

THE
HISTORY, CHARACTER,
AND
RESULTS,
OF THE
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES.

A DISCOURSE,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BI-CENTENARY ANNIVERSARY OF THAT
BODY.

BY

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Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity, Ecclesi-
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This Volume,

WHICH IS PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF MANY WHO
HEARD IT, IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

TO

H. V. BUTLER, Esq.,
OF PATTERSON, N. J.

BY WHOSE GENEROSITY IT IS PRESENTED TO THE
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P R E F A C E .

THE following discourse was prepared by the author, to be delivered to his own congregation, on the occasion of the bi-centenary celebration of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. During his visit to the North, he was requested to deliver it in the Old South Church, Boston, in the First Church in Charlestown, in Patterson, N. J., in New Brunswick, and in Philadelphia. On each of these occasions the author was requested to publish it; and when he had returned home, he received a generous request from the gentleman to whom it is dedicated, to allow it to be published at his expense. To this request he has felt it his duty to accede. Not that there is any pretension in the discourse to elegance of style, or to great originality of matter. To be faithful to history, the facts must be, of necessity, such as are already acknowledged. All that the author claims is, to have combined in the discourse a general summary of all the information we possess concerning this remarkable Assembly, in its origin, progress, and results; to have shown its relations to the great struggle for religious and civil liberty which was then going on; to have presented the grounds

upon which it has laid posterity under a debt of lasting gratitude ; and to have offered some vindication of the Assembly from the charge of persecution and intolerance.

All that is expected, therefore, from this publication is, that it may convey, in a small compass, the most necessary information on these points, to some who may not have leisure or opportunity to peruse more lengthened works.

Should any similarity be found in the *arrangement* of this discourse and the history of Mr. Hetherington, the author would state that, although he has now made some references to that valuable work, this was written in May, 1843, and of course months before the appearance of the work referred to.

CHARLESTON, S. C., SEPTEMBER, 1843.

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H I S T O R Y
OF THE
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

S E C T I O N I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, WITH A REVIEW OF THE CAUSES
WHICH LED TO THE CALLING OF THE WESTMINSTER
ASSEMBLY.

WE are on this occasion called upon, with an innumerable multitude in every quarter of the globe, and of many different denominations, to celebrate the bicentenary anniversary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. To this body the world is indebted for those standards of faith and practice which have been substantially adopted, not only by the Presbyterian Church in all its branches, but also by the Congregational and Baptist denominations.

The return of a second centennial anniversary of this Assembly, invokes the grateful remembrance of all who value these standards, and the blessings of religious and civil freedom with which they have become inseparably connected. If the clear definition and establishment of those doctrines that are of God, alike freed from Antinomian licentiousness on the one hand, and from fanatical extravagance on the other; if the preparation of standards which have served as bulwarks to the truth as it is in Jesus, when error and heresy have come in like a flood upon the church, and which are at this moment venerated, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the word of God, by growing multitudes; and if a devotion to the cause of human rights which no bribery or persecution could extinguish; if, I say, these achievements are sufficient to demand our gratitude, then are we imperatively called upon to hail with exultation this natal day of our spiritual birthright, to consider the days of old and the years of ancient times, and to bring to remembrance the Westminster Assembly.

In order, however, properly to appreciate the debt

of gratitude we owe to this General Council of the Church, and to enter heartily into this commemoration, we must recall to mind the circumstances which gave origin to this assembly,* and the nature and influence of its proceedings. It will be our object, therefore, in this discourse to present some general observations relating to the history, character, and results of this body.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines is to be regarded both as an effect and as a cause. It was at once the result of certain previous movements, and the source of other and momentous consequences to which it gave occasion. Itself the fruit of former vegetation, it became the seed of new productions. From it, as a starting point, the Presbyterian Church commenced her glorious race, freed from the clogs and hinderances with which she had been long previously bound, and is now seen in all the strength of growing maturity, pressing on towards the mark for the prize

* See these minutely given in the Preface to Reid's Lives of the Divines of the Westminster Assembly. Paisley, 1811.

of her high calling; while upon the foundation of its doctrinal standards millions build the fabric of their everlasting hopes.

