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ARTICLE I.

## THE GENESIS OF THE NEW ENGLAND CHURCHES.

*The Genesis of the New England Churches.* By LEONARD BACON. With Illustrations. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, Franklin Square. 1874. Pp. 485, 12mo.

The general character of Dr. Bacon's interesting work was sufficiently indicated in a brief notice of it which appeared in the January number of this REVIEW. It is now proposed to enter into a more thorough examination of the principles which the venerable author has inwoven into his touching narrative, and which he seeks as his main design to establish thereby. The book he has written is not a volume of original research or elaborate learning, and claims to be only "a history digested from materials prepared by others." But while "it simply tells an old story," the author undertakes to give "here and there a new interpretation or a new emphasis to some undisputed fact," and addresses himself in so doing to "all sorts of intelligent and thoughtful readers." He does not write for "scholars, or the men of some learned profession," but "to stir the sympathies of the many;" and he aims, while thus interesting the popular affections and moving the hearts of the masses, to gain also their understanding and convince their judgment in favor of certain ideas of his own. Under the garb of a mere popular narrative of comparatively recent events, this is, really, an endeavor to strengthen

the foundations of a certain theory of church government as that which was from the beginning. It is polemics disguised. The author not merely "constructs a story," but battles for a dogma, and that not before scholars who are competent judges of his attempt, but before "the many," who must simply accept and cannot correct his reasonings. It is a good way for disseminating opinions. Dr. Bacon has as good a right to use it as anybody else. It is the way of our times. This is the day of story books for the many, rather than of treatises for the few. Books of solid learning do not sell like piquant narratives and ingenious endeavors "to stir the sympathies of the many." Messrs. Harper & Brothers, and all the other book publishers, know well about this matter. Had Dr. Bacon offered them a thoroughly learned discussion of the principles of church government held by him, they would have politely and respectfully begged to be excused from running the risk of publishing any such work. Readers in our day and country go through books in a hurry, as they go through everything else. So the *story* is read, but the *treatise* not studied, and not even bought. Now a book issued but unsold for six or twelve months, is *dead* commercially, and it cannot be got to live again commercially. And books for scholars can never have any but a limited sale. And publishers dread loaded shelves as much as loaded guns, but they are eager to issue the book that bids for universal popularity. Book-making thus degenerates into an affair of the pockets rather than the brains. So that for every reason, and in every aspect, authors nowadays, and amongst our countrymen, are, in one sense, wise when they disclaim learning and research, as well as when they send forth their invitations for the many and not the few to come and partake of their repast.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is not to criticise Dr. Bacon's story of the trials and persecutions of his forefathers, either in England, or after they fled to Holland, or subsequently emigrated to America. That is a story which never will wear out, like other similar stories of martyrs, whether of one Christian Church or another, and whether of modern or of ancient times. Whatever the ecclesiastical relations of the sufferers,

stories of martyrdom must be of immortal and of universal interest. Let them be told over and over again, in all countries and to every succeeding generation, that tyrants may be shamed, and that weak hearts may grow strong under oppression. Let them be told everywhere, that the glorious ideas of the right of private judgment and of the liberty to think, to believe, and to teach, may be spread abroad amongst mankind. And yet there will ever remain but one standard of truth in religion for all those who accept Christianity as from heaven. For them the appeal must always be to the Word fairly interpreted. There must be freedom to judge every one for himself; but there is a weighty responsibility which that same freedom involves. And whoever goes further and undertakes, through "stirring the sympathies," to convey opinions into the minds of others, must stand prepared to have the soundness of those opinions thoroughly canvassed by comparison of them by others with the written revelation.

Dr. Bacon means by "The Genesis of the New England Churches," not merely the beginning in 1602 or 1603 "by divers godly Christians in the north of England" to be "studious of reformation," "and to witness against human inventions and additions to the word of God," and "to enter into covenant to walk with God and with one another according to the primitive pattern in the word of God." He does, indeed, say of the Church which, four years later, that is, in 1607, met ordinarily in the manor-house of Scrooby, (on the great road from London to York and thence into Scotland)—he does say of "this church which was in the house of William Brewster" at Scrooby: "*There was the germ of New England.*" But he does not mean to say that "the Separatists of Scrooby" were the true and proper fathers of the New England Churches. On the contrary, he traces the lineage of these churches, of course, up to apostolic times. His position is that Congregational Independency is *the* form which the Scriptures give to the Church. Accordingly, the theme of his first chapter is, "*What was in the beginning,*" and his first paragraph runs thus: "In the beginning, Christianity was simply gospel. Ecclesiastical organisation was not the cause,

but the effect, of life. Churches were constituted by the spontaneous association of believers. Individuals and families, drawn toward each other by their common trust in Jesus the Christ, and their common interest in the good news concerning the kingdom of God, became a community united not by external bonds, but by the vital force of distinctive ideas and principles. New affections became the bond of a new brotherhood, and the new brotherhood, with its mutual duties and united responsibilities, became an organised society. The ecclesiastical polity of the apostles was simple—a living growth, not an artificial construction.” It is upon such a foundation as this, the eminent and venerable author, the great Coryphæus of Independency in New England, builds his argument.

Let us examine the stones out of which this fundamental position is constructed. The first one is, that “*in the beginning Christianity was simply gospel.*” This means, of course, that it was doctrine without order or government. Now, can this be admitted to be true? We are constrained to say that our author takes a very narrow view of Christianity. For Christianity was truly just a new dispensation of an antecedent system of things. It was not a new religion Jesus of Nazareth set up, and it was not a new Church. There has been but one Church from “*the beginning,*” which was not, as Dr. Bacon seems to say, the time of Christ upon earth, but dates back to the first interposition of grace on behalf of fallen man. The Church begins, of course, where the gospel begins, and that was in the promise of the woman’s seed. And the Church began as a *kingdom*, and in every age to the present has continued to be a *kingdom*, of which Christ is the Head. So that there never was, and there is not now, and there never will be, any such thing as a Christianity that is “*simply gospel.*” The King has always ordered all things regarding his Church. Moses, who was faithful as a servant, in setting up the Jewish Church, followed the pattern given to him in the Mount. And the incarnate Lord and Saviour came not to destroy but fulfil what his servant Moses had established. When that passed away which had been for a time and for a purpose, (both of them fully accomplished,) it was no new

Church which was set up, but only a new dispensation of the same, with higher and wider privileges. But it was not one of these privileges to have order abolished and doctrine left alone, for manifestly the former is necessary to fortify and establish and perpetuate the latter. Accordingly, whilst the temple worship, with all that pertained to it, is abolished, the old synagogue system remains and passes over into the new dispensation. The synagogue, with its ruling elders and the councils which they constituted, is Christianised; and so the one Church perpetuates its life in the new dispensation under which we live.

The second stone laid by Dr. Bacon is, that "*ecclesiastical organisation was not the cause but the effect of life.*" This is a singular denial. Did any one ever affirm that organisation can produce life? But why make this denial as to order any more than as to doctrine? Can doctrine itself give life? No, only the Spirit is the author of life; but whilst doctrine feeds the Church's life, organisation surely guards and perpetuates it, and both are absolutely needful to her prosperity.

