was to be adapted to the altered civil Constitution, and not otherwise changed “till a further review shall be undertaken by general authority and consent of the Church.” Provision was made for examination and appointment of lay readers, and with these recommendations and proposals the preliminary Convention of 1784 adjourned.

In the summer of 1785, the clergy, three in number, and lay representatives of several parishes in South Carolina, met in Convention at Charleston under the presidency of a layman. In complying with the invitation of the Convention of October, 1784, to coöperate in the measures requisite to effect a general union, they stipulated that no Bishop was to be settled in that State, which affords, as Dr. Hawks well remarks, “an unequivocal proof of their sense of the independence of the South Carolina Church.”

In Virginia, a Convention numbering thirty-six clergymen and upwards of seventy laymen met in the spring of 1785, and after expressing its willingness "to unite in a general ecclesiastical Constitution with the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the other States of America," acceded to the "Fundamental Principles" proposed with the exception of the fourth and sixth. The action of the Convention with respect to these articles—the one affirming adherence to the doctrine and liturgy of the mother Church, the other to the provision requiring the concurrence of both orders in voting—was as follows:

Resolved, That this Convention cannot bind themselves on the subject of the fourth Article until the same shall be revised at the next General Convention at Philadelphia, and reported to the next Convention.

Resolved, That this Convention cannot accede to the sixth Article, recommended as a Fundamental Principle of the said ecclesiastical Constitution.

Resolved, That this Convention will, how-

ever, accede to the mode of voting, recommended in the sixth Article, with respect to the Convention to be holden at Philadelphia, reserving a right to approve or disapprove their proceedings.

In addition to this strong assertion of diocesan independence, the instructions of the Convention to their deputies-elect to the Philadelphia Convention breathed the same spirit; while the subsequent action of the Convention in adopting a code of canons and in providing "that until further order of the Convention the liturgy of the Church of England be used in the several Churches throughout this Commonwealth, with such alterations as the American Revolution has rendered necessary," conclusively proves the sentiments of this the most numerous body of clergy and laity thus far assembled in any of the States, as to the absolute autonomy of the Church in Virginia.

It was almost immediately after the Conference in New York that the "clergy and lay delegates of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the State of Maryland" met in Convention

at Chester and adopted the "additional Constitutions" respecting "the future discipline and government of the Church," to which we have already referred.

In Pennsylvania, on the 24th of May, 1785, the "clergy and congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania" united in "an act of association" agreeably to the recommendation of the New York Conference. By this step it was "determined and declared by the clergy who do now or who hereafter sign this Act, either by its being ratified by their respective Vestries, or by its being signed by their Deputies duly authorized, that the said Clergy and Congregations shall be called and known by the name of *The Protestant Episcopal Church of the State of Pennsylvania.*" By this Act the autonomy of the Church of Pennsylvania was plainly asserted.

New Jersey appointed deputies to attend the General Convention in Philadelphia, "with power to accede, on the part of this Convention, to the Fundamental Principles published by the Convention * * * in New York

* * * October, 1784; and to adopt such measures as the said General Convention may deem necessary for the utility of the said Church, not repugnant to the aforesaid Fundamental Principles."

In New York, the "State Convention having associated agreeably to the recommendation of the General Convention" of 1784, appointed deputies who were "authorized to proceed on the necessary business which may be proposed for their deliberation at the said Convention, so far as they conform to the general principles which are established to regulate their conduct in this matter."

While these measures were being taken by the Churchmen of the Middle or Southern States, Connecticut had welcomed its Bishop and the other Churches of New England gradually detached themselves from their connection with their brethren at the southward and accepted the Bishop of Connecticut either formally* or practically† as their dio-

* As in Rhode Island, where he was duly elected Bishop.

† As in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, where he made visitations, confirmed large numbers, and ordained candidates for orders.

cesan. From the date of Seabury's arrival and his welcome to his see, there grew up a necessary divergence between the Churches of New England and those of the Middle and Southern States, which for a time threatened serious consequences to each and all alike. The "Connecticut plan" had proved successful. The "Philadelphia plan" was still a problem awaiting solution.

With these notices of the preliminary meetings for organization it becomes necessary, ere we examine in detail the proceedings of the Convention of 1785, to consider somewhat more at length the relations of the Churches thus organized in the various States to each other and to the Church Catholic of Christ.

The successful issue of the war for independence had confessedly destroyed the sole bond of union existing between the various congregations of the Church of England in America before the revolutionary struggle. That sole bond of union was, as Bishop White tells us, "the result of the connection which they in common had with the Bishop of Lon-

don.”* In the words of the Rev. Dr. Hawks: “While the States were Colonies, all were alike subject in ecclesiastical matters to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. They were consequently one, and but one, in the particular of Episcopal authority.”† To this authority they had owed a common allegiance.‡ In the Colonies where the Church had been established, this authority had been practically shown in the attempted exercise of the judicial authority of the Episcopate over the clergy in giving or refusing induction to benefices, and in the uniform practice of issuing, and in revoking for cause, licenses to missions or parishes as the case might be. The annals of the older colonial or provincial governments afford abundant evidences of the continual struggle between the provincial and colonial assemblies and governors on the one

* *Memoirs*, (second edition) p. 98.

† Constitution and Canons, p. 2.

‡ The subject of the Bishop of London’s authority over the Churches and clergy of the Colonies is ably treated by Hugh Davey Evans, LL. D., in his *Essay on the Episcopate of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States*, pp. 108–119.

hand and the commissaries of the Bishops, or in some cases the Bishops of London themselves, for the exercise of that branch of the judicial authority of the Episcopate which relates to the induction of the clergy into benefices. It appears that in all cases the Bishops claimed the right of licensing the clergy, and in general this right of the ordinary was respected. In the Colonies where the Church was not established, the Bishop's license was a pre-requisite to admission to either a parish or a mission. Beside this exercise of power, the Bishops from time to time appointed commissaries who held visitations of the clergy and church wardens, instituted investigations as to the morals of the clergy, adjudged cases under the ecclesiastical canons, and in spite of bitter opposition arising not only from the clergy of ill life and conversation, but from the vestries, which were jealous of interference in their rights of presentation to the livings they had founded and still maintained, made, as was the case with Bray in Maryland and Blair in Virginia, the authority of the ordinary, the Bishop of Lon-

don, a terror to evil-doers. It was this common dependence upon the see of London, which was more or less acknowledged and felt for good throughout the thirteen Colonies, that were destroyed by the successful issue of the struggle for independence. With the birth of the nation there was felt and confessed to be the birth of a national Church. The language of the preface of our American prayer-book correctly expresses the fact: "When in the course of Divine Providence these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included."

The unity of the faith had not been affected by this civil change; in doctrine, in discipline, in worship, save in so far as the altered political relations required slight modifications of language in the parts of the service referring to those in authority, there had been no change. The American Churchman was still baptized into one body,—the Church Catholic of Christ. At the holy table he knelt to feed in his heart by faith with thanksgiving upon the same Body broken, and to drink the same

Blood shed for him and for his salvation. Political convulsions could not change the truth, or destroy the Church, of the living God. The unity then existing between the American Churches and the Church of England, and between both alike and the Catholic Church of Christ, was not, and could not be, affected by the war of independence.

But not only was the bond of union existing between the Churches in the Colonies and the Bishop of London, as their ordinary, dissolved; the union among themselves was also destroyed. It could not be otherwise since this connection with the see of London was the only bond uniting them,—the bond of a common Episcopal jurisdiction, and the exercise of the same ecclesiastical laws.

We have seen in what attitude the Churches in the several States regarded themselves and each other. In the language of Dr. Hawks: “The testimony would seem to leave no doubt that in each State the Church considered itself an integral part of the Church of Christ, perfectly independent, in its government, of any and every branch of the Church

in Christendom. Such an opinion would the more readily be adopted, from the fact that the several States considered themselves in their civil relations as independent sovereignties, and as such, sought to find a bond of union, first in the articles of confederation, and afterwards in the federal Constitution. Many of those who were employed in laying the foundations of our civil policy, were also aiding by their counsels in the establishment of our ecclesiastical system; and hence it is not surprising that there should be found not a few resemblances between them.* Even in Connecticut, the clergy, at the very outset, while acknowledging the severance of the former ties—"that the chain which connected this with the Mother Church is broken; that the American Church is now left to stand in its own strength,"† and admitting the necessity of seeking "to form a new union in the American Church, under proper superiors, since its union is now broken with such supe-

* Hawks' *Constitution and Canons*, p. 4.

† Letter from the Connecticut clergy to the Rev. William White, March 25, 1783.—Bishop White's *Memoirs of the Church*, 2nd ed., pp. 282–286.

riors in the British Church," felt themselves capable of reorganization, and only proposed to defer the business of reconstruction till the Episcopate was obtained. In short, the action contemplated and proposed in the Fundamental Principles of 1784,—principles based, as we have seen, on those of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*,—proves conclusively that the Church in each independent State of the federal union, where organized agreeably to its own pleasure, deemed itself, and was regarded by each independent Church in the other States respectively, as an independent branch of the Catholic Church of Christ, lacking, indeed, a perfect organization while the Episcopate was wanting, but fully competent to seek that perfecting order and to organize for this purpose and for such other purposes as the present need seemed to require.

The Convention of 1785 comprised clerical and lay representatives from the Churches which had organized in seven States. It met in Philadelphia on the 27th of September and continued in session until the 7th of October.

Its first resolution provided "that each State should have one vote," and throughout the session, in the appointment of committees, in the adoption of all measures for organization and for securing the Episcopate, and in the consideration of the proposed changes in the liturgy, "the Church in each State,"—for such is the unmistakable language of the official record,—is recognized. With the important measures adopted or proposed by this "representative body of this greater number of Episcopalians in these States," we have at present nothing to do, save only so far as they relate to the adoption of a Constitution—not of "the Church in each State," but of "the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

The General Ecclesiastical Constitution of 1785 was drafted by William White. Although, as its author reminds us, "it stood on recommendation only," having never been formally ratified, it is still an important link in the evolution of our present Constitution out of the principles first formulated in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*.

These principles had taken form and shape, as we have seen, in the few but comprehensive general or Fundamental Principles recommended to the Churches represented at the meeting in New York, October, 1784, and proposed by this informal, or as we should now style it, "Primary General Convention,"* for the consideration of the Churches not represented. These articles, prepared by a committee of which William White was a prominent member, and reflecting the ideas of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, provided in the first place for the meeting of "the Episcopal Church in the United States of America" in a general Convention" to which "the Episcopal Church in each State" was to send deputies "consisting of clergy or laity." Provision was further made that "associated Congregations in two or more States" might "send deputies jointly." The doctrines of the Gospel as held by the Church of England

* So styled by Bishop White in his endorsement of the original minutes in the handwriting of Dr. Smith, preserved in the archives of the General Convention.

were to be maintained. The liturgy of the said Church was to be adhered to so far as should be consistent with the American Revolution and the Constitutions of the respective States. A Bishop "duly consecrated and settled" was to be "considered a member of the Convention *ex-officio*." The clergy and laity were to deliberate in one body but vote separately, and the concurrence of both was "necessary to give validity to every measure." It was further desired that the clerical and lay deputies to the Convention of 1785 should be duly instructed and authorized to proceed "on the necessary business proposed in these Fundamental Principles for their deliberation."

All these Fundamental Principles except the fourth, which proposed adhesion to the English Prayer Book save where the changed political condition rendered variation necessary, were adopted by the Convention in Philadelphia in 1785, and thus became the sole bond of union existing between the Churches in the Middle and Southern States until the year 1787. It will be remembered that the

General Ecclesiastical Constitution of 1785, important as it is as illustrating the gradual development of Church principles and ideas, "stood on recommendation only." Bishop White, who is careful to remind us of this important fact, further remarks that this ecclesiastical Constitution of 1785 "was of no use except in helping to convince those who were attached to that mode of transacting business, that it was very idle to bring gentlemen together from various States for the purpose of such inconclusive proceedings."

"Inconclusive" as the proceedings of the Convention of 1785 appeared to Bishop White when reviewing them in after years, they were certainly important at the time, and the history of the Church in the United States cannot pass over even the recommended Constitution formulated at this period without noting its many and valuable contributions to the more perfect Constitution of October, 1789.

The first article of this recommended Constitution is an amplified form of the first of the Fundamental Principles of 1784,—that

there shall be a General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. The triennial meeting of the "continental representation" of the Church, it will be remembered, was one of the leading propositions of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. As recommended in this Constitution of 1785, the first article, with slight and unimportant verbal revision and a change in the time of meeting, reappears in the Constitution of October, 1789.

The second article provides for the representation in Convention of both clergy and laity in numbers not exceeding four of each order. It directs "that on all questions the said Church in each State shall have one vote, and a majority of suffrages shall be conclusive."

Again, we find the basis of this article in the Fundamental Principles of 1784. The second of these provided "that the Episcopal Church in each State send deputies to the Convention, consisting of clergy and laity." The sixth was in these words: "The clergy and laity assembled in Convention shall delib-

erate in one body, but shall vote separately, and the concurrence of both shall be necessary to give validity to a measure."

In 1789, with the affirmation of the principle as expressed in the second article of 1785, certain additions, alterations and verbal changes respecting the vote by States, or, as it is now, by dioceses, and orders, were adopted,* giving the article very nearly the form in which it still appears. Certain principles of our ecclesiastical polity are here established. We find them originally in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, and later, as we have seen, in the *Fundamental Principles* of 1784, while the language in this instance is not a little modified by the additional Constitutions adopted in Maryland in 1784, which were themselves based on the principles set forth in May of that year by the Pennsylvania Convention.

The first of these principles calling for notice is the general proposition that those who are to be affected by ecclesiastical laws, other than those of divine origin, have a right by their accredited representatives to a voice and

vote in the consideration and enactment of these laws; and secondly, that this right belongs to the laity no less than to the clergy. It was in effecting the admission of the laity to the counsels of the Church of every grade—a proposition first put forth in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, and carried into effect by its originator in the Pennsylvania Convention of May, 1784, assembled at Christ Church—that William White proved his claim to ecclesiastical statesmanship and grafted upon the legislation of the Church a new principle which has, under God, given to the American Church much of its present prosperity and strength, bringing it in touch with the underlying principles of our civil Constitution. The Churches of the New England States were from the first opposed to this novel proposition, and even in Maryland it was the clergy alone who elected to the Episcopate of that State the Rev. Dr. Smith. Seabury, as we have seen, was elected solely by the clergy, and in his formal reception and recognition as Bishop of Connecticut, on his return from abroad with full Episcopal powers,

it was by the clergy alone that he was welcomed and his authority as Bishop acknowledged and declared. Later, as we shall see in the election of Edward Bass to the Episcopate of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, a measure that served to bring about the union of the Churches in 1789, the choice was made by the clergy only. But in Pennsylvania, in New York, and in Virginia the views of White were carefully followed and the right of clergy and people to a voice in the selection of their ecclesiastical rulers of every grade was duly recognized.

Confessedly an innovation on primitive usage, and only indirectly sanctioned by the admitted powers of parliament in the final adjustment of the affairs of the English establishment, the experience of one hundred years has proved the wisdom of William White in his advocacy and successful accomplishment of this principle, and to-day no one would wish, even, for a change in this respect. In fact, it is doubtful if the Church in this country could ever have been organized as a national Church on the principle of the exclusion

of the laity from a voice in its legislation. As it was, the wise and far-seeing statesmanship of White secured for the Church in whose independent organization and autonomy he was so deeply interested, the counsels and coöperation of the leading statesmen of the time. The men who on the field of battle, as soldiers of renown, or in the halls of Congress or in the State assemblies, won for us by their united labors our civil independence, were personally associated with their clergymen in our State and General Conventions and brought to their work for the Church of God the wisdom and experience, the manly independence and thought they had acquired in the service of their native land. It was thus that there was impressed upon our infant Communion that *American* character—that correspondence between our ecclesiastical and our civil Constitutions,—that representative feature pervading our entire system, and that clearly asserted independence of all foreign control, which justified White in his constant use of the title *The American Church* as applied to the Communion he did so much to mould and shape aright.

Another principle is established in this second article of the recommended Constitution of 1785, which was incorporated into the Constitution of October, 1789.

The ratio of representation is here defined just as it was indicated in the pamphlet published by White in 1782. The ratio was fixed not on the principle of wealth, importance, size, or numbers, but on the ground of an entire parity of rank in the respective States or dioceses, whether great or small. It is the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Hawks that he had again and again heard Bishop White affirm that "on no other ground would the dioceses ever have come into union." As it was, we see "Delaware State," with its three or four clergy and a less number of laymen, voting as the equal of Virginia, then numbering seventy or eighty clergymen and assembling as many laymen in its Convention. Connecticut, with its twenty thousand Church population, and its score of clergy, claimed no greater share in the Church's legislation than Rhode Island, with its few hundreds of people and two or three clergymen. Diocesan

equality is here asserted; and, indirectly, diocesan independence in all matters not specifically surrendered for the great end of union, since any diocese was authorized to demand a vote by orders, and in this mode of voting each diocese, or—as the expression then obtained—the Church in each State, was equal and stood quite by itself.

There grew out of this recommended article, as it was amplified and amended in 1789, a check on the clergy and the laity alike. The language of the recommended Article II. of 1785 is vague, but as experience soon taught, the principle involved in the requirement of one vote for the Church in each State demanded that such a vote must be the concurrent vote of each order in that State. It is doubtful if, at the time that this article was penned by William White, there had been an instance where the clergyman and the laymen of any congregation—the unit of representation in White's system—had ever been at variance.

It would appear from the scanty records of the general meeting in New York in October,

1784, that this concurrence was still maintained; but the debates and decisions of the meeting in 1785 showed conclusively the need of an explanation of this principle of voting; and the present mode of voting by orders, which is strictly in accordance with the principles laid down in White's pamphlet of 1782, was formally stated in the amended and enlarged Article II. of October, 1789.

Article III. of this recommended Constitution of 1785, as printed in the Journal, provides for a Convention of clergy and lay deputies of the congregations. It is the same with the eighth article, as numbered in the manuscript copy of this Constitution, in the handwriting of William White, its author, which is still preserved in the archives of the Church.

The fourth article provides for the continuance of the use of the English Prayer Book as "altered by this Convention in a certain instrument of writing passed by their authority, entitled 'Alteration of the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America,' in order to render the

same conformable to the American Revolution and the Constitutions of the respective States." These alterations were contemplated in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. They are referred to in the Act of Association of Pennsylvania and in the Declaration of Rights and Liberties of Maryland. They are noticed in the Fundamental Principles of 1784. They embodied the changes in the State prayers ordered by the House of Burgesses of Virginia on the day after the news of the declaration of independence had been received. They were in effect those adopted in Boston by Parker, after consultation with his vestry, directly upon the evacuation of the city by the British troops. They had been made use of by the patriot clergy throughout the land; and where the clergy had failed or refused thus to recognize the altered condition of national affairs, the Churches had been closed and public service wholly intermitted. These changes were, now that independence was an accomplished fact, a recognized necessity, and up to this time no further alteration or revision had

been generally mooted. In Maryland, the restless and radical William Smith had introduced an "additional Constitution" providing for a further review, when desired, by general consent; and in Boston the remnant of an Episcopal parish, King's Chapel, the original proprietors of which having been first despoiled of their property in pews and consequently of their right to vote, had *Arianised* the liturgy and practically separated from the Church. But the Church people generally deemed it unwise and even unwarranted to proceed to a revision of the liturgy without the presence of a Bishop, and in Connecticut, where the Episcopal head was secured, the changes, proposed after careful deliberation with the neighboring clergy, were but few and those mainly in the direction of removing the objectionable expressions in the State prayers. The Bishop of Connecticut, in accordance with the terms of the concordat entered into with the Scottish Bishops who consecrated him, set forth an office for the Eucharist, modelled on the Scottish liturgy, which reproduced some interesting features of the first

book of Edward VI., as well as that which Archbishop Laud sought to introduce into Scotland before the Great Rebellion. But this office was not enjoined. It stood on recommendation only and it served its purpose later by the incorporation of its essential characteristics into the revised American office of 1789.

The fifth and eighth articles of this proposed Constitution, as they are numbered in the Journal, require special notice in view of the censure they excited and the hindrances to union their adoption occasioned.

