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ART. I.—*Ethnographic View of Western Africa.*

WESTERN AFRICA may be divided, according to its population, into three grand divisions. *First*—Senegambia, extending from the southern borders of the Great Desert to Cape Verga, a little south of the Rio Grande, and so named from its being watered by the two great rivers, Senegal and Gambia. *Second*—Upper, or Northern Guinea, reaching from Cape Verga to the Kamerun mountain in the Gulf of Benin, about four degrees north latitude. *Third*—Southern, or Lower Guinea, sometimes called Southern Ethiopia, extending from the Kamerun mountain to Cape Negro, the southern limit of Benguela.

The term *Guinea* is not of African origin, or at least not among those to whom it is applied. There is, according to Barbot, a district of country north of the Senegal, known by the name of *Genahoa*, the inhabitants of which were the first blacks that the Portuguese encountered, in their explorations along the coast in the fifteenth century; and they applied this name indiscriminately afterwards to all the black nations which they found further south. In the two succeeding centuries it was applied in a more restricted sense to that portion of the

Organic Christianity

ART. III.—*Organic Christianity*; or the Church of God, with its officers and government, and its divisions and variations, both in ancient, medieval, and modern times; embracing a thorough Exposition and Defence of Church Democracy. By Leicester A. Sawyer. Boston: John P. Jewett and Co. 1854.

THAT there is one holy catholic Church, which Christ has purchased with his own blood, and will present faultless before the presence of his glory without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; that by this Church will be made known unto all heaven the manifold wisdom of God; that it comprises all and only the elect and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; that he is the sole head thereof, and that it is his body and spouse, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is a fundamental article of the Christian faith. Obliterate it, and Christianity goes with it, both foundation and superstructure. So the people of God have ever clung to it, because they hold fast that which is good. It stands out in the simplest and earliest Christian symbols as an integral part of the doctrine of God and salvation. It shines out with focal brightness in the creeds, the didactic and polemic treatises of the Reformers. They fought for it as for life, seeing it to be their only charter of deliverance from the ghostly tyranny of that hierarchy which assumed to be the true body of Christ, the one catholic Church, separate from which there is no salvation. It is the faith of Protestant Christendom, if we except here and there a fragment of it, whose watchword either is or should be, *Tendimus in Latium*.

In the nature of the case, it follows, and appears in all the foregoing ways to have been a part of the Christian faith, that this Church is so far invisible to us, that we cannot certainly know all the individuals who compose it, or distinguish them surely from those who do not compose it. "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

It is another consequence that the boundaries that separate this communion of saints from the rest of mankind, are not precisely conterminous with those which divide any one, or all

visible Christian organizations, and visible churches from the world. All are not Israel that are of Israel. And there are always believers who have not as yet been baptized.

Although this Church is invisible in the sense above indicated, yet it becomes visible in the Christian profession and fellowship, the holy lives and conversations of its members; in the ministries, sacraments, organizations for its own preservation, enlargement, edification; and thus in all its fruits of righteousness and peace, with which it blesses our fallen world.

More strictly and formally, the Church becomes visible in the persons of those who in virtue of a profession of faith in Christ, and manifest fruits of obedience to him, or if yet incapable of such manifestations, of the gracious covenant of God, which includes not only his people, but their children, are in the judgment of charity, to be accounted, treated, and dealt with, as members of the body of Christ, and of the communion of saints. When Paul speaks of persecuting the Church of God, he refers not to any particular ecclesiastical organization, but to those taken indiscriminately, who were to human view Christians. It can only be in rare and exceptional cases that any true Christians are not found within the sacred precincts thus marked out. And hence it is a part of our faith, that "the visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel, not confined to one nation as under the law, consists of all those that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

It is to this catholic, visible Church, not to the invisible as such, and not to any particular sections or societies, exclusively of others in the visible Church, that the sacraments, ministry, polity, and all other outward ordinances and helps for the edification of the body of Christ, are given. Paul means by the Church, the Church invisible, not any particular congregations as such, but the universal Church visible, including all particular churches which are members thereof, when he says: "And God has set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Cor. xii. 28.

We are thus brought not merely to Christianity, but to "Organic Christianity," the subject of Mr. Sawyer's book. For among a multitude of persons, "government" or anything like orderly administration, and united action, implies organization. And all organization implies government.

It should be noted, however, that the word church (*εκκλησία*), in its Christian application, signifies in its first and constitutive idea, the elect and saved; the body of Christ, neither more nor less. When used in a Christian sense, or to denote Christian companies and associations, it is only because, as the logicians say, it also "*connotes*" that those so denominated are composed of persons who visibly, and in the judgment of charity, are to be deemed and treated as Christians, *i. e.* as members of the Church invisible; because in these societies the true members of Christ are, with insignificant exceptions, to be found; because, by universal consent, they impair their title to be called and treated as churches, in so far as they fail to maintain that truth by profession and teaching, and that purity of life which must characterize real Christians, while it is conceded on all hands, and is abundantly asserted in the Protestant confessions, that if in words they profess Christ, yet, as a whole, in works deny him, or avow errors which subvert the foundations, they are no churches in fact, though they call themselves such, but synagogues of Satan.

From all this, it is indisputable, that the normal sense, the proper *connotation* of the word Church, as a Christian term, is the assembly of the faithful, the called, *κληροί*. For any company which is destitute of those visible marks of abiding in fundamental Christian truth and practice, or in proportion as it becomes destitute of them, whatever else it may be, is not a church.

It might seem, at a first glance, to be a merely theoretical question of no practical moment, whether the Church has its essence in being the company of the faithful—the degree of its visibility, of its mixture with unbelievers in certain relations, of its purity and perfection in organization, profession, and practice, being *accidents*—or whether it has its essence primarily in being some visible society or corporation. It may be argued that on this latter theory, although by union to the Church,

and participation of her ordinances, we obtain the grace of life, yet this grace is forfeited if it be not duly improved, or if it lead not to holiness of life; and hence that, without such holiness, no one can be saved, or come into the Church invisible. Thus, it may be claimed, the two views practically flow together, and neither is worth contending for, as against the other.

It is however, hardly credible that the great masters of papal and evangelical polemics, did not know what they were about, or that the Bellarmines and Turretines who exhausted their strength on this controversy, were fighting for a shadow. A little reflection will show that they were not mistaken. It is plainly the doctrine of Scripture, that all true Christians are members of the body of Christ, and that none can be in a state of salvation who are not members of that Church, which is his body. Now, if this be essentially and formally any visible society, then plainly union to such society, and subjection to its authority, becomes a condition of salvation. Saving grace is received, not directly from Christ, but through the mediation of a human priesthood. Union and subordination to them alone give union to Christ and his Church. Thus they are essentially the Church, antecedent and conditional to the existence of Christian people. Surely, no premises ever warranted a conclusion, if the ritual and sacramental system, and so far as there is any logical consistency, Popery itself, is not the legitimate and inevitable consequence.