There remains a third stone to be examined: "*Churches were constituted by the spontaneous association of believers,*" and the bonds which united them were no external ones, but merely those of similarity of ideas and union of affections. When these new affections had drawn together the new brotherhood, then there becomes "an organised society." There appear to be three ideas expressed in this statement: one is, that there was no organised society belonging to Christ and presided over by him until the first one of these voluntary associations of believers in him was formed after his ascension from earth to heaven; another is, that believers in him came together spontaneously, that is, of their own motion entirely; and a third is, that no external bonds united them, but simply the vital force of ideas. The first of these three is the denial over again of there being any Church of Christ on the earth before his incarnation. Nothing additional to what has been suggested requires to be said about it. The second appears to be an extravagant assertion of what is certainly true, that a Church is a voluntary association of individual believers. The extravagance is found in the author's denial that organisation be-

longs essentially to Christianity. That believers associate voluntarily together when they form a Church is true, of course; but it is equally true that they are required of the Lord so to associate themselves together, and therefore it is not true in every aspect that their mutual association is spontaneous. In other words, Christianity is not, and never was, simply doctrine, but always and ever is *doctrine and order*, both equally revealed and equally to be received by men. The third idea is like the other two—there are no external bonds of church fellowship; it is all in the vital force of ideas and principles. We certainly agree that great is the vital force of ideas and principles, and we honor every man who magnifies the importance of these. Such a man, if honest and consistent, will have a creed, and will hold fast to it, and his creed will not concern abstract principles only, but along with these he will accept practical truths and hold fast by them. And others like him will associate with him in maintaining the ideas they hold, not merely as to abstractions, but also as to things practical and positive. It was undoubtedly thus with the first believers. The Lord had made known his will touching the doctrine, and the discipline, and the worship of his house, and these believers were obedient to him, and of one mind with each other, in all things; but, in these circumstances, to say they were united by no external bonds of government and of worship, by no common use of sacraments and ordinances and rules, but only by the force of certain ideas and principles considered abstractly, may suit a pious Congregationalist divine, but would better become, in our judgment, the mere Rationalist.

After laying such a foundation for his building, Dr. Bacon proceeds to describe the Christian Church as a new commonwealth of persons united by faith to Christ, which we always supposed the Old Testament saints every one to have been. He then says: "At first the few disciples seem not to have thought much about how their society should be organised and its affairs administered, their minds being otherwise occupied." That does not show, however, that there was not one mind occupied about the matter—the mind of their King and Head. Our author proceeds to say that "the earliest appearance of anything like organisation amongst them"



was when one was to be elected in the place of Judas. But, we reply, the appointment of the other eleven by the King took place before this; and what else was that but organisation? He insists that the election of Matthias was democratic in form, though theocratic in its spirit. We do not object to the statement. Presbyterians hold that the people have an indefeasible, divine right to elect their own church rulers. Only we wonder at the terms in which he refers to the use of the lot on that occasion by the apostles as "an expedient resorted to, which, had the assembly been unanimous concerning the superior fitness of either candidate, would have been preposterous." If it was an election by the people, what was the necessity for it to be unanimous? The rule of the majority has always been accepted where popular government has prevailed. Are elections amongst Congregationalists always unanimous? Or are they held to be invalid when not unanimous? For Presbyterians we may say, with John Calvin, that this election being of an apostle, there was a direct appeal to the Lord, and a direct decision of the question by him, whilst at the same time the grant made to his people of the right to fill all church offices was also recognised and allowed.

The next step towards organisation in the Christian Church, Dr. Bacon finds in the election of deacons. The only objection to be made to his account of that matter, is, that he appears to be quite sure that this was altogether a new institute; whereas many hold, and we think with some show of reason, that there were deacons in the old synagogue system. But he falls into quite an ecstasy over the fact that the election in this case also was popular, as though it were quite a point gained for the Congregationalists. After this he proceeds to insist that the churches instituted by the apostles were only local churches, and that there is no sign of a national or even provincial Church in the writings of the apostles; that these local churches were entirely self-governing, except that they would naturally apply to the apostles for *information*, where the congregation differed amongst themselves; that these particular churches knew no other unity than that of ideas and affections, there being no subjection to any com-

mon jurisdiction; and that discipline was in the hands of the whole congregation, and their decision always final and without appeal. These points made, and a general statement urged of the simplicity which marked the apostolic methods, and we come to the close of the first chapter.

It will be observed that our author here enunciates all those principles which are included under the two names of Independency and Congregationalism—he asserts the full competency of every particular church to manage its own affairs, without any appeal being necessary or allowable to any higher authority, which makes him an Independent; and he asserts that all the members of each church, as well as its office-bearers, have a share directly in its government, which makes him a Congregationalist. His system of church order, therefore, is generally known by the double term, *Congregational Independency*, which refers to both these cardinal ideas. This system acknowledges only two senses of the word Church in Scripture: *one*, where it signifies the whole mystical body of Christ, consisting of all the true believers in the world; the *other*, where it sets forth a single local congregation. But Presbyterians conceive that there are three other senses in which the New Testament writers employ this term: *one*, to signify the whole body of those in all the world who profess the name of Christ, consisting of many not spiritually united to him; a field of tares and wheat growing together; the kingdom of heaven set up in this world, but not yet free from sin and imperfection; the visible Church to which the ascending Redeemer gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for its edification and comfort; a *second*, to signify a plurality of congregations in different places, connected together under one ecclesiastical order,\* as “the church at Jerusalem,” with its thousands

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\*In Jerusalem there were *πέντε μυριάδες*, *how many ten thousands of believers*. (See Acts xxi. 20.) Of course they could not all compose a single congregation, and yet they are called “*the church which was at Jerusalem*.” (See Acts xi. 22; xv. 4.)

We read also of the Christians at Antioch, to whom so many prophets and teachers ministered, as “*the church that was at Antioch*.”

In Acts ix. 31, we read, “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria.” Now, Tregelles alleges that the true



of members, making, of course, many congregations; or "the church at Antioch," or Ephesus, or in Galatia; and a *third*, in which it is applied to the body of believers in a given place, as represented by their ruling elders. Now if the Presbyterians are right in this view of the five senses of the word Church, then of course most of the points insisted on by Dr. Bacon must be given up. Then as to the apostles being appealed to merely for information which might guide the decision to be made independently by every congregation for itself, Presbyterians believe that in the fifteenth chapter of Acts they find an account in full of an appeal from the brethren at Antioch to a high court assembled in Jerusalem, which made a decree that was afterwards published far and wide through the churches, and accepted as final and conclusive amongst them. Very remarkable it is, indeed, how, in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy, it was provided for the Old Testament Church that Jerusalem should constitute the centre, to which all parts of the body should resort for decision of difficult questions. Let any one examine the passage extending from verse eighth to verse thirteenth inclusive, and he will see how natural it was, in view of such an arrangement having

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reading here is *ἐκκλησία*, and not *ἐκκλησίαι*; *the church*, and not *the churches*; which gives us *the church of Palestine*. And this reading of Tregelles is adopted by Tischendorf and Lachmann.

At Ephesus, Paul labored long; and we cannot doubt there were several congregations of believers in that city; yet, in Acts xx., Paul speaks of them as "*a flock*," under the rule and care of a united body of bishops and presbyters. And in the Apocalypse they are described as *the church in Ephesus*, (or *the Ephesian church*,) for there is high authority for the former reading. Instead of *τῆς Ἐφεσίνης ἐκκλησίας*, which we find in the *textus receptus*, Griesbach puts as a preferable reading, *τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας*, and he is followed in this by Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf.

We have also a letter in common to the "churches of Galatia," (Gal. i. 2,) requiring them to "serve one another," and to "bear one another's burdens," which they could not well have done without somehow acting as a united body.

Peter also addresses the disciples "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," as an associated body, exhorting their elders to "feed *the flock* of God amongst them."

come down to them from so old a date, for the early Christians to turn to the apostles and elders, brethren, at Jerusalem, for the authoritative decision of all matters in dispute amongst themselves. In this Synod at Jerusalem sit the apostles, not deciding by inspiration what is brought before them, but reasoning together amongst themselves and with the elders on the subject. It is a deliberative assembly. The apostles, being extraordinary and temporary officers, who were to have no successors in their peculiar and distinctive calling, here sit side by side with the permanent rulers of the church, called *elders*, and seem to induct them, as it were, into the business of deliberating upon church questions. The apostles being ministers of the Word, are church rulers; and the elders, who are found at this time congregated there together, are church rulers, representing in one body the whole visible Church on the earth, and they entertain the appeal brought before them from Antioch, and give their decision. It is not *information* they send down to Antioch, but a decree; and the bond here seen binding the whole Church together as one body, cannot be, as Dr. Bacon holds, merely the unity of ideas and affections, but manifestly appears to be the very thing which he denies, viz., a common jurisdiction. And then, once more, as to discipline being in the hands of the whole congregation, Presbyterians consider that when our Saviour said the brother offended must take his complaint and tell it to *the Church*, he could not have intended to say that the whole congregation, men and women, old and young, wise and foolish, must be assembled to hear the story, and have their passions and prejudices all aroused and inflamed by it; but must have had in his mind the arrangements of the Old Testament times of the synagogue, which he had determined should pass over into the New Testament Church; according to which a bench of elders, good and wise men, chosen to represent the congregation, should be appealed to by individuals having a difficulty, and their decision be heard, on pain of the recusants' being considered heathen and publicans. Thus Presbyterians find, in this latter case, the authority for their session; and in the former case, the authority for their highest church court; and then, in like manner, they

