PRESBYTERIANISM

FOR

THE PEOPLE.

BY THE

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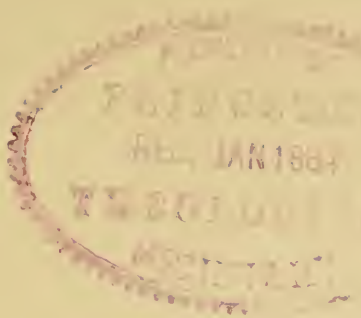

PREFACE.

THIS little volume is not for theologians. There are many abler and more elaborate works on Presbyterianism written for them. It is for the people —the busy, earnest people, who have neither the time nor the taste for an extensive study of this subject, but who ought to know—at least, in a general way—what Presbyterianism is, what it has been in the past, what it believes and teaches. In his pastoral work the author has often wished for such a book, and he earnestly hopes that this one may help supply what he believes to be a real need of the Church. For it he asks the blessing of God and the favor of the people.

R. P. K.

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CHAPTER I.

THE STUDY OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

THE Presbyterian Church, including all its branches, is the largest Protestant organization in the world. Its communion embraces people of every civilized nation, and it is recognized as one of the great forces of Christendom. Its members have acted a distinguished part in literature, philosophy, science, art and government, as well as in religion, and many of the greatest names of history are found on its rolls. It has been identified with nearly all great movements looking to the advancement of the highest interests of mankind, in Church and in State. Liberality and breadth of vision have at all times characterized this branch of the Church of Christ. The Presbyterian Church has never been sectarian in its treatment of other denominations, but has acknow-

ledged the churchship of all bodies which hold the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, offering fellowship even to those who would not hold fellowship with it, receiving their members at its communion-table and their ministers into its pulpits.

Indeed, in many cases, Presbyterians have been so liberal as to neglect the study of their own peculiar institutions. Thousands of them are in ignorance of the history of their Church and of the high place it holds among the denominations. A boastful spirit is not to be desired, but *Presbyterians ought to know Presbyterianism.* They have been noted for the study of the great *doctrines* of religion rather than of forms of government and worship or of their own peculiarities. In other words, they have studied Christianity more than they have studied Presbyterianism. This is right, but they have gone too far. In doing one they should not have left the other undone. The Shorter Catechism, which was drawn up, in connection with other standards of doctrine, by the Westminster Assembly, in London, in 1646, and which is our great theological text-book, is so thoroughly unsectarian that it has been freely used by other denominations for the instruction of the young, and in some instances by persons who did not know that it was a

Presbyterian catechism; for the word "Presbyterian" does not occur in the book.

The study of Presbyterianism need not make men bigoted or exclusive, but should contribute to their efficiency in the grand army of God. The cavalry ought to understand cavalry tactics, the infantry and artillery should master their own respective departments, and all should fight harmoniously, side by side, for one great end.

It is hoped that the perusal of these pages may not tend to sectarianism, but that it may help some Presbyterians to a better understanding of the peculiarities of the Church to which they belong. These peculiarities refer to government and doctrine, and may be described as *ecclesiastical republicanism combined with Calvinistic theology.* The subject will be examined under these two divisions, prominence being given to the former, as that is our own peculiar possession, Calvinistic theology being held by several other churches in common with our own.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IS PRESBYTERIANISM?

THE invisible Church consists of all God's true people in heaven and on earth, and the visible Church of all who profess the essential doctrines of Christianity and who are organized for work and for worship, together with their children.

This great visible Church is made up of several denominations holding various views of doctrine, government and worship, having separate organizations and distinguished by many different names, but all professing the essential truth that *we are saved by faith in a divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, whose atoning grace is applied to our souls by the Holy Ghost, who renews us, sanctifies us and prepares us for heaven.*

The various denominations have grown out of different crises of Church history, and, whereas many of them started in dissension, God has overruled their existence to the glory of his name and

the good of the world; so that, as they stand to-day, they are unquestionably an advantage, ensuring a continued study of doctrine and the maintenance of purity, and furnishing an incentive to aggressive effort in the redemption of mankind by the preaching of Jesus Christ.

But, whilst we work in separate organizations, we should love one another, and should let charity so conspicuously crown our efforts as to show in spirit a fulfillment of Christ's prayer that we "might be one." Thus shall we silence the sneers of the world at our lack of love.

There are two great questions which every denomination must answer: *What to do?* and *How to do it?* "What to do?" refers to the preaching of the gospel; "How to do it?" refers to Church government. This second question some answer by saying, "Do it by episcopal modes;" others, "By congregational;" others still, "By presbyterian." So Church government is simply "how to do it." "What to do?" is a question upon which we are all substantially agreed—"to preach Christ and him crucified." As to "How to do it?" we say, "Do it by presbyterian modes."

There are only three great principles of Church government: (1) Episcopal, a government by

bishops, including the Protestant Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal and Catholic Churches; (2) Congregational, a government by congregations, including the Congregational, Independent and Baptist Churches; and (3) Presbyterian, a government by Presbyteries, including all Presbyterian and Reformed Churches throughout the world. In civil government there are two great systems, the monarchical, or oligarchical, and the republican; these correspond substantially with Episcopal and Presbyterian. There is, and can be, no such thing as a congregational or purely democratic government in the State if it include a large number of citizens. It is a government by the people without any rulers. Monarchy and republicanism, or self-government, have contended together from the beginning, with a gradual advance among the nations toward the latter; and the highest privilege claimed for the people under a republican government is to elect their own rulers. They are therefore called "representative." Such is the case in the American republic and in others.

Presbyterian Church government is not a *form*, but a *principle*; and whereas the applications of this principle will have a strong resemblance, still

the exact forms of its development are determined by circumstances. This principle may be briefly stated as follows: PRESBYTERIANISM IS A CHURCH GOVERNMENT BY REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE AND ALL OF EQUAL AUTHORITY, WHICH IS EXERCISED BY THEM ONLY WHEN ORGANIZED INTO AN ASSEMBLY OR COURT. These representatives are called Elders, or Presbyters, and are of two classes—Ruling Elders, who only rule, and Teaching Elders (or preachers), who both rule and teach. The assemblies, or courts, of the Church are composed of equal numbers of Ruling and Teaching Elders, except in case of the lowest, called the Session, or Consistory, where all except the presiding officer, or Moderator, are Ruling Elders.

