

A SERIES

OF

TRACTS

ON THE

DOCTRINES, ORDER, AND POLITY

OF THE

✓  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EMBRACING

SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

VOL. IV.

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RELATIVE INFLUENCE

OF

PRESBYTERY AND PRELACY

ON

CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL LIBERTY.

BY THE REV. T. V. MOORE,  
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STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST  
HATH MADE US FREE.....Galatians v. 1.

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RELATIVE INFLUENCE  
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*Stand fast therefore in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free.—GALATIANS V. 1.*

THERE is no slavery more abject and absolute than that of sin. It begins with the first stirrings of moral life, and extends to every faculty of moral action. It imposes habits the most rigid and unbending, exacts indulgences the most foul and degrading, and requires sacrifices the most costly and ruinous, without intermitting for a single instant the despotism of its sway. The miserable victim of this thrall, if disposed for a time to assert his independence, is driven with the lash of consuming appetites, inexorable habits, or groundless fears, to his former obedience. And so pervading is this enslaving process, that its wretched object is usually unconscious of the yoke. He hugs the chains that bind him, as the very badges of his liberty, and complacently pities those whom he regards as bound, ignobly and irksomely, in the bondage of religious or virtuous restraint.

From this internal slavery has flowed all external oppression. The slavery of the heart has been the parent of its tyranny. The relentless despot who prostrates all right and rule to his capricious passion, is only a tyrant because he is a slave. He is impelled to conquer and enslave others, because he cannot conquer and govern himself. He is like the swollen and lawless torrent that has broken down the banks which at once confined and directed its energies, whose very power of injury depends on its weakness of restraint. The rights of others would never have been in-

vaded, had not the boundaries of his own rights first been broken away. Hence the greatest tyrant is always the greatest slave.

This is true at once of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. They have the same origin and the same end. They differ only in their means. They who employ the bull, the anathema, or the ghostly power of the keys, to condemn the innocent and crush the weak, are enslaved by the same lust of selfishness and dominion that inflames and governs those who use the sword, the dungeon, and the scaffold, as the instruments of their oppression.

Hence, when tyranny is to be checked and overthrown, or liberty firmly and permanently established, there is required a power mightier than mere physical force. The same agency that destroys tyranny, cannot establish liberty. It is true, the indignant spirit of the oppressed, may be goaded on to that pitch of exasperation, where they will rise in the terrible might of mocked and outraged right, and hurl to the earth the arrogant tyrant who has lorded it over them; but the result of this outbursting of pent-up feeling may be, not emancipation, but a change of masters. The unchained tiger, when glutted to satiety with revenge and blood, may seek repose and quiet in the very cage from which he escaped. The oppression of one tyrant may be followed by the oppression of another; or the capricious will of the few, by the more capricious will of the many; the lawless fury of a despot, by the still more lawless fury of a mob.

There is nothing that can remove tyranny but that which will remove sin. Tyranny never has existed and never can exist without sin as its cause, and the removal of the cause is the only effectual mode of removing the effect. Hence there is no permanent basis for liberty in any department of action but Christianity. With it reigning supremely in the hearts of rulers and ruled, a despotism would be free, for every right of every man would be secured: without it, a republic would be slavery, for soon all rights except those of might and cunning would become insecure and nugatory.

It is mainly to Christianity, especially in its influence since the Reformation, that we owe the existing liberties of Europe and America. It first taught the rights of man as man, as an immortal, responsible being, and declaring in the golden rule that each man's rights and duties as to

other men constitute the measure of their rights and duties as to him, it first founded on a rock the great truth of human equality. Thus the Sermon on the Mount, was the first Declaration of Independence, the first great magna-charta of the rights of the people. It at once founded, defined, and restrained them. Christianity frowns on all oppression, on all invasion of rights by the rich, the great, or the powerful, and teaches the very fontal truth of popular liberty, that every man is every other man's brother. Its influence, therefore, when not restrained, has been literally to proclaim deliverance to the captive, the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, and the breaking of every yoke.

As the necessary tendency of its principles is thus towards civil and ecclesiastical liberty, it would be natural to expect the same tendency in the external forms that embody them. If Christianity as a system of truth and doctrine tends to this end, Christianity as a system of law and government must also do so, or it is inconsistent, if not self-destructive. Hence the tendency of any particular system of ecclesiastical polity to promote civil and religious liberty, would seem to be a fair test of its scriptural warrant. If its influence is favourable, there would seem to be a presumption created for it; if unfavourable, an equal presumption against it.

When the Apostle commands us in the text to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," his language applies not only to the system of doctrine, but also to the system of order given us by Christ. It also implies that this system of order or ecclesiastical polity, whatever it is, tends to make us free, or to promote liberty in its largest and best sense. If then we can discover the system most favourable to freedom, there is a probability that we have that which is warranted by the authority of Christ.

When we look round us, we are met by four distinct forms, each claiming to be that which was instituted by Christ: the monarchy of Popery, the oligarchy of Prelacy, the republicanism of Presbytery, and the democracy of Independency. In examining the claims of each, it is therefore a legitimate inquiry, according to the implied rule of the text, "what is their influence on civil and religious liberty?" Adopting this test we propose to institute an investigation as to the two systems that lie between the extremes

and examine *the relative influence of Presbytery and Prelacy on civil and ecclesiastical liberty.*

In prosecuting this inquiry our appeal will be *first*, to the admitted principles of the systems, and, *secondly*, to the developments of those principles directly or indirectly in the history of the church and the world.

I. In entering upon this investigation we disclaim any intention of representing any system of Church government as absolutely incompatible with our civil institutions; as cherishing any design of their subversion; or as incapacitating those who live under it for being good and patriotic citizens. There are many, living under forms of ecclesiastical polity, which have no affinity whatever with our form of civil government, who are not imbued with their spirit, or influenced by their principles at all; and in those who are, this agency is not strong enough to counteract the many other contrary influences that are constantly acting upon them. But still it may not be the less true, that such a tendency exists in particular forms of Church government, as gives them a greater or less affinity to the form and spirit of our civil institutions. We have to do, not with the adherents of systems, but with the systems themselves, and experience shows that the one may be very inadequate and unfair representatives of the other.

Without intending then to stigmatize those who differ from us, as enemies to liberty and advocates of tyranny, or even to make an unnecessary attack upon any other system, we simply wish to prosecute a question, which we have not been the first to raise and pursue, as to the legitimate tendencies of these two systems. Presbytery has been charged with tending to anarchy, schism, the tyranny of the many, and the prostration of ecclesiastical freedom, if not with actual designs on civil liberty;\* and we wish to investigate these charges. And regarding, as we do, liberty to be one of the great blessings that God has in reserve for the human race, and the Christian Church as one great means of its bestowal; we wish to rear an argument in favour of that system which is most in harmony with

\* See a low and scurrilous pamphlet, entitled "The Warning of Thomas Jefferson, or a brief exposition of the dangers to be apprehended to our civil and religious liberties from Presbyterianism. Philadelphia, 1844." We would term this production diabolical, did we not believe that this would be ranking its intellectual and literary character much too high. It has nothing Satanic except its malignity. Even its falsehoods are too clumsy for the father of lies.

this great design, and which tending most powerfully to its completion, would seem the most likely to be adopted by God for that purpose.