While the Church, without visible organization, may have being in the persons of devout men who fear God, in the dens and caves of the earth, yet it is evident from Scripture and experience, that such organization is indispensable to its well-being—its preservation and increase in grace, knowledge and numbers. This is scarcely questioned by any, unless Quakers, whose officers and yearly meetings, however, prove that even they are obliged to conform to a principle so fundamental, and cannot live in defiance of it. But it is plain that such organizations fail of their end, and of all title to be regarded as churches, except as they exist for the edification of the invisible Church or body of Christ, through their own edification; as they use the scriptural and appointed means therefor; as they are of this Church and have communion with it; as they set up

for their own ideal, towards which they strive and tend, its great attributes of TRUTH, HOLINESS AND UNITY.

As High Churchism unchurches other communions, it is not only based on that false theory of the nature of the Church of which we have spoken, but it is void of one momentous characteristic of a true visible Church, *i. e.* seeking and maintaining fellowship among the members of Christ's body. That of which it most loudly boasts, is precisely that in which it most fails, *viz.* catholicity and unity. More than any other ecclesiastical system, it isolates itself from the communion of saints, and makes a "schism in the body." To the Low Church Episcopalians, though we differ from them in important points of polity and order, we extend the right hand of fellowship, because they so hold fast the Head, as to see and rejoice in their union to all the members.

Passing these as not specially implicated in our present discussion, the principal remaining forms of church government are the Presbyterian, and the Congregational or Independent. These systems especially confront each other in this country, as it is here that the latter has its strongest foothold, as in times past they both have had essentially the same doctrines, modes of worship, forms of religious life and activity, together with mutual fraternal correspondence, and the freest possible interchange of ministers and members. They seemed like branches of the same denomination, rather than different sects, separated only by a geographical line, and some differences of polity. In New England, it was common to call Congregationalists Presbyterians. Of late years, however, a series of events, which it is needless here to detail, farther than to notice the progressive changes in doctrine in the Congregational body, and the uprising of an extraordinary zeal for propagating the Congregational polity as against the Presbyterian, (both which facts Mr. Sawyer asserts and glories in,) have somewhat weakened their mutual affinities. A large and increasing body appear to deem it a chief mission to propagate what they variously style Congregationalism, Independency, or with Mr. Sawyer, "Church Democracy," and this especially as against Presbyterianism. Thus the two systems are made to confront each other as never before in this country. It is the object of Mr. Sawyer's book

chiefly to forward this effort to disparage Presbyterianism, and build up, we will not say, historical Congregationalism, but what he calls "church democracy." The book, indeed, has other purposes and uses. It gives a condensed account of the principal Christian churches and of some anti-Christian sects, which will be interesting and valuable to many readers. It denounces Popery and Episcopacy with exemplary vehemence. It labours to make Abolition an essential article of Christianity, and a test of church-standing. Indeed, we sometimes are led to think that his zeal for Congregationalism is subsidiary to this end. But whether so or not, no one can mistake that his principal direct object is to assail Presbyterianism, and advance Independency in opposition to it. The work is evidently the fruit of study, and shows a clear and vigorous mind. Mr. Sawyer also has the merit of being in earnest, and his short, blunt, honest sentences leave us hardly ever in doubt of his meaning.

Before coming directly to the main issue before us, a few words are in place, with respect to the *jure divino* character of church government. And here it is obvious that all depends on the meaning of this potential phrase, which seems often to be used in reference to this subject, without any very fixed and intelligible sense. That which exists *jure divino* exists by divine warrant or authority. But then this may be various in kind and degree. The warrant may be express and indubitable declarations of God's word, or by implication and inference from it. Then, again, this inference may be immediate, palpable and indisputable, or it may be more remote and questionable. Or this warrant may be a dictate of reason, and this again either intuitive and unquestioned, or obtained by deduction and inference more or less debatable. In this aspect, we, of course, have evidence that any given system of church government is *jure divino*, in proportion as we have evidence that it is according to the will of God. And this evidence is sure, in proportion as it is given clearly and immediately in the Bible; or, next to this, in the primary intuitions of reason. In point of fact, if we take any concrete system of church government, it will be found that its advocates can claim the highest sort of *jus divinum* above mentioned only for its leading and fundamental principles, while they can plead only the lowest for

many of the details of its administration. This is only saying that these details are not expressly laid down in Scripture, but left to be developed and regulated by a sound Christian discretion.

But there is also a traditionary sense of this *jus divinum*, which has arisen from its ancient use by popes and kings, to denote not only that they held their thrones by a divine warrant, but that by virtue of this warrant all other governments, civil and ecclesiastical, were illegitimate, and their acts null and void. He who holds that any form of church polity is *jure divino* in this sense, of course, like Papists and High-Churchmen, unchurches all communions who do not adopt it. It is needless to argue the fallacy of such a view here, or as between Presbyterians and any school of Congregationalists. For both alike, together with all Low-Churchmen, believe that, however any church organization may be defective, and whatever loss the people under it may suffer from its defects, yet if they be a congregation of faithful men, maintaining the word and sacraments, they are to be accounted and treated as a true Church. They may proceed unwisely in some respects; their methods may be deemed unsafe for testing the qualifications of ministers; it may be deemed inexpedient by other Churches to receive these ministers without re-examination, or to be bound by many of their acts; such circumstances may diminish the closeness of intercommunion; yet they warrant not a denial that it is a true Church, to be treated as such, and that its ministrations and sacraments are valid.

It is further to be observed, before we proceed to canvass the points of difference between the two systems under consideration, that Congregationalism appears to have been devised as a refuge from tyranny, when Church and State were united, and the sword was wielded to coerce submission on the part of individuals and particular churches, to the edicts of national, ecclesiastical and civil rulers, both being then essentially one. Hence, the strong impulse to find some local church authority, which being free from all ecclesiastical power beyond itself, would also escape the thong of civil persecution with which that authority was armed. Thus they sought to preserve conscience and Christian liberty inviolate. The true remedy for

this, by separating Church and State, appears not to have dawned upon them, as it had not upon their age. Hence, long after their settlement in this country, they kept up the union. The Cambridge Platform expressly assigns to the civil magistrate the power of convoking synods, and punishing heresy—a power which was exercised in the primitive era of New England Puritanism. But then they were careful to maintain that no decisions of such synods were binding, *propriis viribus*, or until they were formally adopted by the churches as their own acts. The recollection of the fact here adverted to, with regard to the origin of the system, will aid us in comprehending other circumstances which come into consideration in seeking for the *status quæstionis*.