The former of these articles provided that every Bishop should be a member of the Convention *ex-officio*. Bishop White is careful to inform us that in the original draft of this article from his own pen, it was expressly provided "that a bishop, if any were present, should preside." In the sub-committee, charged with the duty of reporting this proposed Constitution to the Convention, this clause, we are told by Bishop White, was objected to by a layman on the ground that this presidency was not a prerogative of Bishops in the ecclesiastical assemblies of ancient

days. Though overruled in sub-committee, the same gentleman, on the report to the Convention of the article containing this provision for Episcopal presidency, for consistency sake, moved to strike out the objectionable clause. The suggestion was supported by another layman. A heated debate followed, and,—we quote from Bishop White,—“as the voting was by orders the clergy, who with the exception of one gentleman were for the clause, might have quashed the whole article.” “But this,” continues the Bishop, “appeared to them to be wrong, because it contained nothing contrary to the principles of Episcopal presidency, and the general object was such as ought to have been provided for.” “Accordingly,” says the Bishop, “the article passed as it stands in the Journal,—that is, with silence as to the point in question. It was considered that practice might settle what had better be provided for by law, and that even such provision might be the result of a mature consideration of the subject. The latter expectation was justified,” concludes Bishop White, “by the event.”

The eighth article provided that every clergyman should be amenable to the Convention of the State to which he should belong. It is easy to account for action of this nature at the time it occurred. Deprived of immediate Episcopal oversight, and subject to no restraint whatever, not a few of the colonial clergy had by evil lives disgraced their sacred calling and thrown suspicion on the clerical profession itself. It was with reference to this unhappy condition of affairs that the matter of clerical delinquency is made much of in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. Even the vestries, however much they might resent and resist the interference of the Bishop of London and his commissaries in their relations to their spiritual head, were far from willing, when the remedy was in their own hands, that that head should be a man of evil life. The feeling throughout the Southern States was universal that there must be means provided at once for the removal of unworthy ministers from their cures, and in the apparent necessity of such relief, and in the adoption of measures to effect the same, there was danger,

as the English Archbishops and Bishops complained, of an implied "degradation of the clerical, and, much more, of the Episcopal character." The action taken was doubtless intended to be in the direction of good morals and the purifying of the Church, but the article in question laid the Convention open to the charge made by the English prelates and reiterated by the Churches at the northward where, indeed, a much higher standard of clerical morality obtained than in Virginia and still further to the southward. It was true, as Bishop White reminds us, that the ground for complaint against this article of the proposed Constitution of 1784 lay rather "in omission than in anything positively declared." The amenability of a Bishop even, to the Convention of the State, did not necessarily involve anything further than that he might be tried by laws enacted by the Convention of which he was a member, and it did not necessarily follow that he might be deposed or even censured by his presbyters and laymen. Still, there was a failure to recognize the principle of trial by one's peers, and while Bishop White

admits that the injustice complained of should have been "guarded against," he significantly adds that "to have attempted it, while the Convention were in the temper excited by the altercations concerning the fifth article, would have been to no purpose."

The sixth article provided for the choice of a Bishop or Bishops "in every State," "agreeably to such rules as shall be fixed by the respective Conventions." We have here another significant admission of State or diocesan independence. The Bishops, it was also enjoined, should confine the exercise of their Episcopal office to their respective jurisdictions.

The seventh article permitted the admission at any time hereafter of a Protestant Episcopal Church in any of the United States not now represented, "on acceding to the articles of this union." This provision was incorporated unchanged into the Constitution of October, 1789. The right of the State or diocesan Church to its place in the union of the Churches in General Convention is inherent

and inalienable. It is a fundamental principle of our union and is coeval with our existence.

The ninth article provided for the use "in this Church, when the same shall be ratified by the Conventions which have respectively sent deputies to this General Convention" of the English Book of Common Prayer, "as altered by an instrument of writing passed under the authority of this Convention, entitled 'Alterations in the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England, proposed and recommended to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.'"

It was in accordance with this instrument that the "Proposed Book," as it has been styled, was ordered to be issued by a committee of the Convention consisting of Dr. William Smith, Dr. William White, and Dr. C. H. Wharton. A comparison of the alterations as contained in this paper with the "Proposed Book" will show the liberties taken by the Committee in preparing the book for

the press. The history of these alterations, and the emendations and changes of the actually proposed alterations, appear in the correspondence between the members of the committee charged with the publication of the "Proposed Book." This correspondence has been printed in full from the archives of the General Convention, and shows conclusively the hand of William Smith as the chief mover in this revision. The "Proposed Book" has sometimes been called the "Bishop White Prayer Book." Such a title would be neither historical nor accurate. The "Proposed Book" reflects clearly the sentiments, the style, and the prejudices of William Smith.

It is evident that at the time of the assembling of the Convention of 1785, "very few, or rather," to quote Bishop White, "none" of the members-elect "entertained thoughts of altering the liturgy any further than to accommodate it to the Revolution." Bishop White reminds us that "there being no express authority to the purpose, the contrary was implied in the sending of deputies, on the ground of the recommendation and pro-

posal from New York, which presumed that the book, with the above exception, should remain entire." Virginia alone had authorized its deputies to join in a review, to be subject, however, when done, to the approval of, or rejection by, the State Convention. While every one may have desired alterations in particular offices or forms, it was generally conceded that such a revision as was needed should not be taken till the Church was consolidated and completed by union and the possession of the Episcopate. There was a hesitation on the part of the members of the Convention "at making the book so permanent as it would have been by the fourth article" of the proposed Constitution. To have agreed to this article without further action would have practically transferred the binding authority of the rubrics, offices, and forms as found in the English Book, save so far as the political situation required modification, upon the American Church. It is submitted that with the view entertained at this period of the unbending obligation of the English Book, as enforced by the Act of Uni-

formity, the adoption of the fourth article of the proposed Constitution of 1785 would simply have enjoined that obligation, unchanged and unchangable, on the American Church for all time to come. We cannot wonder, then, at the hesitancy of the members of the Convention to adopt this article to which Bishop White alludes. Arguments were now offered in favor of a review, notably on account of the archaic expressions, that required adaptation to our present use of language, and also in view of the fact "that there were some matters universally held exceptionable independently of doctrine." And so it happened that "a moderate review," as Bishop White tells us, "fell in with the sentiments and wishes of every member." There grew up a persuasion in the minds of the deputies that the result would be generally acceptable to the Church at large; and thus, in spite of the lack of authority, the Convention entered upon the work of revision.

William White was not a member of the sub-committee by whom these alterations in

the Prayer Book were proposed and reported to the Convention. He is careful to inform us in his *Memoirs of the Church* that "when brought into committee they were not reconsidered, because the ground would have to be gone over again in Convention." We have, therefore, no detailed history of what Bishop White calls "the preparatory stage of the business." Even in the Convention, we are told by the same authority, "there were but few points canvassed with any material difference of principle." These "few points" we proceed to notice.

A motion of Mr. Page of Virginia proposed the omission of the first four petitions of the litany, and the introduction instead of "a short petition which he had drawn up, more agreeable to his ideas of the Divine persons recognized in those petitions." "The mover declared," as we learn from Bishop White, "that he had no objection to the invoking of our blessed Saviour, whose divinity the prayer acknowledged and Whom he considered as invoked through the whole of the Liturgy." This, he thought, "might be defended by

Scripture." His "objection lay to the word 'Trinity,'" which he denounced as "unauthorized by Scripture and a foundation of much unnecessary disputation." The omission of the fourth petition only, in which alone the word occurred, would leave the other petitions liable, he thought, to the charge of recognizing three Gods. He consequently moved to strike out the entire four petitions.

The Rev. William West of Maryland replied to Mr. Page under "great agitation," apprehensive, as Bishop White tells us, that this speech was "the signal for aiming at very hazardous and essential alterations." The quiet management of Dr. White appears to have prevented further discussion, and through his skilful manipulation, as soon as Dr. West had finished his speech the question was put and lost without a division.

The framing of a service for the Fourth of July was, as Bishop White tells us, "the most injudicious step taken by the Convention." It might have been foreseen that a form of this nature which had been prepared by Dr. Smith, who had both written and acted against the

Declaration of Independence and was under suspicion during the greater part of the war, could not prove appropriate or popular in a Church seeking the comprehensive character and the tolerance of differences which might include all good men in its communion.

Had it been a question of praying for the prosperity of the State, or for the temporal and spiritual good of the rulers, the case would have been different. The form proposed included a retrospective approval of measures respecting which both clergy and laity were far from being in accord. That William White, an avowed and consistent patriot from the start, opposed the adoption of the form, supported though he was by one other deputy alone, would convince us of the unwisdom of the proposition.

The day was observed in but few instances, and although the Service as found in the "Proposed Book" is used from time to time in our own days under very different circumstances, by special license of the Bishops, it never approved itself sufficiently to take the place of the State services which were, till

recent times, so marked a blemish in the English Book of Prayer.

On the subject of the articles there arose a dispute with reference to the doctrine of justification and a proposed article, to which White and the excellent David Griffith, afterward Bishop-elect of Virginia, made objection, was withdrawn and the words of the XXXIX Articles on that subject restored. An article concerning predestination, which, as Bishop White says, "professed to say something on the subject, yet in reality said nothing," was introduced and received the approval of the Convention.

The moderation and calm judgment of White prevailed in securing the removal of a controverted passage from the Epistle to the Romans,—chapter VII, beginning at the 9th verse,—from the proposed article on original sin, as prepared by Dr. Smith. It is to be remembered in connection with this subject that it is the testimony of Bishop White that "whatever is novel" in the proposed articles set forth at this time "was taken from a book in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Smith, who

was in every way the leading spirit in the proposed revision."

Bishop White calls attention to "two capital errors independently of the merits of the alterations themselves," into which the Convention fell. The first was the printing of a large edition of the book, which was thought to be inconsistent with its being merely a proposal, and was therefore considered a stretch of power and "designed to effect the introduction of the book to actual use in order to prevent a discussion of its merits." The second error was the ordering of the use of this service at Christ Church, Philadelphia, at the close of the Convention, on the occasion of Dr. Smith's sermon eulogizing and explaining the revision.

This step confirmed the opinion of a purpose of introducing the book with a high hand. The book prepared by the Committee consisting of Dr. Smith, White, and Wharton, appeared after tedious delay and was at first coldly received and shortly afterward rejected. It was only "*proposed*," and ere a Convention could assemble to act on the proposal for its

adoption it had been laid aside by common consent.

Events more important than the framing of Constitutions or the review of the liturgy were occupying the thoughts of American Churchmen.

It was at the Convention of 1785 that united measures were first taken for obtaining the succession in the English line. There was now a Bishop of Scottish consecration in the country. The success of the application to Scotland rendered success in England more probable. The application to England for the apostolical Succession, contemplated by White from the first, and never lost sight of for a moment, now met with no opposition.

It was by White that the resolutions and address to the English Archbishops and Bishops, as found on the Journal of the Convention, were drafted. It was fitting that the earliest steps in this direction should be taken by this judicious man. We proceed, therefore, to examine in detail the measures thus originated for obtaining for the American Church the historic Episcopate in the English line.

The third and fourth articles of the Constitution of the American Church as finally adopted in 1789, are concerned with the recognition and regulation of the Episcopal order and office. Incidental references to Bishops are found in the fifth, sixth and seventh articles, while the tenth article, as finally ratified in 1844, provides for the communication of the Episcopate to foreign lands. It is evident both from the prominence thus accorded to the Episcopal office and the pains taken by our fathers to secure the same, that the Episcopate they desired and finally obtained was not a mere name, but a very real thing,—an office having certain important, indispensable functions; an order, the powers and duties of which, as well as its continuous existence in the Church of Christ, are matters of history. The question so often mooted as to the divine origin and right of Episcopacy, or even the discussion as to its necessity to the being or well-being of a Church, are not pertinent to our present investigation. It is not necessary even to claim, in this connection, that which seems to us indisputable, that the Church to

which we belong acknowledges, at least by fair implication, and certainly in Ordinal and Canons acts upon, the principle of the divine origin of the historic Episcopate so lately characterized by the great Lightfoot as the backbone of the faith. This at least is certain and confessed by all. The exercise of the Episcopal function, the conduct of Bishops, the manner of their choice,—in fact, in all but the bare essentials of the order and office, the Episcopate is under the control of human law. The application of that law, its nature, its origin, its limitations, as constitutionally affecting the office and administration of a Bishop of the Church of God in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America is our special subject of inquiry.

Dr. Hugh Davey Evans, in his “*Essay on the Episcopate of the Protestant Episcopal Church*”—a volume of great value from its judicial treatment of the questions involved—calls attention to a fact at once suggestive and important.

“The American branch of the Anglican Communion so fully recognizes the Episcopate, that

she has made that recognition a part of the very name which she has assumed. She calls herself the Protestant Episcopal Church, Protestant as rejecting the errors of Romanism; Episcopal as recognizing the Episcopate 'as part of her own being.' Yet she has nowhere set forth any definition of the words Bishop, Episcopal, Episcopate, or Episcopacy; nor has she settled the rights and duties which they imply. In common with all the other branches of the Anglican Communion, she declares, that 'it is evident to all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that, from the Apostles' times there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church,—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.' And in common with the same Churches, she exacts that, 'to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in this Church, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereinafter following, or hath had Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination.'

“Yet while she thus recognizes the three orders, and speaks of them as ‘functions,’ she has no-

where set down any definition or description of those functions, except in the case of deacons.

“This remarkable state of things also exists in every other branch of the Anglican Church. The same thing is, in substance, true of every Episcopal Church, which is or has been, in the world. There is nowhere any canon, or other authoritative document, defining, or describing, the office of a Bishop, or prescribing the limits of his rights and duties. Canons there are, both ancient and modern, which regulate the mode of exercising the powers of Bishops, and impose or enforce specific duties upon them; perhaps some may be found which give to them rights, but that is very doubtful. But all these canons presuppose the existence of Bishops, as a known order in the Church, exercising authority. The first of the canons called Apostolical, probably the oldest document bearing that title” (with the single exception of the lately discovered ‘Teaching of the Twelve Apostles’) “regulates the ordination of Bishops, implying their existence as a known order in the Church. When we pass to the conciliar canons, that is, those which are known to have been formally passed by councils, we are met by the fact, that all the councils, from the very first, were composed of Bishops. No council has ever enacted

any canons which did not presuppose the existence of Bishops. . . . Nobody knows by whom the canons called Apostolical were enacted, or whether they are anything more than a body of rules, collected by some unauthorized person from the usages of the Church. Yet they recognize Bishops as a known and existing order, at the time of their compilation; which is supposed to have been during the second century.

“That Bishops were an existing order in the Church at that early period, we know from other and less equivocal sources. Gibbon is always prepared to take that side of any question which is least favourable to the established doctrines and practices of the Church. But the force of truth compels him to admit, that from a very early period, *Nulla Ecclesia sine Episcopo*, has been a fact as well as a maxim, and that after we get past the difficulties of the second century, we find Episcopacy universally established.

“The difficulties of the second century are not very formidable when it is recollected that the existence of Bishops is a fact recognized by every Christian writer of that period, of whom there are any remains. In its very beginning, we meet with Ignatius, whose writings contain abundant evidence of the existence of Bishops. . . . These

epistles were written within a very few years after the death of St. John. Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, Irenæus, and Tertullian, form, with Ignatius, a chain of writers extending from the very beginning to the very end of the second century, all of whom bear witness to the existence of Bishops."

The results of the latest scholarship add to the strength of the position thus assumed. Lightfoot, who sees in Saint James—the brother of the Lord—the first Diocesan Bishop, or, to quote his very words, "James, the Lord's brother, alone, within the period compassed by the apostolic writings, can claim to be regarded as a Bishop in the later and more special sense of the term," and who regards the position occupied by Timothy and Titus, whom he styles "apostolic delegates," as one which "fairly represents the functions of a Bishop early in the second century," is conclusive as to the fact "that the institution of an episcopate must be placed as far back as the closing years of the first century, and that it cannot, without violence to historical testimony, be dissevered from the name of Saint John."

We, therefore, reach these conclusions: The American branch of the Holy Catholic Church recognizes the Order of Bishops as existing from the Apostles' time. She has not defined the functions pertaining to this Order of the sacred ministry, or expressly marked out the limitations of its powers. She refers to scripture and ancient authors for the fact of the existence "from the Apostles' time" of this Order and office. It may be further inferred with reason that the nature of the office, as it was originally instituted, and the extent of the powers inherent in, or conceded to, this Order may be learned from the same "Holy Scripture and ancient authors." In other words, the Episcopate, sought for and at length secured by our fathers, was the historic Episcopate, and in the absence of any definition in constitution, canons, liturgy, or symbols, of the nature of this office and administration, it may be inferred that whatever the Bishop was, in the judgment and acknowledged practice of the Church, the American Bishop was to be; so that all rights, powers, privileges inhering in

this office or appertaining to the same were sought for and secured in obtaining the Episcopate. In other words, the American Bishop was to be no new creation, but the peer of any and every Bishop of the Church of God.

To trace the story of the efforts of our fathers to secure the Episcopate will substantiate this position and make clear this claim. In the efforts made for the Episcopate we see at the outset, and throughout the struggle, even to the moment of success, the hand and head of him of whom his distinguished successor* rightly claimed that "Bishop White will be recognized as the founder and wise master-builder of a system of Ecclesiastical Polity, which, though not faultless, is as perfect as the condition of things then admitted, and of which the essential excellence is likely to be demonstrated by the progress of events."

In *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, William White had argued that "it may fairly be inferred that Episcopalians on this continent will wish to institute among

* Bishop Alonzo Potter.

themselves an Episcopal government as soon as it shall appear practicable, and that this government will not be attended with the danger of tyranny, either temporal or spiritual." The proposition "to include in the proposed frame of government a general approbation of Episcopacy, and a declaration of an intention to procure the succession as soon as conveniently may be; but in the mean time to carry the plan into effect without waiting for the succession," was happily rendered unnecessary, and the writer of this pamphlet became most actively concerned in securing this "succession" for the Church of which he was already a leading spirit. At the meeting of clergy and laity convened in Philadelphia on the 24th of May, 1784, at which Dr. White was chosen Chairman, the fourth of the "instructions or fundamental principles" adopted, provided "that the succession of the ministry be agreeable to the usage, which requireth the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons; that the rights and powers of the same, respectively, be ascertained; and that they be exercised according to reasonable laws, to be

duly made." In this provision it is easy to recognize the hand of White. Out of the meeting of May, 1784, there grew, under the fostering care of White, the organization or "association" of the "Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania," which was effected on the 24th of May, 1785. This important document named as the objects had in view by the clergy and congregations in this "act of association," the following:—"For maintaining uniformity in Divine worship, *for procuring the powers of Ordination*, and for establishing and maintaining a system of ecclesiastical government."* This "Act of Association" was evidently the composition of White, and it embodies the principles and even the language of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*.

In the active correspondence kept up by White with the leading Churchmen North and South, we find further evidence of his purposes concerning the "succession." In a letter addressed, in 1784, to the Rev. Samuel Parker of Trinity Church, Boston, the exact date of

* Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 40.

which is unfortunately lost, Dr. White thus expresses his views on this important matter:

“On the subject of procuring the Succession, I shall only observe that if any private measures said to have been undertaken for this end should prove successful, I think the whole Church should gladly avail itself of the acquisition. If not, an application to our Mother Church from representatives of the Episcopal Church generally will be, surely, too respectable to be slighted; and such an application might be easily framed by correspondence among ourselves.”*

Writing again on the 10th of August, 1784, to the same correspondent, White observes:

“The fundamental principles which you have seen were merely meant as instructions to a Committee in their consultations with our brethren in the other States for the forming a general Constitution for the Continent, which we think should be attempted before we venture to form a Constitution for this State in particular. . . . The independence asserted is intended in the most unlimited sense; but we do not think this precludes us from procuring a Bishop from England, he

*Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 60.

becoming on his arrival a citizen of the United States. Proper measures for procuring an Episcopate we wish to see taken at the ensuing meeting in New York; but, as to his support, I know no source for it, but a parochial living."*

The clergy of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, under the guidance of Parker, adopted the Pennsylvania Fundamental Principles with slight additions, the first of these expressing "the opinion of the Convention that this independence be not construed or taken in so rigorous a sense as to exclude the Churches in America, separately or collectively, from applying for and obtaining from some regular Episcopal foreign power an American Episcopate."†

In the letter accompanying the minutes of this Convention, which, though signed by the Moderator, the Rev. J. Graves, is in the handwriting and is evidently the composition of Parker. The position respecting the episcopate expressed in the resolution is further emphasized:

* Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 61.

† Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 63.

“As to the mode of obtaining what we stand in such need of, we wish above all things to procure it in the most regular manner, and particularly from our Mother Church in England. Whether any of the Bishops in England or Ireland would consecrate a person chosen among ourselves and sent there for that purpose, without a mandate from the King of England or the authority of her parliament, we are at a loss to determine; but we have no doubt that a regular application made by a representative body of the Episcopal Churches in America would easily obtain a consecrated head, and in order to do this, we earnestly wish a mode of applying in some such way as may be immediately adopted by the American Churches.

“We are of the opinion that we ought to leave no means untried to procure a regular success of the episcopacy before we think of obtaining it in an irregular manner. To accomplish this, we have chosen a committee of our body to correspond with you upon this, and adopt such measures for the same as may be expedient or necessary.”*

The letter from the Massachusetts and Rhode Island clergy expressed the sentiments

* Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, pp. 65-66.

prevailing in Connecticut, and which seem to have been current throughout New England. The conservative elements in the North were alarmed, not only at the proposition in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* for "a temporary departure from Episcopacy," but by the radical measures adopted at the southward where, in Virginia, anticipatory canons were enacted defining and circumscribing the exercise of the Episcopal office and making the Bishop not only amenable to trial by the Convention, but even liable to "suspension or dismissal" from office; while in South Carolina it was stipulated that Bishops should not be introduced at all.

Prior to the meeting of the Convention of the Churches in the Middle and Southern States in 1785, the efforts of the Connecticut clergy to secure an Episcopal head had resulted in success. On the 14th of November, 1784, at Aberdeen, the Rev. Samuel Seabury, D.D., *Oxon.*, was consecrated the first American Bishop by the Bishops of the Catholic remainder of the Church in Scotland. Entering into a concordat with the Church from

which he received his Episcopal character, Seabury lost no time in beginning his work, and was joyfully received by his clergy, the formal welcome being extended in Convocation in Middletown, August, 1785. At this Convocation in Middletown the Churches in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were represented by the Rev. Samuel Parker, while the conservative element in New York was represented by the Rev. Benjamin Moore. Both of these gentlemen were friends and correspondents of White and each had taken part in the preliminary measures and meetings of 1784 which had prepared the way for the Convention in Philadelphia in September, 1785. To this meeting Bishop Seabury and his clergy were invited, but as there was no provision in the Fundamental Principles adopted in New York at the preliminary meeting of 1784 for the proper recognition of his office, Seabury courteously declined the invitation, as the clergy at the southward did his suggestion that they should attend the meeting at Middletown.

It is in evidence that had there been the

provision that one of the Episcopal Order, if present, should preside, as was originally intended by White, Bishop Seabury would have gone to Philadelphia in 1785, as he did later, in 1789; but there can be little doubt that such a step would have been premature and might have absolutely prevented, in place of furthering, the unity so greatly desired by both White and himself. There was no little to be done by the statesmanship and wise, conciliatory measures of White ere the conflicting elements in the Church could be calmed, and order arise out of chaos.

Prior to the meeting in Philadelphia, letters from Bishop Seabury to Drs. William White and William Smith, the leading spirits in the Convention, frankly communicated information respecting the rejection of the Connecticut application in England, and offered the Bishop's services for the ordination of candidates until a Bishop was secured at the southward. At the same time the Bishop objected to the policy which had obtained in the Conventions at the South of encumbering their plans for organization by establishing so many

and such precise fundamental rules. He claimed that the powers of the Bishop were too much circumscribed, since "government as essentially pertains to Bishops as ordination." He denied "that the laity can with any propriety be admitted to sit in judgment on Bishops and Presbyters, especially when deposition may be the event; because they cannot take away a character which they cannot confer." The Bishop was careful to state that he did not think it requisite that the Churches at the southward should be modelled on the Church in Connecticut; but he earnestly urged that "in so essential a matter as Church government is, no alterations should be made that affect its foundations." The Bishop professed himself ready "to assist in procuring Bishops in America" so far as he could do this consistently. His desire is stated as follows: "I do most earnestly wish to have our Church in all the States so settled that it may be one Church, united in government, doctrine, and discipline,—that there may be no divisions among us—no opposition of interests—no clashing of opinions."*

* Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, pp. 76-82.

The objections raised by the Bishop of Connecticut and repeated by the venerable Thomas Bradbury Chandler of New Jersey, were answered by the indefatigable William White. On the very eve of the meeting in Philadelphia, Parker wrote to his correspondent in reply to a letter which indicates that the fatal defect of withholding the presidency of the Convention from the Episcopal Order was adopted in opposition to the wish of the far-seeing White. "I am sorry," he writes to Parker, "to find that those measures have been so construed by some of our friends in England, as if we had refused to the Episcopal Order the right of precedency in our Conventions. Probably you will recollect, that in the original draft it was provided the senior Bishop present should preside; and that this was erased, not from the idea that any other than a Bishop ought to be President, but from an observation of Dr. S[mith], that to restrain it to the senior Bishop might be sometimes inconvenient; I wish that the clause had stood."

Parker's letter throws further light on this unfortunate action: "I am, with you, equally

sensible that the fifth of the fundamental principles in the paper printed at N. York has operated much to the disadvantage of that Convention. Had it stood as I proposed that a Bishop (if one in any State) should be president, I make no doubt there would have been one present. You will be at no loss to conclude that I mean Doctor Seabury, who, you must ere this have heard, is arrived and entered upon the exercise of his office in Connecticut. Being present in Convocation at Middletown the 4th of August last, I much urged his attending the Convention at Philadelphia this month, but that very article discouraged him so much that no arguments I could use were sufficient to prevail with him. Had that article stood as proposed, the gentleman who moved the amendment, would not have suffered by it, nor the Convention been stigmatized as Anti-Episcopalian.*

The opening pages of the Journal of the Convention at Philadelphia in 1785 bring to our notice a proposed "plan for obtaining the consecration of Bishops, together with an ad-

*Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, pp. 89-90.

dress to the Most Reverend the Archbishops and the Right Reverend the Bishops of the Church of England, for that purpose."*

This Plan and Address attest the widespread desire of the Churchmen represented in this Convention for the Episcopate as a necessary bond of union. They further prove the preference of the Churches of the Middle and Southern States for the succession in the English line. Recognizing as the acknowledged hindrance to the success of Dr. Seabury's application to the English prelates, the lack of evidence of the concurrence of the civil authorities and the coöperation of the laity in the effort for the succession, they directed the attention of the State Conventions to measures for the removal of this obstacle. Proofs of the desire of the laity for the introduction of the Episcopate were to be provided and documents certifying the concurrence of the State authorities in the proposed measures, or at least attesting the absence of any constitutional or legislative bar to the introduction of Episcopacy, were to be obtained.

*Perry's *Reprinted Journals*, I., 19.

from the various civil rulers. In true republican simplicity, and for the removal of popular prejudices, they sought to prevent, by the concluding paragraph of their plan for obtaining consecration, the assumption on the part of their future Bishops of the lordly titles of the English prelates,—a proposition not unfrequently, though erroneously, quoted as of authority at the present day.

The “Address” to the English prelates was manly and dignified. Bishop White informs us* that this paper and the “plan” itself, “as they stand on the Journals,” were his own composition “with the exception of a few verbal alterations.” It expressed the “earnest desire and resolution” of “the members of our communion” “to retain the venerable form of Episcopal government, handed down to them, as they conceived, from the time of the Apostles; and endeared to them by the remembrance of the holy bishops of the primitive Church, of the blessed martyrs who reformed the Church of England, and of the many great and pious prelates who have adorned that

* *Memoirs of the Church*, 2nd ed., p. 101.

Church in every succeeding age." Its plea was summed up in these words:—"The petition which we offer to your venerable body is, that from a tender regard to the religious interests of thousands in this rising empire, professing the same religious principles with the Church of England, you will be pleased to confer the Episcopal character on such persons as shall be recommended by this Church in the several States here represented; full satisfaction being given of the sufficiency of the persons recommended, and of its being the intention of the general body of the Episcopalians in the said States, respectively, to receive them in the quality of Bishops."

Reference is felicitously made to the possibility of obstacles arising from political complications; and stress is laid on the fact that in view of the separation of Church and state the civil rulers of the United States cannot unite officially in the application for the Episcopal succession. The "Address" closes with a graceful as well as grateful acknowledgment of the kind offices rendered by the English hierarchy and the Society for the Propagation

of the Gospel to the American Church, to which, under God, its "prosperity is in an eminent degree to be ascribed."

It was in this address, prepared by the writer of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, and embodying its ideas,—now at length on the verge of realization—that, as Bishop White asserts, "a foundation was thus laid for the procuring of the present Episcopacy." "To have abandoned the Episcopal succession," writes Bishop White in his *Memoirs of the Church*, "would have been in opposition to primitive order and ancient habits; and besides, would at least have divided the Church. To have had recourse to Scotland, independently of the objections entertained against the political principles of the non-jurors of that country, would not have been proper, without previous disappointment on a request made to the Mother Church. Another resource remained, in foreign ordination; which had been made the easier by the act of the British parliament, passed in the preceding year, to enable the Bishop of London to ordain citizens or subjects of foreign countries

without exacting the usual oaths. But besides that this would have kept the Church under the same hardships which had heretofore existed, and had been so long complained of; dependence on a foreign country in spirituals, when there had taken place independence in temporals, is what no prudent person would have pleaded for."

The reply of the English prelates was courteous but cautious, and, in fact, non-committal. It was prepared by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was signed by the two Archbishops and the Bishops of London, Chichester, Bath and Wells, St. Asaph, Salisbury, Peterborough, Ely, Rochester, Worcester, Oxford, Exeter, Lincoln, Bangor, Lichfield and Coventry, Gloucester, St. David's and Bristol. The letter expresses the wish of the English prelates to promote the spiritual welfare of their "Episcopal brethren in America," and their desire to be instrumental in procuring for them "the complete exercise of our holy religion, and the enjoyment of that Ecclesiastical Constitution" which they believed "to be truly apostolical," and for which the

letter of request expressed "so unreserved a veneration." The Archbishop did not conceal his satisfaction that "this pious design" was "not likely to receive any discountenance from the cure powers" in America, and promised "the best endeavours" of the English prelates "to acquire a legal capacity of complying with the prayer" of the American address. At the same time and with every allowance for the difficulties of the situations, the fear is expressed that in the proceedings of the Convention "some alterations may have been adopted or intended, which those difficulties do not seem to justify." In view of the fact that these alterations are not mentioned in the address, and that the knowledge of their nature possessed by the Bishops in England had reached them "through private and less certain channels," the Bishops thought it but just to "wait for an explanation." "Anxious to give every proof," not only of "brotherly affection" but also of facility in forwarding the wishes of their American brethren, they felt that they could not "but be extremely cautious lest" they "should be the instruments of

establishing an ecclesiastical system" which "could be called a branch of the Church of England, but afterwards" might "possibly appear to have departed from it essentially, either in doctrine or discipline."

The correspondence between the Philadelphia Convention and the Primate had been carried on through the kindly intervention of the celebrated John Adams, the American Minister at the Court of St. James. Mr. Adams, although connected with the Congregational body of Massachusetts, and coming from a State where the opposition to the introduction of Episcopacy into America had been more decided than elsewhere,—the aversion to the measure being occasioned by religious as well as political prejudices,—undertook this office of furthering the object, which the celebrated Samuel Adams had declared to be a moving cause of the war for independence, with an alacrity and enthusiasm most honorable to the man and to his freedom from religious or political prejudices. He delivered the address to the Archbishop in person, and by his personal efforts in public and private,

greatly facilitated the progress of the measure. It was through Mr. Adams that the reply of the Archbishops and Bishops was transmitted to Dr. White. That the office thus kindly undertaken was one liable to misconception, and that the prejudices against the introduction of the Episcopate were not wholly allayed, making the service rendered by the American Minister the more valuable and effective, may be inferred from the language used by Mr. Adams nearly thirty years afterwards, when referring to his share in the successful effort for securing the Episcopate for America.

“There is no part of my life,” writes ex-President Adams to Bishop White, under date of October 29, 1814, “on which I look back and reflect with more satisfaction, than the part I took, bold, daring and hazardous as it was to myself and mine, in the introduction of the Episcopacy into America.”

There had been an active correspondence kept up by William White and prominent English friends from the very moment of the cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and the independent States of America. The

letters which passed between Dr. Inglis, formerly of Trinity, New York, and later the first British Colonial Bishop; the celebrated Philadelphia refugee clergyman, the Rev. Jacob Duché; together with the Rev. Dr. Alexander Murray, who had, for a time, been the missionary of the Venerable Society at Reading, in Pennsylvania, and Dr. White, the leading spirit in the measures now rife for the organization and perpetuation of the American Church, are full of interest and throw no little light on the inner workings of the plan to secure the Episcopate. Beginning with the appearance of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, the letters from these English correspondents became most important in acquainting White, informally and often confidentially, with difficulties arising from misapprehensions of the steps taken in America, or from fears entertained of the doctrinal unsoundness or moral unfitness of some who were known, or supposed, to be candidates for the office of Bishops in the American Church.

The loyalist clergy in London, who were

naturally in the confidence of the Archbishop and the leading dignitaries of the Establishment, were soon able to assure their correspondent in Philadelphia that a proper application for the Episcopate would be favorably regarded. The passage of the Act of Parliament, authorizing the dispensing with the usual oaths in the case of American Candidates for Orders, gave further assurance of a kindly interest in the rising American Church. The needs of the Church in the United States became a matter of interest and discussion in the public press. Pamphlets were published on the subject by leading men, such as the celebrated philanthropist, Granville Sharp, Esq., a grandson of a former Archbishop of York. The offices not alone of Mr. Adams, the American Minister, but also of the celebrated Benjamin Franklin, then in Paris, were invoked. The proper foundation of the independent American Church, and its completion, by the gift of the succession, seem to have occupied the thoughts, the labors, and the prayers of the leading men in Church and state at this critical period.

At length the correspondents of William White were able to write definitely as well as encouragingly. Murray begins his communication of the 11th of March, 1786, with the prophetic words: "I would fain hope the day is not far distant when I shall have the honour of addressing you as *Right Reverend*." He proceeds: "Mr. Adams has finally obviated all political objections to your Application, and reconciled the King, the members, and the whole Bench of Bishops to it." It was a relief to find that the alterations in the Prayer Book, comprising what is now known as the Proposed Book, were "not yet approved, but only proposed and recommended." As Bishop White informs us, it was "the omission of Christ's descent into hell, in the Apostles' Creed," as given in the Proposed Book, that was specially distasteful to the English prelates, though this objection was urged only by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr. Moss. The failure of the Bishops to receive the advance sheets of the Proposed Book, which, though sent to them from time to time as the work was hurried through the press, failed, through

some mischance, to reach their destination, occasioned the "caution" which Bishop White notices as characterizing the English prelates' reply. Even in the United States there was a lack of unanimity in this effort to remove the reference to the descent into hell from the Apostles' Creed. Both at the North and the South it was felt that such radical changes were likely to prejudice the success of the application in England for the Episcopate, and also imperil the unity of the Church in the United States. A very large number of Churchmen sympathized with the Bishop of Connecticut and the conservative element in New England, New York, and New Jersey. All these deprecated any liturgical changes from the English book or doctrinal departure from the standards of the Mother Church. This was deemed, to quote the language of Parker of Boston, addressed to Dr. White, "in direct violation of the fourth fundamental principle agreed on by the Convention in New York," in 1784. This principle provided that the American Church should maintain the doctrines of the Church of England, and

adhere to the liturgy of that Church so far as consistent with the American Revolution and the Constitutions of the respective States.

A confidential letter from the Rev. Dr. Inglis, to whom alone the Archbishop's letter had been communicated, to Dr. White, under date of June 6, 1786, expressed the satisfaction of the English Bishops at finding, on the receipt of the Proposed Book, "that the great essential doctrines of Christianity" were "preserved; particularly the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and Our Saviour's Atonement." The Archbishop of Canterbury had now "taken up the business with greater zeal" and was about to apply for an Act of Parliament authorizing the consecration of Bishops for America. The conditions required by the Archbishop and Bishops, as stated by Dr. Inglis, were these: "1.—A restoration of the Article which has been expunged out of the Apostles' Creed. 2.—A restoration of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, so far, at least, as to leave the use of them discretionary. 3.—Securing to the future Bishops that just and permanent authority, which is not only

necessary for the right discharge of their duty and the benefit of the Church, but which is warranted by Holy Scripture and the practice of the Christian Church in every period of its existence. And 4.—Proper testimonials, such as the peculiarity of the case demands, of the competency in point of learning, the unblemished moral character, and the soundness in the faith, of those who may be sent over for consecration.”* Proceeding to discuss these conditions, Dr. Inglis gives us some light on the action taken in New York, to which, as we have seen, Dr. Parker of Boston so strenuously excepted:

“With regard to your future Bishop’s permanent authority, I consider it as absolutely necessary to the peace, order, and good government of your Churches. When I first saw the regulation made on this head, I was astonished how any people professing themselves members of an Episcopal Church, could think of degrading their Bishop in such a manner. No Episcopal power whatever is reserved for him but that of *Ordination*, and perhaps Confirmation. He is only a *member*, ex-

*Perry’s *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 302.

officio, of the Convention where he resides, but is not to take the chair, or preside, unless he is asked; whereas such *presidency* is as essential to his character as *Ordination*. St. Paul's Bishop was to receive, and judge of accusations brought against presbyters, as hath been the case of Bishops ever since; but your Bishop has nothing to do with such matters:—the Convention, consisting mostly of laymen, are to receive, and judge of accusations against him. In short, his barber may shave him in the morning; and in the afternoon vote him out of his office.

“I was astonished, I say, at this regulation, and could not account for the clergy's agreeing to it,—but my astonishment ceased when I was assured by a letter from America, that all the clergy, except *one*, opposed it; but were out-voted, or overawed into a compliance, by the laity. This accounted for the matter; it is only one of the evils which I foresaw would attend the introduction of so many laymen into Conventions; and be assured it will be followed by many others.”

The Convention of the Episcopal Churches of the Middle and Southern States met in Philadelphia in June, 1786. It assembled, Bishop White informs us, “under circum-

stances which bore strong appearances of a dissolution of the union in this stage of it." There contributed to this state of affairs several circumstances. The "interfering instructions from the Churches in the different States,"—each of these Churches being independent of the others and each cherishing its own notions as to the organization and perpetuation of the Church,—afforded one source of danger. The "embarrassment which had arisen from the rejection of the Proposed Book in some of the States and the use of it in others," together with the almost universal disposition to revise still further this revision and amend its proposed amendments, afforded another source of apprehension. There had grown up in the minds of some, notably through the influence of the patriot Provoost, the Whig rector of Trinity, New York, a spirit of opposition to the Bishop of Connecticut and a disposition to discredit the source whence he had received the Episcopate, and the warmth of feeling thus engendered threatened the lasting separation of the Churchmen in America. The unwillingness of the Church

in South Carolina to receive a Bishop at all, and the growing indifference in Virginia to the adoption of measures for securing the succession, indicated a lack of Churchly sentiment and an indifference to religion itself most discouraging. The attempts of the able but erratic Dr. William Smith of Maryland to obtain the Episcopate of the Church in that State; and the attitude of Provoost of New York towards those of his brethren who were in sympathy with Seabury and the New England Churchmen were elements of weakness in the union of the Churches of the Middle and Southern States. Remonstrances from the conservative Churchmen of New Jersey had been addressed to the Convention, deprecating the radical measures already taken. It was evident that there was no prospect of securing any coöperation from New England in their further efforts for organization. Parker of Boston had expressed his conviction that the Scotch succession was less likely to excite prejudice than that of England, at this time. "In these Northern States," he wrote to Dr. White, "I much

doubt whether a Bishop from England would be received, so great is the jealousy still existing of the British nation. Of a Scotch Bishop there can be no suspicions, because wholly unconnected with the civil powers themselves, they could introduce none into these States. Were it not for these reasons, I frankly confess I should rather have the succession from the English Church, to which we have always been accustomed to look as children to a parent.”*

Besides these unpromising circumstances, the caution so evident in the letter of the English prelates, and the question whether the conditions they laid down would be granted by the Convention, added to the difficulties of the situation. One man alone in the midst of these complications pursued the even tenor of his way. William White never lost heart; never remitted his exertions in the interest of the Church of which he was now confessedly the leading spirit. Correcting misapprehensions, overcoming opposition, removing prejudices, he labored with one single end and

*Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 309.

aim in view. It was for the Church of God that he worked untiringly, and we may well bless God for his patient toil and well-deserved success.