In endeavouring to ascertain the influence of any form of church order on civil and ecclesiastical liberty, the most suitable method of obtaining a satisfactory result, will probably be, to state some of these general principles that are admitted to lie at the foundation of all legitimate freedom, and inquire to what extent they are recognized and embraced by that system as it is most generally received. That form of church government which embraces most extensively and most completely as to the ecclesiastical rights of its subjects, these cardinal principles of liberty, must be regarded, at least as to its theory, the most decidedly favourable in its influence on civil and ecclesiastical liberty.

1. The fundamental doctrine of human liberty is, that the people are the great depository of power, for whose benefit that power is to be exercised, in a prescribed and limited mode, by officers appointed and delegated for that purpose, by their consent.

This great truth, in opposition to all assumptions of legitimacy, and divine right to rule independent of the consent of the ruled, is that which men have been working out in tears, and blood, and fire, in every revolution and struggle against tyranny; which lies at the foundation of all free institutions; and which is pushing its growing roots silently and steadily under every hoary retreat of oppression throughout the world. The system in which this is most fully developed, and at the same time most carefully guarded, will be most favourable in its influence on civil and ecclesiastical liberty. What is the recognition of this principle made by Presbytery?

The system of theology with which it is usually found connected, lays down the broadest basis for human equality. Placing the whole race on the same platform of absolute demerit; recognizing no distinction between the meanest slave and the mightiest monarch, except that which was made in the distant counsels of eternity by mysterious and sovereign grace; and admitting no patent of peculiar privileges, except that which is stamped with the broad seal of Heaven, whose flaming motto is, "the Lord knoweth them that are his;" it at once overlooks and overshadows all temporary and factitious distinctions in society. It breathes



into the humblest and obscurest man the grandeur of an eternal destiny from the past, which taking its salient point from the present, shall only fully unfold its magnificent heritage in the eternal destinies of the future; and showing him by this grand and mighty induction from two eternities, his dignity as a man, as an immortal, predestinated being, the pedigree of whose illustrious birthright is more ancient and imperial than that of kings; its influence on the common mind and heart is such as to warrant the language of an eloquent historian,\* “Calvinism is gradual republicanism.”

But passing by its natural, affiliated system of doctrine, which is not its invariable attendant, or entirely peculiar to it, this great truth is embodied and recognized by Presbytery in a variety of forms.

It is a fundamental principle of this system, that ecclesiastical power is vested in the people. Whilst it does not maintain that the official authority of church officers is conferred by the brotherhood, it steadfastly contends that the right to exercise that authority over any particular people must be conferred by that people, or it is an usurpation. This great principle of non-intrusion, and the right of the people to elect their spiritual teachers and rulers, is one which Presbytery has again and again purchased with her treasure and sealed with her blood.

If we trace the order of her ecclesiastical procedure, we find the power and rights of the people recognized at every step. A church is organized, but it must be done by the voluntary consent of the people composing it. This church must have a government, but the very first element of that government is a bench of ruling elders, who are “the representatives of the people,” selected from among themselves, by their own choice, acquainted with their wants, partaking of their sympathies, guardians of their interests, and always able by their numerical force to control the clerical element of jurisdiction in the event of any collision of interests. The pastor of the church must be one, taken originally from the people; educated usually at institutions supported by their contributions; licensed by a body in which their representatives usually may have the numerical control; sent forth among them to ascertain their sanctions and approval, which is a necessary element in his

\* Bancroft.

call; ordained by their consent; and never installed as a pastor except at their request. His support depends on their voluntary contributions; is determined by their vote; collected and disbursed by their agents. All pecuniary obligations are under the control of trustees and deacons, elected by the people, and invested with no spiritual function or jurisdiction. No law can be passed by any assembly in which the people have not the right to sit by their representatives. No man can be arraigned or tried before any court, a part of which is not composed of the representatives of the people. If aggrieved by the decision of the session, he has the right of appeal, first to the Presbytery, next to the Synod, and finally to the General Assembly; in all which, owing to the Moderator being a minister, the representatives of the people usually may constitute the majority. In this constant element of the eldership, which has always been the characteristic, and the glory of Presbytery, there is a continual, steady and adequate barrier against all clerical encroachment and usurpation. And it is on this element, as the corner-stone of the system, that we ground the unanswerable argument in favour of its popular character and tendency. Presbytery alone has admitted the representatives of the people to plenary authority in all acts of government, not as an offshoot of her polity, but as its essential peculiarity. And she regards them, not as mere delegated laymen or special commissioners, who may be excluded next year by the vote that admits them this; but as officers, solemnly ordained and set apart to a function, as sacred as that of the ministry.

We turn now to examine the principles of Prelacy as to this cardinal point. And in order that we may do it every justice, we select for comparison that form of the system found in the United States, confessedly the most popular and liberal in the world; and shall rely for our information mainly on her constitution and canons, as edited by Dr. Hawks.

The first thing that meets us is the fundamental doctrine for which it has always contended, that Jesus Christ has vested the governing power of the Church, not in the people, nor in the order of presbyters, but in the order of bishops or prelates, who are the successors of the apostles and the sole depositaries and fountains of authority.\* It is

\* Jeremy Taylor. Episcopacy asserted, sec. 9. Works, vol. ii. p. 157. Hooker Eccl. Polity, Book vii. sec. iii. v. pp. 376, 377. (fol.)

true the laity have been admitted to some share in the government of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, but this is confessedly an innovation and an anomaly; which was strongly objected to by the English Prelates when solicited to ordain American Bishops; denounced as Presbyterian in its character; and declared by Bishop Seabury to be "incongruous to every idea of Episcopal government." \* Such is still the opinion of some who are most deeply imbued with the spirit of prelacy. † But even with this partial infusion of a popular element, admitted as a matter of concession and courtesy, and not, as in Presbytery by an original and scriptural right, there is still much that is of a contrary character, and at variance with the maxims of republicanism.

All power is originally vested in the order of bishops or prelates. They are elected not by the people, or indeed by their representatives, (for even if the diocesan Convention were properly composed of representatives of the people, their selection is after all a mere nomination,) but by the bishops themselves, who can admit or reject any applicant they choose. ‡ They can also prevent the resignation of any of their number, even if desired by himself and the unanimous voice of the clergy and laity of his diocese. § They constitute a close corporation of governors; having not only the power to fill their own vacancies, but actually to prevent the occurrence of vacancies, except by death; claiming a divine right to rule as absolutely as the apostles: constituting thus a kind of hereditary, self-perpetuating succession of sovereigns, as completely beyond the control of the people, if they choose to thwart it, as the most absolute, hereditary monarchs on the earth. The general principle is embodied in this fundamental tenet of prelacy, that in ecclesiastical matters at least, *the people are not able to govern themselves* but need rulers, whose ap-

\* Constitution and Canons, p. 18. See also Bishop White's Memoirs, p. 124.

† Smyth on Apostolical Succession, Lect. 13.

‡ Constitution and Canons, p. 93.