To understand the causes which led to the convention of the Westminster Assembly, we must go back to the era of the English Reformation and trace the history and working of the Anglican hierarchy. Unlike the Continental and Scottish reforms, which were originated, and sustained, and completed by the people, the English Reformation was altogether a political movement, and an affair of state. It was forced upon an unprepared and unenlightened people, like any other matter of political legislation. Neither was it a *reformation*, but rather an *adaptation* of the existing hierarchy to the views and purposes of a covetous, worldly-minded, and ambitious monarch. While the supremacy of the pope was renounced, the king was recognized as the head of the church, and was thus implicated in that usurpation of the royal prerogative of Christ, and in those encroachments on the rights of the church, which form one of the weightiest charges against the Roman Antichrist. And while the

people, in their state of ignorance, spurned from them the established religion—as far as they dared express their feelings—because it was in any way, and to any degree an alteration of the old, that same people, when fully instructed in the knowledge of the gospel, rejected to a great extent this same established religion, because it was but a modification of the corrupted papacy, and altogether unlike the primitive and apostolical church of Christ. It is beyond all controversy certain, that had the great body of the clergy and the laity, in the days of Elizabeth, possessed the liberty of carrying out their views, the Church of England would have been modelled after the same original platform of Presbyterian polity which was preserved to us in the sanctuary of truth, and universally adopted by every other reformed church in Christendom.* Coerced into obedience to the powers that ruled over them, and legislated into conformity by the all-convincing arguments of proclamations, penalties, im-

* See the author's Work on "Presbytery, and not Prelacy, the Scriptural and Primitive Polity," for proof.

prisonment, torture, infamy, and death, the people of England groaned within themselves, being burdened. Having no refuge in man, they sought relief in God, into whose ear they poured their complaints, and cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge our cause, and avenge our sufferings on them that oppress us?"

Prelacy is a plain and manifest deviation from the institutions of Christ. As such it appeared to all the reformed churches, and to a large portion of the English people. They sought, therefore, its removal by an appeal to scriptural argument and authority. But prelacy had also become identified with spiritual despotism and arbitrary proceedings. Secular power, external violence, inquisitorial authority, and political tyranny, as well as ecclesiastical jurisdiction, had long been annexed to the hierarchy, had become characteristic of its conduct, and interwoven with all its proceedings. Bishops were not only lords spiritual, but also lords temporal. Their power extended equally to the body and the soul, and to civil as well as to ecclesiastical penalties. They domineered over

all the ecclesiastical rights of the people in the church, while they lent themselves as the tools of arbitrary monarchs in the state. They had, too, become possessed of extensive power, independent of the crown and parliament; a power which, being based upon a divine right and thus beyond the reach of any human control, could be questioned only by the voice of blasphemous impiety. Their history is filled with treasons, conspiracies, and oppression.* They had ever been found opposed to the laws and liberties of

* The collected proofs of these charges, from authentic sources, may be seen given at length by that learned and persecuted man, Counsellor Prynne, in his "Antipathie of the English Lordly Prelacy both to regular Monarchy and civil Unity: or an Historical Collection of the several execrable Treasons, Conspiracies, Rebellions, Seditious, State-schisms, Contumacies, Oppressions, and Anti-monarchical Practices, of our English, Brittish, French, Scottish, and Irish Lordly Prelates, against our Kings, Kingdomes, Laws, Liberties; and of the several Wars, and civil Dissensions occasioned by them in, or against our Realm, in former and latter ages." London, 1641. 2 vols, 4to.

the people, and to the reformation of abuses. Their high-handed proceedings in the Bishops' courts; their illegal powers as members of the High Commission;* and the exorbitant prerogative of the crown, which they abetted and sustained, prostrated all freedom, trampled upon the just rights of the citizen, and left men of every quality and degree at the mercy of a rapacious despotism.†

This language may appear strong, but it is inadequate to express the true character of the Anglican

* By this dreadful tribunal many were reduced to utter poverty by fines, many were imprisoned till they contracted fatal diseases, others were banished, and some were actually sold for slaves.