can produce from Scripture the authority and the model of their classical presbytery—the body that governs several different churches associated together, and that occupies the middle position betwixt their highest and their lowest eldership. And thus they understand the Scriptures as revealing the grand and glorious idea of representative government, which occupies the safe middle between the extremes of a tyrannical rule by one absolute head, and of the yet more tyrannical rule of an unreasoning multitude. *Incertum scindi studia in contraria vulgus*—the untrustworthy crowd is split up into contrary factions, said the great John Calvin; and he touched there as with a needle the weakness and inefficiency of Congregational Independency. The Lord Jesus gave his Church the unspeakable blessing of being governed by her own chosen representatives; and he gave her also a Constitution, which binds all her parts and members together in one body, having joints and bands. If her chosen representatives, her ruling elders, are often very unworthy of their high trust, so that the church really finds no blessing in them, let that be for a lamentation; the same, alas! is also true of her ministers and her deacons and her members in all branches of the Lord's household. And if, on the other hand, the bonds of union, whether in the whole Church at large, or in any particular denomination, seem too weak to hold the parts well together; and if divisions and schisms and separations are constantly ensuing, let this also, alas! be for a lamentation. But neither the one nor the other of these lamentable things constitutes any proof that the Presbyterian system cannot be the one revealed in Scripture. No where in the Holy Book is the Church on earth held up to our view otherwise than as full of imperfections. What her Lord and Head appointed that she shall be, and what she has actually attained to, as yet are very different things.

Dr. Bacon admits that “soon organisation in a more definite way would become necessary. There must be recognised distribution of duties; one must do this work, another must do that.” “But,” he says, “if we would know how the organisation was completed . . . we must forget for the moment all the modern systems of ecclesiastical polity and let the apostolic documents

teach us." Well, he will, no doubt, find it necessary to forget his Congregational Independency, if he sets about learning from the apostolic documents how the organisation of the Christian Church was completed. His "discipline in the hands of the whole congregation" directly, his "local churches entirely self-governing" and getting only "information" from the inspired apostles, Dr. Bacon will hardly find anywhere in the New Testament. On the very surface of those writings, we think, there lies the idea, *first*, that the whole visible Church of Christ is to be one kingdom, divided, if at all, only through sin and ignorance, and constantly striving to realise more and more fully the communion of saints both inwardly and outwardly; and *secondly*, that the Church is to be governed by officers divinely called and divinely empowered, but elected by the free choice of the people. It lies on the surface of the apostolic writings that the twelve were extraordinary officers for the founding of the Church in its New Testament form, inspired ministers of the Word and ruling elders, to be followed by teaching and ruling elders who were not so gifted but who were yet to be put in charge of the flock. From the beginning the Lord sent forth evangelists, and he sends them forth now (and Dr. Bacon will agree with us here) to found the Church in new places, and when thus founded to ordain over them ruling elders and teaching elders as well as deacons whom themselves have freely chosen and called to those offices; and then the evangelist passes on to do the same thing in other regions beyond. This it seems to us was the plan from the very beginning, and so we think there was organisation from the very beginning; every where *elders* and *elderships* or presbyteries, some local, which we call *Session*, some classical, which we call *Presbytery*, and some of wider and higher authority, which we call *Synod* or *Assembly*, as the case may be. Every where, from the very first setting up of the Christian Church, there was government, representative government, the same as there had been more or less fully exercised from the very days of Moses, yes and before his days, where we trace up elders and elderships till this divine institute is lost to our sight in the original system of

patriarchal government through the heads of tribes and of families.

In his second chapter Dr. Bacon treats of the progress "*From the Primitive to the Papal.*" We are unable to recognise in this chapter either learning or originality, although it is a tolerably respectable history of the evil development, that is, *the corruption* of the original presbytery of apostolic days, first into prelacy, and then, following the same track a little further down the ages, into Popery itself. We find little to object to in this account, but must criticise a single paragraph, which runs as follows:

"As the New Testament gives us no system of definite and formulated dogmas in theology, so it gives us no completed system of church government. Ecclesiastical polity grew age after age, just as theology grew. What there was of organisation in the primitive churches was more like the organisation of a seed than like the organisation of the tree in its maturity. The period between the day of Pentecost and the middle of the second century—or the narrower period between the date of the Pastoral Epistles and the beginning of that century—could not but be a period of rapid development in the Christian commonwealth. Nor did the growth of ecclesiastical polity terminate then. It went on, imperceptibly but steadily, to the age of Constantine—as it went on afterward to the age of Luther—as it goes on now, even in communities most abhorrent of progress and most observant of traditions."

Now what is this thing which was so rapidly developed down to Constantine's day and then down to Luther's, and which is now also developed more and more even amongst those most abhorrent of progress and most tolerant of traditions? It is "ecclesiastical polity" or "church government." Well, is that a good thing in Dr. Bacon's estimation or a bad thing? He seems to consider it about as good a thing perhaps as the "dogmas of theology," which have not, however, in general, the very highest consideration amongst those whom our author represents. But was there any of this thing of "ecclesiastical polity" in the beginning? Dr. Bacon would be apt to answer doubtfully, for he says: "What there was of organisation in the primitive churches was more like that of a seed than of a tree." So then there was, at least, a little of it at the beginning—just a seed, whether sown in the Church by the evil one or not, does not, however, seem to be very clear. On the whole it would appear



that the seed in question must have been rather a good one, for the time when it was found first in the Church was when the apostles were alive, and it was right under their influence and administration that Dr. Bacon says it had a rapid and a necessary development. But now let us look and wonder at the subsequent history of this seed—a good thing, it would seem, in the beginning, it *grows* to be a bad one! It is not supplanted by the bad—it is not exchanged for the bad, which sort of revolutions are constantly occurring; no, but this good thing imperceptibly but steadily *grows to be bad* down to Constantine's day, when Prelacy is seen to be established, and then it *grows to be worse*, through the Middle Ages down to the Reformation, at which time the Papacy is revealed in all its enormity of evil. But, when before did ever a good thing grow, and that steadily, to be a bad thing? The wonder is, however, not yet fully before our eyes—this evil thing, for such it has become, Dr. Bacon says, is growing still at this very time; and where? Well, in communities most abhorrent of progress and most observant of traditions. That must be in Rome and such like Churches, for they most abhor progress and are most observant of traditions; and they do both alike, for the one is the complement of the other. They abhor progress because observant of traditions, and they observe traditions because abhorrent of progress. But if so abhorrent of progress, how is it possible that this thing can grow and make progress amongst them? And if so observant of traditions, how is it that they do not stand still in that sort of perfection which the traditions of the past give to them? What does Dr. Bacon mean? His paragraph is a puzzle. Must we get at his meaning by supposing that Congregational Independency is so much in love with democracy that it is ready to condemn as evil all ecclesiastical polity and all church government?

But let us carefully avoid doing injustice to our author: is it possible he may mean to say that whilst there is no completed system of church government in the New Testament, yet nevertheless ecclesiastical polity is revealed there, and that the Word of God is our sufficient rule of faith on this as on other subjects? This is indeed precisely the Presbyterian idea of the relation of



the Word to church polity. It does not seem to be Dr. Bacon's idea. He cannot hold that the Word teaches as fully and completely the will of the King on the subject of the government of his kingdom, for he says the seed must needs grow and develop into a tree, and that progress was necessary and is now going on. But according to the Presbyterian idea of the revelation of church government in the Scriptures and of the Word as our only rule of faith on this as on every other matter relating to the kingdom, it necessarily follows that every change of what was revealed must be a *corruption* of it, so that there is to be no growth of ecclesiastical polity but the very closest possible observance of the scripture-model of the Church. Presbyterians acknowledge no development except in the Church's knowledge of the immutably perfect truth that was revealed. They cannot accept Dr. Bacon's idea of a doctrine being revealed in the beginning which must necessarily have a development into something altogether different. They have no opinion of that progress which adds any new things to the old thing revealed from heaven. Many Episcopalians hold that the Scriptures give the germs of church order, but it was for the Fathers to develop them, so that their rule of faith on this point is the Word and the Fathers. In like manner many Congregational Independents hold that the Scriptures give good instruction on this subject, but partial only, and that the discretion of the Church is to supplement what is lacking in the revelation. With them, accordingly, the rule of faith on this subject, as on many others, is the Word and Reason. No completed system of church government is given in the New Testament, but merely a seed of organisation is planted at the beginning, and the King leaves it to the wisdom of his servants to develop this little seed, as best they know and can, into a tree of right proportions.