§ Ibid. p. 300. "So far as our research has extended, this law is without a precedent in the history of the Christian Church," p. 303. "No man can come into the Episcopal College without their consent, and this is right, but according to this Canon, no man may go out of their body without their approbation; we see no reason for this. The system makes them, in effect, more than an ordinarily close corporation," p. 305.

pointment, authority, functions, and continuance in office shall be almost absolutely beyond their control.\*

In order to show how completely all power is taken from the hands of the people,† let us trace the course of procedure as to a particular church. The very first step of erecting a church edifice cannot regularly and canonically be taken until license is obtained if not from the bishop at least from the neighbouring clergy.‡ When a church has been formally instituted and received by the bishop, and a pastor is to be selected, he is chosen not by the people, but by the vestry,§ subject to the decision of the bishop, who may “confirm or reject the appointment.”|| The candidate for the ministry can be ordained only by the bishop, who may refuse him orders if he think him contumacious toward him in any matter,¶ and as a general fact prevent him from obtaining orders from any one else,\*\* or removing to any other field of labour in the church by withholding his permission;†† who possesses the control of his movements, and the sole power of dispensing with a portion of the qualifications required for ordination;‡‡ and can ordain and institute a pastor in a particular church without reference to the wishes of the people, or even of the inferior clergy.§§ A recent case has shown, that even the proven fact of Romish error, and the solemn protest of grave and learned presbyters could not arrest an ordination. When a pastor is once settled, he possesses the sole power of government in the church, reprimanding, suspending and virtually excommunicating whom and for what he thinks proper.|||| He possesses exclusive control over the church edifice.¶¶ No brother clergyman can preach within the limits of his parish without asking and obtaining consent.\*\*\* The very name is significant. He is not called *pastor*, or *minister*, in the unambitious language of Pres-

\* See this broadly and arrogantly maintained, by Jeremy Taylor. *Episcopacy Asserted*, sec. xxxv. Works, vol. ii. p. 205, sec. xl. xli. pp. 222, 224; also Hooker *Ecl. Pol.* Book v. p. 360, (fol.) Book vi. p. 374.

† It is incidentally admitted by Dr. Hawks, that church membership confers *no other right* on any individual than admission to the Lord's Supper. “Cut the offender off from the communion under the rubric, and of *what other privilege* of church membership can you in this country deprive him?” p. 359. Presbytery confers other privileges than this on her church members.

‡ Constitution and Canons, pp. 294, 295.

§ Ibid. p. 285. The vestry determine the salary of the clergyman, p. 53

|| Ibid. p. 279. ¶ Ibid. p. 164.

\*\* Ibid. p. 166.

†† Ibid. pp. 209, 147. ‡‡ Ibid. p. 146.

§§ Ibid. p. 279.

|||| Ibid. p. 262. ¶¶ Ibid. p. 286.

\*\*\* Ibid. p. 293.

bytery ; but *rector* or ruler, implying his sole and exclusive right to rule the people under him.

But above all this, and in defiance of both rector and people, the bishop can come in and fill the church with whomsoever he pleases, in virtue of his power to confirm at discretion any one however impenitent and heretical, if he deems him a fit subject ;\* or restore to the communion of the church any one already suspended, without complaint, and without inquiry, contrary to the wishes of both rector and people, if he deems the reason of suspension insufficient.† The people, then, are at the mercy, first of the rector, and next of the bishop, whose mere consecration, history and observation alike assure, is no sufficient guaranty of either their piety, their prudence, or their soundness in the faith.

If a dissolution of the pastoral relation is desired, the bishop, with the advice of the clergy, without a single vote of the laity, or any absolute right on their part to interfere, may determine the matter, stipulate the terms of separation, and even require the congregation to pay the clergyman a certain sum of money as compensation for his loss in removing from them.‡ Here then the people are excluded from one of the most important acts of ecclesiastical procedure.§ The bishop alone can displace a minister,|| suspend or depose him from the ministry, and when once degraded from the ministry he can never be restored ; however insufficient the grounds may be discovered to have been, or however penitent and consistent he may after-

\* Constitution and Canons, p. 258. Dr. Hawks doubts this, but there is no law to prevent it if the bishop choose to do so.

† Ibid. p. 363. "Such a restoration by the bishop of a repelled communicant is a *virtual trial and condemnation* of the clergyman who repelled him." Power always passes slowly and silently, and without much notice, from the hands of the many to the few, and all history shows, that ecclesiastical domination grows up by little and little. "Give to the bishops the right, without a formal trial of their peers, virtually to condemn presbyters in *one case* ; and it will surely come to pass, that the day will be seen, when precedent will be cited for it in all cases." "We are free to say we wish this clause on which we comment were out of the law, for it is a reflection on the clergy, and a dangerous innovation on principle. We look in vain through the body of our canon law for any thing like reciprocity in this matter." pp. 364, 365.

‡ Ibid. p. 317.

§ "This is an instance remarkable in the legislation of our church, for one feature: it allows to the *clergy, as a class*, the privilege of determining as against the laity, when a brother clergyman has been unjustly or harshly dealt with by his congregation." Ibid. p. 318.

|| Ibid. p. 346.

wards be, the step can never be retraced;\* the victim of frailty, prejudice, injustice, or conspiracy has no redress in the mode in which redress can alone be properly made. The bishop possesses a most magisterial control of the motions of the clergy; may prohibit the clergyman from another diocese, (and even a bishop as a late fact proves,) from preaching within his diocesan limits, and if he refuses to obey, or violates, even ignorantly, any canon of the diocese during his sojourn, may suspend him from the ministry, and his own bishop cannot restore him without the consent of him who suspended him, or an acquittal in a formal, regular trial.†

When we look at these arrangements and principles of prelacy, drawn from her own canons, by which the people are virtually declared incapable of governing themselves, and a most fearful and tremendous authority is lodged in the hands of one man, who is not in any sense the representative of the people, but a representative of the twelve apostles or the Jewish high-priests,‡ as they allege, we will surely be at no loss to decide upon the relative influence of Presbytery and Prelacy on the practical application of the great doctrine of the people's right and power to govern themselves. The object of one is to take care of the rights of the bishop, the object of the other to take care of the rights of the people.

2. Another cardinal and bulwark principle of liberty, is

\* Constitution and Canons, p. 350.

† Ibid. p. 355. "We must here clearly understand what the offence is, for which the visiting clergyman, who has broken a particular canon of another diocese is tried: he is not called to account so much for the ill consequences which may result from the breaking of that canon, as he is for violating the great principle of a due respect for the lawful ecclesiastical authority of the region in which he is sojourning. Insubordination is his crime, rather than the violation of a particular measure founded on a particular policy." p. 356.

‡ The argument from the Mosaic Institutions, urged by Prelatists, in view of the present point of discussion, is decidedly favourable to Presbytery. The Jewish Theocracy, so far as it was administered by men, was a confederated republic; a general government composed of separate independent tribes. (See this evinced by Michaelis, Commentaries on the Law of Moses, Book i. chap. vi. art. 46.) The people exercised even more power under its arrangements than they do in the United States government, which it closely resembled. In this recognition of the authority of the people, in the popular and representative character of its courts, and in the regular appellate jurisdiction of successive assemblies, and indeed in its entire mode of procedure, so far as it was a permanent system of church government at all, the Theocracy bore a much closer resemblance to Presbytery than to Prelacy.

the existence of written laws and constitutions, defining specifically the powers of the ruler and the rights of the ruled, constituting the ultimate arbiter to which the weakest can appeal for protection as fearlessly as the strongest; in other words, the government of laws and not of men; of principles and not of prerogative; of deliberate, recorded will, and not of undeliberate spontaneous opinion.