† It was actually decided by the twelve judges of the Star Chamber, "That the King, having the supreme ecclesiastical power, could, without parliament, make orders and constitutions for church government; that the High Commissioner might enforce them, *ex officio*, without libel; and that subjects might not frame petitions for relief without being guilty of an offence finable at discretion, and very near to treason and felony." Neal, Vol. I. p. 416, 417.

hierarchy. Take, for example, the case of Leighton, father of the celebrated Archbishop. At the instigation of Laud, and upon the charge of having published a book against prelacy!—he was thrown into prison, where he lay in a filthy cell infested with vermin for fifteen weeks, so that when served with his libel his hair and skin had come off his body, and he was so reduced in strength as to be unable to appear at the bar. This, however, made no difference. Untried and unheard he was condemned to suffer the following sentence, on hearing which pronounced, Laud, we are told, “pulled off his cap and gave God thanks.” “The horrid sentence,” says the sufferer in his petition to parliament some years afterwards, “was to be inflicted with knife, sword, fire, and whip, at and upon the pillory, with ten thousand pounds fine; which some of the lords of court conceived could never be inflicted, but only that it was imposed on a dying man to terrify others. But Laud and his creatures caused the sentence to be executed with a witness; for the hang-

man was animated all the night before, with strong drink in the prison, and with threatening words, to do it cruelly. Your petitioner's hands being tied to a stake, besides all other torments, he received thirty-six stripes with a treble cord, after which he stood almost two hours in the pillory in cold, frost, and snow, and then suffered the rest, as cutting off the ear, firing the face, and slitting up the nose. He was made a spectacle of misery to men and angels. And, on that day seven nights, the sores upon his back, ears, nose and face, not being cured, he was again whipped at the pillory in Cheapside, and then had the remainder of the sentence executed by cutting off the other ear, slitting up the other nostril, and branding the other cheek!"

Similar punishments were inflicted on Counsellor Prynne, Dr. Bastwick, and Dr. Burton, and for the same atrocious crime of having written against the prelacy!

In short, "the Church of England continued under the Stuarts what she had become under the

Tudors: a submissive slave to the higher ranks, a tyrant to the lower."* And the portentous re-appearance, at the present time, and in our own country as well as in England, of the fundamental principle,—the prelatical doctrine of Apostolical Succession,—from which these results followed, may well excite alarm; embodying, as it does, the very essence of despotism, civil and religious, and possessing an energy that nothing human can control without a struggle, wide, wasting, and deadly, too fearful even to be imagined.†

Nor was this all. While prelacy had become identified, as was believed, with despotic cruelty and injustice, an event occurred which awakened the whole people of Britain to a full perception of their awful condition, and still more fearful prospects,—

* Hoffman's *Anglo-Prussian Bishopric*, p. 28.

† Hatherington, *Hist. of Westm. Ass.*, p. 50 See abundant proofs of the intolerant tendencies and results of this doctrine both in England and America, in the author's *Lectures on the Prelatical doctrine of the Apostolical Succession*, Lecture XIII.

I allude to the horrible massacre of the Irish Protestants, by the Roman Catholics. Taught to believe that by putting heretics to death they would merit favor at the hands of God, these deluded men received the sacrament before commencing the work of carnage, and swore before high heaven that they would not leave a Protestant alive in the whole kingdom. For many months, nay, with some little intermission, for two years, the country was a scene of the most unparalleled atrocities. No mercy was shown to age, or rank, or sex. Men, women, and even children, became the executioners of helpless victims, and everywhere perpetrated the most execrable atrocities. Suffice it to say, that according to some writers not less than 300,000 Protestants were sacrificed to glut the ferocious appetite of Popery.* Neither can King Charles be altogether freed from the charge of having connived at, if he did not promote, this infamous treachery. Certain it is, that

* See on this subject the various calculations as given in Dr. Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Vol. I. p. 336, 337.

the object avowed by the Papists was the subjugation of the English parliament and the Scottish army; the support of the king in his struggle for arbitrary power, and the more complete enslavement of the British nation.*