Mr. Sawyer says, “The essential elements of Congregationalism are two: 1. The democratic government of the Church by its membership, or by persons holding their appointment from the membership, and accountable to them; 2. The supreme government of every church by itself, to the exclusion of Synods, Presbyteries, conventions, and all general bodies whatever. This allows advisory councils, associations of ministers, conferences of ministers and delegates; but it does not allow the establishment of any court superior to the Church, either of legislation or judicature.” (p. 414.) How far this agrees in all parts with the highest authorities, or with all that is said by Mr. Sawyer himself, remains to be seen. That, however, it is essentially a correct description of the practical and theoretical system now in vogue with leading Congregational propagandists, is past all question.

He thus defines Presbyterianism: “The fundamental principles of Presbyterianism are those which relate to the eldership as church rulers, holding their offices for life; to the ministry as of a single order; to sessions as a court of church elders, and to presbyteries as a court of ministers and elders.” (p. 245.) “The elders are considered as representatives of the churches, * * but this is an entire mistake.” (p. 247.) “By the single circumstance of having their appointments for life, they are placed above the people, and become their masters instead of being their representatives and servants.” * The session is “a court of monarchs, or aristocrats, who hold office for life.”

“The principles of the Presbyterian and Episcopal systems are the same.” (pp. 248-9.) “Presbyterianism is a modified Episcopacy, and both are modified despotisms of the sacred order kind. Enlightened Congregationalism abhors these principles, as having been the source of incalculable evils to mankind, and as liable to reproduce them in all times and in all countries.” (p. 414.) “It (Congregationalism) is, therefore, the uncompromising enemy of all hierarchical and aristocratical church despotisms whatever, and denounces them all as unscriptural and inexpedient, and as leading to indefinite corruption and unlimited abuse.” (p. 348.)

Such blind and intemperate denunciation as this can hardly need serious refutation among Presbyterians, or those who know them; nor would it, with much more in the book, be of account any way, if found only there. But the truth is, this volume so far as its tone in such matters is concerned, is but the echo and the summation of the utterances of the popular orators and organs of radical Independency, reiterated till multitudes of worthy people take it for some approximation to the truth, because they are not in a situation to hear it questioned, or to examine for themselves. For, according to our author, it is an essential characteristic of Congregationalism, *i. e.* this type of it, thus to denounce Presbyterianism, as one with Episcopacy, as a despotism, as “leading to indefinite corruption and unlimited abuse.”

The points of difference between the two systems, as set forth by our author, and in point of fact, are two: 1. With respect to the government of particular churches or congregations of believers. 2. With respect to the relations of these churches to each other; the subordination of each to all; the degree, basis, method of their visible union; whether there is any such thing as a visible organized Church beyond a single congregation, and whether there is any ecclesiastical authority above such a congregation, or any appeal from its acts. We will consider these two topics in their order, not so much for the purpose of convincing Presbyterians, as of showing those assailants, who glory in what they call church-democracy, the futile and suicidal character of their own assaults. They are compelled by the intuitive dictates of reason, by the undeniable teachings

of the Bible, by the irrepressible instincts of a gracious nature, by inevitable necessity, to do homage to the principles they thus "denounce" as despotic. For the most part, Mr. Sawyer does this himself; where he comes short, the whole history of Congregationalism, the testimony of its most renowned symbols and expositors, does it *ex abundantia*.

I. The internal government of single churches. The only question here is, whether this should, in an orderly and settled state of the Church, be administered by the whole body of adult male communicants, or by a select few chosen by them, and from among them, on account of their superior fitness for the work. It is not a question whether the pastor constitutes a part of the ruling body, and presides over it. This is admitted in either case. On this subject we have to say:

1. It is no question between us and the most eminent founders and champions of Congregationalism in England and New England. Says Mr. Sawyer, "The great champion of Congregationalism in England, in this (the seventeenth) century, was John Owen." For ourselves, we were first convinced that the office of ruling elder has a scriptural warrant, by his masterly plea for it in his great treatise on church government. The Cambridge platform undeniably expresses the principles of the early New England Congregationalists. But it declares, "Of elders, who are also in Scripture called bishops, some attend chiefly to the ministry of the word, as the pastors and teachers; others attend especially unto rule, who are therefore called ruling elders." (Chap. vi. 4.) Again: "Church government or rule is placed by Christ in the officers of the Church, who are therefore called rulers, while they rule with God; yet in case of maladministration, they are subject to the power of the Church, as hath been said before. The Holy Ghost frequently, yea, always, where it mentioneth church rule, and church government, ascribeth it to the elders; whereas the work and duty of the people is expressed in obeying their elders, and submitting unto them in the Lord. So that it is manifest that an organic or complete church is a body politic, consisting of some that are governors, and some that are governed in the Lord." (Chap. x. 7.) It is true, the people and the elders had a mutual veto power upon each other. But

inasmuch as this theory assigned to the elders the function of government as such, of preparing and digesting all matters for the action of the church; as they were formally invested with this pre-eminence by the people, on account of their superior qualifications; as the office of the people was simply that of "consenting" or not consenting to the acts of the elders; the prerogative of the elders in all ordinary circumstances was as great as in any form of Presbyterianism. As Hooker, one of the most renowned of the Congregational fathers, said, "They are a speaking aristocracy in the face of a silent democracy." This is further evident from the fact that the eldership in form quickly fell into general disuse. It wielded a power which could not stand before the jealousy of all power over themselves, that had been so largely imbibed by the people. Dr. Dwight, whom Mr. Sawyer so justly honours as one of the most illustrious of Congregational divines, says that he can see no good reason why the office was suffered to die out; that he deems it scriptural, and that its restoration would be of great advantage to the churches. As to the "power of the church" over the elders, in case of "maladministration," this was substantially that which exists wherever the office exists. In those extreme cases of incorrigible maladministration, which admit of no remedy but revolution, it has been the common doctrine of the Reformed Churches that the power vests in the body of the church to right itself by extreme remedies. *Salus populi suprema lex* under Christ, was their justification for repudiating the Papal hierarchy, and placing over themselves a scriptural and evangelical church rule. As to any ordinary difference between the people and elders of a Congregational church, it was always an undisputed principle, that it was to be referred to a council: i. e., from this single church to a body representing the Church more at large. This, in principle, is Presbyterianism. The comparative merits of Congregational councils and Presbyteries for such exigencies, is another matter, aside of the point in hand, on which we may yet have something to say. Withal, the Cambridge platform styles the eldership an *aristocracy*. Here, alas! we have that fearful "aristocracy" which Mr. Sawyer counts it his own mission and that of Con-

gregationalism to "denounce as leading to indefinite corruption and unlimited abuse."