The conflicting instructions to the deputies accredited to the Convention of June, 1786, from their respective constituencies, were skilfully gotten over by their reference "to the first Convention which should meet, fully authorized to determine on a Book of Common Prayer." This adroit use of a rule of parliamentary procedure was the suggestion of William White. It was through this expedient that, as White expressed it, "the instructions, far from proving injurious, had the contrary effect, by showing as well the necessity of a duly constituted ecclesiastical body, as the futility of taking measures to be reviewed and authoritatively judged of, in the bodies of which we were the deputies. Such a system appeared so evidently fruitful of discord and disunion that it was abandoned from this time."*

* White's *Memoirs of the Church*, De Costa's ed., p. 131.

Book removed the embarrassment threatened by the acceptance in some quarters, and the rejection in others, of this crude and hasty compilation. In the settlement of the question of the Scotch successor, which was only indirectly attacked, the conservatism and Christian courtesy of William White were specially apparent. The opposition to the Scottish Episcopate was, so far as the clerical deputies were concerned, confined to the Rev. Samuel Provoost, afterwards first Bishop of New York, and the Rev. Robert Smith, afterwards first Bishop of South Carolina. Personal and political prejudices seem to have had their influence in this attempt to throw discredit on the source whence Seabury had obtained the Episcopate. The Convention was barely organized when the Rev. Robert Smith introduced a resolution "That the clergy present produce their Letters of Orders, or declare by whom they were ordained." This motion was aimed at the Rev. Joseph Pilmore, a convert from the Methodists, who had received orders from Seabury, and the Rev. William Smith of Stepney Par-

ish, Maryland, and afterwards of Newport, Rhode Island, and Norwalk, Connecticut, who had been ordained in Scotland by a Bishop of the Church from which Seabury had received Consecration. The judicious application of the "previous question" prevented the discussion which it was anticipated would grow out of this motion, and the resolution itself was lost.

Provoost, not satisfied with this expression of the temper of the Convention, offered the following resolution: "That this Convention will resolve to do no act that shall imply the validity of Ordinations made by Dr. Seabury." Again the "previous question" cut off discussion, and the motion itself was determined in the negative. So determined was the feeling of opposition to Dr. Seabury indicated by these motions, that action of some kind could not be avoided and consequently a compromise resolution offered by Dr. White was unanimously adopted. This motion provided, "That it be recommended to this Church, in the States here represented, not to receive to the pastoral charge, within their respective

limits, clergymen professing canonical subjection to any Bishop in any state or country, other than those Bishops who may be duly settled in the states represented in this Convention." This resolution, as explained by Dr. White himself, was pressed with a view of meeting the charge made on the floor of Convention, that clergymen ordained under the Scotch succession were under canonical subjection to the Bishop who ordained them, even though they might reside outside of the limits of his see. The Rev. Mr. Pilmore, the only one of the deputies who had received orders from the Bishop of Connecticut, "denied that any such thing had been exacted of him," and the resolution, for which, as Bishop White is careful to state, there was never "any ground" other than "in the apprehension which has been expressed," was adopted without opposition.

On the following day, the Rev. Robert Smith returned to the subject and offered the following resolution which, evidently regarded by the Convention, as Bishop White informs

us, as a "temperate guarding" against a possible difficulty, was unanimously adopted:

Resolved.—That it be recommended to the Conventions of the Church represented in this General Convention, not to admit any person as a minister, within their respective limits, who shall receive ordination from any Bishop residing in America, during the application now pending to the English Bishops for Episcopal consecration."

This matter disposed of, the Convention proceeded to the consideration of the letter from the English Bishops. Resolutions expressing the "grateful sense of the Christian affection and condescension manifested in this letter" were adopted, and with this acknowledgment of the kindness of the English prelates the application for the succession was renewed, coupled with fresh assurances of attachment to the system of the Church of England. The reply to the Archbishops and Bishops was originally drafted by Dr. William Smith, but this paper being deemed "too full of compliment," it was, on the motion of the Hon. John Jay, considerably modified in tone and language. As finally adopted, it expressed

a grateful appreciation of the fatherly sentiments contained in this letter of the English prelates; it reiterated the assurance that there was no purpose in America "of departing from the constituent principles of the Church of England;" it claimed that no alterations or omissions had been made in the Book of Common Prayer but such as were necessary to make it consistent with the civil Constitutions or "such as were calculated to remove objections" on the part of the people of the United States. The "proposed ecclesiastical Constitution and Book of Common Prayer" accompanied this renewed request for the succession, and the alterations and modifications of the former made this second application more acceptable. As Bishop White observes, referring particularly to the development of a more conservative and Churchly spirit, as seen in the fuller recognition of Episcopal character and dignity, by this Convention:—"In the preceding year the points alluded to were determined on with too much warmth, and without investigation proportioned to the importance of the subjects. The decisions of

that day were now reversed—not to say without a division, but—without even an opposition.” It should not be forgotten that these Constitutional changes in the direction of conservative Churchmanship were introduced by Dr. White and carried through his influence. These alterations gave to the Bishop, if present, the presidency of the Convention, and required the Bishop’s presence at all ecclesiastical trials, giving to him the sole right of pronouncing the “sentence of deposition or degradation on any clergyman, whether Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon.”

Bishop White, who gives us in his *Memoirs of the Church* the unwritten history of this period, specifies as among the chief means of securing the moderation in tone and temper for which this Convention was noticeable, the presentation of a memorial from the Convention of New Jersey, drawn up, as was “afterward learned with certainty,” by the learned and devout Dr. Thomas Bradbury Chandler of Elizabethtown, and couched in language both conservative and conclusive. This memorial urged the General Convention to revise the

proceedings of the meeting of 1785 and to "remove every cause that may have excited any jealousy or fear that the Episcopal Church in the United States of America have any intention or desire essentially to depart, either in doctrine or discipline, from the Church of England." Bishop White regards this letter as "among the causes which prevented the disorganizing of" "the American Church," since its arguments must have convinced the deputies "that the result of considerable changes would have been the disunion of the Church."

Shortly after the rising of the Convention there came into the hands of Dr. White a communication from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, which was followed by a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury alone, enclosing a recent Act of Parliament authorizing the consecration of Bishops for America. On the receipt of these letters, the committee appointed for this purpose convened the Convention at Wilmington, Delaware, on the 10th of October.

The Archbishops prefaced their words with an earnest deprecation. It is "impossible,"

write the prelates, "not to observe with concern, that if the essential doctrines of our common faith were retained, less respect, however, was paid to our Liturgy than its own excellence, and your declared attachment to it, had led us to expect; not to mention a variety of verbal alterations, of the necessity or propriety of which we are by no means satisfied, we saw with grief that two of the Confessions of our Christian faith, respectable for their antiquity, have been entirely laid aside; and that even in that called the Apostles' Creed, an article is omitted which was thought necessary to be inserted, with a view to a particular heresy, in a very early age of the Church, and has ever since had the venerable sanction of universal reception." The letter announced the application of the Bishops for the passage of an Act of Parliament authorizing the consecrations desired. This step was taken in the expectation that their representations would secure the modification of the radical action of the American Convention. Great stress was laid upon the necessity of affording "the most decisive proofs of the

qualifications" of those recommended for consecration. The Bishops called upon the Convention, before the Bishops-elect should make the subscription required by the tenth article of the proposed ecclesiastical Constitution, to "restore to its integrity the Apostles' Creed;" "to give to the other two Creeds a place" in the Prayer Book, "even though the use of them should be left discretionary;" and to make some alteration in the eighth article of the ecclesiastical Constitution, removing what appeared to the Bishops "to be a degradation of the clerical, and still more of the Episcopal character."

The solicitude of the Bishops respecting the "purity of manners" of those recommended for consecration, led them to require "the most effectual securities:" and forms of testimonial, to be signed by the General and State Conventions, accompanied the letter, which have been ever since, and are still, in use in the American Church. These testimonials, Bishop White assures us, gave "general satisfaction." "The General Convention," continues Bishop White, "had not

been without apprehensions, that some unsuitable character, as to morals, might be elected: and yet for them to have assumed a control might have been an improper interference with the Churches in the individual States."

It is at this point, and evidently calling up to mind the grave issues depending on the proper action at this critical moment, that Bishop White, in his *Memoirs of the Church*, interrupts the narrative with the paragraph we quote:

"The question to be determined on at the present session was: Whether the American Church would avail herself of the opportunity of obtaining the Episcopacy; which had been so earnestly desired, ever since the settlement of the colonies; the want of which had been so long complained of, and which was now held out in offer. When the author considers how much, besides the preference due to Episcopal government, the continuance or the restoration of divine worship in the almost deserted churches, their very existence as a society, and of course the interests of religion and virtue, were concerned in the issue, he looks back with a remnant of uneasy sensation at the

hazard which this question run; and at the probability which then threatened, that the determination might be contrary to what took place.”*

We may well pause in our review of these proceedings to note the fact that it was to William White's patient persistency, moderation, forbearance and conservatism, that the issue at this epochal period was such as gave to us, in its completeness and Catholicity, the American Church.

On the assembling of the adjourned Convention at Wilmington, Delaware, the papers from England were referred to a committee of which Dr. White was evidently the leading member. This committee, we are told by Bishop White, “sat up the whole of the succeeding night, digesting the determinations in the form in which they appear on the Journal.” These conclusions were comprised in a paper entitled “An Act of the General Convention of Clerical and Lay Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Dela-

* White's *Memoirs of the Church*, De Costa's ed., p. 138.

ware, and South Carolina, held at Wilmington, in the State of Delaware, on Wednesday, the 11th of October, 1786." This Act, after reciting the precedent circumstances of the organization and conventional action of the American Church, proceeds to "determine and declare"—

“First, That in the Creed commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, these words, ‘He descended into Hell,’ shall be and continue a part of that Creed.

“Secondly, That the Nicene Creed shall also be inserted in the said Book of Common Prayer, immediately after the Apostles’ Creed, prefaced with the Rubric (or this).

“And whereas, In consequence of the objections expressed by their Lordships to the alterations in the Book of Common Prayer last mentioned, the Conventions in some of the States represented in this General Convention have suspended the ratification and use of the said Book of Common Prayer, by reason whereof it will be improper that persons to be consecrated or ordained as Bishops, Priests, or Deacons respectively, should subscribe the declaration contained in the Tenth Article of the General Ecclesiastical Constitution, without some modification:

“Therefore, it is hereby determined and declared, Thirdly, That the second clause so to be subscribed by a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon of this Church in any of the States which have not already ratified or used the last-mentioned Book of Common Prayer, shall be in the words following:

“And I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, according to the use of the Church of England, as the same is altered by the General Convention, in a certain instrument of writing passed by their authority intituled, ‘Alterations in the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in order to render the same conformable to the American Revolution and the Constitutions of the respective States,’ until the new Book of Common Prayer, recommended by the General Convention, shall be ratified or used in the State in which I am—(Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, as the case may be)—by the authority of the Convention thereof. And I do further solemnly engage that when the said new Book of Common Prayer shall be ratified or used by the authority of the Convention in the State for which I am consecrated a Bishop—(or ordained a Priest or Deacon)—I will conform to the doctrines and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church,

as settled and determined in the last-mentioned Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, set forth by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

“And it is hereby further determined and declared,

“That these words in the Preface to the new proposed Book of Common Prayer, viz: in the Creed commonly called ‘the Apostles’ Creed,’ one clause is omitted as being of uncertain meaning, and—together with the note referred to in that place, be from henceforth no part of the Preface to the said proposed Book of Common Prayer.

“And it is hereby further determined and declared,

“That the Fourth Article of Religion in the new proposed Book of Common Prayer, be altered to render it conformable to the adoption of the Nicene Creed, as follows: ‘Of the Creeds. The two Creeds, namely, that commonly called the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed, ought to be received and believed because they,’ etc., etc.”

On the first vote—the question being the restoring of the words “He descended into Hell” to the Apostles’ Creed—New York,

Pennsylvania, and Delaware were divided. New Jersey and South Carolina voted aye. As the divided States did not count, there were two ayes and no negatives and the words were restored.

The Nicene Creed was restored unanimously. On the question, "Shall the Creed commonly called the Athanasian Creed be admitted in the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America?" New Jersey and Delaware were divided and New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina voted in the negative. Maryland, represented by a clerical deputy only, the Rev. Dr. William Smith, was at the outset declared not admitted to the Convention, and was allowed no vote on these important matters.

A brief address to the Archbishops was prepared and adopted. The testimonials of Dr. White, Bishop-elect of Pennsylvania, Dr. Provoost, Bishop-elect of New York, and Dr. Griffith, Bishop-elect of Virginia, were signed, and a Committee of Correspondence, with

power to convene another General Convention, was appointed.

Although it does not appear on the Journals, and no direct reference to the circumstance can be found in Bishop White's account of this Convention in his *Memoirs of the Church*, the voluminous correspondence of this period, preserved in the archives of the General Convention, acquaints us with the fact that the Wilmington Convention, while availing itself of the presence and the abilities of Dr. William Smith, Bishop-elect of Maryland, refused to sign the testimonial required, recommending him for consecration. It appears, from letters still on file, that two members only of the Convention voted in favor of Dr. Smith's application for recommendation, and that the opposition was based on moral grounds.

The end desired was near at hand. The Bishops-elect of Pennsylvania and New York set sail for England early in November, 1786, and arrived at Falmouth on the 21st of that month. We need not trace the story of the successful accomplishment of the long struggle

for the Episcopate in the English line, as it is detailed at length in the pages of Bishop White's *Memoirs of the Church*. It is enough to say, that on the 4th day of February, 1787, at Lambeth Chapel, at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Moore, the Archbishop of York, Dr. Markham, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr. Moss, and the Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Hinchcliffe, William White and Samuel Provoost were duly and canonically, by the laying on of hands, made Bishops of the Church of God.

At length the struggle for an American Episcopate was ended. There were now three Bishops of the American Church—Seabury of Connecticut, White of Pennsylvania, and Provoost of New York.

It was a happy omen for the newly organized American Church that the Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York reached their native land amidst the Easter festivities of the year 1787. The Church in America was now complete. There only remained the consolidation of the Churches of the North with those of the Middle and Southern States

in one organization, and the adjustment in the general ecclesiastical Constitution of the united Churches of those principles and practices which were still unsettled.

Directly on the return of the newly consecrated Bishops to their homes, the Bishop of Connecticut addressed to each letters of congratulation, adding expressions of his earnest desire to promote "uniformity in worship and discipline among the Churches of the different States." Referring to the "present unsettled state of the Church of England in this country and the necessity of union and concord among all its members in the United States of America, not only to give stability to it, but to fix it on its true and proper foundation," Bishop Seabury proposed that a meeting of the three Bishops should be held, "before any decided steps be taken," and suggested as a basis of union and comprehension a return to the English Prayer Book, "accommodating it to the civil Constitution of the United States." "The government of the Church," he adds, "is already settled; a body of canons will, however, be wanted to give energy to the gov-

ernment and ascertain its operation." The terms of union thus suggested were simply an affirmation of the "fundamental principle" adopted in New York in October, 1784, respecting the Prayer Book. In the view of Seabury, other differences could be settled by conference, and this meeting of the Bishops, he was confident, "would promote the great object—the union of all the Churches." "May God direct us in all things," was his closing prayer. In making these fraternal overtures, Seabury was evidently influenced solely by his earnest desire for union and uniformity. He already occupied a position of absolute independence. Welcomed by the clergy and warmly supported by the laity, his Episcopal character had been recognized throughout New England, which had become, practically, his province, and through which, from Stamford and Norwalk in Connecticut, to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, he journeyed, confirming, ordaining, and setting in order the Churches owing allegiance to his office and to himself. He had exercised his Episcopate in New York in spite of the secret opposition of

the irate Provoost. Candidates for ordination from New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the Southern States had sought from him the laying on of hands. There was no dissention among his clergy; no factious opposition among his laity. The Wallingford Convocation of the Connecticut clergy, held in February of this year, resenting the affronts they deemed directed at their Bishop at the Philadelphia Convention, had determined to send one from their number to Scotland to receive consecration as coadjutor to Seabury; and Leaming and Mansfield were successively chosen to undertake this office, while on their unwillingness, in consequence of age and infirmities, to assume this responsibility, the choice fell on Jarvis, afterward to be the one to fill the place of Seabury. At the same time measures were put in train to secure in Massachusetts the election of Parker as Bishop of the Church in that State and in New Hampshire, that thus the college of Bishops in the Scottish line of succession might be complete and any necessity of union with the Churches at the southward for the consecration of Bishops in the

time to come, removed. The correspondence of this period affords abundant proof that the great body of the Churches and Churchmen of New England shared in this feeling of resentment and were ready for the initiation of measures for perpetuating the separation and antagonism which seemed inevitable. There was every prospect that there would speedily be in this country two rival Episcopal Churches, each possessing the Apostolical Succession, but at variance with each other in doctrine, in ritual, and in practises. Had Seabury listened to the urgings of his clergy at home and his correspondents both in this country and abroad, this deplorable result would have occurred. Union would soon have become impossible, and the Church in the United States—an house divided against itself—would have been at the mercy of old foes and new, each and all bent alike on its utter overthrow.

It is in this connection that we cannot fail to recognize and admire the wise conservatism, the marked self-abnegation, the patient forbearance of the first Bishop of Connecticut. He was already practically,—he might soon

have been in fact and name,—the “Primus” of the Church in New England, closely affiliated with the Scottish Communion from which its orders were derived, and reproducing at the outset of the history of the New England Episcopal Church the distinctive principles of the body whence it sprang. It was his choice rather, for the “great object” he had at heart, “the union of all the Churches,” to enter into a union in which he was to be from the start in a hopeless minority. We find him, therefore, restraining the impetuosity of his clergy and his friends and sympathizers outside of Connecticut. We find him making most friendly and courteous overtures to the Bishop of New York, who had attacked him in public and in private, and who cherished an unreasonable personal animosity towards him. He renewed again and again these efforts for union and comprehension, and at length God, who maketh men to be of one mind in an house, rewarded his self-denying, self-forgetting endeavors and made him for the last few years of his earthly life the Presiding Bishop of an united American Church.

In these efforts of Seabury for union, William White was an earnest and able seconder. Recognizing from the start the official character and the Christian courtesy of Seabury, the Bishop of Pennsylvania, while careful to secure the features of our ecclesiastical system he had formulated in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, was ever ready to further the schemes of Seabury for the comprehension of "all the Churches" in one organization comprising the Churches in every State. Without this seconding, Seabury's efforts would have been of no avail. The personal animosity of Provoost, the machinations of the able and unscrupulous William Smith, the lax Churchmanship and doctrinal unsoundness prevailing in various sections of the Church and uniting in efforts to render the Episcopal Office as powerless as possible:—all these obstacles to union were to be overcome, and in the successful struggle it was William White who contributed the most of labor and influence to secure the desired result.

It is of interest to note the hand of God hedging up the way to the completion of the

Episcopal college in the English line until, in His good time, both a disposition for union had become general and measures to effect this end were in train. The amiable and devoted Griffith, the friend of Washington, and doubtless the most worthy of the Virginia clergy, was the choice of the Convention of that State for Bishop, and his papers were favorably passed upon by the adjourned General Convention at Wilmington, in 1786.

But this excellent man found his intended journey to England hindered and finally prevented by the indifference of the parishes, leading them to withhold their contributions for its accomplishment. Even when the generous aid of William White was offered to remove this obstacle, the coldness of the clergy toward their Bishop-elect made it evident that they feared both his piety and zeal for the Church, should he ever enter upon the Episcopate to which their suffrages had called him. There followed, as appears from the unpublished correspondence of Dr. Griffith with Bishop White, a series of petty but annoying persecutions which, as detailed in these

letters, reveal a lamentable laxity in doctrine, and even in morals, existing in the Virginia Church. It is a pitiful story, and of interest alone in showing a conspiracy of ministers and members of the Episcopal Church designed to destroy the efficiency, if not the very existence, of the Episcopate, the powers of which they evidently felt would be at once exercised for their punishment.