* The Royal Commission from Charles I. for the movements of 1641, has been strenuously denied. The evidence of its reality seems, however, beyond controversy. The evidence may be summed up as follows:—(1.) The Royal Commission was published by Sir Phelim O'Neill himself, in his proclamation from Newry, 1641, (2.) It was reprinted in the "*Mysterie of Iniquity*," 1642. (3.) In "*Viccar's Parliamentary Chronicle*," 1646. (4.) In Milton's Works, 1698. And those who desire to see the genuineness of the Commission fully canvassed, may consult Brodie, Vol. III. p. 190-9; and Godwin, Vol. I. p. 225-30. (5.) Even Reilly, a staunch Romanist, admits that Lords Auburn and Osmond were instructed by Charles to seize the castle of Dublin, the lords justices, &c., and that Sir Phelim merely endeavoured to have the first hand in the work. (6.) The declaration of the commons, July 25, 1642, is sufficient to prove that there was a plot between the queen and the Irish Papists, and that the king knew of it.

By these, and other similar causes, which time will not permit us to detail, the public mind was led to regard prelacy as equally dangerous to the religion, liberties, and peace of the three kingdoms, and thus to desire the complete extirpation of the hierarchy. The controversy respecting high-churchism, which had hitherto been carried on by the Puritans on religious grounds, was now, by the conduct of the prelates, forced to assume the character of a defence of civil liberty. The floodgates of the popular mind were opened. The subject of church government became the all-engrossing topic of the day, and, from its close connection with public affairs, a national question. Within a period of twenty years no fewer than 30,000 pamphlets were issued on this subject. Feeling ran deeper every day against the prelates, until, by the disclosures brought out upon the trial of Archbishop Laud, it burst forth in ungovernable fury, and demanded their removal from office.

The commons, therefore, having been petitioned to that effect by the London ministers, in their grand

remonstrance, presented in 1641, urged the necessity of a free synod, to take into consideration, and remove the grievances of the church. In the treaty of Oxford a bill was offered to the same purpose and rejected. Some time after, Dr. Burgess, at the head of the Puritan clergy, again applied to parliament for the same purpose. At length an ordinance was passed by the parliament in June, 1643, convening an assembly by their own authority. In this ordinance ✓ they say, “Whereas, among the infinite blessings of Almighty God upon this nation, none is, or can be, more clear to us than the purity of our religion; and for that as yet many things remain in the liturgy, discipline, and government of the church, which do necessarily require a further and more perfect reformation, than as yet hath been obtained; and whereas it hath been declared and resolved by the lords and commons assembled in parliament, that the present church government, by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissars, deans, and chapters, arch-deacons, and other ecclesiastical officers, depending upon the hierarchy, is evil and justly

offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and government of this kingdom; therefore they are resolved, that the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the church as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other reformed churches abroad; and for the better effecting hereof, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions, it is thought fit and necessary to call an assembly of learned, godly, and judicious divines, who, together with some members of both houses of parliament, are to consult and advise of such matters and things, touching the premises, as shall be proposed unto them, by both or either houses of parliament, and to give their council and advice therein to both or either of said houses, when, and so often, as they shall be thereunto required."

The language and spirit of this ordinance will be considered as justly marvellous, when it is recollected, that this very parliament was composed of persons who had been almost to a man Episcopalians, and attached to Episcopal government; men, too, possessed of great and plentiful fortunes; and, as Clarendon, who states these facts, allows, of great gravity and wisdom.*

* Clarendon, Vol. I., p. 184. M'Crie's Scottish Church Hist. p. 275. "As to religion," says Clarendon, "they were all members of the Established Church, and almost to a man for Episcopal government."

SECTION II.

THE NATURE, HISTORY, AND CHARACTER OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

THE Assembly was to consist of ten lords, twenty commoners, and one hundred and twenty-one ministers; in all, about one hundred and fifty-one members. In accordance with what we have stated, as it regards the ecclesiastical views of the parliament, the members chosen to constitute this Assembly were, almost all, such as had till then conformed to the Established Church of England.* From the fact

* In their answer to the reasons given by the Episcopal divines for withdrawing from the body, the assembly answer the charge that "the divines were for the most part of a puritanical stamp and enemies to the hierarchy," by saying, "the divines, except the Scots and French, were in Episcopal orders, educated in our own universities, and most of

that it was convened at Westminster, in the Abbey Church, it has been denominated the Westminster Assembly. And forasmuch as it was not called by ecclesiastical authority, or according to any fixed rules of ecclesiastical procedure, but by the authority of parliament, it is styled an Assembly, and not a Convocation or Synod. It was designed to be an ecclesiastical advisory council, to aid and assist the parliament in the determinations of religious questions. It was thus identified with the national legislature and became a part of that body, or rather its ecclesiastical cabinet.* All its members were chosen by the parliament, who selected two from each

them graduates." Neal's Hist. of Puritans, Vol. III. 49.