Mr. Sawyer lays great stress on the life-tenure of their office by Presbyterian elders. This makes it a despotism, or vastly aggravates its despotic severity. But the Congregational elder-ship were on the same basis. Besides, this has nothing to do with the principle, the scriptural authority, and utility of the office itself. It is not essential to the being of Presbyterianism. The Dutch Reformed Churches elect their elders either for a year or term of years. Some New-school churches have agitated, and, we believe, actually do the same thing. It is purely a matter of expediency, left to be determined by the wisdom and prudence of the church, as exigencies may require. The idea that a tenure of office for a period limited only by good behaviour, makes it despotic, is a simple hallucination. It would turn the Supreme Court of the United States, of many, and until of late, of nearly all of the particular States, into despotisms. Above all, the office of Congregational pastor, on this supposition, becomes a despotism, because, according to the boast of Mr. Sawyer, "it differs from all others in this, that it is *supreme*." * * * "Presbyterian pastors are subject to their Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, and can do nothing against them. But the Congregational minister is subject only to Christ." (p. 350.) We trust our Congregational brethren will bear with us, if we prefer Presbyterianism to such "church democracy" as this.

2. In all well ordered communities, government is in fact administered, not by the people in person, but by their chosen representatives. A pure democracy, in which the people govern permanently, otherwise than through their chosen rulers, is a pure fiction. We know it to be so in this country, which is far more democratic than any stable government the world ever knew. We know it to be so in all churches, except the Congregational. Nor are these able to maintain discipline, order, and peace, without committing the oversight of their affairs to their best and wisest men, who in conjunction with the pastor, take the lead, exercise a preponderating influence, and are in short ruling elders in fact, if not in form, and in name. That pastor who has no such coadjutors, is deplorably

weak. That church that has them not, or having them, hearkens not to them, will quickly be rent with intestine feuds, or wither away under the decay of discipline. This is so palpable, that large numbers of those churches have attempted to restore what was vital in the lost eldership, in the form of committees, often holding office for life, who are expressly charged with the oversight of the interests and the discipline of the church. They usually consist of precisely the same men who would be chosen to constitute a board of elders, if the office existed in form. With or without such a committee, there are always deacons, who are chosen, always, with the understanding that they take the place of leaders in the church, and in view of their fitness for such a position. In the absence of elders, Mr. Sawyer truly says, "the deaconship in the Congregational Church approximates to the dignity and importance of the eldership in Presbyterianism." This is so clearly the fact, that it is almost an axiom, that a church in conflict with its deacons is in jeopardy, while it is well understood that a pastor may just as safely incur the hostility of a bench of Presbyterian elders, as of Congregational deacons. In the nature of things then, the question is not, whether a well ordered church shall have elders in fact, but whether it shall have them in form; on a constitutional basis; with powers and duties clearly defined; and with a regular privilege and available mode of appeal from their exceptionable acts. And surely this is hardly a question. The highest Congregational authorities have well said: "It is a usual thing with a prudent and faithful pastor himself to single out some of the more grave, solid, aged brethren in his congregation, to assist him in many parts of his work, on many occasions in the year; nor will such a pastor ordinarily do any important thing in his government, without having first heard the counsel of such brethren. In short, there are few discreet pastors but what make many occasional ruling elders every year. I say, then, suppose the church by a vote recommend some such brethren, the fittest they have, and always more than one, unto the more stated assistance of their pastor in the church rule, wherein they may be helps unto him; * * * yea, and what if they should, by solemn fasting and prayer, be commended unto the benediction of God in what service they

have to do? What objection can be made against the lawfulness? I think none can be made against the usefulness of such a thing." Still further—"unless a church have divers elders, the church government must be either *prelatic* or *popular*; and that a church's needing but one elder, is an opinion contrary not only to the sense of the faithful in all ages, but also to the law of the Scriptures, where there can be nothing plainer than, "elders who rule well, and are worthy of double honour, though they do not labour in word and doctrine;" whereas, if there were any *teaching* elders, who do not "labour in word and doctrine," they would be so far from "worthy of double honour," that they would not be worthy of any honour at all. Such is Cotton Mather's account of the arguments by which the defenders of the Cambridge platform, vindicated its articles relative to ruling elders, against their opponents. They have an inherent and irresistible cogency, which it is impossible to gainsay or resist.* Cases sometimes occur in which a popular pastor carries majorities with him in inflicting grievances upon minorities or individuals, for which they have no means of redress, however just their cause. And they as often occur, especially when congregations are anxious to rid themselves of pastors, when all his counsel and influence, his expositions of ecclesiastical law and order, are just about as potential as an insect in a whirlwind.

3. These arguments, derived mainly from Congregational sources, are clinched by the decisive authority of Scripture, which in various ways sets forth governments, ruling, and rulers, in the house of God; not a single elder, but a plurality of elders in particular churches; not exclusively those who both teach and rule; but those who rule, as distinguished from those who both rule and labour in word and doctrine, as we have already seen. Moreover, they with equal emphasis, enjoin obedience to these rulers. All the efforts to explain away this *catena* of scriptural teachings that have come in our way, class rather with special pleading than with exegesis.

Finally, Mr. Sawyer himself gives up the ancient point, when he says that the government of the church may be either by its "membership, or by persons holding their appointment

* See Mather's *Magnalia*, Hartford edition, Vol. ii. pp. 239—241.

from the membership." If so, then it may lawfully be by elders so appointed, as in the Presbyterian Church. This is the great principle in issue. All else concerns matters of detail and expediency.

II. We have come now to consider the relation of particular churches to each other, and to the whole Church or community of churches; whether all the dogmatic, diatactic, and diacritical power of the Church is lodged in its separate congregations; and whether if there be any warrant for large church organizations, their decisions have an authority superior, equal, or inferior to those of single churches. And here a little preliminary ventilation of two or three points may help to blow away some of the fog which too often mystifies this whole subject.