These assemblies are arranged in the scale of a regular gradation from the Session, through the Presbytery and Synod, to the General Assembly, which is the highest. These are all Presbyteries, because composed of Presbyters, and had originally the same functions; but for the sake of efficiency and order there has been a distribution of duties, each one having its own province strictly defined. It is the duty of each higher court to review the proceedings of the next lower, and

cases are carried from the lowest to the highest. In some parts of the Church minor classes of cases are not allowed to come before the General Assembly, but receive their final decision in the Synod.

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE ORIGIN OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

WE claim that whereas no kind of Church government is *commanded*, yet Presbyterianism was *practiced* from the earliest times. There is no command to change the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week, but the Christian Church observes the first day because it was the practice of the apostolic Church so to do.

The Church existed first in the family, the father being the head. As families multiplied, their several heads, or elders, would naturally form a ruling assembly; but because a body composed of all the heads of families in an extensive community would be too large for general efficiency, the people would elect from the number of older men certain ones conspicuous for piety and wisdom to be their representative rulers. They would then have a Presbytery. In a simple state of society this body would have charge of both religious and secular

affairs, but as society advances a necessity arises for the separation of the affairs of Church and State. In Old-Testament times they were united, but were separated under the New Dispensation.

We find this presbyterial government in operation among the children of Israel in Egypt when Moses came upon the stage of history. God told him to go and call together the "elders of Israel" and lay his business before them. He was to be their leader in the exodus from Egypt and in the journey to Canaan; but, though divinely appointed to this office, he did not undertake it without calling together the elders of the people and explaining God's purpose to them. In the Presbyterian Church of to-day, if a man feels called of God to be a pastor and to preach the gospel, the Presbytery must sit in judgment upon his credentials and qualifications. Moses afterward organized a higher court, or assembly—very like a General Assembly—of those whom he knew to be elders, to preside over the government of the whole Church. This body was composed of seventy elders, and was in later times called "the Sanhedrim." Beginning with Exodus iii. 16, the word "elder" (signifying "ruler") is used in the Old Testament about one hundred times, and over sixty

times in the New. Their duties were the same as those of elders now—*administrative* and *judicial*, to administer the government and to decide cases. This is a simple statement of the functions of elders in all ages, growing out of the very nature of things and having God's endorsement. The administrative function is seen in their coming together to receive Moses; the judicial (Deut. xix. 11), where they were instructed to try men for murder. These two cases are selected as typical of the large number, which may be seen by referring to any concordance of the Bible, under the word "Elder."

The introduction of the priesthood interfered not with the office of elder. The priesthood was part of the ceremonial system of worship, of which the temple was the representative. The business of the priest was to offer sacrifices and to intercede for the people, as a type of Christ. But when Christ came the great sacrifice was made, and there was no further use for sacrifice or priest to remind men that Christ was coming; so the veil of the temple was rent when Christ said, "It is finished!" Then priestly sacrifices and gorgeous ritual passed away, God destroying, through the agency of Rome, every vestige of the temple where so long they

had served. But there still remained untouched the old government of elders. In each synagogue there was a bench of elders and a "minister." In Luke iv. 20, Christ "gave the book to the minister, and sat down." The synagogue elders were responsible to the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem, as we learn from *The Life of Josephus* (section xii.) and from other sources.

This was a government on the great principle of representative assemblies; which is Presbyterianism. The men who administered the government were often corrupt, but the principle was sound and was never called in question in the Scriptures.

CHAPTER IV.

APOSTOLIC PRESBYTERIANISM.

SUCH being the government under which the Church was living when the apostles were sent out to Christianize the world, it was natural that they should follow the time-honored customs of God's people in every land whither they went; so we find that as they journeyed among the nations, preaching the gospel and organizing congregations of converts, they "*ordained them elders, in every church*" (Acts xiv. 23)—that is to say, they carried out the old synagogue system of government by elders, with which the Jews dwelling among the nations were familiar. They were not organizing a new Church, but only extending the old Church of God and proclaiming that the Christ had come. The Jews who rejected Christ cast themselves out and virtually made themselves a new body.

We discover, on the one hand, no traces of Congregationalism, for "every church" was ruled, not

by the people directly, but by their representatives; nor, on the other, of Episcopacy, for the congregation was committed to the care, not of one man, but of several elders. In Acts xx. 28, where Paul was instructing the elders of the church at Ephesus, whom he had requested to come to Miletus, he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*" (επισκοποι). This word was translated "overseers" in the Old Version, but in the new one—prepared principally by Episcopalians—it is correctly rendered "bishops." This passage alone shows conclusively that "bishop" was simply another name for elder, for these were elders to whom the apostle was speaking. In the seventeenth verse we read: "And from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called the *elders of the church.*"

A grand feature of the Presbyterian system is the *perfect equality* in rank *of all the elders.* It is entirely opposed to the Episcopal distinctions of bishops, priests and deacons. Paul shows the equality of all elders in 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." This shows that the elders

had the office of *ruling* in common, but that some, in addition to ruling, "labored in the word and doctrine." In 1 Tim. iv. 14 ordination is shown to be, not by one bishop, but by "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," which was composed of several elders, or bishops, as they were indifferently styled. In Jerusalem a General Assembly (Acts xv.), composed of "apostles and elders," was held to decide a question concerning the observance of the ceremonial law, and the decision of this body was sent out to the churches as authoritative. This is conclusive against both Congregationalism and Episcopacy.

We have found that the governmental principle of Presbyterianism runs throughout the whole Bible history; and now, in the book of Revelation, we can catch a glimpse of the same principle operating in the government of the redeemed in heaven. In ch. iv. 4 we read that "round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats were four and twenty *elders sitting*" (not standing), "clothed in white raiment, and they had upon their heads crowns of gold." The facts that they were "sitting" and that they wore "crowns" indicate authority. Christ on the throne, and the elders sitting around

him, constituted the governing body of the saints. This is the final endorsement of the grand principle of Church government by elders in "that Holy City, the New Jerusalem," which shall at last descend out of heaven, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men."

CHAPTER V.

POST-APOSTOLIC PRESBYTERIANISM.

THE order of apostles was a temporary one, just as the priesthood had been, both having grown out of the exigences of their respective periods. The priests passed away with the completion of their work, when Christ came. The apostles were chosen to be eye-witnesses of the great fact that Christ rose from the dead. The order, therefore, could not exist after those died who were contemporaries of Christ. To be an apostle it was necessary to have been appointed to that office, and to have seen the Lord after his resurrection. This is plainly set forth in 1 Cor. ix. 1, where Paul is vindicating his apostolic authority. He says, "Am I not an apostle? . . . Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"

The apostles all passed away, and the government of the Church remained what it had been from the beginning—a government by assemblies of elders, or "presbyters." It was a spiritual re-

public, admitting of no distinctions of rank; and even Peter, whom papists claim as the first of the popes, said of himself in his First Epistle (v. 1), "*I who am also an elder*" (presbyter).