These annoying hindrances at length wore out the patience of Griffith and wrung from him the resignation of the office he had never sought, but which he would have adorned and honored. It was not till after the death of Griffith and the return of the Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York from their successful journey to England, that the scholarly Madison, the President of William and Mary College, was chosen to the Episcopate of Virginia and sent to England to complete the college in the English line.

In Maryland, the Church, which had been the first in taking steps for organization, was now even further removed from any hope of obtaining the Episcopate than was Virginia.

The adjourned General Convention of 1786, held at Wilmington, at which the testimonials of Drs. White, Provoost and Griffith, recommending them to the English Archbishops and Bishops for consecration, had been duly signed, had refused, as we have seen, to recommend Dr. William Smith for the Episcopate. This action, taken in opposition to the plans and purposes of perhaps the foremost man in point of ability of the American Church, in consequence of a general conviction that he was far from being blameless in life and conversation, effectually prevented any further election in Maryland, as the Convention was to a large extent under the control of this unhappy man. In Delaware there was too little Church life to move in the matter of securing an Episcopal head, although among the few clergymen of this State, there was one, the Rev. Charles Henry Wharton, the first convert to true Catholicity from Romanism of the independent American Church, who was both worthy of the Episcopate, and would have adorned the office. South Carolina desired no Bishop, and the

Church in North Carolina was too feeble to attempt to secure one. It was much the same in Georgia, where the labors of the Wesleys and Whitefield had left hardly a trace behind, while in Florida the Church had ceased to exist. In New Jersey, personal controversies between the leading clergy, resulting from intrigues on the part of Uzal Ogden to obtain the Episcopate, plunged the Church into confusion and strife. It was evident that there must be means found for drawing together the Churches at the North owning Seabury as their Episcopal head, and the Churches of the Middle and Southern States which, having secured in part their desire in the introduction of the Episcopate in the English line, seemed averse to further effort in this direction, if not half-hearted in their appreciation of the gifts and grace already obtained.

The Bishop of Connecticut, in a letter to an English correspondent shortly after his overtures to Bishops White and Provoost, on their return from England, alludes to these letters as follows: "I know not what effect this overture may have. But my fears are greater

than my hopes. Everything I can fairly do to procure union and uniformity, shall certainly be done." There is no evidence that Bishop Provoost even acknowledged this courteous advance of Seabury.

Bishop White's reply is preserved to us by a copy made of its contents and forwarded by him to his friend and supporter, Parker, the rector of Trinity Church, Boston, among whose correspondence it was found. In this characteristic letter Bishop White begins with the assurance that "there is nothing" he has "more at heart than to see the members of our Communion throughout the United States connected in one system of Ecclesiastical government." He professed his readiness to make the proposed journey for "the accomplishment of this great object," but added that he thought it "best previously to understand one another, as to the views of the Churches in which we respectively preside." With this purpose in view, Bishop White submits the following paragraph, which we quote in full:—

"We have been informed (but perhaps it is a mistake) that the Bishop and Clergy of Connecti-

cut think our proposed Ecclesiastical Constitution essentially wrong in the leading parts of it. As the general principles on which it is founded were maturely considered and compared with the maxims which prevail in the ecclesiastical system of England; as they have received the approbation of all the Conventions southward of you, and of one to the northward;* as they were not objected to by the Archbishops and Bishops of the English Church, and as they are generally thought among us essential to the giving effect to future Ecclesiastical measures, I do not expect to find the Churches in many of the States willing to associate on any plan materially differing from this. If our brethren in Connecticut should be of opinion that the giving of any share of the legislative power of the Church to others than those of the Episcopal order is inconsistent with Episcopal government, and that the requiring of the consent of the laity to Ecclesiastical laws is an invasion of clerical rights,—in this case, I see no prospect of doing good in any other way than

* Bishop White here refers to Massachusetts, the Convention of which at first showed a willingness to follow the lead of the Southern and Middle States, but on the return to America of Seabury with Episcopal powers, at once transferred its allegiance to him.

contributing all in my power to promote a spirit of love and peace between us; although I shall continue to cultivate the hope of our being brought, at some future day, to an happy agreement."

With reference to the return to the English Prayer Book, which would necessarily involve the rejection of the Proposed Book, Bishop White expressed himself at length as follows:

"As to the Liturgy, if it should be thought advisable by the general body of our Church to adhere to the English Book of Common Prayer (the political parts excepted), I shall be one of the first, after the appearance of such a disposition, to comply with it most punctually. Further than this, if it should seem the most probable way of maintaining an agreement among ourselves, I shall use my best endeavours to effect it. At the same time, I must candidly confess my opinion, that the review of the liturgy would tend very much to the satisfaction of most of the members of our Communion, and to its future success and prosperity. The worst evil which I apprehend from a refusal to review is this, that it will give a great advantage to those who wish to carry the alterations into essential points of doctrine. Re-

vised it will unquestionably be in some places, and the only way to prevent its being done by men of the above description is the taking it up as a general business. I have been informed that you, Sir, and our brethren in Connecticut think a review expedient, although you wish not to be in haste in the matter. Our brethren in Massachusetts have already done it. The Churches in the States southward of you have sufficiently declared their sentiments; for even those which have delayed permitting the use of the new book, did it merely on the principle of the want of the Episcopal order among them."

This important letter, itself a most important contribution to the hastening union of the Churches, concluded as follows:—

"If we should be of a different opinion in any matter, I hope we shall be so candid as mutually to think it consistent with the best intentions and a sincere desire to promote the interests of our holy religion. This justice you have always received from * * * WILLIAM WHITE."

At the very time when this letter was written, the Virginia Convention was debating the proposition that Bishops White and Provoost should be asked to unite with the

Bishop of Connecticut in consecrating Dr. Griffith, thus rendering unnecessary the expense and delay of a voyage to England for this purpose. This project, after discussion, was decided to be "impracticable," and the Standing Committee was instructed to request Bishops White and Provoost, or *either* of them, to consecrate a Bishop for Virginia. It was the conviction of Dr. Griffith that the question of expense was not the real reason for resorting to this expedient. It was, he writes to Bishop White, the "wish to prevent, if possible, the introduction of a Bishop into the State." That this was the purpose of those who were active in their opposition to the consecration of the excellent Griffith is evident from their further procedure. They proposed "such alterations in the Canons as would deprive the Bishop of the right of judging of the qualifications of candidates for Orders," and would "even compel him to ordain such as were offered by any two Presbyters though himself should not approve of them." They proceeded "to assert the equality of Bishops and Presbyters in primitive

times," and made attempts to deprive the Bishop of his "right of precedency in Ecclesiastical assemblies." "What more," writes the astonished Griffith, "could the most zealous Presbyterian have proposed to abolish all distinction in the Orders of the Ministry, and overturn the Episcopal Church?" In view of difficulties in the way of his success, and fearing that the triumph of "the junto of innovators" would destroy the Church, Griffith "determined to persevere, considering it absolutely necessary for the defence and furtherance of the Episcopal Church in Virginia" that a Bishop should be at its head. Still, the requisite means for the voyage to England were not forth-coming. Various schemes for supplying this lack were proposed and abandoned. There was, as Griffith sorrowfully admits, "indifference in this part of the world towards everything connected with religion."

The application of the Standing Committee of Virginia to the Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York for the consecration of their Bishop-elect met with a prompt refusal. De-

spairing of the completion of the Episcopal college in the English line, Bishop White, a few weeks later, under date of July 5, 1787, wrote to the rector of Trinity Church, Boston, the Rev. Samuel Parker, as follows:

“I wish most sincerely that Massachusetts would unite with us, and choose a person for consecration; not merely as it would tend to cement the Church throughout the whole continent, but because it would add to the wisdom of our determinations whenever a General Convention shall be held for the final settlement of our Ecclesiastical system.”

In pursuance of these new plans the Bishop of Pennsylvania entered into correspondence with the venerable Jeremiah Leaming, himself twice tendered by the suffrages of his brethren an election to the Episcopal office. Leaming had been active in the measures already taken by the Connecticut clergy to induce Parker to seek consecration in Scotland and thus, with Jarvis as coadjutor to Seabury, complete the Episcopal college in the Scottish line. Already Leaming had renewed his approaches to Parker to accept the Episcopate, but the

reply was prompt and decisive: "In answer to the latter part of your letter, I can only say two words, *Nolo Episcopari.*" In replying to Bishop White's advances, Leaming urged a speedy conference of the three Bishops, Seabury, White, and Provoost. He claimed that the Church of England was the "best model" for imitation and denied the right of man to alter "the being and constitution of a Christian Church," of which the faith, the ordinances and officers were, in his judgment, "divine." "The Church in this State," he proceeds, "would be pleased to have the old forms altered as little as may be; but for the sake of a union they will comply as far as they possibly can." Parker, in reply to the letter from Bishop White to which we have already referred, added to his statement that "nothing will be determined in this state respecting a bishop till we see how matters are settled between you and the Bishop of Connecticut," the inquiry as to the prospect of Dr. Griffith's obtaining consecration, and whether, in the event of an election in Massachusetts, the Southern Bishops would unite with Seabury

in the act of consecration. The correspondence between Bishop White and Leaming continued. The aged Connecticut Priest wrote with singular insistence to Bishop White, "You are the only person who can prepare the way to effect this scheme." The personal opposition of the Bishop of New York to Seabury,—arising from political grounds,—seemed now the chief hindrance in the way of that friendly conference of the Bishops which it was thought by all would result in a speedy return to unity. It was at this juncture that a new obstacle was revealed. It is stated, in the reply of Bishop White to the inquiry made by Parker, in these words:

"I will be very explicit with you on the questions you put in regard to a union with Bishop Seabury, and the consecration of Dr. Griffith. On the one hand, considering it was presumed that a third was to go over to England;—that the institutions of the Church in that country require three to join in the Consecration;—and that the political situation of the English prelates prevents their official knowledge of Dr. Seabury as a Bishop, I am apprehensive it may seem a breach

of faith towards them, if not intended deception in us, were we to consecrate without the usual number of three, all under the English succession, although it would not be inconsistent with this idea, that another gentleman, under a different succession should be joined with us. On the other hand, I am most sincerely desirous of seeing our Church throughout these States united in *one* Ecclesiastical Legislature, and I think that any difficulties which have heretofore seemed in the way might be removed by mutual forbearance. If there are any further difficulties than those I allude to, of difference in opinion, they do not exist with me; and I shall always be ready to do what lies in my power, to bring all to an agreement."

It was thus, and in these words, that the ecclesiastical statesman of Philadelphia laid down the plan on which alone the union so greatly desired could be expected, and with prophetic insight indicated the measures which would eventually result in the accomplishment of this desire.

The condition of Church affairs in New Jersey, in Maryland, and in Virginia, so far from showing signs of improvement, grew

from bad to worse. In New Jersey, the excellent Dr. Beach, who had been foremost in seconding the efforts of White for the organization of the American Church, was prevented from receiving an election to the Episcopal office by the cabals of Uzal Ogden; who, some years later, when his ambitious schemes for his own election were defeated, took refuge in the Presbyterian Communion, to the great relief of the New Jersey Church. In Maryland, Dr. Smith, though failing to secure the recommendation of the General Convention at Wilmington, still insisted on his election, and for a time effectually prevented another choice. In Virginia, as we have seen, the indifference of the clergy and congregations left Dr. Griffith without the means for the voyage to England and proved conclusively that no Bishop at all was wanted by the Church at large in that State. There came, indeed, from across the ocean an expression of willingness on the part of a former clergyman of Pennsylvania then resident in London, to undertake for a time the Episcopate of New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland,

with a view to complete the Episcopal college in the English line. But this proposition failed to commend itself to either the Bishop of New York or to Bishop White, although the self-offered candidate was a reputable and dignified clergyman, and his proposition was undoubtedly kindly meant to extricate the two Bishops from an evidently unpleasant dilemma. At length Dr. Griffith formally abandoned the purpose he had entertained of proceeding to England for consecration, and as Bishops White and Provoost felt under obligations to the Archbishop of Canterbury not to proceed to consecrate until the number of three consecrations in the English line was complete, the Bishop-elect of Virginia placed his resignation of the office to which he had been elected in the hands of the proper authorities in Virginia. Shortly afterwards, when at the house of Bishop White in Philadelphia, in attendance at the first Convention of 1789, this good man died, to the universal regret of all who knew him.

Under these untoward circumstances the tireless White turned his attention again to

Massachusetts. Writing to Parker he inquired "whether our brethren of Massachusetts are determined still to keep at a distance from us, or whether they will meet us in Convention next July?" Assurances were added of an "accommodating spirit" on the part of the Churchmen whom White represented. It was urged that "of the Southern States it is evident that the Church is not sufficiently numerous, in some of them, to encourage their choosing a Bishop; while, in others, there are very particular circumstances preventing such a measure." Even if Dr. Griffith were enabled to proceed to England for consecration, "the business would be imperfect, unless there was at least a fourth ready against his return." The "respectability of the Church in Massachusetts" warranted, he judged, his "looking to them in this business." The Bishop adds, "I have formerly expressed to you another reason for my wishing you with us; and the reason still exists:—the effecting of a junction with our brethren of Connecticut."

The Bishop proceeded to enforce his posi-

tion by adding:—"It must be considered by all as a surprising instance of negligence in our Church,—her not availing herself of the present opportunity of obtaining the entire and independent possession of that Episcopacy which she had so long complained of the want of." Blaming the "brethren of Virginia" most of all, he claimed that when their indifference had shown that there was no dependence to be placed on them "it should have been taken up elsewhere."

The minds of all Churchmen were now turning towards union, save perhaps the Bishop of New York, who wrote Bishop White as late as February 24, 1890, as follows:

"An invitation to the Church in that State (Connecticut) to meet us in General Convention, I conceive to be neither necessary nor proper—not necessary, because I am informed that they have already appointed two persons to attend the next General Convention without any invitation—not proper, because it is publicly known that they have adopted a form of Church government which renders them inadmissible as members of the Convention or union."

Parker of Boston, in his reply to Bishop White, promised to make the attempt in the coming spring to carry out the wishes of his correspondent. He urged "that a union might take place even if the Constitutions of government and the liturgy varied a little in the different states." He thought agreement in "the general principles of discipline and worship" enough to secure unity. He called attention to the removal of the civil disabilities of the Scottish prelates, which had indirectly grown out of their action in consecrating Bishop Seabury, as also removing "one bar to a reconciliation with Bishop Seabury." The question of the admission of the laity to a share in Church government might be left to the respective Churches. "For my own part," he writes, "I am not of the opinion that the Church of England is entirely free from lay government, and I am still more of the opinion that a Church existing under such Constitutions of civil government as are adopted in the United States, especially where it has no funds of its own to support its officers, can never flourish without yielding to

the laity, who hold the purse-strings, a share in the government." Quoting from a recent letter of Bishop Seabury's, he concludes: "Here certainly appears a disposition to unity; where, then, is the impediment?"

Ere this wise and temperate letter had been received, Bishop White had written to Bishop Seabury cordially inviting him, with representatives of the Connecticut Church, to attend the approaching Convention in Philadelphia, on terms honorable to both parties. This overture was met in the spirit which prompted it, and the Bishop of Connecticut, in an hurried note to Mr. Parker, under date of April 10, 1789, announces his determination to "send two clergymen to the Philadelphia Convention to see whether an union can be effected."

On the eve of this meeting of the first General Convention of 1789, Bishop Seabury addressed a long and carefully prepared communication to Bishop White. This letter was written after consultation with the clergy and with the leading laity of Connecticut. The latter had been convened "to provide

for the support of their Bishop and to consider of the practicability of instituting an Episcopal Academy." The clergy met in convocation in June, and the great questions now occupying the minds of Churchmen throughout the land were considered by these two representative bodies of the Connecticut Church. The laity "declined every interference in Church government or reformation of liturgies. They supposed the government of the Church to be fixed, and that they had no right to alter it by introducing a new power into it. They hoped the old liturgy would be retained; and these matters, they thought, belonged to the Bishops and clergy and not to them. They therefore could send no delegates, though they wished for unity among the Churches, and for uniformity of worship; but could not see why these great objects could not be better secured on the old ground than on the new."

The clergy supposed that under the Constitution of 1785 any representation from Connecticut of the clerical order alone would be inadmissible. In this judgment they were

undoubtedly correct. At the Wilmington Convention, in October, 1786, Maryland, represented only by the Rev. Dr. William Smith, had been denied representation and a vote. The Connecticut clergy further asserted that they could not “submit to offer themselves to make part of any meeting where the authority of their Bishop had been disputed by one Bishop”—Provoost of New York—and probably through his influence “by a number of others who were to compose that meeting.” They deemed themselves “excluded till this point shall have been settled to their satisfaction.”

For his own part, Bishop Seabury wrote that he would gladly “contribute to the union and uniformity of all our Churches,” but while Bishop Provoost disputed the validity of his consecration he could “take no step toward the accomplishment of so great and desirable an object.” This point, he thought, was now in such a state that it must be settled either by the approaching Convention or “by an appeal to the good sense of the Christian world.” As a matter in which he was personally concerned, he refused to discuss it, “hop-

ing that the candor and good sense of the Convention will render the further mention of it altogether unnecessary."

Bishop Seabury referred in passing to the implied obligation resting on Bishops White and Provoost to complete the succession in the English line ere uniting with him in the consecration of a fourth Bishop for America. He did not presume to dictate in this matter, but he felt that he could not but wish it were otherwise. He left it to Dr. White's "good sense," only hoping that the Bishop and the Convention would "deliberately consider whether the implied obligation in England and the wishes" of the Middle and Southern Churches should "be so strong that they must not give way to the prospect of securing the peace and unity of the Church."

In this carefully considered and temperate communication, evidently intended by the writer as the *ultimatum* of the Church at the North, Bishop Seabury proceeded to state the objections that obtained in Connecticut against the proposed Constitution of 1785. The inclusion of the lay delegates in Conven-

tion as “part of a *judicial* consistory for the trial and deprivation of Clergymen,” was regarded at the North as “a new power, utterly unknown in all Episcopal Churches, and inconsistent with their Constitution.” It was felt that it could not fail to be “a source of oppression.” It was thought that it would “operate as a clog on the due exercise of ecclesiastical authority.” If the powers with which the lay delegates were invested in their proposed Constitution were, as was claimed, “conformable to the sentiments of some of our best writers,” the Bishop professed himself ignorant of the fact and desired to know to “what writers” he was to look for “conviction and information on this point.” With reference to the accord of the proposed plan to “the principles which have governed in the English Church,” he had “always understood that the Liturgy, and Canons, and Articles, were settled and agreed upon by the Convocation, and were then, by Act of Parliament, made part of the Constitution.” He was not “aware that the laity had anything further to do with it.”

The Bishop corrected the misapprehension of his correspondent respecting the course of the Massachusetts and Rhode Island clergy. In neither State had the proposed Constitution been adopted. The proposed liturgy "with but little variation" had been introduced by Mr. Parker in Boston, and possibly by the other Congregation there, but the Bishop was not aware that this "was done elsewhere." "An attempt to introduce it into Newport," the Bishop judged, had "laid the foundation for such dissensions in that congregation" as would "long continue." The Proposed Book was also reviewed in this interesting and important letter. The Bishop deemed "the mutilating the Psalms" an "unwarrantable liberty, and such as was never before taken with Holy Scripture by any Church." It destroys," proceeds the Bishop, "that beautiful chain of prophecy that runs through them and turns their application from Messiah and His Church to the temporal state and concerns of individuals."

"By discarding the word Absolution, and making no mention of Regeneration in Bap-

tism," it seemed to the Bishop "to give up those points and to open the door to error and delusion." "The excluding of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds," he proceeded, had "alarmed the steady friends of our Church lest the doctrine of Christ's Divinity should go out with it."

"If the doctrine of these Creeds be offensive, we are sorry for it, and shall hold ourselves so much the more bound to retain them. If what are called the damnatory clauses in the latter be the objection, cannot these clauses be supported by Scripture? Whether they can or cannot, why not discard those clauses and retain the doctrinal part of the Creed? The leaving out *the descent into hell* from the Apostles' Creed seems to be of dangerous consequence. Have we a right to alter the analogy of faith handed down to us by the Holy Catholic Church. And if we do alter it, how will it appear that we are the same Church which subsisted in primitive times. * * The Apostles' Creed seems to have been the Creed of the Western Church; the Nicene of the Eastern; and the Athanasian, to be designed to ascertain the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, against all opposers. And it has always appeared to me that

the design of the Church of England in retaining the three Creeds was to show that she did retain the analogy of the Catholic faith, in common with the Eastern and Western Church, and in opposition to those who denied the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Divine essence. Why any departure should be made from this good and pious example, I am yet to find."