First: what is meant by ecclesiastical authority? This is often spoken of, as if it were a very harmless and salutary thing, when wielded by a majority of a single congregation over individuals or minorities, but as if it were a very despotic, monstrous, and detestable thing, when exercised by an ecclesiastical body representing many churches, over a single church; in short, as if it must necessarily be specifically different in the two cases. Now the truth is, that be it more or less conceded or disputed, it is the same in kind in either case. It is not supreme and lordly authority, either according to the Congregational or Presbyterian scheme, since God alone is Lord of the conscience. It is declarative and ministerial only. As dogmatic, it extends only to the declaration of the doctrine of Scripture, not to the invention or imposition of any other; as diatactic, it extends not to the legislating into existence any commands or ordinances which in principle and substance Christ hath not enjoined, but only to the making of rules and regulations for doing decently and in order, what in general is already ordained in the Bible; as diacritical, it extends only to the power of trying and judging those charged with scandals and heresies, subversive of Christianity, and of visiting upon offenders the censures of the church, even to the excommunication of the incorrigible. But excommunication is the ultimate penalty. The church can inflict no civil penalties or disabilities. It can only eject from its own communion. Now the

champions of Independency are much in the habit of reasoning, as if the admission of any ecclesiastical authority beyond or above a single church, would interpose a power between that church and the authority of Christ. But they seem to have no fear that the authority of that church over its members, will interpose any such authority between them and Christ. The manifest truth is, that there is just as much, and no more interference with the direct authority of Christ, and proper Christian liberty in the one case, as in the other. That is, all but the exceptional cases which prove the rule, none at all. Where either of these authorities, or any human authority, ecclesiastical, civil, or parental, require disobedience to God, there is no alternative. We must obey God rather than man. In all other cases, though we suffer, we must endure rather than rebel, and commit our way to Him that judgeth righteously. In case any cannot without sin, acquiesce in any ecclesiastical judgment, the worst penalty that can befall a church or individual, is to be separated from the visible fellowship of that church, or communion of churches. But this separates not from the body of Christ, and the Church of the first-born, those who are really members of it. It is vain for man to call common what God hath cleansed. This being so, it follows that there is nothing more terrible in the authority of the whole Church over single churches, than in the authority of single churches over their own members. But it also follows, that any injustice done by such churches to their own members, or the cause of Christ, becomes thrice oppressive, immitigable, and intolerable, if there be no appeal to the Church at large. And if such ecclesiastical authority is despotic, then all conceivable human authority, in the Church, state and family, is despotic.

Next, it is to be observed, that each particular congregation of believers, with its organization and ministries, exists not exclusively or mainly for itself, but in order to the edification of the body of Christ, in and through its own growth in numbers and graces. And this increase again, can only be by union to the entire body, as it is all permeated and bound together by the common life flowing through it from Christ the Head, "from whom the whole body fitly joined together and com-

pacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. iii. 16. The very figure itself imports not only the subordination of the whole body to Christ, but the subserviency of its parts and members to itself as a whole. This is explicitly taught in the passage just quoted, and is constantly implied in all the scriptural representations. The members of his Church are members of his body, his flesh, and his bones; so they are members one of another, and so are all "subject one to another," not as we have already explained, in derogation, but in fulfilment of their subjection to their adorable Head. That these are characteristics of the invisible Church; that all visible societies fail of the attributes of a church, in so far as they do not aim to shadow forth these characteristics; that for the same reason, and to the same extent to which individual members of churches are subject to those churches or their chosen representatives, churches in turn are subject to the whole fraternity of churches or their representatives in the Lord; these are cardinal truths implicated in the one body, the one faith, the one baptism, the one hope, the one Lord of Christianity, and have commanded the assent of all Christendom, except a few champions of Independency. "Now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. * * * That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care, one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." 1 Cor. xii. 12. *et seq.* In accordance with these views, Owen, the great champion of Congregationalism, insists in his great treatise on the "communion of Churches," that a Church which deifies or sets itself aloof from other Churches, is a society to which no man can safely commit his soul; and that if any member feel aggrieved by the judgments of a particular church, he ought to have the right of appeal to the Church at large, in some representation of it, since he is a member of this also, and it has the highest interest in the welfare of its members. Now there are two principal cases for which the Church needs organizations beyond single congregations. 1. For the pur-

pose of accomplishing all the great ends of maintaining the truth, propagating the gospel among the unevangelized, sustaining weak churches, making organized resistance to heresy and scandal, and in general, of vivifying, energizing, and purifying the whole body, for which separate local churches alone do not suffice. 2. For the purpose of revising and correcting by the collective wisdom and fidelity of larger bodies, the doings of local churches, sessions, or other bodies, in which error has been committed, or truth and righteousness wounded, through ignorance, prejudice, or other infirmity. For if one member suffer, all suffer. All have an interest, and it is an axiom too plain to need argument, laid down by the framers of the Connecticut Platform, as the basis of their Constitution, that what affects all, should be managed by all—*Quod tangit omnes, debet ab omnibus tractari*. But it will not be disputed, that to whatever extent churches ought to be organized together for their mutual welfare, the majority must prevail over minorities, and individuals for the same reason, and within the same limits already defined, as in the case of single churches, or their representative eldership; *i. e.* always saving intact the paramount duty of obedience to God. Another principle too self-evident to need stating, were it not so often lost sight of in these discussions, is this: All ecclesiastical power, authority, and obligation, as to the essence and vitality of it, is primarily derived from Christ, not from the Church, or from any ordinance or consent of man. Nor can any man or set of men in his kingdom, exercise powers which he hath not conferred without trenching on his prerogative. Nor can they fail to discharge the offices which he has laid upon them, without breach of fealty to him. Many persons write and speak as if ministers and church officers were ministers of the people exclusively, forgetting that in a still higher sense, they are ministers of Christ; as if church officers and courts might lawfully do whatever the people consent that they shall do, and as if they must forbear to do what the people do not authorize. Thus, Mr. Sawyer says, (p. 174)

“The consent of the membership is the source of authority to the Church, as a body, and to the ministry; and this is equally true with all systems of church polity—Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational. This, and not tradition, is the

true source of all the valid authority of the Papacy itself. The Papal power is, in a sense, traditionary, but is in effect by consent of the membership. *The authority of the ministry, thus constituted, is a valid authority.*"

The Pope, then, and all hierarchies that usurp the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ, have a valid authority to "sit as God in the temple of God!" This conclusion is inevitable, if we grant the premise that the consent of the people is the source and measure of all ministerial authority. Extremes meet. The basis of Independency becomes the corner-stone of Papacy. But we deny, and would deny with ten thousand tongues if we had them, that the "consent" of all the people under the whole heaven, can give any "valid authority" to the Pope to enact his abominations; to the minister of a Universalist society to preach Universalism; to Brigham Young, to perpetrate his heathenish impostures.