After the apostles we have historical proof of the true Presbyterian organization of the Church.

Clemens Romanus, writing in the first century, says, "It is a shame, my beloved, and unworthy of your Christian profession to bear, that the most firm and ancient church of the Corinthians should be led to rise up against the elders. Let the flock of Christ enjoy peace with the elders which are set over it."

Again, in the third century, Hippolitus writes, "The elders cited Noëtus, who was charged with heresy. Having summoned him a second time. they condemned him and cast him out of the church." Here is a trial by Session too plainly set forth to need argument.

It is with peculiar pleasure that the testimony of a great Episcopalian is here introduced. Dean Stanley, of Westminster Abbey, London, writes, "The most learned of all the bishops of England, whose accession to the great see of Durham has recently been welcomed with rare unanimity by

the whole Church of England, has, with his characteristic moderation and erudition, proved beyond dispute, in his celebrated essay attached to his edition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, that the early constitution of the apostolic churches of the first century was not *that of a single bishop, but of a body of pastors indifferently styled bishops or presbyters,* and that it was not until the very end of the apostolic age that the office which we now call episcopacy gradually and slowly made its way into Asia Minor; *that Presbytery was not a later growth out of Episcopacy, but that Episcopacy was a later growth out of Presbytery;* that the office which the apostles instituted was a kind of rule, *not by bishops, but of presbyters;* and that even down to the third century presbyters as well as bishops possessed the power of nominating and consecrating bishops; and, besides, *there were, from the commencement of the Middle Ages down to the Reformation, large exceptions from the principle of episcopal government which can be called by no other name than Presbyterian.*"

This testimony, coming from Bishop Lightfoot —"the most learned bishop of the Church of England"—endorsed by Dean Stanley (who for

his scholarly attainments and elegant diction was the pride and favorite of the British aristocracy), is of immense value in establishing our claim to apostolic Presbyterianism.

CHAPTER VI.

PRESBYTERIANISM OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

IN the process of time the desire—ever found in the minds of men—for authority and pre-eminence asserted itself in the pastors of large churches claiming authority over those in small parishes. Being resorted to for advice and assistance by country churches in securing pastors, these city ministers gradually came to believe that they had a right to appoint, and at last to consecrate, men to the ministry. This was the germ of episcopacy; but of course it required many years for this innovation to pervade any large portion of the world, and to secure its recognition as a part of the constitution of the Church. At last, however, it became the general rule; though, as Bishop Lightfoot says, "there were large exceptions." While some churches, by their remoteness from the great cities and through other causes, were protected in the en-

joyment of their Presbyterian liberty, the larger part of the Christian world recognized the episcopal form which had grown up.

But the tendency of which episcopacy was the outgrowth continued to develop until it culminated in the establishment of two great ecclesiastical empires, corresponding to and having their two head-bishops in the two principal cities of the world, Rome and Constantinople. The Church power which before had existed in solution throughout all the body of believers at last crystallized around these two centres, and episcopacy found its complete development in the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome. These two pastorates, by gradual encroachments extending through a period of several centuries, had gained authority over nearly the whole Christian world. Then came the "Dark Ages," when the Church was held in the chains of ecclesiastical tyranny and lulled to slumber by the opiate of beautiful forms and ceremonies superadded upon the simplicity of apostolic worship. But, as in the Old-Testament period, God still reserved to himself a remnant who were faithful and refused to recognize the two Antichrists who had usurped the crown-

rights of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest and King over his people.

In the valleys of Southern France and under the shadow of the Italian Alps the Waldenses —noble name!—kept themselves free. Behind those natural fortresses they took refuge, defying the power of the pope, and from those Alpine heights the pure light still shone through that awful night whose hours were measured by centuries. In the isles of Western Scotland—or Caledonia, as it was then called—there was a little flock, named Culdees, who maintained a pure Presbyterianism. On one of these isles (Iona) are still to be seen the ruins of the seminary whence Columbanus and his brethren sent missionaries (of whom St. Patrick was one) into Ireland, into Scotland, into England and to the northern shores of Europe. The Culdee Church maintained its independence from the early ages of the Christian era to the close of the thirteenth century. The Waldenses were never suppressed, but have had an independent existence up to the present day, and now form a constituent part of the great confederation of Presbyterian and Reformed churches throughout the world. But when their delegates made their first appearance

in the General Council, they said, "We do not call ourselves *Reformed, for we have never been deformed,*" and it was true.

The history of the Presbyterian principle of self-government has thus been rapidly traced from the days of Moses down to our own time. We hold that it has a divine warrant, and that through the ages God has defended it in a marvelous manner. We believe that the application of this principle tends to the development of man to his grandest possibilities, and that under it he attains his highest earthly happiness.

We will now proceed to consider the working of this principle in the various governing bodies of the Church.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE CHURCH.

THE great principle of government by representative assemblies may be applied under many different forms and names, but still remain the same. Indeed, this is the advantage which a government of principle has over one of form, allowing elasticity and adaptability to the various conditions of mankind. Neither the number nor the names of the assemblies which govern a Church are essential to its Presbyterianism. A body of Christians isolated from the Church by any cause might organize themselves under the Presbyterian principle and elect an assembly of elders. They might call it a Session or a Consistory—which is the name used in some branches of the Presbyterian Church—or they might invent some other designation for it. They might have no other assembly; a small body would need but one. If they grew, they must have higher assemblies; continuing to increase, they would organize higher

ones still, until at last they would arrive at the order of assemblies which obtains in most Presbyterian bodies, and which is as follows:

I. The Session, or Consistory;
II. The Presbytery, or Classis;
III. The Synod, or Particular Synod;
IV. The General Assembly, or General Synod.

All these are Presbyteries, of different names, rank and powers, arranged in an ascending scale. First comes the church Session, Consistory or lowest Presbytery.