This has always been one of the characteristic principles of Presbytery. The pertinacity with which she has contended for written creeds and symbols, defining specifically not only the articles of religious faith, but the conditions of ecclesiastical organization, has been made the ground of ridicule and denunciation. She has been charged with a finical fastidiousness in exacting conformity to her creeds, from those who entered her communion, that was ridiculous and vexatious; and with a bigoted and illiberal strictness in condemning departures from them, among those who wished to retain her communion, that was narrow-minded and tyrannical.

The fact thus charged upon her, is one of her most glorious characteristics. Whilst she compels no man to enter her pale, she defines the terms of entrance, so that no one need be deceived before taking that step, or deceive others after it. And providing in her discipline for almost every possible contingency that can affect the rights or wrongs of her members, she furnishes a fixed, clear, and intelligible code, to which appeal can be made for the punishment of the guilty and the protection of the weak. And in addition to this she declares that the church possesses no authority to go beyond or add any thing to the Bible in the matter of rites and ceremonies equally with that of faith; that her authority in all matters is not original or strictly legislative, but only ministerial and declarative. This system of polity possesses at least some claim to the characteristic of a perfect government given by the sage of Priene,\* when he defined it to be, "the government in which there is nothing superior to the law."

Is this the case with Prelacy? In the first place it claims "power to decree rites and ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith;"† thus opening a door which we know has afforded entrance to much tyranny by adding to

\* Bias, one of the seven wise men of Greece.

† Book of Common Prayer, p. 260. Art. XX.

the words of God, and enforcing "conformity" to those additions by arbitrary penalties and restrictions. But the most serious defect in this respect is, that it has no definite written code for the defining of offences, the punishment of offenders, and the redress of the injured.\* The Church of which it was said by Lord Chatham, that it possessed "a Popish liturgy, Calvinistic articles, and an Arminian clergy," must surely have a system of jurisdiction somewhat lax, either in theory or practice. But the proof of this fact will be given in the language of one of its most distinguished defenders, the commentator on the Constitution and Canons. His statements are in these words: "In the Church we may be said to have no judicial system. By the constitution, the mode of trying offending clergymen, is to be regulated in each State by its own rules. Some dioceses have made no rules at all. Uniformity in judicial proceedings is therefore wanting. But there is a greater evil than this; it is the want of uniformity of interpretation. *Misera est servitus, ubi jus est vagum aut incertum.* Better is it that the law should be interpreted erroneously, so that men may at least have certainty, than that it should be held to mean one thing to-day, and another to-morrow. The mode as it at present exists operates thus. In the diocese of Massachusetts, for instance, before a court composed according to the canons there in force, some clause of the constitution, or some canon of the General Convention, receives a certain interpretation, and under it, punishment is inflicted. In South Carolina, a different meaning is attached by the court there to the very same words, and acquittal follows; and thus it may be in some six or more dioceses. In vain will any one ask what is the law? No man can say. The convict of Massachusetts, doubting as well he may, under such circumstances, the propriety of his intended punishment, would fain appeal to some tribunal competent to adjust these conflicting interpretations. But where is such a tribunal? Nowhere in the Church!" †

\* "Neither the General Convention nor any State Convention, have ever provided any 'rules or process' for excommunication. There is not a clergyman in the Church, who, if he were desirous to excommunicate an offender, would know how to take the very first step in the process." "We know of no other law, which practically reaches the case of an offending layman, but this: and there are very few of the dioceses in which any provision is made by canon for investigating or trying the case of a *layman*. He must so offend as to come within the terms of the rubric, or we know not how he is to be disciplined." Constitution and Canons, pp. 359, 360, 362.

† Constitution and Canons, pp. 56, 57. "We need two things: first, a



With such testimony from an accredited source, we may leave the question of comparison as to this point, without further remark.

3. Another fundamental principle of freedom is, the administration of law with suitable checks and balances. In attaining this end, there are two things to be avoided; first, the tyranny of the few, and secondly, the tyranny of the many. These are secured by never giving to the few a power which is not under the ultimate control of the many; for this would be oligarchy; nor to the many a power that may be used on the few, without some intervening barrier to stay the tide of sudden and frenzied excitement; for this would be democracy: but such a balance and checking of powers, that justice shall neither be baffled by prerogative, nor overwhelmed by passion; this is republicanism. Hence we find in every department of our civil government, two distinct elements operating as mutual checks and correctives, the one purely popular, the other only remotely so, but still in the end, within popular control, when calmly and perseveringly applied. Analogous to this we have in Presbytery the two co-ordinate elements of the ministry and eldership: the one purely popular, the other only remotely so, yet still completely within the control of the people, when any great and paramount reason exists for its exercise. These two elements meet in every form and act of government that can exist, and operate as mutual checks and balances. All the forms of process are arranged with peculiar exactness to prevent the sacrifice of any right. The laws are uniform for the whole Church, and must be adopted by a majority of the Presbyteries, before they can become binding. No man can be accused until certain preliminary steps are taken; and when accused, must have a copy of the specific charges, with time, place, and witnesses, that he may meet them by an alibi or otherwise, be cited at least ten days before the first meeting of the court, and not tried unless by consent until a second meeting, when he may be fully prepared for his defence. When any wrong or error has been committed, the powers of appeal, com-

uniform mode of proceeding in constituting courts, and conducting trials in the dioceses. This, as the constitution stands, we cannot have, unless all the dioceses, by their several canons, adopt the same rules: and this is not to be expected. The General Convention cannot legislate on the subject, until the sixth article of the Constitution is altered. Secondly, we need a court of appeals, with power authoritatively and finally, to settle the true interpretation of Constitution and Canons, *ut sit finis litium.*"

plaint, reference, review and control, overture and petition from the session through the Presbytery and Synod to the General Assembly, furnish every earthly probability of its detection and correction. All these facts taken together, furnish, perhaps, as perfect a system of checks and balances in government as the world ever saw.

But is it so with Prelacy? It is true there is a House of Bishops and a Lower House, but they correspond not to a Senate, and House of Representatives, but to a House of Lords, and a House of Commons; for the Prelatical order is in no sense, even remotely, popular, or subjected to popular control; but rules by an alleged divine, and hereditary right embodied in the order of "successors to the apostles."\* The House of Bishops, and even a single Bishop, if there be but one present, has an absolute veto on all the acts of the General Convention, even if passed by a unanimous vote.† In one diocese, the bishop alone, one man, possesses an absolute veto, even against a unanimous vote of the Convention.‡ And as the Bishops possess the sole power of ordaining, suspending and deposing, it is plain that they can, if they determine to do so, ultimately place in the lower house, those who will be merely their creatures, or at least prevent the admission of those who will not, and remove such as refuse to submit to their will by suspension or deposition for contumacy. The forms of process are so vague and indeterminate that there is no adequate defence against premeditated injustice. The people possess no ultimate, efficient, legal control that can operate as a plenary check and balance to the power of the bishops, if they determine to carry it into execution.§ Events yet fresh in the memory of all,|| furnish a mournful proof of the inadequacy of the checks and balances that exist to control the exertion of Episcopal power.

\* "The bishops being, as it were, the senators, *virtute officii*." Constitution and Canons, p. 52. Nothing more can be said of one of the Lords Spiritual of the British House of Peers, than is here said of republican Bishops.

† Constitution and Canons, p. 26.

‡ Ibid. p. 56. "It is easy to see how the veto power here may make the convention a mere body for registering Episcopal edicts." Recent facts have shown that this remark of Dr. Hawks was remarkably well-grounded, well-nigh prophetic.