"Those who made up the Westminster Assembly, and who were the honour of the parliamentary party throughout the land, were almost all such as had till then conformed." Orme's Life of Baxter, Vol. I. p. 35.

* In the answer of the Assembly to the Episcopal divines they say, "This being not designed for a legal convocation, but for a council to the parliament in the reformation of the church." Neal, III. 49.

county, and in addition to these, some of the most learned men of the age, such as Archbishop Usher, Dr. Holdsworth, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Wincop, Bishops Westfield, and Prideaux, and many more.* Parliament also drew up the rules by which in all their deliberations they were to be directed and governed, and the solemn oath or protestation which was to be taken by every member of the body. The Assembly, therefore, had no independent existence or authority.

Its members were sworn to “make good out of Scripture what any man undertook to prove,” and “to maintain nothing in matters of doctrine, but what they thought in their conscience to be truth; or in point of discipline but what should conduce most to the glory of God, and to the good and peace of the church.” They could not, however, enforce any thing by their own power, as either true or obligatory. All their productions are entitled, “The hum-

* A few of the royalist Episcopal divines at first met with the Assembly, but afterwards withdrew when the king had prohibited their meeting.

ble advice of the Assembly of Divines, by authority of parliament sitting at Westminster concerning," &c. &c.* The ecclesiastical authority *now* attached to the Westminster Assembly's standards, arises solely from their adoption by the various bodies who have received them as their own, while their intrinsic validity is based upon the word of God, on which they are exclusively founded. The Assembly was but a component part of the most celebrated of all parliaments—a wheel within a wheel—one band of actors in that glorious drama which will ever attract the admiration and excite the reverence of mankind. By obeying the summons of the parliament, the members of the Assembly, at once and forever, committed themselves to the cause of the people against their tyrannical oppressor ; braved the fury of an incensed monarch, who had openly denounced their meeting as traitorous, and pledged their lives, property, and

* Of these I possess copies in the original editions. I have also ten 4to volumes of the discourses they delivered before the parliament.

sacred honour, to the support of liberty and truth.* The volcanic fires which had long been burning in secret had now burst forth, and filled the land with civil commotion. To these divines was given the hazardous but honourable duty to direct the whirlwind and the storm which were then raging, and if possible to suggest such measures as might reduce their conflicting elements to order and harmony. By the merits of that struggle, which was then commenced in desperate earnestness, must this Assembly be now tested. Was it a traitorous rebellion against *lawful* power and the heaven-appointed insolence of despots?—then were they accessories to the nefarious plot, and base hypocrites in the sight of heaven.

* In their answer to the Episcopal divines, who alleged that the Assembly were not authorized by the king, they replied, “ that the constitution at present was dissolved ; that there were two sovereign contending parties in the nation ; and if the war in which the parliament was engaged was just and necessary, they might assume this branch of the prerogative, till the nation was settled, as well as any other ”
Neal, Vol. III. p. 49

But was that outburst of freedom “the commencement of all true liberty, public and personal,” and the birth-day of a nation’s rights?—then are the members of the Westminster Assembly to be held in everlasting remembrance.

The Assembly continued to act and deliberate till 1648–9, about three weeks after the king’s death, having sat five years, six months, and twenty-two days, during which time they had eleven hundred and sixty-three sessions. They were still employed after that time, as a committee for the examination, ordination, and induction of ministers, till March 25th, 1652, when the long parliament being turned out of the house by Oliver Cromwell, they also broke up without any formal dissolution. They thus rose and fell with the long parliament, and were buried with it in the same grave of constitutional liberty.