But still more charitably construing our author's meaning, did he design to signify that ecclesiastical polity is in the Scriptures in the very same way that the Christian doctrine on other points is there? Was it his meaning that there is no system of formulated dogmas of theology arranged in the New Testament as a Confession of Faith arranges them scientifically, and so there is

no completed system of church government drawn up with logical precision as in modern church formularies; but that nevertheless the doctrines of Christian theology are all in the Word ready for the human mind to arrange in its own way of orderly statement, and that just so the principles of the polity which the King has given to his Church are all revealed in the Word ready for his servants to draw out and apply in suitable forms of procedure? If it is possible to understand our author as meaning to say this, no more can be demanded, and his position must be acknowledged to be scriptural and satisfactory. And we may proceed to make very frankly a brief statement of the Presbyterian belief, as we understand it, upon the question, What do the Scriptures reveal in the way of a system of ecclesiastical polity?

We begin with the declaration, nearly in the words of a celebrated old treatise on "the Divine Right of Church Government by the London Ministers," that the *substantials* of church order are all laid down in Scripture in particular and express rules respecting officers, ordinances, courts, discipline, etc., whilst the *circumstantials* are laid down also, but only in the general rule of doing all things decently and in order and unto edification. This is the doctrine of *Jus Divinum* in its true and just form as held forth in our standards. According to this view of it, church government is revealed in the Scriptures like any other doctrine; and the truth on this subject may be discerned by a church with more or with less clearness, and may accordingly be followed out into practice with a more or a less complete obedience. So that a Church may still be a true Church although holding erroneous views about ecclesiastical polity which lead her into erroneous practice on that subject, just as a Church may still be a true Church although holding erroneous views respecting the doctrine of the divine decrees, or like points in Christian theology. Not to receive and practise the doctrine of church government laid down in Scripture makes an imperfect Church, but does not destroy its title to be considered a true Church of Christ and to be acknowledged and treated as such by us. We must acknowledge all whom Christ acknowledges, and fellowship all whom he receives. We must, so far as in us lies, maintain communion,

at least the unity of the Spirit, with all who hold the Head. Now this is evidently a very different form of *Jus Divinum* from that offensive and unscriptural aspect of it in which it is held by the Church of Rome and some Protestants, according to which not only is a particular form of church government appointed, but so appointed as to be essential to the very being of the Church—there is no Church possible where that form of government is not. Our Presbyterian Confession states the true *Jus Divinum* doctrine in these words: “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing is at any time to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saying understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.”

What now are the *substantials* and what the *circumstantials* of church order? The former may be thus summed up under four heads, as set forth in the Scriptures: 1. The Church is one organised body, and not an indefinite number of independent congregations. 2. The members of the Church are all professed believers and their children. 3. The officers of the church, ordinary and perpetual, are presbyters and deacons, the former being of two classes. Every individual of each class is equal, officially, to all the rest of his class, and both classes are of equal authority in the courts of the church; only that the teaching elders, *as such*, and in their separate work of teaching, are manifestly very far superior to the ruling elders, by reason of that highest and most dignified office of teaching, which is committed to them singly and severally. All these ruling officers of the church are to be chosen freely by the people; but when chosen and ordained, they are to be always obeyed in the Lord. 4. The

power of rule by these officers is a joint and not a several or one-man power, and it is to be exercised only in free deliberative assemblies. These assemblies are of higher and lower authority, so that appeals can be taken up to the topmost; but their whole power is only declarative and ministerial and spiritual, Jesus Christ himself being sole Lawgiver and Head over his Church. These four are the *substantials* of the Presbyterian ecclesiastical polity—setting before us the voluntary membership which, with their offspring, compose the body of Christ on the earth; and the only officers whom the Lord sets over them after they have voluntarily chosen and called them; and the limited yet real and solemn power to be exercised by these officers in ruling the body, and exhibiting that body to be only one in all the earth, even as it has one Head only. Now, are not all these points of the doctrine of church government perfectly and indisputably scriptural? And do they not set before us the whole system of Presbyterianism; for what else is there belonging to it as of the substance besides these four points? All the rest are mere *circumstances* of time and place, of order and method, to be regulated decently and becomingly by human wisdom, which is quite competent to such a task. Let it be admitted that Scripture teaches what is declared above as to the Church's being one body, and as to her members, her officers, and her courts, and it will be thus granted that the Word gives the limbs and members, the bones and sinews, and flesh and blood, the whole framework of the system. Grant that these substantials are written in the Word, or are deducible therefrom by good and necessary consequence, and so are of divine right, and Presbyterians are then perfectly willing to let human wisdom and discretion come in, as Scripture authorises, to arrange all the mere circumstantials, according to the general rules of decency and order.

These four principles of ecclesiastical polity constitute the Church a free commonwealth. It is not a monarchy, with a human head on earth, as Popery makes it; it is not an oligarchy or an aristocracy, as Prelacy makes it; and it is not a democracy, as Congregational Independency makes it. But it is a free representative republic. The Church is not subject to any human

power; her officers are all her servants, given to her by her Head. They belong to her, not she to them, and are employed by her for her edification and comfort. But then the Church does not directly, but only indirectly through these officers, govern herself. The flock has need of under-shepherds, and she has them given her by the Lord. The representative system is a thing from heaven, revealed in his Word by God, who is author both of State and Church, as also of the Family lying at the basis of both; and a thing it is which is exactly adapted to meet most perfectly the wants of man in all these aspects of his being. As it is not the monarchy of a man the Church needs, nor yet an aristocratic oligarchy, so also it is not democracy, the direct rule of the people, the government of the crowd, the sway of a headlong, inconsiderate, loud-tongued, many-voiced mob; the control of passion, or prejudice, or interest, or mere sympathy and feeling. What she needs, and what Christ has given her, is representative government, he creating all the offices in his Church, and bestowing on them certain simple, spiritual powers, limited, well defined, and special, and she at liberty to fill these offices with such men as she freely chooses for her servants, but yielding thereafter to them that cheerful obedience in the Lord to which they are entitled after they have counselled together and proclaimed their judgment. What the Church has had given her is constitutional government, the Word being her charter, wherein are written all her rights, and her formularies being based on the provisions of the Word, and being accepted by her own free approving choice. And as she must not yield her rights to any usurping monarchy or aristocracy, but stand fast in her liberty, so she must not swing round to the other extreme of wild license, giving the control of things to those not called of God or elected by the Church to office, allowing men or women without gifts for ruling to intrude into the sacred work of governing the kingdom and breaking up the one body into a thousand thousand fragments.