§ Jeremy Taylor, *Episcopacy Asserted*, sec. xxxvi. Works, vol. ii. p. 210 quotes with approbation a declaration of the Council of Chalcedon, "*that bishops have power to do whatsoever they will*," and adduces 2 Cor. ii. 9, and the unbroken testimony of the Church for many ages to its support. See also Hooker, *Ecc. Pol.* Book VII.

|| The New York ordination, and its attendant circumstances.

4. The last great bulwark of freedom that we can mention is free, deliberating assemblies, in which the people are fully and fairly represented, and in which the leading measures of the government can be canvassed without any authority to restrict or overawe discussion, deliberation and determination, to the extent that is necessary for the public weal.

The history of liberty shows clearly that they have been its great munitions. The free assemblies of Greece and Rome, the Wittenagemote of the Saxons, the House of Commons in England, and the free assemblies of America, demonstrate to the careful observer, the inseparable connection between such assemblies and the existence of liberty. When properly constituted and guarded, they have always prevented consolidation on the one hand, and anarchy on the other, as long as they continued to be free, deliberating, and representative.

In accordance with this, we find it to be the fundamental law of Presbytery, that the church is governed by *assemblies*.\* These assemblies are all composed in part, of the direct, ordained representatives of the people. Each church is governed by a sessional, each district by a presbyterial, each larger province by a synodical, and the whole church by a General Assembly. Each lower court is responsible to the one above it, in the exercise of its authority, and comes under its review regularly once in each year. No law can be made or executed in any of these assemblies without the formal consent of the people, by their representatives. As long as such assemblies, existing "in their strong and beautiful subordination," constitute the government of the church, it seems difficult to conceive how clerical usurpation can find admission.

With Prelacy, however, the case is different. It is a government not of assemblies but of individuals.† Each church is governed by its rector; the ministers by their bishop; and the whole church by an assembly, on the proceedings of which the bishops have a veto. The leanings of Prelacy are embodied in the language of one of her prominent prelates,‡ who objects to the organization of

\* Form of Government, chap. viii. sec. 1.

† "Episcopacy is a unity of *person-governing*, and ordering persons and things accidental and substantial." Jeremy Taylor, *Episcopacy Asserted*, Works, vol. ii. p. 149.

‡ Bishop De Lancey, Address to the Convention in 1842, quoted by Dr. Smyth, *Ecclesiastical Republicanism*, p. 169.

their Board of Missions, because the Bishops are there controlled by "*the vote of a majority.*" He says, "that institution is modelled on the Congregational platform of placing layman, deacon, priest, and bishop, on the arena of debate, where the most skilful, bold, zealous, and fluent, will predominate, and where the opinion of the presiding bishop of the church has no more prelatical weight, when questions are brought *to a vote*, than that of the youngest deacon or youngest layman that may happen to be voted into either committee, to fill a vacancy within a week before the meeting of the board. The members of the house of bishops, as a body, are as little disposed as *qualified* to carry on debates in a popular assembly, and yet unless they will consent to the exposure and trials of such a scene, they must consent to lose the weight of their sentiments in the board, or to seek peace by surrendering the conduct of the institution to whomsoever will undertake to lead it."\*

Any comment on this declaration is needless. Uttered but two years ago, in a land where no privileged governing orders are admitted; and where the very principle of majorities, and votes, so haughtily and scornfully rejected, is the corner-stone of the civil fabric, it furnishes perhaps as significant a commentary on the tendencies of Prelacy on this point as could be demanded.

But lest we should be charged with unfairness to this system, by drawing inferences from it which its advocates disclaim, let us for an instant look at the testimony of some of its friends. The Virgin Queen of England, who loved Popery because she loved pomp, and hated it because she loved power, † disliked Presbytery, because she thought it inconsistent with monarchy. ‡ That drivelling and vain-glorious pedant in whose person the treacherous race of the Stuarts ascended the British throne, hated it in the same proportion that he hated liberty; and loved Prelacy as

\* See also Hooker, Ecc. Pol., Book viii. p. 499. (fol.)

† Burnet's Reformation, by Nares, Part ii. Book ii. vol. ii. p. 582.

‡ Burnet's Reformation, by Nares, Preface, p. xxv. Lord Burghley and others "demonstrated to her that these models (Presbyterian Church Government,) would certainly bring with them a great abatement of her prerogative; since, if the concerns of religion came into popular hands there would be a power set up distinct from hers, over which she could have no authority." Sir F. Walsingham says (ibid. p. 650) "the Puritans pretended to a democracy in the church," "opened to the people a way to government by their Consistory and Presbytery, a thing prejudicial to the sovereignty of princes." This explains why "she would often say she hated the Puritans more than the Papists." Neal's Puritans, ch. v. vol. i. p. 172.

much as he was capable of loving any thing but himself.\* His brilliant, heartless, and ill-starred son, "the man who never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one," declared, "Show me any precedent wherever Presbyterial government and regal was together without perpetual rebellions. It cannot be otherwise, for the ground of the doctrine is anti-monarchical. I will say, without hyperbole, that there was not a wiser man since Solomon, than he who said 'No bishop, no king.'"† He also states in his letters, "that he considers Episcopacy a greater support to his monarchy than the army."‡ This was the principal ground for which it was persecuted by Laud,§ that narrow-hearted and bitter bigot, whose stunted intellect could just execute what his wicked heart could devise, and whose silly and dotard superstition would be forgotten in contempt, did not his cruelty and pride stamp it with eternal infamy. The same sentiments have been supported by Jeremy Taylor in his Ciceronian phrase;|| by Bancroft, Secker, and Hicks from the throne of the Hierarchy;¶ by Dryden in the limping numbers of the Hind and Panther;\*\* by South,†† and Swift,‡‡ in the sneering language of wit; and by Heylin in the bitter and envenomed pages of what he chooses to call History.§§

Nor is this only the testimony of former days. Dr. Chandler, in pleading for an American Episcopate, declares,||| "that Episcopacy and monarchy are in their frame best suited to each other, and that republican principles cannot flourish in an Episcopal Church." The same thing is argued by other Episcopal writers with irresistible force. And were it necessary to swell this mass of testimony, we

\* At the Hampton-Court Conference, James said, "you are aiming at a Scots' Presbytery, which agrees with monarchy as well as God and the devil." Neal's Puritans, ii. 43, 44.

† Clarendon's State Papers, ii. 202, 260, 274, quoted by Dr. Miller, Christian Ministry, 330.

‡ Macaulay's Miscellanies, p. 86. See also Clarendon's Hist. Rebellion, Book x. vol. iii. p. 5, (fol.)

§ Clarendon's Rebellion, vol. i. book 3, p. 158; book 4, pp. 245, 352; vol. ii. book 6, p. 18.

|| Works, vol. ii. pp. 147, 814, vol. iii. p. 717.

¶ Ecc. Rep. by Dr. Smyth, pp. 136, 154, 179.

\*\* Part I.

†† South's Sermons, vol. ii. pp. 306, 320; vol. iv. p. 504.

‡‡ Sermon on Martyrdom of Charles I. Works, vol. xiv. p. 69.