"Our regard for primitive practice makes us exceedingly grieved that you have not absolutely retained the sign of the Cross in Baptism. When I consider the practice of the ancient Church before Popery had a being, I cannot think the Church of England justifiable in giving up the sign of the Cross where it was retained by the first Prayer Book of Edward the VI. Her motive may have been good, but good motives will not justify wrong actions. The concessions she has made in giving up several primitive, and I suppose, apostolical usages, to gratify the humours of fault-finding men, shows the inefficacy of such conduct. She has learned wisdom from her experiences. Why should not we also take a lesson in her school? If the humour be pursued of giving up points on every demand, in fifty years we shall scarce have the name of Christianity left. For God's sake, my dear sir, let us remember that

it is the particular business of the Bishops of Christ's Church to preserve it pure and undefiled, in faith and practice, according to the model left by apostolic practice. And may God give you grace and courage to act accordingly."

Excepting to the burial office, where "the hope of a future resurrection to eternal life is too faintly expressed," and the "acknowledgement of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection, seems to be entirely thrown out," and noticing that "the Articles seem to be altered to little purpose," there follows the Bishop's criticism on the Eucharistic office:—

"That the most exceptionable part of the English book is the Communion office, may be proved by a number of very respectable names among her clergy. The grand fault in that office is the deficiency of a more formal oblation of the elements, and of the invocation of the Holy Ghost to sanctify and bless them. The consecration is made to consist merely in the Priest's laying his hands on the elements and pronouncing, '*This is My Body,*' etc., which words are not consecration at all, nor were they addressed by Christ to the Father, but were declarative to the Apostles.

This is so exactly symbolizing with the Church of Rome in an error—an error, too, on which the absurdity of Transubstantiation is built,—that nothing but having fallen into the same error themselves, could have prevented the enemies of the Church from casting it in her teeth. The efficacy of Baptism, of Confirmation, of Orders, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and His energy is implored for that purpose; and why He should not be invoked in the consecration of the Eucharist, especially as all the old liturgies are full to the point, I cannot conceive. It is much easier to account for the alterations of the first liturgy of Edward the VI. than to justify them, and as I have been told, there is a vote on the minutes of your Convention, *anno* 1786, I believe, for the revision of this matter. I hope it will be taken up, and that God will raise up some able and worthy advocate for this primitive practice, and make you and the Convention the instruments of restoring it to the Church in America. It would do you more honour in the world, and contribute more to the union of the Churches, than any other alterations you can make, and would restore the Holy Eucharist to its ancient dignity and efficacy.”

Renewing his former proposition of a meeting of the three Bishops with proctors of their

respective clergy, in which all would meet “on equal ground” and “everything might be settled to mutual satisfaction” “without the preposterous method of ascertaining doctrines, etc., etc., by a majority of votes,” the Bishop in conclusion expressed the hope “that all obstructions may be removed,” and besought “Almighty God to direct us in the great work of establishing and building up His Church in peace and unity, truth and charity, and purity.” In a postscript he added:—

“That the assent of the laity should be given to the laws which affect them equally with the clergy, I think is right, and I believe, will be disputed nowhere, and the rights of the laity we have no disposition to invade.”

A similar letter was addressed by Bishop Seabury to the Rev. Dr. Smith. It expressed the Bishop's conviction of the necessity of the union of all the Churches and the disadvantages of the present disunion, and added: “I have, however, the strongest hope that all difficulties will be removed by your Convention,—that the Connecticut Episcopacy will

be explicitly acknowledged, and that Church enabled to join in union with you without giving up her own independency."

At the meeting of the General Convention of the Church in the Middle and Southern States at Philadelphia, July, 1789, a letter from the Rev. Samuel Parker of Boston, enclosing a formal request from the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire to the Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York to unite with the Bishop of Connecticut in the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass of Newburyport, their Bishop-elect, demanded immediate attention. This measure, as we are informed by Bishop White, was set on foot by the energetic Parker, and, as it appears in the sequel, was not so much intended to bring about Mr. Bass' consecration as, by the presentation of a case in point, to effect that union which was now the desire of the great body of Churchmen throughout the land. The prospect that this election of Mr. Bass might bring about this result had not escaped the vigilant eyes of Bishop Provoost of New York; and the attempt was made by

perhaps the most prominent layman of Massachusetts, Dudley Atkins Tyng, a parishioner of Mr. Bass', to interest the various vestries of Massachusetts and New Hampshire in opposition to Mr. Bass' consecration. It required the most determined and painstaking effort on the part of Parker to counteract this opposition and to prevent its success. It was by his judicious measures and explanations that the growing discontent was allayed; and on the third day of the session of General Convention in Philadelphia, there was laid before the body by the Rev. Dr. White, the formal action of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire clergy.

The Act of the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, recommending the Rev. Edward Bass for consecration, began with these words:—

“The good Providence of Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, having lately blessed the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America by supplying it with a complete and entire ministry, and affording to many of her communion the benefit of the labors, advice, and government of the successors of the Apostles:

“We Presbyters of said Church in the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, deeply impressed with the most lively gratitude to the Supreme Governor of the universe for His goodness in this respect; and with the most ardent love to His Church and concern for the interest of her sons, that they may enjoy all the means that Christ the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls has instituted for leading His followers into the ways of truth and holiness, and preserving His Church in the unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace, to the end that the people committed to our respective charges may enjoy the benefit and advantage of those offices, the administration of which belongs to the highest Order of the Ministry, and to encourage and promote, as far as in us lies, a union of the whole Episcopal Church in these States, and to perfect and compact this mystical body of Christ—do hereby nominate, elect and appoint the Rev. Edward Bass, a Presbyter of said Church and rector of St. Paul’s in Newburyport, to be our Bishop; and we do promise and engage to receive him as such, when canonically consecrated and invested with the Apostolic office and powers by the Right Reverend the Bishops hereafter named, and to render him all that canonical obedience and submission which,

by the laws of Christ and the Constitution of our Church, is due to so important an office.”

This wordy paragraph is followed by the request addressed to the Bishops of Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, “praying their united assistance in consecrating our said Brother, and canonically investing him with the Apostolic office and powers.”

Parker was further made the agent of the five clergymen, of which number he was one, who participated in this election, “to appear at any Convocation to be holden at Pennsylvania or New York, and to treat upon any measures that may tend to promote an union of the Episcopal Church throughout the United States of America, or that may prove advantageous to the interests of the said Church.”

In this connection, as appears from the *Journal*, a letter was read from the Right Reverend Dr. Seabury, Bishop of the Church in Connecticut, to Bishop White, and one from the same gentleman to the Reverend Dr. Smith.

On reading these letters, as it appeared that

the Bishop of Connecticut “lay under some misapprehension concerning an entry in the minutes of a former Convention, it was at once resolved unanimously, that it is the opinion of this Convention that the consecration of the Right Reverend Dr. Seabury to the Episcopal office, is valid.”

The request of the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire was now considered in the committee of the whole from day to day until Wednesday, August 30, when five resolutions reported in committee, adopted, and afterwards unanimously agreed to by the Convention, affirmed the existence in the United States of America of “a complete order of bishops as well under the English as the Scottish line of Episcopacy,” specifying these prelates as the Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Bishop of New York, and the Bishop of Connecticut.

It was further affirmed that these three Bishops were fully competent to every proper act and duty of the Episcopal office and character in the United States, “such as the consecration of other Bishops and the ordering of Priests and Deacons” and “the government

of the Church according to such canons, rules, and institutions as now are or hereafter may be duly made and ordained by the Church in that case." In conclusion it was urged that Christian charity, as well as duty, necessity and expediency, required the Churches represented in this Convention to contribute in every manner in their power towards supplying the wants, and granting the requests, of their sister Churches in these States.

It was determined by the Convention to address the English Bishops with a view to securing relief for the Bishops of Pennsylvania and New York from the obligation they felt themselves under to await the consecration of a third Bishop in the English line ere proceeding to the consecration of a Bishop in America.

This address to the English prelates recited in full the action of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire clergy, the resolutions adopted by the Convention, adding extracts of a letter from Parker, in which he said: "The clergy of this state are very desirous of seeing an union of the whole Episcopal Church in the United

States take place, and it will remain with our brethren at the southward to say whether this shall be the case or not—whether we shall be an united or divided Church;”—and portions of the letters of Seabury to which we have already made reference. Bishop White accompanied the address with a personal letter to the Archbishop urging a favorable consideration of the prayer of the Convention, and adding that “all my endeavors have tended to the union with our Eastern brethren, still in consistency with the completing of the succession from England.”

Letters from Dr. Smith, and from the Committees of the Convention, as well as from Bishop White individually, pressed strongly upon the Bishop of Connecticut the wish of all that he should attend the adjourned meeting in October. On receipt of the official invitation, Seabury, in a letter to White, at once announced his determination to accept. Provoost, who had not been present at the meeting in July and August, addressing his brother of Pennsylvania on the same day, expressed his unabated opposition to the proposed union,

in favor of which his own delegates had been unanimous.

The consideration of the request of the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire for the consecration of Mr. Bass was not the only subject that engrossed the attention of the first session of the Convention of 1789. Even before the "Act of the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire" had been brought formally to the notice of the meeting, a "Committee consisting of one deputy from each State," had been appointed to take into consideration the proposed constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and to recommend such alterations, additions, and amendments as they shall think necessary and proper.* After two days' deliberation, this committee, through the Rev. Dr. William Smith, "reported a Constitution."† After a first and second reading, the proposed Constitution was "debated by paragraphs," and it was then

Resolved, that the first, second, fourth, fifth,

* Perry's *Reprint of the Early Journals*, I., pp. 69, 70.

† *Ibid.*, p. 72.

sixth, seventh and eighth articles be adopted, and stand in this order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; that they be a rule of conduct for this convention; and that the remaining articles be postponed for the future consideration of this convention.”

At the close of a week, during which measures had been taken providing for the healing of differences and the bringing together of long-parted men, “the Convention took into consideration the two Articles of the Constitution which had been postponed, and which they amended and agreed to.” The Constitution was then ordered to be engrossed, and on the following day it was signed by Bishop White, and the deputies, both clerical and lay, from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina. This constitution was as follows:—

A GENERAL CONSTITUTION OF THE PROTESTANT
EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.

ARTICLE I. There shall be a General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America on the first Tuesday of August, in the year of our Lord, 1792, and on the

first Tuesday of August in every third year afterwards, in such place as shall be determined by the Convention; and special meetings may be called at other times, in the manner hereafter to be provided for; and this Church, in a majority of States which shall have adopted this Constitution, shall be represented, before they shall proceed to business, except that the representation from two States shall be sufficient to adjourn; and in all business of the Convention freedom of debate shall be allowed.

ART. 2. The Church in each State shall be entitled to a representation of both the Clergy and the Laity, which representation shall consist of one or more Deputies, not exceeding four of each Order, chosen by the Convention of the State; and in all questions, when required by the Clerical or Lay representation from any State, each Order shall have one vote; and the majority of suffrages by States shall be conclusive in each Order, provided such majority comprehend a majority of the States represented in that Order. The concurrence of both Orders shall be necessary to constitute a vote of the Convention. If the Convention of any State should neglect or decline to appoint Clerical Deputies, or if they should neglect or decline to appoint Lay Deputies, or if any of those of either

Order appointed should neglect to attend, or be prevented by sickness or any other accident, such State shall nevertheless be considered as duly represented by such Deputy or Deputies as may attend, whether Lay or Clerical. And if, through the neglect of the Convention of any of the Churches which shall have adopted, or may hereafter adopt this Constitution, no Deputies, either Lay or Clerical, should attend at any General Convention, the Church in such State shall nevertheless be bound by the acts of such Convention.

ART. 3. The Bishops of this Church, when there shall be three or more, shall, whenever General Conventions are held, form a House of revision; and when any proposed act shall have passed in the General Convention, the same shall be transmitted to the House of revision for their concurrence. And if the same shall be sent back to the Convention, with the negative or non-concurrence of the House of revision, it shall be again considered in the General Convention, and if the Convention shall adhere to the said act, by a majority of three-fifths of their body, it shall become a law to all intents and purposes, notwithstanding the non-concurrence of the House of revision; and all acts of the Convention shall be authenticated by both Houses. And in all cases,

the House of Bishops shall signify to the Convention their approbation or disapprobation, the latter with their reasons in writing, within two days after the proposed act shall have been reported to them for concurrence; and in failure thereof, it shall have the operation of a law. But until there shall be three or more Bishops, as aforesaid, any Bishop attending a General Convention shall be a member *ex officio*, and shall vote with the Clerical Deputies of the State to which he belongs. And a Bishop shall then preside.

ART. 4. The Bishop or Bishops in every State shall be chosen agreeably to such rules, as shall be fixed by the Convention of that State: And every Bishop of this Church shall confine the exercise of his Episcopal Office to his proper Diocese or District, unless requested to ordain, or confirm, or perform any other act of the Episcopal Office, by any Church destitute of a Bishop.

ART. 5. A Protestant Episcopal Church in any of the United States, not now represented, may, at any time hereafter, be admitted, on acceding to this Constitution.

ART. 6. In every State, the mode of trying Clergymen shall be instituted by the Convention of the Church therein. At every trial of a Bishop,

there shall be one or more of the Episcopal Order present; and none but a Bishop shall pronounce sentence of deposition or degradation from the Ministry on any Clergyman, whether Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon.

ART. 7. No person shall be admitted to Holy Orders, until he shall have been examined by the Bishop, and by two Presbyters, and shall have exhibited such testimonials and other requisites, as the Canons, in that case provided, may direct. Nor shall any person be ordained until he shall have subscribed the following declaration:—

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation: and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrines and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States.

No person ordained by a foreign Bishop shall be permitted to officiate as a Minister of this Church, until he shall have complied with the Canon or Canons in that case provided, and have also subscribed the aforesaid Declaration.

ART. 8. A Book of Common Prayer, Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, Articles of Religion, and a Form and Manner of making, ordaining and consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons, when

established by this or a future General Convention, shall be used in the Protestant Episcopal Church in these States which shall have adopted this Constitution.

ART. 9. This Constitution shall be unalterable, unless in General Convention, by the Church in a majority of the States, which may have adopted the same; and all alterations shall be first proposed in one General Convention, and made known to the several State Conventions, before they shall be finally agreed to or ratified in the ensuing General Convention.

In General Convention, in Christ Church, Philadelphia, August the 8th, One thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

At the adjourned Convention, which met on the 29th of September, and continued in session until the 16th of October, Bishop Seabury, with clerical deputies representing Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, were in attendance. The Convention of July and August had appointed a committee to notify the Bishop of Connecticut, and the "Eastern and other Churches not included in this union," of the time and place of the adjourned session, and to "request their atten-

dance at the same, for the good purposes of union and general government." This committee, consisting of the Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Rev. Drs. William Smith and Samuel Magaw, and Messrs. Francis Hopkinson and Tench Coxe, in their letter of invitation, assured Bishop Seabury "that nothing hath been left unattempted" which was deemed "conducive, either towards the basis or superstructure of an union, so seemly and needful in itself, and so ardently desired by all." The letter proceeded as follows:—

By the *second* Article of our printed Constitution (as now amended), you will observe that your first and chief difficulty respecting Lay representation is wholly removed, upon the good and wise principles admitted by you as well as by us, viz.: "That there may be a strong and efficacious union between Churches, where the usages are in some respects different." It was long so in the different dioceses in England.

By the Article of our Constitution above mentioned, the admission of yours and the other Eastern Churches is provided for upon *your own principles of representation*; while our Churches are

not required to make any sacrifice of theirs; it being declared—

That the Church in each State shall be *entitled* to a representation either of Clergy or Laity or of both. And in case the Convention [or Church] of any State should neglect or decline to appoint their deputies, of either order; or if it should be their rule to appoint only out of one order; or if any of those appointed should neglect to attend, or be prevented by sickness, or any other accident, the Church in such State, (district or diocese) shall, nevertheless, be considered as duly represented by such deputy or deputies as may attend of either order.

Here, then, every case is intended to be provided for, and experience will either demonstrate that *an efficacious union* may be had upon these principles; or mutual good-will, and a further reciprocation of sentiments will eventually lead to a more perfect uniformity of discipline as well as of doctrine.

(The representation in those States where the Church appoints clerical deputies only, or chooses to be wholly represented by its bishop, will be considered as complete; and as it cannot be supposed that the clergy will ever neglect to avail themselves of their voice and negative, in every

ecclesiastical decision, so neither can the laity complain in those States where they claim no representation, and still less where they are declared to have a voice, and claim a representation, but neglect to avail themselves of their claim; which latter is too likely to be the case in some of the States within our present union, where it is difficult to procure any lay representation, although earnestly solicited by some of the clergy, who are fully sensible of the advantages derived to our former conventions, from the wise and temperate counsels, and the respectable countenance and assistance of our lay-members.)*

It was with these views and this understanding that the Churches of New England were represented at the adjourned Convention of 1789. The Convention respectfully listened to the reading of Bishop Seabury's "Letters of Consecration to the holy office of a Bishop in this Church,"† and immediately in a committee of the whole considered the sub-

* From the original draft in Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, pp. 405, 406.

† This is the language of the official journal of the Convention.—*Vide*. Perry's *Reprint of the Early Journals*, Vol. 1., p. 93.

ject of the proposed union. The Bishop of Connecticut and the deputies from New England stipulated that the third Article of the Constitution should be "so modified as to declare explicitly the right of the Bishops when sitting as a separate House, to originate and propose acts for the concurrence of the other House of Convention, and to negative such acts proposed by the other House as they may disapprove." The committee of conference with the Eastern deputies, under the chairmanship of Dr. William Smith, reported that the proposed alteration was "desirable in itself," and after consideration the third Article was modified as follows:

ART. 3. The Bishops of this Church, when there shall be three or more, shall, whenever General Conventions are held, form a separate House, with a right to originate and propose acts for the concurrence of the House of Deputies, composed of Clergy and Laity; and when any proposed act shall have passed the House of Deputies, the same shall be transmitted to the House of Bishops, who shall have a negative thereupon, unless adhered to by four-fifths of the other House; and all acts

of the Convention shall be authenticated by both Houses. And, in all cases, the House of Bishops shall signify to the Convention their approbation or disapprobation, the latter, with their reasons in writing, within three days after the proposed act shall have been reported to them for concurrence; and in failure thereof, it shall have the operation of a law. But until there shall be three or more Bishops as aforesaid, any Bishop attending a General Convention, shall be a member *ex officio*, and shall vote with the Clerical Deputies of the Diocese to which he belongs; and a Bishop shall then preside.

It was further "*Resolved*, that it be made known to the several State conventions, that it is proposed to consider and determine, in the next general convention, on the propriety of investing the house of bishops with a full negative upon the proceedings of the other house."

As soon as this was done the "General Constitution of the Church, as now altered and amended," was "laid before the Right Rev. Dr. Seabury, and the Deputies from the Churches in the Eastern States, for their approbation and assent."*

* Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, p. 415.

This assent was cordially given. The House of Bishops was at once constituted; Bishop Seabury, by virtue of his seniority of consecration, being the first "Presiding Bishop" thereof and of the American Church.

Bishop White informs us: "that from the sentiments expressed in the debate, there is reason to believe that the full negative would have been allowed, had not Mr. Andrews,* from Virginia, very seriously and doubtless very sincerely, expressed his apprehension, that it was so far beyond what was expected by the Church in his State, as would cause the measure to be there disowned."† In the compromise which was adopted, Bishop Seabury and the deputies from New England "acquiesced but reluctantly." The truth was, as Bishop White informs us, that "they thought that the form of ecclesiastical Government could hardly be called Episcopal while such a matter

*Mr. Robert Andrews, recorded as a lay deputy to the Convention of 1789, was a secularized priest of the Church, who, on discontinuing the ministry, had pursued the vocation of a Professor in the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, Va.