Dr. Bacon's third chapter discusses, "*What the Reformation in the sixteenth century did for Church polity.*" The fundamental fact on which he builds his superstructure here will be



disputed by none, that "everywhere a political element was combined with the simply religious element in effecting the Reformation." The Church of Rome was a political institution. Earlier attempts at Reformation failed because the civil power regarded them as dangerous; but Luther and Zwingli found protection, and in some sense help, from secular powers, and so they succeeded. Accordingly the Reformers had to accept what they could get from the States which protected them. There is truth in these statements; but it cannot be said that the idea of a national Church had existed before the Reformation only as "a rudimentary notion," and was the offspring, in its fulness, of religious and political forces in coöperation at that time; for surely the Jewish Church was a national Church, and when Constantine became the patron of Christianity there ensued the Church of the Roman Empire. What if the providence that has always watched over the Church, and raised up defenders for it when it seemed good in God's sight, did use Frederic of Saxony to sustain Luther, and free Switzerland to give Zwingli support, and Geneva to house John Calvin, fleeing from France, and afford him opportunity to exhume the apostolic church-order from the grave in which it had been buried for ages—how do these things prove that Luther's, Zwingli's, and Calvin's theories of church government were all poisoned with "Nationalism," but that Francis Lambert of Avignon, who, in 1526, nine years after Luther began his work, devised a purely Congregational platform, which shortly "vanished away, leaving behind it no enduring fruit," was the only one of the Reformers who repaired directly to the Bible for instruction about church polity? Lambert failed, says Dr. Bacon, because the time had not come for "building the house of God according to the pattern given in the Scriptures." It was "set aside to wait for better times," although it alone would have had the "churches ordered strictly according to the law of Christ." This sounds a little strange from Dr. Bacon, when we recall to mind what he says in the preceding chapter about the New Testament giving us no completed system of church government, and of ecclesiastical polity being necessarily a growth under guidance of human discretion. But he cannot divest John



Calvin of the glory of having gone directly to the Word for all his principles of church order. It is certainly not true of him that his ecclesiastical polity was determined "not so much by reference to the primitive model as by considerations of temporary and local convenience." He was not able, indeed, to establish his scriptural discipline in its fulness at Geneva; but certain it is that his whole life was but one struggle to accomplish this, and that in the French Church, through his influence, that discipline was established in considerable purity, and flourished there in great vigor for one hundred years. Still further, it is certainly not correct, so far as Calvin is concerned, to say of the Reformers, "what they were contending for was the primitive gospel, rather than the primitive church polity." Principal Cunningham will be admitted to be higher authority on this point than Dr. Bacon could possibly be, and he says: "The systematising of divine truth, and the full organisation of the Christian Church, according to the word of God, are the great peculiar achievements of Calvin;" but that his "contributions to the establishment of principle and the development of truth were greater in regard to church organisation than in regard to any other department of discussion—of such magnitude and importance, indeed, in their bearing upon the whole subject of the Church, as naturally to suggest a comparison with the achievements of Sir Isaac Newton in unfolding the true principles of the solar system." (Cunningham's *Reformers and Theology of the Reformation*, pp. 27, 294.) No man can read Calvin's Letters without perceiving how near to his heart lay the reëstablishment of the original church government of the Scriptures, and with what preëminent zeal he addressed his energies to this consummation as the great labor of his life. But Dr. Bacon misunderstands the true attitude which Calvin occupied on this subject, and hence we hear him gravely affirming, "At Geneva, Calvin, not to be out-voted by fellow-presbyters unfriendly to the Reformation, established a consistory in which representatives of the laity, annually chosen, were confessors with the clergy." Upon which statement we have to remark, *first*, that neither the word "clergy," nor the idea it conveys, had any favor with Calvin. The former he expressly con-

demns more than once ; the latter he abhorred and opposed everywhere, and the names he gives to those who teach in the Church are always and only bishops, presbyters, pastors, and ministers; *secondly*, we have to say that Calvin no where teaches that ruling elders are any more representatives of the laity than are ministers of the Word ; and *thirdly*, we have to protest that, seeing the great Reformer has expressly traced the institution of ruling elders, and of the consistory and other church courts, up to the Word of God, it is hardly a liberal or a fair thing to charge that he invented them purely to serve a temporary and selfish purpose.

The fourth chapter of this volume is entitled "*The English Reformation and the Puritans.*" Dr. Bacon traces the twofold character of this Reformation, running up its religious side to Wycliffe, one hundred and fifty years before Luther, and running back the political or national side of it also through centuries of conflict between the State, as represented by King and Parliament, and the Church as governed by a foreign potentate, the Pope. Two results followed the politico-ecclesiastical movement which occurred under Henry VIII.: one that the Church becomes dependent on the crown, and allied with the aristocracy ; the other that two parties show themselves hereafter in the national Church, the party of the old clergy who submitted to the new arrangements with little of the revolutionary spirit, and constantly looked to the past with a feeling akin to regret, and the party who had received their ideas of Reformation by tradition from Wycliffe, or by communication and sympathy from the Reformers on the continent. Then begins the conflict of the government Protestantism, completed and immovable, and the demand for a more thorough reformation. On the one side the court and what were called "the court clergy ;" on the other side the men who wanted purity in the worship of God and the administration of Christ's ordinances, who were therefore nicknamed "The Puritans." Such, then, is the origin of Puritanism in England, according to our author. "It was not, nor did it intend to be, a secession or separation from the national Church." Dr. Bacon says they were not "Dissenters," in the modern

meaning of that word—not Congregationalists, nor, at first, even Presbyterians. In the early stages of the conflict, they had not generally reached the conclusion that diocesan episcopacy must be got rid of. The most advanced of them were at the beginning only “Nonconformists,” deviating from some of the prescribed regulations for public worship. What they desired was not to withdraw from the National Church, but reformation of the National Church itself, by national authority. But beginning with certain conscientious scruples about some of the ceremonies and of the vestments prescribed in worship, because appearing to them to sanction pernicious superstitions, they came, at length, to be satisfied with nothing short of an entire revision and reconstruction of the ecclesiastical establishment. This progress of opinion was due to various influences—one being the obstinacy of conscience once roused in conscientious men, which could not be quieted, but must needs be roused the more when the strong arm of power sought to quiet it by force; and another being the influence of Thomas Cartwright, a Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, of great learning and eloquence, who began to discuss in his lectures (1570) the theory of church government given in the Scriptures. Yet even Cartwright, Dr. Bacon says, “aimed at nothing more than a complete reformation by the government,” “though his system was essentially that of Geneva and Scotland.” Under the influence of this man, “English Puritanism became essentially . . . Presbyterianism, like that of Holland or of Scotland.”

But our author holds that “something better than Puritanism was necessary to liberty and to the restoration of simple and primitive Christianity.” And so in the fifth chapter, which is entitled “*Reformation without tarrying for any,*” he proceeds to tell us what that something was. The Puritans demanded that the established forms of public worship be purged of all idolatrous symbols and superstitious ceremonies, and a variety of changes be made in the ecclesiastical government, so as to conform it to the apostolic pattern; but this was to be done “by the national authority, inasmuch as the English nation itself baptized and Protestant was the Church of England. No withdrawal from

the National Church was to be thought of, for that would be schism." "But under oppression men sometimes get new light." Fines and imprisonments led the sufferers to doubt whether the Church of England, having Elizabeth Tudor for its supreme ruler on earth, was really any Church of Christ at all. They began to inquire whether the apostles ever instituted any national churches. Such questions among the Puritans gave origin to another party aiming at a more radical reformation." And this party is one which, "instead of remaining in the Church of England to reform it, boldly withdrew themselves from that ecclesiastico-political organisation, denouncing that and all other so-called national churches as institutions unknown to the law and mind of Christ." They propound a theory of separation, and they undertake to embody it in organised churches. The Separatists put forth books to disseminate their opinions, and there is no excess of moderation in their style of setting forth their ideas. Queen Elizabeth sets up her court of High Commission to "make inquiry concerning all heretical opinions, seditious books, . . . false rumors or talks, slanderous words and sayings," having power to punish the refractory, amongst other ways by fines at discretion and unlimited imprisonment. Of the forty-four members of this English Inquisition, twelve are bishops; and any three of them, one being always a bishop, could proceed in any case. John Copping, Elias Thacker, and Robert Browne were leading Separatists, and were imprisoned. The former two are condemned for sedition, because they disputed the Queen's supremacy in religious things, and they are put to the felon's death. Robert Browne, whose name, *Brownists*, the Separatists bore, recanted, and turned conservative and betrayed the cause. Next we meet with Henry Barrowe, *Gentleman*, and John Greenwood, *Clerk*, friends and fellow-sufferers for Separation, who, after years of imprisonment, during which they bravely maintained their opinions, and even managed sometimes to publish them in books by means of the press in Holland, were at last both hanged as seditious, praying meanwhile for the Queen and for England! Then we are made acquainted with John Penry, a

Welshman, who also sealed his testimony for Separatism with his blood.