I. The Session.

This body is composed of not less than two ruling elders, if there be so many, and the pastor. The number of elders is not limited, and in some congregations it is very large. The duties of the Session, in common with all other assemblies of the Church, are administrative and judicial. In spiritual things no body of men on earth have any legislative power, in the strict meaning of that term. The Bible is the only law-book of the Church. Our Books of Order and Deliverances are but interpretations of divine law, entitled to respect and obedience so long as

they conform to the inspired word, and liable to change whenever change may seem best to the Church. These interpretations ought to be observed by all, unless they violate an important principle; then it is the duty of those who differ to endeavor by lawful means to have them changed.

The Session administers for the congregation in spiritual things, and the deacons administer in temporal affairs, subject to the review of the Session. The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* gives the following summary of the duties of this body.

"The church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church, for which purpose it has power to inquire into the knowledge, principles and Christian conduct of the church-members under its care; to censure those found delinquent; to see that parents do not neglect to present their children for baptism; to receive members into the communion of the church; to grant letters of dismission to other churches, which, when given to parents, shall always include the names of their baptized children; to ordain and install ruling elders and deacons on

* The body embracing mainly the Presbyterian churches in the Southern States.

their election by the church, and to require these officers to devote themselves to their work; to examine the records of the proceedings of the deacons; to establish and control Sabbath-schools and Bible classes, with especial reference to the children of the church; to order collections for pious uses; to take the oversight of the singing in the public worship of God; to assemble the people for worship when there is no minister; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the church and congregation; to observe and carry out the lawful injunctions of the higher courts; and to appoint representatives to the Presbytery and the Synod, who shall on their return make report of their diligence."

The church Session is required annually to send its record to the Presbytery for review.

II. The Presbytery.

This is the most important assembly of the Church, because it has the most work to do. It has charge of all the congregations in a certain district, and is composed of all the ministers and one elder from every church in that district. Quotation is made from the same excellent authority as before for a description of the functions of this

body, and also the Synod and the General Assembly:

"The Presbytery has power to receive and issue appeals, complaints and references brought before it in an orderly manner; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove and judge ministers; to review the record of the church Sessions, redress whatever they may have done contrary to order and take effectual care that they observe the constitution of the Church; to establish the pastoral relation, and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties or where the interests of religion imperatively demand it; to set apart evangelists to their proper work; to require ministers to devote themselves diligently to their sacred calling and to censure the delinquent; to see that the lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed; to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church; to visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them; to unite or divide churches at the request of the members thereof; to form and receive new churches; to take special oversight of vacant churches; to concert measures for the enlargement of the Church within its

bounds; in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care; to appoint commissioners to the General Assembly; and, finally, to propose to the Synod or to the Assembly such measures as may be of common advantage to the Church at large."

III. The Synod.

This assembly has under its care all the Presbyteries in a large district, corresponding, usually, in America, with the area of a State—for example, the Synod of New York or the Synod of North Carolina. The Synod is usually composed of all the ministers and one elder from every congregation in its bounds; but, in some branches of the Church, Synods are allowed to choose between this plan and that of having its members appointed by the Presbyteries under its care.

"The Synod has power to receive and issue all appeals, complaints and references regularly brought up from the Presbyteries; to review the records of the Presbyteries and redress whatever they may have done contrary to order; to take effectual care that they observe the constitution of the Church, and that they obey the lawful injunctions of the higher courts; to erect new Presbyteries and unite

or divide those which were before erected; to appoint ministers to such work, proper to their office, as may fall under its own particular jurisdiction; in general, to take such order with respect to the Presbyteries, Sessions and churches under its care as may be in conformity with the word of God and the established rules, and may tend to promote the edification of the Church; to concert measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the Church within its bounds; and, finally, to propose to the General Assembly such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church. It shall be the duty of the Synod to keep full and fair records of its proceedings, to submit them annually to the inspection of the General Assembly and to report to it the number of its Presbyteries and of the members thereof, and, in general, all important changes which may have occurred within its bounds during the year."

IV. The General Assembly.

This is the highest authoritative assembly of the Church. It meets annually, and has charge of all the Synods in its division of the great Presbyterian sisterhood. It is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders, appointed by the Presbyteries.

If a Presbytery has more than twenty-four ministers on its roll, it may send two ministers and two elders, and in some branches of the Church may go on increasing the number of its delegates by two for every twenty-four ministers in its membership. There are many General Assemblies, representing many bodies of Presbyterians, and all independent of one another.

"The General Assembly shall have power to receive and issue all appeals, references and complaints regularly brought before it from the inferior courts;* to bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practice injuriously affecting the Church; to decide in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; to give its advice and instruction, in conformity with the constitution, in all cases submitted to it; to review the records of the Synods; to take care that the inferior courts observe the constitution; to redress whatever they may have done contrary to order; to concert measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the Church; to erect new Synods; to institute and superintend the agencies

* In some branches of the Presbyterian Church cases of minor importance are not allowed to come before the General Assembly, but the Synod's settlement of them is final.

necessary in the general work of evangelization; to appoint ministers to such labors as fall under its jurisdiction; to suppress schismatical contentions and disputations according to the rules provided therefor; to receive under its jurisdiction, with the consent of the majority of the Presbyteries, other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this Church; to authorize Synods and Presbyteries to exercise similar power in receiving bodies suited to become constituents of those courts and lying within their geographical bounds respectively; to superintend the affairs of the whole Church; to correspond with other Churches; and, in general, to recommend measures for the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under its care."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL.

THIS assembly is composed of delegates from the various Presbyterian or Reformed churches throughout the world. It held its first regular meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, in July, 1877, and will meet triennially in different countries. It has no *authority* over the churches belonging to it, but can only advise. It is intended to show the world that the various branches of the Presbyterian family are one, to bring their united influence to bear against sin, to help and encourage feeble churches, and to arrange for the formation of native churches among the heathen, gathering into them the converts of the missions of the various Presbyterian churches.

The formation of this body was earnestly desired by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, but was not effected until quite recent times. Much good has already come from the alliance of very many of the divisions of the Presby-

terian body, and still greater results are confidently expected.

The following is a catalogue of the organizations holding the Presbyterian faith and order represented by this council:

CONTINENT OF EUROPE.

AUSTRIA.

Evangelical Reformed Church of Hungary.
Reformed Church of Moravia.
Reformed and Evangelical Church of Bohemia.

BELGIUM.

Union of Evangelical Congregations.

FRANCE.

Synod of the Union of Evangelical Congregations.
National Reformed Church.

ITALY.

Waldensian Church.
Free Church of Italy.

GERMANY.

Free Reformed Church of Germany.
Old Reformed Church of East Friesland.

NETHERLANDS.