§§ Hist. Presbyterians, title page.

||| Appeal, quoted Ecc. Rep. 153.

could add that of a Hooker,\* an Isaac Taylor,† a Macaulay,‡ a Carlyle,§ a George Bancroft,|| and a DeToqueville,¶ tending to the same point. The competency and force of some of which witnesses, would surely not be questioned.

In this argument we have not even alluded to pure unrepublicanised Prelacy, as we have it in England, where it has always been the truckling tool of tyranny, the mitred defender of the divine right of kings to rule as they pleased, and the divine duty of subjects to be pleased with that rule; \*\* or the crushing pyramids of prelatical domination that confine in dark and hopeless superstition and slavery the millions that submit to the authority of the Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Abyssinian, and other Prelatical churches of the East. We must look to the old world for the complete development of pure Popery, and pure Prelacy, in their influence on human liberty. But even confining ourselves to that Presbyterianized form of Prelacy, that we find existing in our midst, we think there is enough unanswerably to prove that Presbytery embodies more fully than Prelacy, the acknowledged principles of freedom, and therefore that its influence must be more favourable on the development and establishment of civil and ecclesiastical liberty.

II. We turn now briefly to interrogate history as to the extent to which these relative tendencies have been embodied in the temper and conduct of the adherents of these respective systems.

In conducting this inquiry we will not notice the Presbyterians of the primitive Church, such as Paul, Peter, Ignatius, and Clement; or those of later ages, such as the Waldenses and the Culdees, or the Arnolds, Wickliffs, and Husses, of the long period of ghostly despotism that preceded the Reformation; partly because it is useless here to contend for disputed ground, and partly because it might seem unfair to charge on Prelacy the tyranny of Popery.

\* Ecc. Pol., book vii. p. 416, (fol.)

† Spiritual Despotism, pp. 123, 137.

‡ Miscellanies, pp. 16, 86, &c.

§ Hero-Worship, pp. 153, 177, 180.

|| Hist. U. S. i. 266, 267, 291, 462; ii. 459, 460.

¶ Democracy in America, part i. pp. 11, 15, 17, 281.

\*\* See Book of Homilies, pp. 99, 103, 492, 516, also Canons appended, especially under the title "of Church of England," also Hooker, Taylor, Macaulay, &c.

It is true we might show that Popery is only the child of Prelacy, historically and logically; that its imperious acts are only the simple, necessary growth of the Prelatical principles that are the roots from which it sprung, and on which it rests; in a word, that Popery is only Prelacy run to seed, and Oxfordism the pod that contains it: but this we must forego. Bringing our inquiries down to the time when pure Prelacy and pure Presbytery became distinct from Popery, we have more than sufficient testimony to determine the question.

It is perhaps unnecessary to prove that to the Reformation we owe the liberties of modern Europe and America. It was the uprising of the human soul against hoary oppression; an awakening of the ocean-like mind of the people, that had long been chained and charmed by a spell of words, by a priestly and kingly sorcery as cruel and bloody, as it was hollow and false; and the mighty and thrilling voice of this flood-tide of the world, was "freedom to choose the worship of God, and freedom to resist the tyranny of man." And although thrones, hierarchies, armies, cabinets, and all the ancient embankments of prescriptive authority were piled upward with frantic and desperate energy to resist and roll back its waters, yet it continued to swell and rise in resistless might and majesty, until it swept away these bootless barriers like straws on the cataract's plunge: and, when pursued by a bigotry, dark, bloody and relentless, gathering its mingled tributes from the summits of the icy Alps, the bright waters of Geneva, the hills of sturdy Saxony, the green vales of England, the wild glens of Scotland, and the sunny plains of France; and Arethusia like, plunging beneath the dark waves of the ocean, it gurgled up in light and beauty, first at the rock of Plymouth, and next at Bunker Hill and Yorktown. Thus the Reformation was the fountal source even of American liberty.

But it is equally clear that the Reformation was a Presbyterian movement. It was the giant struggle of the European mind against prelatical usurpation, was conducted by Presbyters falling back on their original Presbyterian authority, and its result was Presbytery in every case except that solitary instance in which it was not properly a religious movement at all in its origin; but the expedient of a brutal and gluttonous despot, to obtain that license for his beastly appetite by renouncing Rome, which he had before obtained by upholding her. But even in England,

when Puritanism was struggling for purity, it was only by a single vote, and that one of a number of proxies, in the house of convocation, that a petition for reform was rejected, which, if granted, would most probably have led to the pure and simple ritual of Presbytery;\* and it was only by the most powerful efforts of the haughty Tudors and the treacherous Stuarts, that Prelacy was retained. The whole spirit of the Reformation set in strongly against it, and in the light of history, there is more truth than Popery, in the Tractarian maxim, that the name "Protestant Episcopal" is an anomaly and contradiction in terms. Hence the influence of the Reformation in favour of freedom, we unhesitatingly claim as an illustration of the tendency of Presbyterian principles and organizations.

In the further history of English liberty, we trace the influence of Presbytery at almost every important step. It is the language of Humé,† that "the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the Puritans alone," and "that their very absurdities were a shelter for the noble principles of freedom." Such a testimony forced from him is decisive.

If we examine the forces that moulded the Puritan character, we shall find Presbytery bearing a prominent part, if it was not the very plastic influence that formed it. The bloody Mary, fulfilling with the characteristic blindness of bigotry the merciful designs of God, drove into banishment all who refused to receive the mark of the beast. That five years of exile formed the character of Puritanism, and gave birth to the liberties of the world. In the sweet embosomed vale of Geneva, they found "a church without a bishop, and a state without a king;" and from the lips of Calvin himself, they learned that lesson of stern and lofty adherence to liberty, that was afterwards to be repeated in the halls of Westminster and on the fields of Naseby and Worcester; and uttered to other lands and ages, by the clarion voice of a Hampden, the Washington of England; by the high and majestic words of a Milton, whose pen of flame was more potent than the warrior's brand; and by the thunder tones of a Cromwell,‡ that man of iron and

\* Burnet's Reformation by Nares, part iii. book vi. vol. iii. p. 455.

† Hist. of Eng. vol. v. pp. 183, 469.

‡ Yet so clearly did Cromwell perceive the point we contend for, that when he determined to make himself a king, if possible, he also determined in that event to establish Episcopacy as the only sure support for his monarchy. See this proven: Burnet's History of his own time, book i. vol. i. p. 89.



clay, whom, though "a vulgar fanatic," Cardinal Mazarine was said to fear more than he did the devil; and who, after all, did more for the good of England and the world than a whole generation of monarchs, *jure divino*. And the great revolution of 1688, that gave liberty to England, was in a great measure purchased by the labours, sacrifices, treasure, and blood of the Presbyterians of Scotland.\*

But it is in our own land that the influence of Presbytery receives its most triumphant demonstration. The Revolution of 1776, so far as it was affected by religion, was a Presbyterian measure. It was only the natural result of the principles she had planted in the persons of her sons, the English Puritans, the Scottish Covenanters, the French Huguenots, and the Dutch Calvinists. The elder Adams, in a letter to Dr. Morse, dated Quincy, December 2, 1815, † says, "that the apprehension of Episcopacy contributed fifty years ago, as much as any other cause to arouse the attention, not only of the inquiring mind, but of the common people, and urge them to close thinking on the constitutional power of Parliament over the colonies. . . . Passive obedience, and non-resistance in the most unqualified and unlimited sense, were their principles in government, and the power of the church to decree rites and ceremonies, and the authority of the Church in controversies of faith, were explicitly avowed. . . . In Virginia, the Church of England was established by law in exclusion and without toleration of any other denomination. In New York it displayed its essential character of intolerance. Large grants of land were made to it, while other denominations could obtain none, and even Dr. Rodgers's congregation, in New York, numerous and respectable as it was, could never obtain a legal title to a spot to bury their dead." He adduces a number of facts to show what he terms "the bigotry, intrigue, intolerance, and persecution" of Episcopacy in the New England States, and especially in Massachusetts; all tending to prove that the dread of Episcopal intolerance was one of the moving causes of the Revolution. ‡ His testimony is corroborated by the remark of Bancroft, "that Episcopacy and monarchy were feared as natural allies."