All the truth which gives the slightest plausibility to so pernicious a principle, is that no man has evidence of a divine call to the pastorate or eldership of any office in a church, without the election of that church; that he, therefore, cannot be lawfully imposed upon them, without their choice—a truth precious enough to warrant all the sacrifices of the Free Scotch Church to witness it. But this gives not the minister the charter of his duties or functions. That he receives from Christ in his word; and whatever the people may choose or permit, woe is him if he preach not the gospel, whether they will hear or forbear! It is at his peril, that he fails to be an example to believers, and to discharge his proper part in maintaining the discipline of the house of God. If the people will not endure sound doctrine, or faithful ministrations, that does not justify him in being unfaithful. In such a case, God plainly calls him elsewhere. But, wherever he may go, though he or an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel, he is accursed!

Now, with respect to the right of appeal by aggrieved parties, from the decisions of particular churches, to an ecclesiastical body, composed of other churches and their representatives, it is so obvious that it is sanctioned by all Congregational practice. Such parties may refer the case to a council, consisting of the delegates of other churches and their pastors. If the church

consent to such reference, the council is called mutual, and is selected, half by the church and half by the appellant. If the church refuse, as sometimes happens, to grant so reasonable a request, the aggrieved party has a right to an *ex parte* council, chosen wholly by himself—so Mr. Sawyer says, and says truly. (p. 364.) The principle is thus conceded that the acts of particular churches are justly liable to revision before, and that those aggrieved by these acts have a right to the verdict of, the Church at large, in the persons of the ministers and representatives of various congregations. The points of divergence from Presbyterianism respect the authority of these councils with regard to the churches whose decisions they revise. It is moral, and not juridical. This simply raises the question, whether in a controverted case the judgment of one church, and that an interested party, or that of a number of churches, ought to preponderate, not so far as opinion, but so far as action, practical acquiescence, are concerned. The light of nature, the first principles of all order, sufficiently answer this question. “If one church be to be heard, much more are many churches to be so, in things that properly fall under the cognizance thereof,” said the ancient Cambridge meeting of Congregational ministers.*

It only remains here to inquire, whether, if such ecclesiastical courts beyond particular churches are necessary, it is best that they should exist only *pro re nata*, called into being by one or both the parties, and expiring with the occasion; or whether they should be permanent, composed of the ministers and representatives of the churches within a given district. So far as the advantages of independence of the parties, judicial experience, known character, definite constitutions and rules of procedure, or the practice, not only of nearly all Christendom, but of the whole civilized world go, the answer to this question is too obvious to need argument. The state of things generated by the former class of tribunals became so intolerable in Connecticut, as to induce the early adoption of the Saybrook Platform, which provides for permanent instead of occasional councils, called Consociations.† Dr. Dwight, expressing his

* Mather's *Magnalia*, Vol. ii., p. 248.

† Trumbull's *History of Connecticut*, Vol. i., p. 507, enumerating the causes which led to the adoption of the Saybrook Platform, says: “Besides, it was gene-

high approbation of this system, says that it only wants a General State Consociation, to which appeals from the district Consociations could be carried, to render it complete. Consociations, Mr. Sawyer however, *et id genus omne*, denounces as a "corruption of Congregationalism."

Says Mr. Sawyer, very justly, "the right to ordain, on the part of the ministry, implies a right to withhold ordination from improper candidates. Such a right involves a limitation of the power of the brethren, so as to require the concurrence of the pre-existing ministry in the appointment of ministers; but it does not imply ministerial absolutism." Of course not. But it does imply a power beyond a particular church, in the church at large, which may lawfully overrule its wishes in regard to its most momentous interest; and this, not only because its own safety requires such a defence against ignorant or unworthy intruders into the sacred office; but because the welfare of the whole Church is implicated in the character of its ministers, and what concerns all, should be transacted by all. Here again we have the principle. Whether it can best be carried out by occasional councils or permanent ecclesiastical bodies, is quite another and incidental matter, on which enough has already been said.

With respect to general organizations of the Church for the purpose of transacting those matters not judicial, but vital to her welfare, to which single churches are inadequate, there is no room for controversy. Whether authorized in form by the

rally conceded, that the state of the churches was lamentable, with respect to their general order, government and discipline. * * * 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 a remedy. There was no such thing in this way as bringing their difficulties to a final issue."

This state of things has been witnessed of late years in Massachusetts, in reference to several momentous cases. The first stealthy inroads of Unitarianism in Connecticut were arrested by the action of the Consociation of Tolland county, in the case of Rev. Mr. Abbot, of Coventry. They tried, and deposed him. He then with the Society called a select council from Eastern Massachusetts. This council acquitted him, and pronounced the judgment of Consociation unlawful and null. The General Association of the State investigated the affair, and under the lead of such men as Dr. Dwight and Dr. Beecher, fully vindicated the Consociation, and utterly condemned the picked council as lawless intruders. The Connecticut churches are deeply indebted to Consociations for their preservation from the Massachusetts apostacy.

churches or not, they have everywhere, among all Congregationalists, sprung up spontaneously, in the form of General Conferences, Associations, Unions. If founded on no other warrant, they are the instinctive outworkings of Christian fellowship, of that unity which joins and actuates the head, the body, and the members. In some cases, being composed exclusively of ministers, they look a little too hierarchical and anti-republican to suit Presbyterians. However, we will not here make a point of this. The principle is what we are after. This is that of ecclesiastical organization, coextensive with the entire communion of churches, so far as local contiguity and other means of intercourse and mutual helpfulness render it feasible and desirable. Least of all, have we anything to contend for on this subject as against Mr. Sawyer. He deems the existing Congregational organizations wholly insufficient. They need, he says, to be "completed by the addition of a stated national convention, to meet annually, or at regular intervals of three or four years, in which state associations, conferences, conventions, &c., can be represented; and to have established by this national court a set of church boards to conduct the various charitable enterprises of the Church, by its authority, and to serve in various ways as a bond of union and agreement between the widely separated branches of this body." (pp. 398-9.) Again, he says, such an organization "might constitute a general agency of the whole Congregational Church to conduct the benevolent operations of the entire body." (p. 372.) He also says, (p. 23,) "a Church without a government is a contradiction in terms. It takes organization to make a Church, and organization is a provision for associated action." This argument is futile, unless he means what is true, *vice versa*, that organization implies government. To which we will add, government implies judicial power, and must exercise it, in fact, if not in name. Looking back over these quotations, what do we find? The whole Congregational Church! A church, then, may mean not only a congregation of believers, but a whole communion of them; organized, too, and so having a government, without which the idea of a Church is a "contradiction in terms;" nay, organized into a "national court," which shall serve as a "bond of union," and establish church-

boards for benevolent operations "by its authority!" Yet all this, with the name Presbyterian substituted for Congregational, has a thousand times been denounced as "leading to indefinite corruption and unlimited abuse." Old-school Presbyterians can well afford to bear this, for adopting principles which are so fast taking root among adversaries.