Reformed Church of the Netherlands.
Christian Reformed Church of the Netherlands.

SPAIN.

Spanish Christian Church.

SWITZERLAND.

Berne French Church.
Evangelical Church of Neuchatel.
Reformed Church of Canton de Vaud.
Free Church of Canton de Vaud.
Reformed Church of Geneva.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

ENGLAND.

Presbyterian Church of England.

IRELAND.

Presbyterian Church of Ireland.
Reformed Church of Ireland.

SCOTLAND.

Established Church of Scotland.
Free Church of Scotland.
United Presbyterian Church.
Reformed Presbyterian Church.
Original Secession Church.

WALES.

Calvinistic Methodist (Presbyterian) Church.

BRITISH COLONIES AND DEPENDENCIES.

CANADA.

Presbyterian Church in Canada.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

CEYLON.
Presbytery of Ceylon.

EASTERN AUSTRALIA.
Synod of Eastern Australia.

NATAL.
Dutch Reformed Church.
Presbytery of Natal.
Christian Reformed Church of South Africa.

NEW HEBRIDES.
Mission Synod of New Hebrides.

NEW SOUTH WALES.
Presbyterian Church of New South Wales.

NEW ZEALAND.
Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

ORANGE FREE STATE.
Dutch Reformed Church of Orange Free State.

OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND.
Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland.

QUEENSLAND.
Presbyterian Church of Queensland.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.
Presbyterian Church of South Australia.

TASMANIA.
Presbyterian Church of Tasmania.

VICTORIA.
Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

UNITED STATES.

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern).

Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern).

Reformed (Dutch) Church in America.

Reformed (German) Church in the United States.

Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America.

United Presbyterian Church of North America.

Welsh Calvinistic Methodist (or Presbyterian) Church in America.

These Presbyterian bodies, scattered all over the globe, including above forty millions of people, have at last, in "The General Alliance of Reformed or Presbyterian Churches," found a tie which binds them together. It is proposed thus to combine our forces, to magnify our grand institutions of government and theology, and to remove the stigma of discord which has so often been affixed to the Presbyterian name.

But there is a higher name than Presbyterian. It is CHRISTIAN. Under that name all the followers of Christ at last shall be ONE.

CHAPTER IX.

DEACONS.

THESE officers were unknown in the Church of God until the time of the apostles. In Acts vi. is given an account of the election of the first Deacons. Being elected by the people, they come under the definition of Presbyterianism.

The elders, having charge of the spiritual concerns of the Church, could not give to temporal matters the time and attention they deserved; so they called upon the people to select "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon and Parmenas and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apos-

tles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

The office thus instituted was extended over the whole Church, and has continued in the Presbyterian body unto this day.

The Deacons are subordinate to the Session, as the Session is subordinate to the Presbytery. Except the highest of all, there is no assembly which is not subject to the review of a higher body. The work of the Deacons is to have care of the poor, the sick, prisoners, the property of the church and the money contributed for pious uses. This office has proved of immense benefit in the Church, and should be honored by those who occupy it, as well as by the people whom they serve.

In some branches of the Presbyterian Church godly women have been set apart to assist in the work of the Deacons, as among the sick and the poor there are many duties pertaining to this office which can be better discharged by females.

The divine authority for this office is derived principally from Romans xvi. 1, 2: "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, which is a servant" (a "deacon" in the original) "of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever

business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also."

Because this office was perverted and grievously abused by the Roman Church it was generally abandoned by Protestants at the Reformation, but it is now being slowly reinstated by the Church in various parts of the world.

CHAPTER X.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN OTHER CHURCHES.

IN the history of nations there has been, as before stated, two great principles of government contending from the beginning, monarchy and republicanism. In the one case, the people belong to their rulers; in the other, the rulers belong to the people. Under a monarchy the people are the servants, but in a republic they are the masters. Republicanism has the endorsement of God in the fact that the government of his people, as he organized it at first, was on that principle, and after they demanded a king in their civil administration self-government was still maintained in their religious institutions.

In 1 Sam. viii. we have an account of the change in the government of the people of Israel: "The elders of Israel" said to Samuel the prophet "make us a king to judge us like all the nations." "The thing displeased Samuel," and he told the Lord, who said to him, "They have not rejected thee,

but they have rejected me." Then follows a catalogue of those royal oppressions which would come upon them for rejecting the government ordained of God, and for committing authority into the hands of one man. In vs. 17, 18, God says, "And ye shall be *his servants*, and ye shall cry out in that day because of your king, which ye shall have chosen you: and the Lord will not hear you in that day." The people had reason bitterly to repent of their folly in thus surrendering God-given rights into the hands of a king.

The tendency of monarchy, when unrestrained by constitutions and representative assemblies, is to stereotype the institutions and condition of a people, while self-government encourages progress. As civilization has advanced men have always demanded liberty and a voice in their own government. In some cases this has caused sudden revolutions and great bloodshed. The demand has not always been wisely made, as in the French Revolution. The French kings, infatuated with an idea that they ruled by "divine right," believed that the people were their property, and oppressed them through many generations. At last, in the reign of Louis XVI., the downtrodden masses arose in their might and overthrew the monarchy. This

was right, and they ought to have stopped with dethroning the king, but they were so maddened by tyranny and poverty that they beheaded their unfortunate sovereign. The same history was enacted in England when Charles I. was put to death. As knowledge increases among them men become independent and are unwilling to be oppressed. They feel that they have a right to decide who shall rule over them; they gradually learn that the government is for the benefit of the people, and not the people for the benefit of the government; and at last they demand the right to elect their own rulers. This is the fundamental principle of all republics; and it is the *principle*, not the form, which constitutes the real government. Great Britain is a monarchy in form, but it is more of a republic in principle. The people elect their own Parliament, and the Parliament makes the laws. In the British government there are left many traces of the old monarchical principle, but they are slowly being submerged under the advance of knowledge. In France, under Napoleon I., the government was in form a republic, but in principle and reality a despotism. He was called "the republican emperor." By gradual encroachments this splendid tyrant had absorbed in himself the power

of government, until what was republican in form became extremely monarchical in principle. At last it was overthrown. With regard to government, there is little in a name.

The great *principle* of republicanism is what mankind contend for, and not a name or a form; so, when the British people got liberty to elect ~~their~~ their own rulers, they did not care enough for the name of a monarchy to fight about it. They had the substance of a republic, and wisely left the name to take care of itself.