\* Macaulay's Miscellanies, pp. 303, 306, 311.

† Methodist Protestant, quoted from the New York Evangelist.

‡ See this virtually admitted, Bishop White's Memoirs, p. 93.

It is the testimony of a distinguished Episcopal jurist,\* and of the venerable Bishop White himself, that a majority of the royalists in the colonies were Episcopalians, and that the Episcopal clergy were generally opposed to the Revolution,† whilst the Presbyterian clergy were its advocates and defenders, and suffered most severely from the brutality of the British soldiery.‡ The devotion of the sainted and massacred Caldwell and others is written in their blood. These are facts familiar to the merest novice in American history. The Presbyterian Church was the first to protest against British tyranny, and nerve the arms of her sons for the terrible conflict;§ the first to acknowledge the Declaration of Independence;|| (which a distinguished civilian of New York¶ has traced to the Solemn League and Covenant as its model,) and the wisdom and firmness of a Presbyterian Witherspoon in the halls of Congress, and the sturdiness of the Presbyterian valour of a Morgan, a Shelby, a Marion, and others, whose blood gushed forth on many a turf, and whose bones are now bleaching on many a storied spot, contributed eminently to crown that fearful struggle with success. And in determining the structure of our Government, Chief Justice Tilghman has remarked, that the framers of the United States Constitution borrowed very much of the form of our Republic from that form of Church government developed in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.\*\* And it is susceptible of the amplest proof that to Presbytery is due the separation of Church and State. For this they struggled against Prelacy in Virginia,†† and at least in advance of, if not in opposition to, independency;‡‡ and it is to these struggles that we owe the absence of an established religion in the United States. Hence the influence of Presbytery was decidedly

\* W. B. Reed, Esq., Address to Philomathean Society.

† See also Dr. Hawks' Contributions to Prot. Epis. Church, U. S. Hist., Virginia, p. 135. Bishop White's Case of the Episcopal Churches in U. S. Considered, pp. 4, 5, 16, 29.

‡ Baird's Religion in the United States, p. 230.

§ See the Pastoral Letter of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. Records, p. 466.

|| See original paper of Hanover Presbytery, adopted 1776, in Baird's Religion in United States, pp. 231—234.

¶ Hon. G. C. Verplanck.

\*\* Dr. W. Harris. Presbyterian, Feb. 24, 1844.

†† See this proven, and Jefferson stripped of his borrowed plumes in this matter. Baird's Religion in U. S., book iii. chap. iii., and admitted reluctantly, in Dr. Hawks' Ecc. Hist., Virginia, pp. 139, 173.

‡‡ The union of Church and State was not dissolved in most of the New England States until 1816, in Massachusetts not until 1833.

favourable, while that of Prelacy was at least indifferent, if not hostile to the establishment of American independence at the time it was actually declared and achieved.

But we will be met by the standing reply that Puritanism was intolerant. Now without dwelling on the fact that the Puritans of New England, and of Old England, who were most intolerant, were not Presbyterians but Independents; we contend that even the intolerance of Puritanism has many apologies that cannot be pleaded by Prelacy. It was the intolerance of self-defence; the intolerance of those who, having lopped off the heads of the hydra that had well-nigh destroyed them, thought it necessary to crush those heads when they began to grow and hiss afresh around them; the intolerance of those who, having fled from tyranny to the wilderness, wished to save the necessity for another flight, by choosing the inmates of their forest homes, and not warming into life that which at length would sting them. If Puritanism began with Calvin, as is alleged, surely persecution did not, and when safety was obtained after years of suffering, can we wonder that it should be employed in self-protection? Yet this is the fact as to most of the intolerance on which so many changes are rung. But the whole age was behind, though advancing toward, perfect freedom; and was the ideal to spring, Minerva-like, full-formed and panoplied from the labouring body politic? And compare the drivelling Laud, the imperious Strafford, the bloody Claverhouse, the traitorous Sharpe, or the perfidious Lauderdale, with any Puritan persecutor, as to those high and noble traits of humanity, which we admire in action, and love in repose, and they were as far below them, as a Dominic or a Hildebrand is below a Chrysostom or an Augustine. The one class persecuted because of their system, the other in spite of it; the one, in defence of the faith, the other in defence of themselves. The age was advancing towards liberty, and Presbytery was in the front, whilst Prelacy was in the rear, where she will probably remain. The stag in the fable was fearful lest his hinder feet should overtake and outrun his fore; a similar fear as to the outstripping tendencies of Prelacy is equally well-grounded. And even if the tendencies of the systems should in some cases be arrested and counteracted, yet the tendencies not the less certainly exist.

Are not the tendencies of the systems clearly marked in

history? Do they not exhibit some invariable traits wherever they exist? Has Prelacy been chosen spontaneously by the champions and martyrs of liberty? Has she been invariably feared and persecuted by tyrants; by the Charleses, and Jameses, and Elizabeths of the world? Has she marked with her favour the great epochs of liberty, the Reformation, and the Revolutions of 1640, 1688, 1776, and 1798, so far as they were struggles for popular emancipation? Has she always been found on the side of struggling right against unholy might? Has she been marked by the sacrifice of benefices, and livings and state patronage for liberty and truth? Have her "successors to the apostles" been found champions for the rights of the people to choose their own rulers, temporal and spiritual, and determine their compensation? Were the Husses, the Luthers, the Calvins, the Knoxes, the Melvilles, and the Sidneys, the apostles and high-priests of liberty, Prelatists? Has Prelacy ever manfully resisted the usurpations of the civil power? Did she so in the "prerogative" days of Elizabeth? Did she so when the Stuarts were goading England to madness; when the dragoons of Claverhouse were staining the heather of Scotland with brave and innocent blood, and the gray-haired sire, the defenceless mother, and the unconscious babe, were massacred with indiscriminate brutality? Did she so when but yesterday, after repeated struggles for freedom, the old and honoured banner of Christ's crown was unfurled from the castled crags of Scotland, and the thrilling battle-cry of other days awoke some of the stern and lofty spirit of the mighty dead? Why has all this been true to the letter, of Presbytery?