The Westminster Assembly was a congregation of the most wise, pious, liberal and learned spirits of the age. “The divines there congregated,” says Baxter, “were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity, and being not worthy

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to be one myself, I may the more freely speak the truth, even in the face of malice and envy; that as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidence left us, the Christian world, since the days of the Apostles, had never a Synod of more excellent divines than this, and the Synod of Dort." "For personal integrity, ministerial diligence, and general scholarship, the Wesminster Assembly," says Dr. Price, who is warmly opposed to presbyterianism, "has never been surpassed by any ecclesiastical assemblage."* Let any one examine the list of its members, and he will find among them the most considerable lawyers and divines of a most remarkable age.

The names of Lightfoot, Gataker, Greenhill, Arrowsmith, Twisse, Reynolds (afterwards bishop), Burgess, Bolton, Burroughs, Calamy, Caryl, Godwin, Hildersham, Marshal, Scudder, Vines, Wallis, Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford, Baillie, and many others, are among the most illustrious in English history,

* Dr. Price's Hist. of Non. Conf. Vol. II. p. 248.

and will never be undervalued in the learned world. Selden, also, among the lay members, and Prynne, the great Presbyterian advocate in the parliament, were prodigies of learning, and their works treasuries of erudition.

In fact all the members were men of distinction, and while Cajetan, who was reputed to be the most learned man in the Council of Trent, knew not a word of Hebrew,* many of these divines were eminent for their acquirements in Hebrew, and in Talmudical, classical, and oriental literature. Their de-

* “Neither was there amongst these prelates any one remarkable for learning; some of them were lawyers, perhaps learned in that profession, but of little understanding in religion; few divines, but of less than ordinary sufficiency; the greater number gentlemen or courtiers; and for their dignities some were only titular, and the major part bishops of so small cities, that, supposing every one to represent his people, it could not be said that one of a thousand in Christendom was represented. But particularly of Germany, that there was not so much as one bishop or divine.” Father Paul, p. 153.

bates, which were sometimes continued for months upon a single point, were regular scholastic discussions. An appeal was continually made to the Greek and Hebrew originals, to the analogy of faith, and to the opinions of the Rabbinical doctors and early fathers. In these branches of study some of them attained an eminence, which, if ever it has been equalled, has certainly never been excelled. They still shine forth, with singular glory, as stars of the first magnitude. Besides the discussions of the Assembly, which occupied their forenoons, and those of the committee, which filled up their afternoons, the members were many of them employed in preparing dissertations for the parliamentary discourses and other works of great extent, erudition, and learning. When the universities were deserted, in consequence of the removal of the adherents of the king, their places were filled with incumbents selected chiefly from among the members of this Assembly. And while many have asserted that the reputation of these universities was sadly diminished by their new professors, the very contrary is the truth

in the case. Learning, religion, and good sense prevailed to a much greater extent at the Restoration, than before the civil wars, in both these seats of learning. All the eminent philosophers and divines, who did so much honour to their country in the three succeeding reigns—the Tillotsons, Stillingfleets, Patricks, Souths, Caves, Sprats, Kidders, Whitbys, Bulls, Boyles, Newtons, and Lockes—were educated by these very professors. And if, as is always allowed, the glory of the scholar illustrates the character of his teacher, we may at once perceive how pre-eminently qualified these men were to be the tutors of the greatest geniuses that have ever adorned humanity.

In foreign countries, also, the reputation of these universities was at this time very high; while the number of learned performances which they produced was as great as during any former period.* Never certainly was the standard of ministerial qualifications placed higher than by these divines. “The languages, Greek and Hebrew, are,” they urged,

* Neal III. 400.

“ necessary to understand the original text, and derive our doctrine from the fresh and pure fountains. The Latin is also needful, that we may the better receive the benefits of the gifts given to the fathers and writers of former ages, (for all gifts are given by God to profit the church withal,) but also to be acquainted with the liberal arts and sciences.” After showing how the knowledge of the arts and sciences contribute to the usefulness of the ministry, and how a learned ministry has been in all ages the bulwark of the church against heretics and errorists, they conclude that “ therefore the enemies of a learned ministry are the friends of popery and all heresies, of ignorance and blindness, and the enemies of the truth and gospel, of the light and comfort of the church of Jesus Christ.”* The fruits of these principles and labours we find in that harvest of nonconforming ministers who filled the churches at the period of the Restoration, of whom two thousand in England, between