Mr. Sawyer says, "Strictly speaking, Congregational churches are not subject to discipline. If they do wrong, they may be remonstrated with and admonished by sister churches; and if the wrong is of such an aggravated character as to prove a bar to communion, sister churches may withdraw from their communion, and have no fellowship with them." (p. 362.) And what higher penalty, pray, can Presbyterianism inflict? It only differs in having a known constitution, in providing known and practicable ways of bringing the accused to trial; in guarding them against injustice by securing all the privileges of a fair trial, in affording all needful right of appeal. Argument would be wasted upon those who doubt whether this is or is not an advantage.

Moreover, as organization implies government, it implies *a priori*, the right and the necessity of determining the membership of the organized body, and of excluding those who violate its acknowledged conditions. This cannot be done with Christian fairness, without a fair trial; therefore, not without judicial process. Here again is judicial power. To say otherwise, is to say that no qualifications are requisite for membership in these bodies; or which comes to the same thing, none but that of being ministers or members of churches of the Congregational polity, for American Unitarians and Universalists, including Theodore Parker, adopt this polity. To say this, therefore, is to say that they have no power to insist on such qualifications as will insure their being entitled to be deemed, in the judgment of charity, a Christian body. But this they will not say. Accordingly, the Connecticut Association, in refusing to issue the charges against Dr. Bushnell's Association, voted, nevertheless, that a constituent Association that had "fatally subverted the principles of faith and order" of the communion, was regularly liable to accusation and trial. The consistency of this, with their refusal to entertain charges duly brought by

fifty ministers, as had been done in that case, it is not for us to show. But the principle is none the less affirmed by this high Congregational authority, notwithstanding. The only question remaining is, whether, if this be warrantable, it is better to have or not have known, definite, fair, practicable modes of procedure? Again we say, we do not wish to argue such a question.

According to Mr. Sawyer, however, and the growing school which he represents, the occasion can scarcely arise for exercising such discipline against heresy. From the general tone of his book, we should scarcely conceive that heresy had any existence, except in the imaginations of antiquated bigots. The following quotations will show his views on this subject:

“The Bible is the Congregationalist confession of faith and constitution. It is the highest and sole supreme organic church-law of Congregationalism;” (it surely is of Presbyterianism;) “and has no other enforcement than arises from the counsel and advice of sister Churches and the providence of God. It wants no other. This is enough and far better than more. Congregationalism, in this respect, bases itself on the assumption that the Bible is an intelligible book, adapted to the human understanding; that its essential doctrines are matters of certainty, not of opinion merely; and that honest inquirers, being fully competent, by the grace of God, to understand them, must understand them alike.” (p. 404.) He further argues against confessions and creeds, because we are commanded to receive to fellowship the weak in faith. “Christ received all that came. We hear of no applicants for church being rejected by the Apostles.” “The correctness of this (insisting on the supreme Divinity of Christ as a term of church fellowship) admits of being seriously questioned. * * The safety of truth depends on the clearness of its evidences. It asks no aid from authority. It asks only liberty of argument and free discussion. * * It is invulnerable and immortal, and can afford to be generous.” (pp. 408, 409.) “Why do we not establish organizations to preserve the Newtonian philosophy? to preserve the science of chemistry, of natural philosophy, of astronomy; and establish our superintendencies to keep men everlastingly to the truth of these sciences?” (p. 34.)

Arguments like these, whose force is merely *ad captandum*, would need no attention, were they not constantly iterated from high and influential quarters. We say therefore,

1. They are in utter conflict with the whole usage and historic life of Congregationalism itself, Mr. Sawyer himself being witness. He says, "in Congregationalism, every church association, convention and conference, makes its own laws and adopts its own confessions of faith." (p. 409.) We know that the whole Congregational body of New England, assembled in Synod, early adopted the Westminster Confession, with a few confessedly immaterial variations, and that they have never revoked these proceedings. We know further, that every church as yet owned among the orthodox Congregationalists, has its confession of faith, assent to which is required of all "applicants for admission," as a condition of such admission. If these confessions are unduly extended, doubtless they may prove an unscriptural yoke upon the consciences of weak believers. But this is not for us to defend. The point is this: If confessions of faith other than the Scripture may be imposed as a term of church communion, much more may they lawfully be imposed, in much greater extension and minuteness, upon the teachers and guides of the church, in her congregations and representative assemblies. At all events, the principle of creeds is thus sanctioned.

Here we are brought to notice a strange want of discrimination in many writers, which lies at the bottom of most of the sophisms on this subject. They reason as if the amount of doctrinal knowledge which may lawfully be exacted of a weak believer, in order to communion, were the measure of what may lawfully be demanded of the teachers and official guides of the Church, who are "set for the defence of the gospel;" required to be apt to teach, to feed the flock with knowledge and understanding; to declare the whole counsel of God; rightly to divide the word of truth; to rebuke, reprove and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine; and as if those who insist on certain doctrinal qualifications in the ministers and office-bearers in the Church, and on excluding from the sacred office such as are destitute of them, therefore insist on their exclusion from Christian fellowship. The statement of this fallacy sufficiently

exposes it. It underlies most of the plausible things that Mr. Sawyer and his school advance on this subject. It is just as if the same qualifications were required in a pupil as in a teacher; of a babe in Christ, a mere disciple, as in his spiritual guide.

It is the constant boast of this class, while they berate all general confessions of faith, that Congregationalism, so far from being destitute of such confessions, has them by the thousand in her thousand churches. If this be all, it results: 1. Either that these confessions are so extended as to exclude many weak believers from communion, or so brief and vague as to be no test of the doctrinal insight and soundness of the ministry. 2. If there be no general standard of faith, on what principle can any church, Unitarian or Universalist, if only it be Congregational, be excluded from the communion of churches and the general ecclesiastical bodies in which they are represented and so indicate their mutual endorsement and substantial unity? Mr. Sawyer not obscurely intimates that he would not exclude those who deny the Divinity of Christ. If he would not exclude such, whom would he? He does not tell us. Here he observes a reticency as prudent as it is unusual with him. And in all this, we are sorry to add, he is but the echo of others of higher note and influence; yet we are glad to read (p. 419) "that there are limits beyond which diversities of opinion cannot be tolerated, without proving a bar to communion." This, after all, concedes the principle for which Presbyterians contend. The difference respects its application. But in the case of one who so largely specifies what ought not to be a bar to communion even to Socinianism, while he specifies nothing that is such a bar, such concessions can scarcely be construed as more than mere salvos.