But is this clearly marked tendency only a characteristic of the past? Is it true, as we often hear from "apostolic" sources, that Presbytery is intolerant of the religious rights of others? Does she arrogate to herself the title of *the Church*, and call others (except "the erring sister" that dwells in her vestal simplicity on the Tiber,) sects and conventicles, if not synagogues of Satan? Does she lay down a Procrustian rule of rites and organization, and then denounce, unchurch, and exclude even from "covenanted mercy," all non-conformists? Does she deny the validity of all ecclesiastical acts but her own? Does she pass loftily by, "on the other side," and rather see the wretched subjects of temperance, Bible, tract, and Sabbath associations, perish in their destitution, than soil her lawn in their res-

cue, by coming in contact with dissenting Samaritans? Does she insolently brand with the epithet of "dissenters," those who think the unwieldy panoply of the dark ages, with its stains of blood, and its joints of iron, unsuited to the battles of the Lord, and who prefer the shepherd's sling to the armour of Saul? Does she exclude the very dead from the sanctuary of the consecrated grave, for the sin of daring to worship God in life under their own vine and fig-tree? Does she obstruct and trammel the exercise of private judgment, and the freedom of speech and debate, as far as she dare? Does she follow the missionary labours of others, and rather see the bigoted Armenian, the ignorant Nestorian, and the benighted Hindoo, die in delusion, than be dispossessed and exorcised by those who "follow not after her?" Does she exalt her symbols with an idolatrous reverence, and dwell on forms and rites as absolute means and conditions of salvation? Does she forsake the weightier matters of the law, and cling to a figment of apostolic succession as the very spinal marrow of the Church, which, if once sundered, life is extinct? Does she denounce separation from her as schism, as the unpardonable sin, and significantly hint at the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Does she induce a beardless stripling to insult a gray-haired father by disowning his ministerial commission, and even virtually denying his own legitimacy, for the carrying out of "Church principles?" Are her ministers found, at one time invading the courtesies of a social entertainment to insult the children of the pilgrims by unchurching their honoured and sainted sires, and at another going down on their knees to one of those "who call themselves apostles and are not," because the skirt of his liberality, that was too narrow to cover those men of whom the world was not worthy, and of the fruit of whose toil and tears they themselves were thanklessly eating, was yet wide enough to embrace that bloated harlot, whose hands are yet dripping with their blood? Are her moderators found dictating to her judicatories what shall go on their minutes, and treating their worthiest members, like school-boys or slaves? Are her ministers found vaunting with a starched and strutting dignity, and a swelling self-importance, sonorous and lordly titles, that if not arrant nonsense, involve a claim of spiritual jurisdiction, to certain territory as absolute and exclusive as that of the civil government, calling themselves the Bishops, not of dioceses,

or churches, but of States? Is there nothing like intolerance here? Is not this the very same spirit (they themselves being the judges) that breathed in Charles, James, and Laud, those eminent and favourite polemics of Prelacy, when to these meek and gentle means of convincing and converting dissenters, were added such cogent and logical arguments, as the thumb-screw, the boot, the pillory, the dungeon, and the scaffold? And if we see modern Prelacy following in the footsteps of ancient Prelacy as far as it dare, or can go, are we to be deemed either incredulous or uncharitable, if we think it at least not a matter of regret, that it cannot go any further? And if, when we are met with such arrogant pretensions at every turn, we venture in all humility to make some inquiries as to their authority and tendency, in a land of liberty, will an "apostolic institution" object to such a Berean process as "unwarrantable meddling?" Surely, in view of this mass of testimony, we cannot be charged with either illegitimate reasoning or uncharitable deduction, when we conclude from all this, that the influence of Presbytery is at least much more decidedly and positively favourable than that of Prelacy, to the development and establishment of civil and ecclesiastical liberty.

In concluding this discussion, we disclaim all intention of assailing or censuring indiscriminately those who compose the Episcopal church. We rejoice to know that there are found amongst them as pure patriots, as sound republicans, as devoted and liberal Christians, and as scriptural and catholic theologians, as ever adorned the doctrine of Christ. There are those who reject and deplore the arrogance, and Romish tendencies amongst their dignitaries, as cordially as we do, but who, owing to the structure of their system, can only weep and pray over what they cannot correct. They have not the spirit of Prelacy, but the Spirit of Christ. With such we most cordially sympathize and fraternize, and would grieve if any thing now uttered should express toward them any feeling but brotherly kindness and charity. Did they give tone to the measures and language of their Church, controversy would cease, and we could unite our forces in the common cause, and against the common enemy.

But when claims are made whose insolence is unparalleled, except by their emptiness and wickedness; when spiritual religion, the piety of the heart, is treated with a

cold and ribald mockery that chills the blood with horror ;\* when it is loudly proclaimed that Prelacy is not only the sole, authorised system of polity, but it is boasted of as eminently even republican ; and when our commissions are rudely snatched from us and pronounced in the hearing of our people as forgeries, and impostures ; silence becomes at once cowardice and treason, and neither attack nor defence from us requires any apology.

When we look at the rapid strides of Prelatical arrogance in our own land, and see in other lands its shuffling, sidelong movement toward Popery ; and add to this the political signs of the times ; the systematic measures of the British government wantonly to insult the Presbyterians of Ireland in the most sacred and tender tie of human life ; whilst it meanly fawns on and crouches to Popery ; its disposition to oppress the Presbyterians of England by education bills, and chapel bills ; whilst it smiles even on the enemies of a Divine Saviour, if they are also enemies to this turbulent system ; its persevering efforts to crush the free sons of Scotland, who have dared to assert principles at once purchased and hallowed by the blood of their fathers ; the startling and ominous resemblances that exist between the present condition of England, and that which preceded and produced her two great revolutions ; the steady policy of France to cripple and destroy Presbytery, in violation of the very letter and spirit of her primary laws ; the evident tendency of all Protestant Europe toward a hierarchy, as the means of propping up the tottering turrets of usurped and frightened power ; and look at the accumulation of those internal elements, that may, ere long, burst forth with volcanic fury, in one of those earthquake explosions that scar and notch the record of the past ; there is no reflecting mind that does not seriously forecast the future. If that last fearful struggle of the embattled hosts of truth and error, may be at hand, which passed in its mystic and shadowy but terrific grandeur before the eye of the lonely exile of Patmos ; and if these ominous warnings may be the first distant clink of busy

\* The New York Churchman (Feb. 17, 1844) not content with contemptuously sneering at "evangelical religion," actually avows itself drawn to the Christian Register, the Unitarian organ of Boston, "by many cords of sympathy, and among them are hostility to the popular religion of the day, variously called Orthodoxy, Calvinism, Revivalism, and the Lutheran heresy of Justification." This avowal has at least the merit of honesty.

preparation that forebodes to the wakeful ear the coming battle; it becomes those whose fathers have always been found in the hottest and bloodiest spot of the contest, to prepare to stand in their lot, and calmly await the future. If peace and quiet shed their mellow light around us, let us stand fast to the truth of God, and not be betrayed into laxity on the one hand, or bigotry on the other: stand fast to duty, that we provoke not God to scourge us to our task by adversity: stand fast to one another, that we fall not by internecine strife and fratricidal phrensy. But if trouble from without, and hot, bitter contests from within, await us; if the storm and the darkness are to gather over our path, yet still let us stand fast: stand fast to the pure mystery of the cross, the stumbling-block and the foolishness of formalism and philosophy: stand fast to the altars that are hallowed with the blood of our fathers: stand fast to the sanctuaries that enshrine their honoured dust: stand fast to that holy and beautiful house that was built in troublous times, on whose stately and snowy turrets are engraved such high and glorious memories of the past, and around whose lofty pinnacle linger and play such bright and cheering visions of the future: stand fast to those pure and noble truths of doctrine and order bequeathed by our fathers, in which they lived and for which they died: in a word, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

THE END.

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