† *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 146.

was held out as speculatively possible." In 1808 the words "unless adhered to by four-fifths of the other House" were stricken out.* Thus the Episcopal veto was secured. In the language of Dr. Hawks, "to Bishop Seabury belongs the merit of having made the Bishops an equal and coördinate power in the work of our ecclesiastical legislation. Instead of a mere council of revision, he made the Bishops a senate, or upper house, holding their places for life; thus most effectually upholding, as was proper, the dignity and respectability of the Bishops, giving more stability to the legislation of the great council of the Church and guarding against the dangers of enactments, made hastily under temporary excitement."†

The union of the Churches, as we have seen, was not effected until radical changes had been made in the General Ecclesiastical Constitution as proposed in 1785 and amended in 1786. The right of a Bishop to preside at meetings of Convention as originally provided by White in his draft of the Constitution of

* *Memoirs of the Church*, p. 146.

† Constitution and Canons, p. 24.

1785 was affirmed in 1786, thus freeing the Constitution from the objections raised on every side to its alleged depreciation of the Episcopal office and dignity. At the same time, the apparent limitation of the Episcopal office to the right "to ordain or confirm" was removed by the insertion of the additional words "or perform any other act of the Episcopal office." This was not all. In the article respecting ecclesiastical trials, there was added after the words "equitable mode of trial," the provision that "at every trial of a Bishop, there shall be one or more of the Episcopal Order present; and none but a Bishop shall pronounce sentence of deposition or degradation from the Ministry on any Clergyman, whether Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon." The ratification of the Proposed Book was deferred "till further provision is made in this case by the first General Convention which shall assemble with sufficient power to ratify a Book of Common Prayer for the Church in these States." In all these changes there had been shown a growing tendency towards conservatism and a fuller

recognition of the inherent rights of the Episcopate. At the Wilmington adjourned Convention of 1786, the action amending the eighth article, which had been excepted to by the English prelates as well as by the Churchmen at the North, was unanimously ratified; and further action was taken in the important matter of "subscription." An alternate form was adopted to meet the case of those seeking consecration or ordination from States where the Proposed Book had not been approved. This measure was imperatively required for the relief of Dr. Provoost, Bishop-elect of New York, since the "faith and worship" recognized in the proposed Constitution had not received the approval of the Church of New York. The alternate form adopted required the subscriber to pledge himself to conform to the use of the English Book of Common Prayer except so far as it had been modified in consequence of the war for independence. This obligation was to continue until the Proposed Book should be finally ratified, or until another revision should take place.

At the first meeting of the General Convention of 1789, a Committee of one deputy from each State was appointed to take into consideration the proposed Constitution and to recommend such alterations, additions and amendments as they should deem proper. After two days consideration, as we have seen, the first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth Articles were adopted and made "a rule of conduct for this Convention." This action left two Articles for further deliberation—those concerning the Book of Common Prayer, and the mode of adopting and altering the Constitution. These Articles were subsequently considered, amended and agreed to with like unanimity, and the engrossed Constitution, now complete so far as this Convention's action could make it, was signed on the following day, August 8th, 1789.

This Constitution of August, 1789, was the result, Bishop White tells us, of "the conviction generally prevailing in the Convention that the formerly proposed Constitution was inadequate to the situation of the

Church." It is of interest to notice the disclaimer of Bishop White that the added powers and authority accorded to the Episcopate were the result of his interference with the action of the Convention.

"On this business," writes Bishop White, "the President of the Convention met the Committee but once, and interested himself very little; being desirous, that whatever additional powers it might be thought necessary to assign to the Bishops, such powers should not lie under the reproach of having been pressed for by one of their number, but be the result of due deliberation, and the free choice of all orders of persons within the Church and given with a view to her good government." *

In the adoption of the changes in this Constitution to which the Bishop refers, it is certainly but just to call attention to the fact that the fears entertained of the arrogance or assumption of importance and authority by the Episcopate, had been allayed, even in Virginia and South Carolina, as men saw and

* White's *Memoirs of the Church*, second edition, p. 144.

noted how holily, blamelessly and humbly William White bore himself as a Bishop of the Church of God. He who had done so much by his pen, by his personal efforts, and by his persistency, to secure the Episcopal office for the Church in the United States, made that office and dignity honorable in the sight of all men by the manner in which he ruled the flock of Christ committed to his charge. Men could not withhold from him who arrogated nothing to himself or to his office, all that the office claimed, all that its incumbent could desire.

The Constitution of August, 1789, in the first article, provided for a triennial meeting on the first Tuesday in August, beginning with the year 1792, carefully specifying that "in all business of the Convention freedom of debate shall be allowed."

The second Article gave to the Church in each State a representation of both clergy and laity, numbering one or more, but not exceeding four, of each order. The deputies were to be chosen by the Convention of the State. A call for a vote by States or Dioceses and

Orders could be made by the clerical or lay representation from any State. In this case each order had one vote and "the majority of suffrages by States" was to be "conclusive in each Order, provided such majority comprehended a majority of the States represented in that Order." The concurrence of both Orders was made necessary to constitute a vote of the Convention. Provision was made in the event of the failure or refusal of the Convention of any State to appoint either clerical or lay deputies, or in case the accredited deputies failed to attend or were prevented by sickness or any other accident from discharging the duties of their appointment. In such case, the Church in the State was to be "considered as duly represented by such deputy or deputies as may attend, whether clerical or lay." Even if no deputies, either clerical or lay, were present at any General Convention, the Church in the State, having adopted the Constitution, was deemed nevertheless to be bound by the acts of such Convention.

By this provision not only was recognition made of Diocesan or State independence, but

the principle was laid down that the General Convention was to be composed of delegates of such order as the Church in each respective State should determine. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, refusing to send lay delegates, were to be admitted on the ground that the nature of the representation from the Church in any State was to be such as that Church should elect. The representation, and of course the manner of choosing that representation, were matters not within the purview of the general body, but were solely as the State Convention should determine. With wonderful prevision a question was then settled which governs a burning issue of this very day. The principle here laid down is still unchanged. "Four clergymen and four laymen, communicants of this Church, residents in the Diocese, and chosen in the manner prescribed by the Convention thereof," make up the representation of a Diocese, whether large or small, to-day.

Article third introduced a new principle and created a new body heretofore unrecognized in the legislation proposed or adopted in the

American Church. It created, at all General Conventions, a "House of revision" to be composed of "the Bishops of this Church, when there shall be three or more." The language of this third Article is striking. In this creation of the House of Bishops as a House of revision, this new element in the legislation of the Church is regarded as distinct and separate from the General Convention, and this House of revision is made, by the wording of the Article, emphatically an *upper* House. It is provided that "when any proposed act shall have passed in the General Convention, the same shall be transmitted to the House of revision for their concurrence. And if the same shall be sent back to the Convention, with the negative or non-concurrence of the House of revision, it shall be again considered in the General Convention, and if the Convention shall adhere to the said act by a majority of three-fifths of their body, it shall become a law to all intents and purposes, notwithstanding the non-concurrence of the House of revision; and all acts of the Convention shall be authenticated by both Houses.

And, in all cases, the House of Bishops shall signify to the Convention their approbation or disapprobation, the latter with their reasons in writing, within two days after the proposed act shall have been reported to them for concurrence; and in failure thereof, it shall have the operation of a law. But until there shall be three or more Bishops as aforesaid, any Bishop attending a General Convention shall be a member *ex officio*, and shall vote with the Clerical Deputies of the State to which he belongs; and a Bishop shall then preside."

Great as was the advance towards a due recognition of the Episcopal character and office shown by the unanimous adoption of this Article of the Constitution of August, 1789, it was still insufficient. At the adjourned meeting in September and October of this same year, 1789, Bishop Seabury, with the Churches of New England, came into the union, but not until a further modification of this Article had been adopted. The Bishop of Connecticut and the New England Churches made it a condition of their acceding to the Constitution, that this third Article should be

so modified as “to declare explicitly the rights of the Bishops when sitting in a separate House, *to originate and propose acts* for the concurrence,” not of the General Convention, but of “the *other House* of Convention, and to *negative* such acts proposed by the other House as they may disapprove, provided they are not adhered to by four-fifths of the other House.” This change was agreed to, although, as we shall see, the *full* negative was not yet conceded, since four-fifths of the other House could overcome this negative; but the recognition of the Bishops sitting in Convention as an equal and coördinate power in our general ecclesiastical legislature, and as a separate House, was happily secured. To Bishop Seabury this advance to a fitting recognition of Episcopal authority and dignity, is due. In the well-considered language of the Rev. Dr. Hawks, —

“Instead of a mere council of revision, he made the Bishops a senate or upper House, holding their places for life; thus more effectually upholding, as was proper, the dignity and respectability of the Bishops, giving more stability to the

legislation of the great council of the Church, and guarding against the dangers of enactments made hastily under temporary excitements."

We learn from Bishop White that "from the sentiments expressed in the debate" in the Convention on this requirement by Seabury and the New England Churchmen of the Episcopal negative as a condition of their entering the union of the Churches, "there is reason to believe that the full negative would have been allowed, had not Mr. Andrews from Virginia,"—a secularized priest holding an appointment as a lay deputy from the Church in that State—"very seriously, and doubtlessly very sincerely, expressed his apprehension, that it was so far beyond what was expected by the Church in his State, as would cause the measure to be otherwise disowned." In consequence of these apprehensions, the subject of the full negative was referred "to some subsequent General Convention, to be determined according to instructions from the Conventions in the several States." Bishop White further informs us that "the Eastern gentlemen acquiesced,

but reluctantly, in this compromise." "Had there been," the Bishop proceeds, "no more than their apprehension of laws passing by a majority of four-fifths, after a non-concurrence of the bishops, the extreme improbability of this would—it is thought—have been confessed by them. But the truth is—they thought that the frame of ecclesiastical government could hardly be called Episcopal, while such a matter was held out as speculatively possible." In consequence of this concession on the part of Seabury and his clerical assessors it was further "*Resolved*, that it be made known to the several State Conventions that it is proposed to consider and determine in the next General Convention, on the propriety of investing the House of Bishops with a full negative on the proceedings of the other House."

This matter having been determined, as we have stated, by a compromise, "the General Constitution of the Church, as now altered and amended," was "laid before the Right Rev. Dr. Seabury and the deputies from the Churches in the Eastern States for

their approbation and assent." This assent was given. Bishop Seabury signed the Constitution with Leaming and Hubbard as his clerical proctors from Connecticut, and Parker as representing the Church in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

It was then resolved "that agreeable to the Constitution of the Church as altered and confirmed, there is now in this Convention a separate House of Bishops." The Bishop of New York was absent from the Convention, so that but two of the three Bishops were in attendance at the time. Still it was ruled that the case contemplated in the Constitution existed; and consequently the Bishops of the Church, there being three in number, withdrew, and formed the first House of Bishops of the American Church. Bishop White had been president of the Convention prior to the organization of the House of Bishops. With characteristic self-forgetfulness and generous courtesy, he recognized in Seabury, the senior Bishop, the presiding officer of the newly created House of Bishops, thus establishing the rule which has obtained, with a brief inter-

ruption, to the present day, determining the presiding Bishop by seniority of consecration.

The further history of the Episcopal negative may be briefly summarized. At the Convention of 1792, agreeably to the resolution offered and adopted in 1789, an effort was made to change the Article of the Constitution so as to render the consent of the Bishops necessary to the adoption of every measure, and to take from the House of Deputies the right to override the Episcopal negative by a vote of four-fifths. This was strenuously opposed by the lower House, and some of the State Conventions gave specific instructions to their representatives to vote against the proposed change. The measure proposed failed of success, and was again defeated in 1789 and in 1801. In 1808 the change was finally adopted, the words "unless adhered to by four-fifths of the other House" being stricken out. Thus the Episcopal veto desired by Seabury was at length obtained.

At this Convention of 1808, held in Baltimore, a question of no little interest seemed likely to arise under this Article, as inter-

preted by the formation of the House, with the presence of but two of the three Bishops of the Church. The question was, whether a single Bishop, there being three or more in the Church, could constitute a House. Upon this question, Bishop White informs us that he was prepared to support the affirmative as being most agreeable to the letter of the Constitution, and also as on the contrary supposition nothing could have been done. Happily, the issue was not found to be necessary.

Article fourth provided that the choice or election of Bishops should "be agreeable to such rules as shall be fixed by the Convention of the Diocese," and further enacted, that "every Bishop of the Church shall confine the exercise of his Episcopal office to his proper Diocese unless requested to ordain, or confirm, or perform any other act of the Episcopal office in another Diocese by the Ecclesiastical authority thereof."

The Fundamental Principles of 1784 contain no provision of this nature; but the draft Constitution of 1785, the composition of White, has the basis of the present article—

the language as proposed by Dr. White being identical with that now used, with only the limitation of the last clause, as follows: "unless requested to ordain or confirm by any Church destitute of a Bishop."

This restriction was regarded both in England and at the North as unduly restricting the powers of the Episcopate. It was feared that the radical views of the parity of the Episcopal and priestly office, save in the specified matters of ordination and confirmation, as urged in Virginia and accepted still further at the southward, would find justification by the language of the proposed article. In 1786, the words were added, after "ordain and confirm," "or perform any other act of the Episcopal office by any Church destitute of a Bishop. In 1789, the article as thus modified was re-enacted with the verbal change of the word "jurisdiction" to the words "State or district," which, with the omission of the words "or district" and the change of "State" to "diocese," is the language of the article as now in force.

It has been urged that the Constitution of

the Church, as formulated by this Article, contemplates the office of a Bishop as necessarily connected with some field over which he is to exercise jurisdiction, and consequently that a Bishop cannot constitutionally resign his see, since the American Church does not recognize the possibility of a Bishop at large. This construction is certainly not warranted, either by historical precedent or even by the language of the Article itself.

If we regard at all the *animus imponentis* the Article has nothing to do with the question of resignation, but is intended merely to prescribe what shall be the conduct of a Bishop in full possession of his see. Besides, it was the historic Episcopate that our fathers sought and obtained, and in all ages Episcopal jurisdiction has been confined within defined limits, and at the same time Bishops have for cause been permitted again and again to resign. That the matter of Episcopal resignation was not intended to be precluded by this Article, is evident from the fact that the legislation of the Church makes provision, by canon, for resignations, and determines

under what circumstances and in what manner they shall take place.

Another question has arisen under this Article which is certainly not less important. When Virginia, acting under the provision contained in the first clause of this Article, to-wit: "that bishops shall be chosen agreeably to such rules as shall be fixed by the Convention of that State," elected William Meade as assistant to Bishop Richard Channing Moore, it was expressly declared by the Convention that in case the assistant Bishop should survive the Bishop of the Diocese, the right of succession was not necessarily to belong to the assistant but was to depend on the further action of the Convention. It was possible, therefore, that on the death of the apostolic Channing Moore, Bishop Meade might be left a Bishop at large, having mission, but without jurisdiction,—since the Virginia Convention was at liberty to elect some one else as the Diocesan. It was thought at the time that the action of the Virginia Convention violated the spirit if not the letter of this Article of the Constitution, and on this

ground opposition was made to the consecration of Dr. Meade. Even the Bishops felt that it would be a dangerous example; and while they determined to proceed to consecrate, they yet resolved to accompany the act with a protest against its becoming a precedent.

The Virginia Convention assumed that in the exercise of her rights as an independent Church, the Church in that State had authority to make this condition a part of the election. This view would have been sustained under the first clause of Article fourth, which permitted the State Convention to fix its own rules in electing a Bishop, had the proviso related at all to the mode of election. It had nothing to do with the *mode* of the election, however, which had proceeded according to rules long before adopted in Virginia. It was to become operative—if operative at all—at a period subsequent to the election, after Bishop Meade had been, possibly, for years acting as a Bishop, and fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of his sacred office agreeably to the canons of the Church in such case made and provided. The General Conven-

tion had no authority to criticise or condemn the mode or form of electing, provided that it was done according "to the fixed rules of the Convention." The right to elect a Bishop agreeably to her own rules and in her own appointed way was one of the independent, sovereign rights that had never been ceded or surrendered by Virginia to the Church at large. She had, however, surrendered the right of having at her pleasure and within her limits a Bishop whose condition was that of ecclesiastical vagrancy,—a Bishop with mission, indeed, but without jurisdiction, power, or respect. A Bishop chosen for Virginia and chosen by Virginia and confined in the exercise of his jurisdiction to Virginia only, was still a part of the universal historic episcopate,—a Bishop of the Church in the United States,—a Bishop of the Church of God. Deprived of the right to exercise his office in Virginia, as this declaration made possible, he was still at liberty to perform any Episcopal office in any other State or Diocese, if desired so to do by the ecclesiastical authority of the same. The credit and character of the

whole Church was therefore concerned in his position, his respectability, his inherent rights. While a Diocese might limit the exercise of the Episcopal office by canonical regulations, no Diocese had the right to make such laws as would in effect strip the Bishop of his proper spiritual functions, or serve to deprive him of all authority and leave him "an object of contempt instead of respect." It is not supposed that Virginia proposed to do this to Bishop Meade, who was then, as ever afterwards, universally and deservedly respected and beloved; but a door was left open through which such results might subsequently enter; and so the matter was amicably and satisfactorily settled by canonical legislation, providing that in all cases the assistant Bishop should have the right of succession.

The fifth Article of this Constitution, as at present in force, relates to the admission of new Dioceses; noting the precedent consent required; the number of Presbyters and parishes competent for the creation of a Diocese; carefully specifying the rights of the Diocesan and the Assistant Bishop, in the case of the

division of a Diocese, and providing a Constitution and canons for the new Diocese, until the same were altered or provided by the new Diocese itself.

This Article is the expansion of the simple provision of Article five of 1789, that "a Protestant Episcopal Church in any of the United States, not now represented, may, at any time hereafter, be admitted on acceding to this Constitution." By this simple provision our fathers proposed to secure the perpetuation of Diocesan independence. As they had come into the union, surrendering only those rights and powers to the central or national organization specifically stated in the Constitution or bond of union, so were other State or Diocesan Churches to come in for all time. Whatever may be the action of the future, at our organization and for the first century of our existence, Diocesan independence has been the acknowledged law and rule of our Church life and being. It is evident from the language of the Article, that even now, on application, the "Church in any part of the United States, or any territory thereof, not now

represented may, at any time hereafter, be admitted on acceding to this Constitution:" the restriction respecting the number of parishes and resident Presbyters holding only with reference to the formation of new Dioceses by the division of existing Dioceses. The State or Territorial Church has the right to admission to the union whenever, in the judgment of its resident priests and parishes, whether few or many, it may organize and apply for admission.

Article sixth provides for "ecclesiastical courts, trials, and sentences." The evolution of this Article is full of interest. The necessity of some effectual means for the exercise of discipline in the case of clergymen of evil lives is urged in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. The amenability of the clerical order of every grade to the Convention, was a principle to which William White, in 1782, refers again and again. It is included in the fifth Fundamental Principle of the May meeting of clergy and laity, under the Presidency of White, in 1784, which places the whole matter of canonical legis-

lation and procedure in "a representative body of the clergy and laity conjointly." It appears in the "additional Constitutions" "respecting the future discipline and government" of the Maryland Church, adopted at Annapolis, June, 1787. The first of these Constitutions provides for the exercise of "the power and authority necessary for receiving and excluding from Church privileges scandalous members, whether lay or clerical, and all jurisdiction with regard to offenders;" together with "the power of suspending or dismissing clergymen (of all orders)"* from the exercise of their ministry; and the second of these Constitutions remands to the Standing Committee, during the recess or adjournment of Convention, authority "in all matters respecting the discipline and government of the Church."

Virginia provided by canons in May, 1785, that "Bishops shall be amenable to the Convention, who shall be a court to try them, from which there shall be no appeal. All accusations against a Bishop shall come from

* Perry's *Historical Notes and Documents*, pp. 33.

Vestries, three being required to join in the complaint." "Disorderly, scandalous, and immoral conduct, neglect of duty, a disregard to the rules and canons of the Church, or taking a bribe to grant either ordination or recommendation for a vacant parish" were to be "considered as offences in a Bishop, for which he may be brought to trial, and on his being convicted of any of these he shall be reprov'd, or suspended, or dismissed, at the discretion of the Court." The Standing Committee was empowered "to receive complaints against the clergy, and to direct courts of examination, pursuant to the rules for the government of the Church," but it was provided that "no Bishop shall inflict any censure upon or exercise any power over the clergy, under his inspection, other than he is allowed to do by the laws and institutions of this Church, made in Convention." In Massachusetts and Rhode Island the Pennsylvania Fundamental Principle was adopted unchanged.

In the draft Constitution of 1785, prepared by White, it was provided that "every clergy-

man, whether Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon, shall be amenable to the authority of the Convention, in the State to which he belongs; so far as relates to suspension or removal from office; and the Convention in each State shall institute rules for their conduct, and equitable mode of trial."