Presbyterianism is ecclesiastical republicanism. The name is of little value as compared with the great principle for which, in Church and in State, martyrs have died. The Presbyterian Church has not the monopoly of this principle among the denominations. Presbyterianism is the opposite of episcopacy, and yet it can be conceived that the republican principle might grow up in the Episcopal Church and that it might die out of the Presbyterian body. It may also be conceived that neither denomination should be wholly Episcopal or wholly Presbyterian—that the two principles of monarchy and republicanism should exist together in the same body. But one must predominate. This is really the state of the case. There is

no Church or State government which is purely monarchical or purely republican. The Roman Catholic Church is a monarchy in form and in predominating principle, but yet the people elect some of their lower officers. The Church of England is monarchical in form, but the principle of republicanism has been gradually making its way in the body, until now the people have almost as much power as the clergy. The same statement may be made with reference to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The principle of republicanism has made remarkable encroachments upon this great denomination. True, the bishops still have the power of appointing and removing pastors, which is monarchical, but when agreeable to the people they are allowed to remain much longer in one charge than formerly, and a strong sentiment is growing up in favor of their permanent settlement. Of more importance is the fact that the election of their lower officers is with the people. These officers go on and elect higher ones, called bishops, who are vested with greater powers than belong to the rulers of a spiritual republic. It is a republican house with a monarchical roof.

The Congregational and Baptist denominations have been making progress toward republicanism.

They were at first almost pure democracies—that is, people without any rulers, people who made their own laws and administered them without the intervention of anything more than mere committees. The need of greater authority has caused these officers to take power into their hands, but always with the consent of the people. Some distinguished Baptist ministers—Spurgeon and others—have advised that their Associations and conventions be clothed with presbyterial, congressional or parliamentary power—that is to say, with judicial and administrative authority.

This process will go on. It will sometimes be temporarily checked or turned backward for a brief period, but the gravitation of history is toward republicanism in Church and in State. This is not directly the effect of the example of the Presbyterian Church, though other churches are indirectly indebted to that denomination. Geneva has been justly called "the Mother of Modern Republics," and every historian knows that Presbyterianism was the mother of Geneva.

The logic of experience, which causes men to consider what is the best way to manage affairs, has caused them to gravitate, in civil and ecclesiastical government, toward republicanism. They seek lib-

erty, which they cannot have under a civil or ecclesiastical monarchy or oligarchy, and they desire efficiency, which is hardly attainable in a pure democracy; so they are adopting the middle principle of appointing representatives and giving them power to rule, holding them responsible for their conduct of the affairs of government. The study of the inspired word with its expansive truths, that enlarge the range of man's thinking and teach him to believe himself a son of God; the spirit of universal charity, which animates the whole body of Christians, causing them to do as they would have others do unto them; and the example of Scripture precedents,—have all conspired to republicanize Churches and States. Indeed, it is hardly possible that a community can be thoroughly Christian without in the course of time becoming in some degree republican.

Under the operation of these influences the Churches have been unconsciously approximating toward a common centre. By whatever ways they have come, it is certain that they are nearer together than ever before. May we dare to hope for a time when the denominations shall be like the States of the American Union—free,

harmonious and independent, but one in a grand spiritual confederation for one another's help and for the conquest of the world? The convergence of events seems to point to that splendid consummation.

PART II.

Presbyterian Theology.

CHAPTER I.

PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGY.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight."—2 Cor. v. 7.

SALVATION BY FAITH IN A DIVINE SAVIOUR WHO DIED FOR MEN is the great central truth of our holy religion, and it is held by all evangelical Churches. If a man believes this doctrine, he is a Christian, and any denomination which really holds to it is a Christian Church. The differences between evangelical. Churches, while important, are not as the things necessary to the salvation of the soul.

In the present condition of the world it is well that there should be several denominations. There is more work done, and better work, than if all Christians were in one organization. Now, it would be difficult to maintain the subdivisions necessary for efficiency without differences of opinion. There must be various centres of thought around which men may rally. There is a certain theological system called Arminianism, another called Cal-

vinism, and there are different systems of government and modes of worship, all of which contribute to form the denominations into which, under the providence of God, the Church has been divided. The unity of the Church may be sufficiently realized by magnifying our common belief in the great truths of redemption, and in exhibiting at all times a charity, greater than faith and hope, which will shut the mouths of our enemies and command the respect of the world. One of the best signs of our times is the fact that most denominations now recognize one another's churchship and work together harmoniously for the glory of Christ in the redemption of mankind.

But it is necessary that each division of the great army of Christians should be instructed in the things peculiar to itself, and ought not to be considered uncharitable if it exhibits and defends those distinctive institutions which give it being. There is also need of a brief exposition of Presbyterian doctrines, from the fact that there has been some misunderstanding among other peoples as to what we really believe. For example, we have been accused of teaching the damnation of infants who die in infancy. Though such a statement may seem unnecessary, it is now most emphatically made: The

Presbyterian Church holds and teaches that *all who die in infancy are saved.*

The following is given as a general outline of Presbyterian theology. Some parts of it are taken from an old formula, of unknown authorship, and two articles from the Westminster Catechism:

Summary of Doctrines.

I. There is one God, the Creator, Preserver and Governor of the universe, who is possessed of every natural and moral perfection.

II. This God exists in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the same in essence and equal in all divine attributes.

III. The Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God and furnish a perfect rule of faith and practice.

IV. God created Adam perfectly holy and constituted him the representative of all his posterity, suspending their moral character and legal relation on his probationary conduct.

V. In consequence of Adam's fall all mankind are in a state of total moral depravity and are under condemnation.

VI. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and

man, by his sufferings and death has made atonement for the sins of the whole world.

VII. Through the atonement salvation is freely offered to all sinners in the gospel; and though they are free to accept, yet they naturally reject, this gracious offer, and refuse to come to Christ that they might have eternal life.

VIII. God the Spirit, by an act of special sovereign grace, renews the hearts of all the elect and causes them to accept the salvation of the gospel.

IX. The foundation of the elects' forgiveness and redemption is the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, received and rested on in faith.

X. God promises to preserve from final apostasy all who have been renewed in their souls, and to conduct them, through sanctification and belief of the truth, into the kingdom of glory.

XI. All men who hear the good news of the gospel and come to Christ will be saved. God from all eternity has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and yet man is free to accept or reject God's offers of mercy.

XII. God has appointed a day, at the end of the present order of things, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, who will receive those that believe on him into everlasting

happiness and sentence the wicked unto everlasting punishment.