Dr. Bacon's touching narrative now goes forward into full details of the removal of these suffering Christian people out of England into Holland, and their sojourn there, and then of their translation to New England and settlement in the American wilderness. We need not enter upon that oft-told story, which, in fifteen thrilling chapters, is again here well told and most affecting. We must go back and take notice of our author's account of the gradually increasing divergence between the two classes into which the Puritans have come to be divided. Whilst Barrowe and Greenwood are in prison, they carry on a bitter controversy with Giffard, who had himself suffered as a Puritan. He was "a great and diligent preacher," who had found "some things in the Book of Common Prayer not agreeable to the Word of God;" who was therefore twice suspended from his ministry and imprisoned, but got released, and who, Dr. Bacon says, notwithstanding the vigilance of Bishops Aylmer and Whitgift, was still, as "minister of God's holy word," at his post in Maldon, "carrying on the reformation he had made in that market town by his preaching, and steadily puritanising the whole parish, when Barrowe sent forth from his prison the 'Discovery of the False Church.'" In this book, Barrowe assails in no measured terms "the attempt of certain Puritan clergymen to institute and carry on a Presbyterial government in the National Church." Barrowe calls them "Pharisees of these times," ridicules them as "your good men, who sigh and groan for reformation, but their hands, with the sluggard, deny to work;" but they wish to "bring in a new, adulterate, forged government, in show (or rather in despite) of Christ's government," which they "most miserably innovate and corrupt." Dr. Bacon says, "Barrowe and the Separatists, as they compared that scheme with the model which they found in the New Testament, were of the opinion which Milton, himself a Separatist, afterward expressed: 'New presbyter is but old priest, writ large.'" Also he says: "It did not escape the notice of Barrowe, that the Puritan scheme proposed an ecclesiastical government of the people, but not by



the people." Accordingly, Barrowe charged that "they give the people a little liberty to sweeten their mouths and make them believe that they should choose their own ministers; yet, even in this pretended choice, they do cozen and beguile them also, leaving them nothing but the smoky, windy title of election only." Giffard, the Maldon preacher, publishes a rather temperate reply, in which he calls the Brownists by the old and odious name of "Donatists," and says they are "a blind sect;" and he complains with some warmth that they called the Puritan assemblies "Romish, Idolatrous, and Antichristian," and declared them to have "no ministry, no word of God, nor sacraments." Other like combatants on both sides are described by Dr. Bacon; but it would appear from his own account of them, that the commonly received estimate of the Brownists is correct, and that in comparison with the Puritans, they exceeded in objurgatory bitterness. It was not strange. More bitterly persecuted than their brethren, because more bitter in their hatred of the Government religion, they became bitterer still, and realised to the full Solomon's picture of the effects of oppression; and then, in the madness which came on them, it was not easy for them to distinguish the different classes of their opponents.

Dr. Bacon justifies not, but condemns, the bitterness of Brownist zeal. Not Robert Browne, but John Robinson, who tempered and toned down the fierce spirit of the Separatists, is his hero. "Learned, polished, modest in spirit," and "growing saintlier" year by year as he drew nearer to heaven, well may our author admire John Robinson, father of the Congregational brethren, as they were distinguished from the original Independents or Brownists. "He became a reformer of the Separation." Yet Dr. Bacon, as between Puritans and Separatists, always prefers the latter. It is impossible to deny that the Separation was fanatical, severe, and contentious, harsh and abusive in spirit and in language, even beyond the ordinary harshness of that age; yet Dr. Bacon, whenever he places Puritan and Separatist in opposition, is prone to speak of the former as the enemy of the latter, rather than the latter as the enemy of the former. In his account, it is not the Church of England which per-



secuted both classes of the Nonconformists, but it is the Church of England and the Puritans who persecuted the Separatists. So strongly does he sympathise with these last against the other Nonconformists, that the very name, *Puritan*, seems to have grown hateful in his eyes. This is a new fashion he has adopted. When he published his "Congregational Order," giving his historical account of the ancient platforms, the Saybrook and the Cambridge, which Congregationalists accept, he gloried in the Puritans. But this was long years ago. He has been learning better. He has found out contrary precisely to what he said in the historical account, that the Puritans were not Congregationalists, but were all Presbyterians; and so now he is for turning them all over to us. And as Robinson advised his brethren to "avoid and shake off the name of Brownist," Dr. Bacon now wants to avoid and shake off a name he used to glory in. He will now call his forefathers only *Pilgrims* or *Separatists*. Great must be his zeal against Presbyterianism, when, because some Puritans adopted that view of church government, the very name of Puritan, gloried in so long by all New England, must now be foresworn and proscribed. Dr. Bacon cannot change this fashion. Words are things, and no one man has any right nor any power to change the meaning of them. Everybody knows that *Puritanism*, like *Protestantism*, is a term which included originally those who afterwards became widely separated in opinion. As said the late Dr. Moore, of Nashville, writing in this REVIEW in March, 1866, in every great movement in history, there are two elements at work, corresponding with two great types of human character, the radical and the conservative element. The former is destructive, seeking thorough change in everything, and for slight defects will raze a building to its foundations; the latter is moderate in spirit, preferring to remove always what is defective only, and seeking to retain what is good in existing institutions. These two elements showed themselves amongst the Puritans, and the one assumed the form of Independency and the other of Presbyterianism, as both were opposed to and by the English Church.

Towards the close of his book, our author is completely carried

away with this new-born prejudice. The writer who could say in his Historical Account of the Saybrook Platform, that "The Puritans who came to New England, particularly those who came to Connecticut, were neither Presbyterians nor Independents, but Congregationalists"; and again: "But while the Puritans disliked Presbyterianism, they objected to strict Independency"—closes this "*Genesis of the New England Churches*" with three chapters portraying the bad treatment of the *Pilgrims* by the *Puritans*! And the very last chapter of the work is entitled "*The beginning of a Puritan colony in New England, and what came of it.*" The object of this colony, it is said, was that *there*, "Puritan principles abhorrent alike of Popery and Prelacy on the one hand, and of schism on the other, should have free course and be glorified." Dr. Bacon describes this new colony at Naumkeag as instinct with "the Puritan idea of a National Church, and the Puritan method of church reformation," viz., the planting "in that territory a Christian state after the Puritan theory." It was originated by men "whose conscientious antipathies had convinced them that 'they should sin against God by building up such a people' as those Pilgrims were who 'renounced all universal, national, and diocesan churches.'" And yet it turns out that John Endicott, the leader and governor of the new colony, who had been selected as a "fit" man for this Puritan undertaking, writes very shortly after his arrival to Governor Bradford, of New Plymouth, desiring that the "sweet harmony and good will" which was "proper to servants of the same master," should prevail betwixt them and their followers; which letter Dr. Bacon has the candor to acknowledge was both "frank and generous." And so it was not long before these ill-disposed Puritans and the Separatists were in full fraternity and mutual confidence!

"Under Cartwright's influence," says Dr. Bacon, (p. 71,) "English Puritanism became essentially, in its ideas and aspirations, Presbyterianism, like that of Holland or of Scotland." Here we have the reason and ground of his dislike of "the Puritans." And the charge which he brings against them throughout his work, is that they sought to reform existing "ecclesiasti-

cal institutions—such as public worship, the choice and induction of ministers, the administration of sacraments, and the infliction of censures—in conformity with the theory which it will be convenient to designate as *Nationalism*. The underlying idea was that the baptized people of an independent state, being a distinct Church, were as independent of Rome as Rome was of them, while they were also a constituent part of the true Church catholic.” “It was assumed as a first principle, that the people of a Christian state or kingdom, being all baptized, were all Christians and members of Christ’s Church in that state or kingdom.” (Pp. 51, 52.) This is Dr. Bacon’s description of what he calls *Nationalism*, regarded and represented by him as the chief characteristic of the Puritans, whom he describes as Presbyterians. “The English nation itself, baptized and Protestant, was the Church of England.” “Ecclesiastical reformation must all be made by the national authority.” “No withdrawal from the National Church was to be thought of, for that would be schism.” (P. 73.) But on the other hand, the cardinal idea of Separation was that a “Church is nothing else than a society of Christian disciples, separated from the world, and voluntarily agreeing to govern themselves by the law of Christ, as given in the Holy Scriptures.” (P. 88.) All this, we are persuaded, is erroneous and unfair, considered as a delineation of the difference between Puritanism and Separatism, just as it is unfounded and in fact absurd, considered as an account of the main characteristic of Presbyterianism. Dr. Bacon has only seen a ghost—that’s all. He is carried away with a phantom of his imagination. *Nationalism* was not the main idea of those Puritans who were Presbyterians. Dr. Calamy says, (Nonconformists’ Memorial, Introduction, p. 5,) that they “were for Calvin’s Discipline and Way of Worship,” which means what the Scripture sets forth. This and not Nationalism has ever been the distinguishing and chief feature of Presbyterianism—it demands for every doctrine and every observance a *thus saith the Lord*. Dr. Bacon introduces George Giffard as a chief opposer among Puritans of the extreme Brownists. Well, we confidently ask, can he produce a word from Giffard about Nationalism? Still further,