* See Byfield's (a member of the Assembly) *Short Treatise* describing the Church of Christ. London, 1653, p. 26, 27.

three and four thousand in Scotland, and sixty out of sixty-five in Ireland, gave up their livings rather than abandon principle; of whom the world was not worthy; whose works of piety and devotion will ever constitute the staple productions of our Christian literature; and of whom we have a noble succession in those five hundred Presbyterian clergymen and two hundred licentiates and students in divinity in Scotland, who have now taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and suffered even unto poverty, in their glorious contest for the truth and honour of the gospel. Howe and Charnock, Bates and Heyward, and a host of other worthies, exemplify the character of these divines, and the truth of these observations. Without the works of many of these divines, no theological library could be complete, since they contain treatises on various subjects, which are regarded as incomparably the best in the English language.

Neither is this character of the divines of the Westminster Assembly rendered in any degree questionable by the baseless calumnies of Clarendon, or the revengeful vituperation of Milton. By their de-

nunciation of Milton's work on divorce, which led to his being brought before the House of Lords, and by their steady opposition to the constitutional proceedings of his master Cromwell, they excited the deep and keen anger of his fierce antagonist. In this, however, Milton only proved his own inconsistency, and reflected discredit, not on the Assembly, but upon himself. For that very work on divorce had been dedicated by him to this very Assembly. In this dedication, after they had been in session for two years, he denominates them "a select Assembly" "of so much piety and wisdom," "a learned and memorable Synod, in which piety, learning, and prudence were housed." The hireling defamer of political opponents, and the enraged avenger of a private quarrel, are neither of them therefore entitled to vilify a large and respectable Assembly, whose character is otherwise so undoubtedly established.*

* See Orme's Life of Baxter, p. 71.

SECTION III.

THE STANDARDS OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

BUT great as were these men in natural genius, and eminent as they were in acquirement and in their literary and theological publications, it is as the authors of those standards which were the fruits of their five years' deliberations, that they most powerfully claim our reverence. The first of these is the Confession of Faith. We have stated that the members of the Assembly had been almost to a man Episcopalians, or at least conformists. The first object of the Assembly was not therefore to overthrow, but to alter and improve, the existing system of polity and doctrine. Accordingly, one of their first acts was to divide their whole body into three committees, to each of which was distributed a certain number of the articles of the English Church. After having

spent ten weeks in the revision of the first fifteen articles, they were arrested in their proceedings by an order at once to frame a Directory for public worship; and as it was afterwards thought that uniformity would be better promoted by constructing a new Confession, the further amendment of the thirty-nine Articles was dropped. A committee was therefore appointed to this work in May, 1645, who presented the complete Confession in November, 1646, which after being reviewed and amended was published in May, 1647. The outline of this work would appear to have originated with Alexander Henderson, the leader of what is termed the Second Scottish Reformation, who had been appointed by the General Assembly of Scotland in 1641 to draw up a Confession of Faith, a Catechism, a Directory for all parts of public worship, and a Platform of Government, and who was a commissioner to the Westminster Assembly. In June, 1648, the two houses of Lords and Commons having gone over the whole, article by article, ordered it to be published under the title of "Articles of Religion approved and

passed by both houses of Parliament, after advice had with an Assembly of Divines called together by them for that purpose." The whole Confession being immediately transmitted to Scotland, was received with approbation by both the General Assembly and Parliament, and has continued to be the established doctrine of the Church of Scotland until this day, and of all the Presbyterian churches founded by her in England, Ireland, America, and all other parts of the world. This Confession has been embodied almost verbatim in the Confession adopted by the Congregationalists at the Savoy Conference, in their Cambridge and Saybrook platforms, and in the Confessions of the Old South Church in Boston, and other New-England churches ; and also by the Calvinistic Baptists.