XIII. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

XIV. Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

XV. It is required of the *officers* in the Presbyterian Church to accept the system of doctrines of the Confession of Faith, but persons are admitted as *private members* on a simple profession of faith in Christ, a promise of obedience to him and conformity to the rules of the Church. Whatever admits a man into heaven ought to admit him into the communion of the Church on earth.

The greater part of this system of doctrine is held by all Christians, but there are a few import-

ant points in which we differ from other denominations.

The Presbyterian system of theology has been called Augustinian because it was first fully elaborated by Augustine in the fifth century, and Calvinistic because its greatest modern expositor was John Calvin, in the sixteenth century. The most complete statement of these doctrines was made by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in the seventeenth century, in a "Confession of Faith" which has become the standard of nearly all English-speaking Presbyterians.

CHAPTER II.

PECULIARITIES OF CALVINISM.

THE distinctive features of this system of theology are three—viz.:

(1) The supremacy of God in all things;

(2) The total depravity of man;

(3) God's election of the saved.

While this system exalts God, it humbles man. It has been the object of many fierce attacks. It has never been popular with the world, yet it has inspired the grandest struggles ever made for the truth and for human liberty. Strong doctrine is required to make strong characters, and strong characters are necessary in the great warfare against sin. What would the Reformation have been without Calvin in Switzerland and Knox in Scotland? In contending for the doctrines called Calvinistic they worked out the conditions of a civilization grander than any other the world has seen. These doctrines have been called hard, but God made them, and for the salvation of men. We must be brought

to feel a sense of our own helplessness ; man's proud spirit must be humbled, and then he is ready to cry out for mercy. The tendency of Calvinistic theology is also to promote the comfort of Christians. When Christians plant their feet upon God's eternal decree, they may set the world, the flesh and the devil at defiance.

Election and Free Agency.

Presbyterians also believe in the freedom of man. We are often treated as if we did not; we are accused of teaching that a man can and must do nothing for his salvation. We are called fatalists. But we do believe in the freedom of man; we preach it; it underlies every proclamation of pardon; it is embodied in every invitation of mercy. How man can be free and God supreme is a question which perhaps Michael could not answer; certainly we cannot. We are not bound to answer it. Our duty is to accept all that God reveals, and to trust him for what is not revealed. He has revealed both these doctrines, but not the reconciliation of them. Our ignorance is the cause of the difficulty. "We know in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 9).

An illustration may help us to understand, *not the difficulty*, but *where it lies—in our ignorance.*

Six hundred and forty years before Christ, Thales discovered that the world was round. He is said to have been at that time the only man who knew this great fact. Suppose he had declared to the people, who were in ignorance, "I can travel eastward, never turning to the right or left, and, keeping straight on, come back to the point from which I set out." He might have gone farther and said, "By traveling westward I can return to this place without changing my course." The people would have answered, "Thales, it is absurd! Your two statements contradict each other; they cannot be reconciled, and we will not believe them." They supposed the world was flat, and in their ignorance it was indeed impossible for them to understand the two statements of Thales; but they were *true*, nevertheless. The truth of a thing does not depend upon our ability to comprehend it. If Thales had gone on and told them that the world was round, the difficulty would have vanished at once. Before, they "knew in part." But Thales's children would have believed him without explanation, because he was their father. So God's children must believe him, even when they cannot understand.

The Primitive Baptists reject free agency because they cannot reconcile it with election. Some

Arminians reject election because they cannot reconcile it with free agency. But Presbyterians hold both doctrines, confessing their inability to reconcile them because of the finiteness of human comprehension, yet declaring that it is enough for them to know that both doctrines are taught in God's word. These doctrines, however difficult, are held by four-fifths of the whole Protestant world. Why? Because "THUS SAITH THE LORD."

"*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein*" (Luke xviii. 17).

CHAPTER III.

CALVINISM AND SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THE Roman Catholic Church is Arminian; the Episcopal Church is Calvinistic in its creed and Arminian in its clergy; the Methodist Church is Arminian in its clergy and creed. The Episcopal Church has a formula, called the "Thirty-nine Articles," which is Calvinistic, but the greater part of the Church has grown away from it, and Arminianism is preached from nearly all its pulpits. In churches organized on the monarchical or oligarchical principle the doctrines of Calvinism cannot live. In proportion as the rulers absorb power into themselves the Church becomes Arminian. The greater the authority of the clergy, the deeper the shade of this doctrine. Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church is the most Arminian of all, because it is the most thoroughly monarchical. Albert Barnes, a great American writer, says, "There are no permanent Arminian Presbyteries,

Synods, General Assemblies, on earth. There is no instance where this belief takes on the Presbyterian form. There are no Presbyterian forms of ecclesiastical administration where it would be long retained."* On the other hand, it is a conspicuous fact that the Churches in which the principle of self-government is maintained are all Calvinistic. It is also to be noted that those Churches which are most nearly approximating toward ecclesiastical republicanism are becoming more Calvinistic in their theology. The two great distinctive features of the Presbyterian or Reformed Church are *Calvinism* and *self-government.* Wherever the Church is established, these are its peculiarities.

The connection of these two principles of government and theology is by no means accidental. There is a strong moral twinship between them. One cannot long exist without the other, and minds which are constructed to believe one almost uniformly accept both. After a man has contemplated the Calvinistic conception of God—a Being absolutely supreme over all creation, everywhere pres-

* For this and several other quotations in this chapter we are indebted to a valuable book called *Calvinism in History,* by the Rev. N. S. McFetridge, D. D. (Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia).

ent and everywhere almighty, one who decrees alike the death of a sparrow and the downfall of an empire—he turns a wearied gaze on human grandeur. What are earthly potentates compared to his God! All human distinctions sink to a level before this awful majesty, and he feels "the rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all" (Prov. xxii. 2).

The history of Calvinism is the history of self-government. Beginning with Geneva in the sixteenth century, trace the progress of this great institution of human liberty through the changes of three hundred years. Says Renan, the unbelieving French author, "Paul begat Augustine, and Augustine begat Calvin." He meant it as sarcasm, but it is a splendid compliment to the last two names; and it is true. Calvin discovered in the Bible the great foundation of all theology—God's absolute supremacy; he found it where Augustine found it—where it had been since Paul by inspiration wrote it; and he built upon it the most powerful system of theology ever constructed. Froude, the historian, says, "Calvinism is the spirit which rises in revolt against all untruth. It is but the inflashing upon the conscience of the laws by which mankind are governed—laws which exist whether we ac-

knowledge them or deny them, and will have their way to our own weal or woe according to the attitude in which we place ourselves toward them; inherent, like the laws of gravity, in the nature of things; not made by us, not to be altered by us, but to be discerned by us and obeyed by us at our everlasting peril." Calvin felt the power of this colossal truth in his soul, and it became the inspiration of his life; he never flinched before tyranny, but continually waged war against it, and in Geneva developed a republic in Church and in State which has been the model of all similar institutions since.