Ah! but the Scriptures are the only authoritative guide; and they are our creed. A resolution drawn by Dr. Dwight, and adopted by the General Association of Connecticut, is a sufficient answer to this plea of Unitarians, Universalists, and in general, all varieties of liberal Christians. It was to this effect—we have not the words at hand—that a confession of faith in the words of Scripture, amounts to no confession at all, because those holding the most opposite views on fundamental doctrines, profess to believe the Scriptures. A creed or con-

fession is simply a declaration of what we understand and believe the Scriptures to teach on certain subjects; not a standard set up above them, or as equal, or otherwise than as subordinate to them. To deny the right of imposing such a test, is to open wide the door to receive Socinians, Universalists, everything that calls itself Christian, to fellowship. It is a significant fact, that the arguments of the deniers of the faith in all ages have sooner or later culminated in this assault on creeds and confessions. Down with creeds and confessions, was the battle cry of Massachusetts Unitarians. They appear not to want for followers and coadjutors. But this whole theory is contradicted by the practice, history and professions of orthodox Congregationalism. No book is a more standard authority among them than *Upham's Ratio Disciplinae*. This enumerates (p. 37) as among "the early and fundamental principles of the Congregationalists," that "every church in the first instance, and subsequently, *every agreeing community, or brotherhood of churches*, (that is to say, every religious sect,) has a right to declare what it considers to be the will of Christ in regard to the terms of communion, and the general principles of church order; *and also to insist on the fulfilment of this will as thus understood by them*; and this cannot justly be considered, and is not, an infringement on the rights of others."

The Massachusetts Congregationalists acted on this principle with regard to the Unitarians, and were sustained in it not only by all the orthodox Congregationalists, but by all Christian bodies in our land.

The only question left is, whether, if these things are to be done, justice to all parties does not require that a known and definite judicial process be provided for doing them. This we again willingly leave to the unbiassed judgment of mankind.

As to all that our author says of the sufficiency of free discussion to preserve the truth, the absurdity of employing discipline to preserve the truth in the various sciences, he proves too much, if he proves anything, in his somewhat smart reproduction of this stale argument. If it is good for anything, it is good for all, and will overthrow his admission that there are diversities of opinion which may be a "bar to Christian communion." The merest tyro in Christian knowledge understands

full well that, in spiritual things, blindness constitutes a part of human depravity: that therefore, while the Bible is a plain book, and, as Mr. Sawyer well says, "its essential doctrines are matters of certainty, not of opinion merely; that honest inquirers being fully competent, by the grace of God fully to understand them, must understand them alike;" this condition of honesty, candour, and freedom from prejudice, is wanting, except so far as it is given by the grace of God. Therefore, though the evidences of divine truth shine with a convincing light to the seeing eye, too often man's sinful blindness is such that this eye is wanting, and so "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." This puts a difference between this and all other sciences, so far as the preservation of the truth in them is concerned. While, then, it is true that all real Christians understand essential doctrines alike, it is not true, as all facts too abundantly show, that all who call themselves Christians "understand them alike." Would to God that they did!

But if they "are matters of certainty, not of opinion merely," to real Christians, why should they not declare what they are? and how can they be the light of the world unless they do so declare them? And if, when so declared, they are denied by those calling themselves Christians, and claiming countenance and fellowship as such, can they do less than disown and dis-fellowship such deniers of the truth as it is in Jesus? To shrink from this is treason to God and truth. There is no point in reference to which the language of Scripture is more decisive and peremptory. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." We are constantly warned to beware of false prophets, and those who bring in damnable heresies, and to reject heretics after due admonition. This class of scriptural teachings seems to be ignored in the writings of Mr. Sawyer and his school on these subjects.

As might be expected, this book repeats *usque ad nauseam*, the vulgar declamation about Congregationalism being the exclusive source and pattern of the republican institutions of this country, while it denounces Presbyterianism as a system

of despotism. It is enough to say in reply, without detracting from others, that the Presbyterians rallied as one man on the side of American independence; that they were more widely diffused over the country than the Congregationalists, and that our political institutions, in which government is exclusively by the chosen representatives of the people, and is by towns and counties, in respect to matters affecting them merely; by States, in matters which concern wider sections of territory; and by the representatives of the whole country, in things which affect the whole country; also by known and definite judicial process through a series of courts provided for every exigency; present twenty points of analogy to Presbyterianism, for one to Mr. Sawyer's "church democracy." This is so plain, that he who runs may read.

Much is said by our author and his school about Presbyterians not trusting the people. This is aside of the point. We have all confidence in the people of God—but we have all the more confidence in them, and we have no doubt our author and his school have too, when they commit the management of their public affairs to their worthiest and wisest men, whom God has specially endowed therefor. However this may be, Mr. Sawyer is not the man to hurl this sort of reproaches at his Presbyterian brethren. He complains, as if he were uttering the wailings of his own heart's bitterness, of the sad state to which ministers are reduced, by being dependent on their people for support, and strongly urges that they insure themselves relief from such annoyances, by combining secular employments with the ministry. He says, (p. 357,) "Pledged charities fail, and stipulated salaries are withheld for the very purpose of crippling the minister's efforts and palsying his arm. If he is not subservient, he must be starved into submission. This is no exaggerated picture, drawn from imagination. The victims are numerous who are suffering at this moment, not only the evils here described, but more than language can express; and the great principles of religious democracy are more obstructed, in their progress through the world, by the wholesale degradation of democratic church ministries than by any other cause." Comment is needless. If we have failed to show that reasonable confidence in the membership of

particular churches does not attribute to them an infallibility, which precludes the necessity of occasional appeal from their decisions, Mr. Sawyer has supplemented our lack of service, and made out our case. But, says he, appellate bodies may err too. What then? If Mr. Sawyer were unjustly deprived of liberty or estate by the ignorance or prejudice of one court, would he not deem the privilege of appeal to a higher, among his dearest rights?

Doubtless all things transacted by men are liable to be vitiated by error and imperfection. It is therefore requisite, as far as possible, that we provide such counterpoises, correctives, and checks, as the experience of mankind has proved efficacious. Even thus, we see an end of all perfection.

Our object has been gained, if we have succeeded in showing those who denounce our system as despotic, that they are, after all, obliged in practice or theory, directly or indirectly to concede its essential principles; while we have the advantage of avowedly building our system upon them, and of so perfecting its details in consistence therewith, that they become operative, in ways whose excellence is proved by the experience of Christendom and the race. Says President Edwards, *facile princeps* among Congregational worthies—"As to the Presbyterian Government, I have long been perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land (New England;) and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things.*

* Edwards's Works, New York edition, Vol. i. pp. 412.