Dr. Bacon says Cartwright's influence made Puritanism essentially Presbyterianism, like that of Holland or of Scotland; and surely, then, he can tell us of much that Cartwright had to say about Reformation by national authority. We are of the opinion, however, that Dr. Bacon may be safely challenged to quote anything from the writings of this great Puritan leader to substantiate the statement made about Nationalism. Here are the six propositions containing the opinions he had disseminated at Cambridge, where he was Professor, which, being submitted to the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Whitgift, caused his expulsion from the University. They seem to contain some *very good reading*, such as suits well the Presbyterian palate; but surely no flavor of what Dr. Bacon calls *Nationalism*, can possibly be detected in them. We quote from Brook's *Lives of the Puritans*, Vol. II., p. 140—an authority several times referred to and often copied by our author. These propositions were delivered under Cartwright's own hand to the Vice-Chancellor:

"1. That the names and functions of archbishops and archdeacons ought to be abolished.

"2. That the offices of the lawful ministers of the Church, viz., bishops and deacons, ought to be reduced to their apostolical institution: bishops to preach the word of God and pray, and deacons to be employed in taking care of the poor.

"3. That the government of the Church ought not to be intrusted to bishops, chancellors, or the officials of archdeacons; but every church ought to be governed by its own minister and presbyters.

"4. That ministers ought not to be at large, but every one should have the charge of a particular congregation.

"5. That no man ought to solicit or stand as a candidate for the ministry.

"6. That ministers ought not to be created by the sole authority of the bishop, but to be openly and fairly chosen by the people."

Let it be observed, that with Dr. Bacon the chief error of the Puritans in England was, that "ecclesiastical reformation was to be by national authority," while the cardinal idea of Separation was, that "a church is nothing else but a society of disciples, governing themselves by the law of Christ alone," "acknowledging no jurisdiction of Cæsar or of Parliament over the things that are God's." And let it also be observed, that our author

glories in the Pilgrim Fathers as having actually established in America "the simplicity of self-government" for their churches, "under Christ alone." Such a quantity has the venerable Doctor to say about that frightful apparition of *Nationalism* discovered by him in the Puritans, and so sincerely does he seem to worship Congregationalism as divine, that for his edification and comfort we must needs recall to his mind some passages written by him years ago, and which are to be found in his "Historical Account of the Saybrook Platform."

First, then, let us here copy what Dr. Bacon quotes from Trumbull, a high New England authority, as to the condition in which Separation, as it was first established in Connecticut, placed their churches:

"For the want of a more general and energetic government, many churches ran into confusion: councils were not sufficient to relieve the afflicted and restore peace. As there was no general rule for the calling of councils, council was called against council, and opposite results were given upon the same cases, to the reproach of councils and the wounding of religion. Aggrieved churches and brethren were discouraged, as in this way their case seemed to be without remedy. There was no such thing in this way as bringing their difficulties to a final issue."—Trumbull, Vol. I., p. 480.

Again:

"Churches might meet in consociation from the vicinity or from a distance, in larger or smaller numbers; and there was nothing to prevent one consociation from sitting after another upon the same case. There was no suitable nor direct provision for the relief of aggrieved individuals, nor indeed for convening the members of the body. The churches of Connecticut realised these defects, both before and after the session of this Synod.\* The difficulty in the first church in Hartford, growing out of a controversy between the pastor and ruling elder, afflicted them exceeding, and in fact all the churches in New England. Other difficulties, arising in different churches, afflicted them also."

This second extract is in Dr. Bacon's own words. The two together sufficiently evince that Separation had not, up to the period referred to, proved to be a perfect panacea for church troubles. But what remedy was devised? The answer is, associations of the ministers and consociations of the people. Good

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\* The Massachusetts Synod, which met in 1662.



Mr. Hooker had told them, (so records Dr. Bacon,) about a week before his death, "we must agree upon constant meetings of ministers, and settle the consociation of churches, or else we are undone." Separation, pure and simple, was found to be not what the churches required. Somehow, the union and communion of the particular congregations with one another, must be brought about, or confusion must continue and increase, and ruin overtake the whole. "The simplicity of self-government" must not be too absolute, or all will come to destruction, and there be no church whatever left. So much for Dr. Bacon's revelations to us years ago, respecting strict and proper Independency, even as it was modified and softened under the teachings and influence of the gentle Robinson. It is not enough that Brownists become Congregational brethren. Another step must be taken to destroy the too great isolation of particular congregations—a step in the direction of Presbyterianism.

But who is to undertake the work of uniting these Separatist churches? Here let Dr. Bacon stiffen his sinews and screw up his courage, for the ghost is about to appear again—the very ghost of *Nationalism*, which he declares that he has seen so often amongst the Presbyterian Puritans, but which never dared to shew itself amongst the Separatists. Speaking, as quoted above, of the troubles in the first church in Hartford, which so afflicted all the churches in New England, and of the other like difficulties arising in different churches, Dr. Bacon goes on to say as follows:

"The Legislature were so annoyed by these, that in 1668 'they conceived the design of uniting the churches of Connecticut on some general plan of church government and discipline, by which they might walk, notwithstanding their different sentiments, in points of less importance.' With this view an Act passed, authorising four distinguished clergymen in different parts of the colony, viz., the Reverend Messrs. James Fitch of Norwich, Gershom Buckley of Wethersfield, Joseph Elliott of Guilford, and Samuel Waterman of Fairfield, 'to meet at Saybrook and devise a way in which this desirable purpose might be effected.' 'This appears to have been,' Trumbull remarks, 'the first step towards forming a religious constitution.'"

Again, at a later day, the same thing occurs. We quote again from Dr. Bacon:



“The substance of all this appears from the Act of the Legislature appointing those conventions in 1708 in the different counties then in Connecticut, whose delegates formed the Saybrook Platform. ‘This Assembly, from their own observation and the complaint of many others, being made sensible of the defects of the discipline of the churches of this Government, arising from the want of a more explicit asserting of the rules given for that end in the Holy Scriptures, from which would arise a permanent establishment among ourselves, a good and regular issue in cases subject to ecclesiastical discipline, glory to Christ our Head, and edification to his members; hath seen fit to ordain and require, and it is, by the authority of the same, ordained and required, that the ministers of the several counties of this Government shall meet together at their respective county towns, with such messengers as the churches to which they belong shall see cause to send with them, on the last Monday in June next, there to consider and agree upon those methods and rules for the management of ecclesiastical discipline which by them shall be adjudged agreeable to the word of God, and shall at the same meeting appoint two or more of their number to be their delegates, who shall all meet together at Saybrook, at the next commencement to be held there, where they shall compare the results of the meetings of the several counties, and out of and from them draw a form of ecclesiastical discipline.’

“Agreeably to this order the ministers and messengers of the churches met and drafted four models of church discipline, and appointed delegates to the Convention at Saybrook. The delegates met and adopted the Confession of Faith which has been spoken of,\* and the Heads of Agreement and Articles for the Administration of Discipline.”