Holland was liberated by Calvinism. Never until these doctrines took possession did that country prevail against Spain. William the Silent became a strong Calvinist. Then he conquered, because Calvinism allied him, as he believed, with the Almighty. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Motley writes: "It would certainly be unjust and futile to detract from the vast debt which the Dutch republic owed to the Genevan Church. The earliest and most eloquent preachers, the most impassioned converts, the sublimest martyrs, had lived, preached, fought, suffered and died with the precepts of Calvin in their hearts. *The fire which*

had consumed the last vestige of royal and sacerdotal despotism throughout the independent republic had been lighted by the hands of Calvinists.

"Throughout the blood-stained soil of France, too," writes this historian, "the men who were fighting the same great battles as were the Netherlanders against Philip II. and the Inquisition, the valiant cavaliers of Dauphiny and Provence, knelt on the ground before the battle, smote their iron breasts with mailed hands, uttered a Calvinistic prayer, sang a song of Marot, and then charged upon Guise and upon Joyeuse under the white plume of the Bearnese. And it was upon the Calvinistic weavers and clothiers of Rochelle the great prince relied in the hour of danger, as much as on his mounted chivalry.

"In England, too," continues Motley, "the seeds of liberty, wrapped up in Calvinism and hoarded through many trying years, were at last destined to float over land and sea, and to bear the largest harvests of temperate freedom for the great commonwealths that were still unborn." Henry VIII. did not *reform* the English Church: he merely cut it off from Rome. The Reformation of that Church was done by Calvinists. "The Lambeth Articles," drawn up under the authority of Elizabeth, "affirm

the Calvinistic doctrines with a distinctness which would shock many in our age who are reputed Calvinists." But England was still under a despotism. With difficulty, a body of Calvinists called Puritans were preparing, in the providence of God, for the liberation of the people. Cromwell with the Puritans destroyed the despotism of centuries. True, after Cromwell passed away, the horrid spectre again made its appearance; but it was too late: the people had seen liberty, and under the guiding genius of William III., the Calvinist, the "divine right of kings" met its final overthrow, and the grand principle of self-government was for ever fixed in the British constitution.

Turning to Scotland, we discover a great personality towering above all others—John Knox, the greatest benefactor that country ever had. He had learned theology under Calvin in Geneva, and he had tasted Romanism as a galley-slave in France. Froude says of him, "No grander figure can be found in the entire history of the Reformation in this island than John Knox. The time has come when English history must do justice to *one but for whom the Reformation would have been overthrown* among ourselves, for the spirit which Knox created saved Scotland; and if Scotland had been Catholic

again, neither the wisdom of Elizabeth's ministers, nor the teaching of her bishops, nor her own chicaneries, would have preserved England from revolution. He was the voice which taught the peasant of the Lothians that he was a free man—the equal, in the sight of God, of the proudest peer or prelate that had trampled on his forefathers."

Thomas Carlyle writes: "This that John Knox did for his nation, I say, we may really call a resurrection as from death. . . . He is the one Scotchman to whom, of all others, his country and the world owe a debt."

Thus it is seen by the testimony of men who were not Presbyterians that those who fought the great battles of human liberty were inspired by the doctrines of Calvinism.

These principles of self-government having been worked out in Geneva, France, Holland, England and Scotland, the time came for their establishment in other lands. There was a new world in the West to be colonized and developed. The Catholics took the southern part, and the Calvinists the northern. South America, Central America and the West Indies have stagnated under Catholic influence, while the United States and Canada have continually gone forward in progress. The free institutions of this

country have been an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. Coming to North America, they have found liberty to think and to act according to the dictates of their own consciences. Free from cramping influences, they have developed in all departments. No country on earth ever before made such progress as that which has been seen in the short history of the American republic. To what principles are we indebted for the conditions which made this wonderful advancement possible? To those of Calvinism.

The early settlers of North America were largely Calvinists. The Huguenots from France, the Dutch from Holland, the Scotch and the Scotch-Irish, the Puritans from England, were the real pioneers of Western civilization, and they were all disciples of Calvin. These distinguished colonists came to the New World because, being Calvinists, they were not tolerated at home. They sought for liberty to worship God. They had tasted the bitterness of royal and ecclesiastical tyranny in Europe, and the high Calvinism with which they were imbued inspired them with an unconquerable desire for self-government. When the great conflict arose between the colonies and England, the Episcopalians generally sided with the mother-country; the Calvin-

ists were for independence. They had their Church established by law, and before the Revolution the Presbyterians were denied a charter in New York. *They were not allowed "a legal title to a spot to bury their dead."*

But this was not to continue. They had left Europe to escape tyranny, and were not willing to submit to it in America. The feelings which inspired the break with England were as much religious as political, though a political act was the occasion of the rupture. A historian quotes an article published in a weekly journal of that day: "This country will shortly become a great and flourishing empire, independent of Great Britain, enjoying its civil and religious liberty uncontaminated, and deserted of all control of bishops, . . . and from the subjection of all earthly kings." Monarchy and Episcopacy stood together. The clergymen of that faith belonged to a State-Church and had sworn to support the authority of England. The king was the head of the Church, and they were bound by their allegiance to him.

But the Puritans, the Scotch, the Scotch-Irish, the Huguenots and the Dutch rallied under the banner of revolution. They fought for the right of self-government in Church and in State; God

was on their side, and they won it. They framed their government according to the principles for which they had so long contended. They were building for the future, and were divinely guided in laying the foundation of a structure which is still rising before the nations, the inspiration of freedom in other lands and the admiration of mankind. Who were the men that did this work? Calvinists—men who derived their principles, strong as granite, from the quarries of God's eternal decree, "according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

Ranke says, "John Calvin was virtually the founder of America," and Renan said, "Paul begat Augustine, and Augustine begat Calvin." But who, we ask, begat Paul? Who was the author of that system of truth which has been the mainspring of civilization and the bulwark of human liberty? We answer, It was born in heaven, and claims paternity from God.

"*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*" (Gal. v. 1).