So general was the complaint against this proposed Article as derogatory to the Episcopal office and character, and so little likely did it appear that the English Archbishops and Bishops would communicate the succession while this amenability of Bishops to their presbyters and laity continued, that in 1786 the language of the Article was materially changed for the better. As it now read it provided that "in every State the mode of trying clergymen shall be instituted by the Convention of the Church therein. At every trial of a Bishop there shall be one or more of the Episcopal order present; and none but a Bishop shall pronounce sentence of deposition or degradation from the Ministry on any clergyman, whether Bishop, or Presbyter, or Deacon." This Article was re-affirmed in 1789 and, with

the substitution of the word State to Diocese adopted in 1839, remained unchanged until 1841, when the Article was put in its present form. This is as follows:

ARTICLE 6. The mode of trying Bishops shall be provided by the General Convention. The Court appointed for that purpose shall be composed of Bishops only. In every Diocese, the mode of trying Presbyters and Deacons may be instituted by the Convention of the Diocese. None but a Bishop shall pronounce sentence of admonition, suspension, or degradation from the Ministry, on any Clergyman, whether Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon.

We have in this Article the only provision in this Constitution relating to the Judiciary. It is evident from the history of the evolution of this Article as it now stands, or as it was adopted in 1789, that had the effort been made at first to remand this matter to the General Convention it would have lessened materially the chances of union. All that could at first be hoped for was the removal of the oppressive and derogatory provisions at first suggested, making the Bishop amenable to

trial not by his peers, but by his priests and people assembled in Convention. The provision of a complete judicial system for the Church at large has been the dream of our canonists from the first. The labors of Hawks, Hoffman, and others distinguished for their accurate knowledge of canonical law and procedure, have again and again been directed towards securing uniformity of judicial proceeding and judicial decision. That this result is of no little importance to the peace and prosperity of the Church, may be admitted without discussion. That the most inefficient and defective part of our ecclesiastical system is the judiciary of the Church, cannot be denied; but the Church in General Convention has again and again stopped short on the threshold of instituting an appellate system, and it is doubtful, in view of the great principle of Diocesan independence, whether such a system can ever obtain. In this as in many other mooted questions, it may be better to bear the ills of which we are fully cognizant than fly to others of which we know little or nothing at all.

Article seven recites the pre-requisites for ordination, gives the form of declaration to be subscribed by all candidates for admission to orders, and requires subscription to this declaration in the case of clergymen ordained by a foreign Bishop before they can be permitted to officiate as ministers of this Church.

This Article finds its original in *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*. In the proposed Constitution of 1785 it concerned itself solely with the matter of subscription. In 1786 a preliminary clause was adopted to the effect that "no person shall be ordained until due examination had by the Bishop and two Presbyters, and exhibiting testimonials of his moral conduct for three years past, signed by the Minister and a majority of the Vestry of the Church where he has last resided." Then follows the provision respecting subscription. In 1789 this Article was adopted as it stands at the present day.

It will be borne in mind that the form of subscription given in this Article was designed to take the place of the *ex animo* subscription to the XXXIX. Articles required then as now

by the Mother Church of England. At the time of the adoption of this Constitution the XXXIX. Articles had not been formally adopted by the American Church. They were not "established" until the 12th of September, 1801. It is evident, therefore, that in contradistinction to the Church of England, it is only in the most general manner if at all, that we subscribe to the Articles. In fact only on the principle that they formed part of the doctrinal standards of the Mother Church at the time of our organization and are included, as are the English canons and English usages of that period, as part of our common law, binding where action has not been taken to the contrary on our part,—can these Articles be regarded up to the year 1801 as of any authority whatever in the American Church. At that date they were "established." The full meaning and bearing of this term is yet to be ascertained by competent authority.

Article eight sets forth the present American Book of Common Prayer. *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered* proposed

the review of the English Prayer Book. Its language is as follows:

As to divine worship, there must no doubt be somewhere the power of making necessary and convenient alterations in the service of the Church. But it is to be used with great moderation; otherwise the communion will become divided into an infinite number of smaller ones, all differing from one another and from that in England."

The third Fundamental Principle of the May Convention in Philadelphia, in 1784, asserted doctrinal conformity to the Church of England, and the continuation of "uniformity of worship" "as near as may be to the liturgy of said Church." Maryland, Massachusetts and Rhode Island used similar language. The fourth Fundamental Principle of the general meeting at New York, in October, in 1784, provided "that the said Church shall maintain the doctrines of the Gospel as now held by the Church of England; and shall adhere to the liturgy of the said Church, so far as shall be consistent with the American revolution and the Constitutions of the respective States."

The Virginia Convention refused to bind itself to this fourth Fundamental Proposition "until the same shall be revised" at the General Convention to be held at Philadelphia in 1785, and then reported to the subsequent Virginia Convention. New York and New Jersey instructed their respective deputies to the Convention of 1785 to approve this provision, together with the other Fundamental Principles. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire proceeded to make a revision of their own in a Convention held September, 1785. Connecticut, on the arrival of Seabury, altered the State prayers and discussed the adoption of a few changes, substantially those adopted by the joint Convention of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire; but deferred definite action thereon. In the year 1785, in White's proposed Constitution, the fourth Article provided that—

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, shall be used by the Church as the same is altered by this Convention in a

certain instrument passed by their authority, entitled *Alterations of the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, in order to render the same conformable to the American revolution and the constitutions of the respective States.

The ninth Article of this proposed Constitution provided for the use of the Proposed Book "when the same shall be ratified by the Conventions which have respectively sent delegates to this Convention." In 1789 the Article was adopted as follows:

"A Book of Common Prayer, administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church, Articles of religion, and a form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests and deacons, when established by this or a future General Convention, shall be used in the Protestant Episcopal Church in those States which shall have adopted this Constitution."

The history of this practical return to the English Book as the basis of the American revision of 1789 is detailed at length by Bishop White, who was present as a spectator in the House of Deputies during the debate on this question:

“In the appointment of Committees on the different departments of the Book of Common Prayer, Dr. Parker proposed that the English book should be the ground of the proceedings held, without reference to that set out and proposed in 1785. This was objected to by some, who contended that a liturgy ought to be formed without reference to any existing book, although with liberty to take from any, whatever the Convention should think fit. The issue of the debate, was the wording of the resolves as they stand on the Journal, in which the different Committees are appointed, to prepare a morning and evening prayer,—to prepare a litany—to prepare a communion office—and the same, in regard to the other departments, instead of its being said—to alter the said services, which had been the language in 1785. This was very unreasonable; because the different congregations of the Church were always understood to be possessed of a liturgy, before the consecration of her bishops, or the existence of her conventions. It would have been thought a strange doctrine in any of the clergy, had they pretended that they were released from all obligation to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, by the Revolution. It is true, that Dr. Parker had carried the matter too far in speaking

of the Proposed Book as a form of which they could know nothing, considering that it had been proposed by a preceding Convention from a majority of the States. It was particularly wondered at in Dr. Parker, by those who knew that he had used the Book in his own Church at Boston. But as the Doctor, during the preceding part of the session, had been looked to for the opening of the sentiments of the Clergy present from Connecticut, who had said but little all along, and evidently depended on him to press the points which they had most at heart, it is probable that in this instance, he accommodated more than was either necessary or well considered, to make matters agreeable to their minds. The direct course would have been to have taken the English liturgy, as that in which some alterations were contemplated; and with it, the other as a proposal, agreeably to what was expressed on the title-page. Certain it is, that the extreme proposed tended very much to the opposite extreme, which took effect—an evident implication in all proceedings in the House, that there were no forms of prayer, no offices, and no rubrics, until they should be formed by the Convention now assembled. Every one must perceive, that this abridged the species of negative lodged with the

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House of Bishops. For if, in any branch of the liturgy, they should be disposed to be tenacious in any point, which should be a deviation from the English book, the consequence must be, not that the prayer, or whatever else it were, remained as before, but that no such matter were to be inserted. This, in some instances, would have operated to the extent of excluding a whole office of the Church, if the negative of the Bishops had been insisted on. They did not carry their right so far, but they reasoned and expostulated on the point, with several of the gentlemen, to no purpose. They would not allow that there was any book of authority in existence: a mode of proceeding, in which they have acted differently from the Conventions before and after them: who have recognized the contrary principle when any matter occurred to which it was applicable. If that adopted by the majority of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies had been acted on by the clergy and individual congregations, on the taking place of the civil Revolution, it would have torn the Church to pieces. On the contrary, the idea had prevailed, that although the civil part of the institution was destroyed, and each Christian minister lay under the necessity to discharge the Scriptural duty of praying for his

civil rulers according to his individual discretion, the rest of the service remained entire, on the ground of antecedent obligation." * * *

“The principal act of this session was the preparing of the Book of Common Prayer, as now the established Liturgy of the Church. It will not be noticed any further, than, on the ground of information possessed, to account for the doing or for the omitting of any important matter. The Journal shows that some parts of it were drawn up by the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, and other parts of it by the House of Bishops. In the latter, owing to the smallness of the number and a disposition in both of them to accommodate, business was despatched with great celerity; as must be seen by any one who attends to the progress of the subjects recorded on the Journal. To this day, there are recollected with satisfaction, the hours which were spent with Bishop Seabury, on the important subjects which came before them; and especially the Christian temper which he manifested all along.”

“In the daily prayer for morning and evening service, the principle subjects of difference arising between the two Houses, were the Athanasian Creed, and the descent into hell in the Apostles' Creed.”

“On the former subject, the author consented to the proposal of Bishop Seabury, of making it an amendment to the draft sent by the other House to be inserted with a rubric, permitting the use of it. This, however, was declared to be on the principle of accommodation, to the many who were reported to desire it, especially in Connecticut, where, it was said, the omitting of it would hazard the reception of the book. It was the author’s intention never to read the creed himself, and he declared his mind to this effect. Bishop Seabury, on the contrary, thought that without it, there would be a difficulty in keeping out of the Church the errors to which it stands opposed.” * * *

“However, the Creed was inserted by way of amendment; to be used or omitted at discretion. But the amendment was negatived by the other House; and when the subject afterward came up in conference, they would not allow of the Creed in any shape, which was thought intolerant by the gentlemen from New England, who, with Bishop Seabury, gave it up with great reluctance.”

“The other subject—the descent of Christ into hell—was left in a situation which afterwards not a little embarrassed the Committee who had the charge of printing the book. The amendments of the Bishops, whether verbal or otherwise, to the

services sent to the other House, had all been numbered. The President of that House, as afterwards appeared on unquestionable verbal testimony, accidentally omitted the reading of the Article in its full force, with the explanatory rubric. The meaning of the Article in that place, was declared to be the state of the dead, generally; and this was proposed, instead of the form in which the other House had presented it—in italics and between hooks, with a rubric permitting the use of the words ‘He went into the place of departed spirits.’ The paper of the House in return to that of the Bishops, said nothing on this head; and therefore their acquiescence was presumed.” * * *

“When the Committee assembled to prepare the book for the press, great was their surprise and that of the author, to find that the two Houses had misunderstood one another altogether. The question was—what was to be done? And here, the different principles on which the business had been conducted, had their respective operation. The Committee contended, that the amendment made by the Bishops to the service, as proposed by their House, not appearing to have been presented, the service must stand as proposed by them, with the words ‘He descended into hell,’

printed in italics and between hooks; and with the rubric permissory of the use of the words, 'He went into the place of departed spirits.' On the contrary, it was thought a duty to maintain the principle, that the Creed, as in the English book, must be considered as the Creed of the Church, until altered by the consent of both Houses which was not yet done. Accordingly, remonstrance was made against the printing of the Article of the descent into hell in the manner in which it appears in the book published at the time."

"When the Convention afterwards met in New York in the year 1792, this matter came in review before them; and the result was the ordering of the Creed to be printed in all future editions with the Article not in italics and between hooks as before, but with the rubric leaving it to discretion to use or to omit it, or to use, instead of it, the words considered by the rubric as synonymous."

"The House of Bishops," we are told by Bishop White, "did not approve of the expedient of the other House, in relation to the selections as they now stand, to be used at the discretion of the minister instead of the Psalms for the day." Bishop Seabury, however, "interested himself in the subject the

less," aware that his clergy would "adhere to the old practice." Bishop White's proposal was "to give to the officiating minister the liberty to select Psalms at his discretion."

In the service for the administration of the Communion, Bishop White informs us that "it may, perhaps, be expected, that the great change made, in restoring to the Consecration prayer the oblatory words and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, left out in King Edward's reign, must at least have produced an opposition. But no such thing happened, to any considerable extent, or at least, the author did not hear of any in the other House, further than a disposition to the effect, in a few gentlemen, which was counteracted by some pertinent remarks of the president. In that of the Bishops, it lay very near to the heart of Bishop Seabury. As for the other Bishop, without conceiving with some that the service as it stood, was essentially defective, he always thought there was a beauty in those ancient forms, and can discover no superstition in them."

Bishop Seabury had, on his return from

Scotland, published the Eucharistic office of the Scottish Church, and recommended it, agreeably to the terms of the concordat entered into with the Bishops who consecrated him, to the use of the Church in Connecticut. In Maryland, the first Convention after the issue of the Proposed Book urged the addition to the Communion office of the oblation and invocation and this was done with the hearty approval of the president, Dr. William Smith. Thus was the way prepared for the action taken in 1789.

In 1811 the second clause of the present Article eight was added, providing the manner in which alterations or additions to the Prayer Book could be made. The words "or the Articles of religion" were added to this clause in 1829, after the words "Book of Common Prayer or other Offices of the Church." In 1877, provision was made for the amending of the Lectionary from time to time, and thus the article was finally brought into its present shape.

There can be no doubt as to the intent of our fathers in the gradual evolution of this

article respecting the Book of Common Prayer. Their purpose was undoubtedly the transfer of the obligation to use with strict rubrical precision the Church's Prayer Book, which obtained in the Mother Church through the Act of Uniformity, to our American revision. There was no idea in their minds of an eclectic use of offices or prayers. Whatever was of obligation in the Church of England was to be of obligation still, unless there had been positive action permitting or establishing a change. The very difficulty of changing one jot or tittle of the Prayer Book would be enough to prove this purpose of those who revised our Prayer Book. Certainly the *animus imponentis* of our fathers warrants only the strictest rubrical conformity.

Article nine relates to alterations of the Constitution.

The proposed Constitution of 1785 provided that

“This General Ecclesiastical Constitution, when ratified by the Church in the different States, shall be considered as fundamental, and

shall be unalterable by the Convention of the Church in any State."

In 1786, it was enacted that "the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, when ratified by the Church in a majority of the States assembled in General Convention with sufficient power for the purpose of such ratification, shall be unalterable by the Convention of any particular State which hath been represented at the time of such ratification." In 1789 it assumed its present form, with the verbal change, in 1838, of the word "States" to "Dioceses," and the word "State" to "Diocesan."

It is under this article that various questions arise respecting the rights of the General, and the State or Diocesan, Conventions.

We have an instrument—the Charter of the American Church—adopted, and unalterable save after long and tedious process. This instrument has appended to it the enacting clause: "Done in the General Convention of the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Church, the 2nd day of October, 1789." It was adopt-

ed by the Bishops and deputies of the Churches in the respective States. The deputies had been empowered by their constituencies to enact this instrument. Before they originally voted to accept this charter of rights and privileges they were called upon to declare that they had this power entrusted to them.

They were then the representatives of the Churches in the respective States assembled in State or Diocesan Convention, and the Constitution they enacted was adopted in their representative capacity as representing the said State or Diocesan Churches in Convention assembled.

In this Constitution the Church in each State respectively surrenders all power of altering this instrument save in accordance with the rules and in the manner laid down in the Article itself.

But the Church in each State or diocese retained the right of having any proposed alteration or addition "made known" to it; and unless this requirement is strictly observed, the Constitution cannot legally be changed. The mode of alteration is, then,

as follows: The change is proposed in one General Convention. In the event of its securing at this time the constitutional majority of votes, it is made known to the several Diocesan Conventions, and then it is “finally agreed to or ratified” at the session of the ensuing General Convention.

It is evident from the language of the article requiring that the alterations shall be first proposed in one General Convention and shall further be made known to the several Diocesan Conventions that these changes are to be “finally agreed to or ratified,—*not by*—but *in* the ensuing General Convention. We agree to or ratify something which has been determined on, not merely proposed. We ratify an act which others, not ourselves, have performed. *Ex vi termini* it would appear that action some where else, that is, in some other body than in the General Convention, is evidently pre-supposed. The Article directs that the alterations proposed shall be made known to the several Diocesan Conventions before they shall be finally agreed to or ratified. The previous action, so evidently contem-

plated by these words, must necessarily be in the several Diocesan Conventions. The Churches, in State or Diocesan Convention, enacted this Constitution. They are naturally concerned not only in knowing, but in taking action, with respect to, any proposed alteration in the charter of mutual rights and obligations, in the making of which they respectively took part.

The change of the Constitution is therefore made in General Convention, not *by* General Convention, but by the Church in a majority of dioceses. Consequently the Churches in the States respectively, *quasi* States or dioceses, are alone competent to alter the Constitution. That this is the proper interpretation of the article is evident from the fact that Title III., Canon 1, § iii., makes it "the duty of the Secretary of the House of Deputies, whenever any alteration of the Constitution is proposed, or any other subject submitted to the consideration of the several Diocesan Conventions, to give a particular notice thereof to the Ecclesiastical Authority in every Diocese;" and this canon, with but slight and merely

verbal changes, has been in force since 1808.

Certainly matter thus formally communicated to the Church in each State or diocese "for the consideration of the several Diocesan Conventions," presupposes that the Church in a majority of dioceses is to consider and furnish that action with regard to the proposed alteration which, in the ensuing General Convention, is to be finally agreed to or ratified. It is in recognition of this view of the true meaning of this article that, after some carelessness at first, the principle has long since obtained that on the question of the ratification of proposed changes thus made known to the several Conventions, the final vote in the ensuing General Convention must be taken by States and dioceses. It is also agreed that it is the right of the Church in each State or diocese to make known to the General Convention the action, if any, taken in Diocesan Convention, respecting any proposed alterations of the Constitution or Book of Common Prayer, whether affirmative or dissenting.

We may further infer that if a majority of such Diocesan Conventions should make

known their disagreement to the alteration or alterations proposed, it would not be competent for the ensuing General Convention to make these alterations. It is in support of this view that we would refer to the action taken in connection with the changes in the Prayer Book proposed by Bishop Hobart in the Convention of 1826. They were duly communicated to the Diocesan Conventions. In the General Convention of 1829 a resolution was received by the House of Deputies from the House of Bishops that, under existing circumstances, it was inexpedient to make the change, and the House concurred, so that no direct vote was taken. Bishop White, in his *Memoirs of the Church*, uses this language: "The alterations of this book proposed by the last General Convention, were not acted on by the present, *having been found unacceptable to the major number of the Diocesan Conventions.*" In the diocesan Journals from Maine to Mississippi respectively there is recorded a formal vote of dissent, and thus the changes proposed were negatived.

We conclude, then, that in all questions of Constitutional or liturgical changes, the vote in the House of Deputies *must* be taken by Dioceses.

That the Diocesan Convention has a right to make known to the General Convention, its action with respect to a proposed alteration in the Constitution or Prayer Book, is evident.

The assent of the Church in each State may be assumed, if it is silent or has taken no measures to make known its dissent.

If a majority of the Diocesan Conventions do make known their dissent to any proposed alteration, the General Convention ought not, and under this Article is certainly not competent, to alter the Constitution or liturgy.

Article ten provides for the consecration of Bishops for foreign countries, and was agreed to and ratified in 1844. Under its provisions—though it is to be feared without a careful observance of its requirements, the Bishop of the Valley of Mexico was consecrated, a measure well intended, but resulting in disappointment. The consecration of the Right Rev. Dr. Holly for the Church in Haiti,

took place under the same Article, and has proved to be a successful venture of faith.

In our review of the Constitution, as now in force, we cannot but close as we began. To William White, more than to any other one of our fathers, is due the praise of having conceived, and by patient toil carried into execution, the main principles of our ecclesiastical Constitution and system. God raised him up for the work of leadership; God gave him the rich reward of superintending, for half a century, the Church which owed so much to him. Wise, conservative, conciliatory and yet firm, he left his impress on our very being; and generations yet unborn shall rise up to call him blessed.