In these formularies, which together constitute the famous Saybrook Platform, provision is made, as Dr. Bacon tells us, “to preserve, promote, or recover the peace and edification of the churches by the means of a consociation of the elders and churches, or of an association of elders, both of which, (the compilers say,) we are agreed have countenance from the Scriptures.” “The articles provided for one or more associations in each county, consisting of the teaching elders, who should meet at least twice in the year,” etc. “The Platform also recommended a General Association, . . . to meet once a year.” “Being thus formed, the Platform was sanctioned by the Colony Legislature, and as soon as practicable went into operation.”

Let us retrace our steps. The *Legislature*, in 1668, were so

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\* The Savoy Confession, nearly identical with the Westminster.

annoyed by the difficulties which absolute Separation produced amongst the Connecticut churches, that *they conceived the design* of uniting them in some general plan of *church government and discipline*. An Act of the Legislature passes, *authorising four ministers* to meet and devise a way. Again, in 1708, the Legislature, sensible of the defects of the discipline of *the churches of this Government*—mark the claim here made—*hath seen fit to ordain and require*, and it is, by *the authority of the same, ordained and required*, that the ministers and messengers shall meet and draw out a form of *ecclesiastical discipline*. Then, after the Platform is made, the Colony Legislature *sanctions* it, and it goes into operation!

Now, where is our venerable friend, Dr. Bacon? Has he survived the terrors of this manifestation of such a frightful *Nationalism* in the very midst of his Separatist brethren?

Whoever will examine the Cambridge Platform, adopted in 1648 by delegates from Connecticut and other New England colonies, along with those of Massachusetts, will discover that it makes Christ the King and Lawgiver, and declares the doctrine of *jus divinum*, and also makes the same distinction, with our system, as to *the parts* of church government and its *circumstantials*; that it acknowledges the distinction of the Church visible and the Church invisible; that it accepts the ruling elder as of divine authority, and distinguishes between him and the teaching elder, as also between this latter and the doctor; that it holds to deaconesses as well as deacons, and accepts synods as the ordinance of Christ, and necessary to the well-being of churches. But to remedy the manifest defects of this Platform, and put an end to the confusion which arises under it, the Saybrook Platform was set up in 1709, providing for consociations and associations, and councils for appeals. This attempt at mutual government by the churches looks somewhat like the engrafting of a Presbyterian or *quasi* Presbyterian idea upon the Congregational system. Thus early Congregationalism was assimilated in various particulars of importance to the Presbyterian system. It cannot be denied, however, that the present successors of the old Congregational Puritans have fallen away from some of the best

parts of the testimony of their fathers. There lies before us a very able and conclusive argument, read in 1859 before the General Association at Bloomington, by the Reverend President Blanchard, pleading for the restoration to use amongst his Congregational brethren, of the office of the ruling elder, as set forth in the Scriptures, and also in the Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms. He argues: I. That then they would be abiding in Christ's words, instead of man-made church arrangements. II. That this would give their churches the strength of right position in argument. "We now teach them (he says,) that Christ 'has given no church polity,' and yet complain when our ministers or people desert to other churches. Why complain, if Christ has left the form of church polity to each man's sense and judgment of convenience and propriety?" III. That this return to the Bible forms and names of discipline, and this alone, will give our churches that sacredness in the eyes of our members which Christ intended that his body, the Church, should have. If we go to our town meetings and lyceums instead of our Bibles, for the names of our church-officers, we so far make our churches like our lyceums and town meetings, in the eyes of our people. A church differs from another meeting in that Christ is there, and his Spirit dwells there; and surely such a body ought to be constructed in all things after the pattern shewed us in the New Testament, and not to be disfigured and marred by the inventions of men. Where there is no eldership, the place will be supplied by man-invented and unordained committees. We are losing our liberties as God's children, by having no clear, definite, well-defined scriptural views of church polity." About the same time the late venerable Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, Connecticut, delivered a discourse before the Congregational Board of Publication in Boston, in which he declared that their system has "one great want—organic unity. The churches have no bond of union in faith or practice. We have no common standards. When asked, What is Congregationalism? it is not easy for us to give an answer. There are great divergencies in faith and order. We want more unity, and we must wisely and considerately move in this direction, or we shall

lose our hold on the conservative and thoughtful amongst us, and fall into the hands of the rash or the radical. Young America wants holding in." So, then, Dr. Hawes testifies that the Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms are no longer held in the New England churches for "common standards!" Said we not truly, that they have fallen away from the testimony of their fathers? Clearly they are *in the downward drift*, obeying that law written on the history of the whole past—the law of degeneracy after *renaissance*. Would to God that our own beloved Church, so lately reformed, were giving no sign of her following now herself the same law!

The late Rev. Dr. Moore pointed out in this REVIEW for March, 1866, the differences that mark Independency and Presbyterianism. The one is a pure democracy like that of Athens; the other a representative republic. The one is a government of the existing numerical majority, whose decision is final, for Independency recognises no court of appeal that can reverse the action of the congregation; the other is a government of tribunals with appellate courts above, to correct the errors of the judicatories below. The one is a government of the individual will of the majority; the other necessarily involves a fixed and written constitution, by whose terms its complex system of tribunals is constructed. The one has not, and cannot have, any fixed creed, as this would interfere with that liberty and responsibility of the individual will, which is its cardinal feature; the other has had from the beginning a fixed creed, whose leading articles of faith have changed but little since its first establishment. The one is mainly negative, denying much, but affirming little, as a system, leaving that to the individual; the other is positive, affirming more than it denies, and requiring assent to these affirmations as a condition of association with it.

Now the one system, (continues Dr. Moore,) in its very structure, implies the fallibility and weakness of man, by making many provisions, which the other does not make, to correct and restrain it. The system which implies that man is a fallen, fallible creature, needing restraints and correctives, requiring checks and balances of the most guarded kind, will tend to produce a

type of theology, philosophy, and individual character conformable to this idea. The opposite system will produce an opposite type of theology, philosophy, and personal character. Here let us listen to Prof. Porter, of Yale College, whom Dr. Moore quotes, as delineating with the most admiring love the Independent system, in its effects on personal character: "The freedom and independence of the individual man characterised the Puritan. . . . It was not, however, a lawless freedom, but a liberty implied in that separate responsibility which each individual man holds to himself and to his God. The Puritan must judge of a law, to know why he must obey it. No authority or organisation steps between himself and his conscience. Hence he stands or falls for himself; he is independent in his bearing, self-relying in his character, and marked by his own individuality. This, not because he scorns the restraints of society or of law, but because he is overmastered by a restraint which is higher; not that he despises authority, but that he reverences the authority that is highest of all. This feeling of responsibility leads him to a personal and thorough investigation; an investigation which is not content till it has tested every question at the highest tribunal. He calls in question every truth, not because he is sceptical by nature, but that he may distinguish the true from the false. He must examine all truth. He questions his own being, and the powers of his own soul, the existence and character of God, the authority of conscience, the reason of this or that duty, the evidence of divine revelation, the genuineness of the text, the exactness of its meaning. He calls in question the tenure of magistrates, the right by which they bear the sword, and the use or abuse of the power intrusted to their hands. . . . The Puritan believes in no fixed institutions. . . . Hence he is by nature a reformer. He is intent upon changing old laws, old institutions, and old habits, that they may meet new exigencies and the new character of those for whose benefit they exist."

This principle of individual responsibility (says Dr. Moore,) is vital in Protestantism; but where it works unchecked, in connexion with a theory of human nature which exalts the natural powers and the goodness of men, much that is valuable in the



opinions and institutions of the past will be rejected, endless diversities of opinion be generated, and an unsettled state of opinions in politics, philosophy, and religion must result. Individual energy will be developed, a jealousy of individual rights be produced, popular education be promoted, and popular advancement stimulated; but its defect is the lack of those checks and restraints, those elements of stability and permanence needful in every enduring state of society. Precisely here Independency differs from Presbyterianism, with its conservative and restraining influences. The two systems were antagonistic—but Dr. Moore holds that they were not of necessity mutually destructive. In the largeness of his catholic spirit he compares them to the centripetal and the centrifugal forces of the great system of the universe, whose antagonism is so wisely adjusted and balanced, that there results a progress at once safer and faster than either alone could produce. We leave it for the reader to judge for himself whether any such adjusting and balancing by man is conceivable for the Presbyterian and the Independent systems. We have ourselves been trained to a jealousy of all such mixtures.