The next work completed by the Assembly was the reduction of the substance of this Confession into the form of Catechisms ; one called "The Larger," for the groundwork of a public exposition in the pulpit, according to the custom of the foreign churches ; and the other "The Shorter," for the instruction of

children in the principal doctrines of the Christian religion. The Shorter Catechism was presented to parliament in November, 1647, and the Larger in April, 1648. These works are beyond all praise. To those who recognize the system of doctrine they contain as being that taught in the word of God, they must be allowed to be, next to the Bible, the most complete and perfect summaries of evangelical truth that exist; most admirable in their arrangement; simple and scriptural in their language; comprehensive in their details, and masterly in their whole construction. They are, in short, perfect systems of divinity. Beginning with a general introduction, illustrative of the great end of man's creation and the only infallible standard of faith and practice, they are divided into two parts. The first division explains what we are to believe concerning God in himself considered, and in his doings towards the human race, in their creation, fall, and redemption. The second division embraces the duty which God requires of man; in which is given a full explanation of the moral law as contained in the Ten Command-

ments; and the special duties arising from the gospel dispensation, such as faith, repentance, the diligent use of the means of grace and prayer, as illustrated in the general summary of "The Lord's Prayer." To these catechisms, millions are indebted for their theological knowledge, for their saving piety, and for their preservation from dangerous heresies and errors; while to them, under God, must our church trace her deliverance from many a dangerous onset, and her present establishment in the faith once delivered to the saints.

The next work of the Assembly was the one which gave rise to the greatest debates—that is, the Form of Government. At first no more was thought of than such a modified form of episcopacy as would remove the evils consequent upon the hierarchy. But when the views of the Scottish divines were presented and most elaborately discussed, and a full knowledge was obtained of the working, efficiency, and influence of the Presbyterian system, as practised in the reformed churches, the great majority of the Assembly, *Episcopalians though they had been*, were led to

approve of Presbytery as the system of polity instituted by Christ and his apostles. They all, except about eight Independents, (who differed as to the second point,) adopted as of divine right "the two radical principles of Presbyterian church government, the **PARITY OF MINISTERS** of the Gospel, or the identity of Bishops and Presbyters; and the regulation of all matters in the church by the counsel and will of the whole body, or their representatives, which comprehends the subordination of inferior to superior judicatories."

Even the Congregationalists in the Assembly embraced almost every thing in this work, and had actually agreed to a compromised view upon which both parties would have been harmoniously united, but for the political influence of Cromwell, for whose interest it was necessary that they should be kept divided.* This form of government, however, was

* "They both admitted the same orders of office-bearers in the church, though the Independents would have recognized more than the Presbyterians thought either necessary

never fully approved by the parliament, owing to the increased influence of the Independents, Erastian,

or commanded in Scripture ; and they differed little in their opinions respecting the powers properly inherent in congregations." (Hetherington, p. 165.) Mr. Nye, the leader of the Independents, admitted that they held classical and synodical meetings very useful and profitable, yea, possibly agreeable to the institution of Christ ; but the question is this, whether these meetings have the same power that *ecclesia prima*, or one single congregation has ? (Lightfoot, p. 144.)

The compromise above alluded to, was brought in by a committee raised for the purpose, and composed of Messrs. Seaman, Vines, Palmer, Marshall, Godwin, Nye, Burroughs, and Bridge, together with the four Scottish divines, and was as follows : " 1. That there be a presbytery, or meeting of the elders of many neighbouring congregations, to consult upon such things as concern those congregations in matters ecclesiastical ; and such presbyteries are the ordinances of Christ, having his power and authority. 2. Such presbyteries have power in cases that are to come before them, to declare and determine doctrinally what is agreeable to God's word ; and this judgment of theirs is to be received with reverence and obligation as Christ's ordinance. 3. They

and Sectarian parties in that body; and the impossibility of harmonizing them all upon the platform of

have power to require the elders of those congregations to give an account of any thing scandalous in doctrine or practice." (Lightfoot, p. 214, 215.) Another report was brought forward from this committee about a week afterwards, containing two additional propositions, forming five in all, as follows: "4. The churches and eldership being offended, let them examine, admonish, and in case of obstinacy, declare them either disturbers of the peace, as subverters of the faith, or otherwise, as the nature and degree of the offence shall require. 5. In case that the particular church or eldership shall refuse to reform that scandalous doctrine or practice, then that meeting of elders, which is assembled from several churches and congregations, shall acquaint their several congregations respectively, and withdraw from them, and deny church communion and fellowship with them." (Lightfoot, p. 229.) In the course of their argument and illustrations, the dissenting brethren, that is, the Congregationalists, made so many concessions, that it is rather difficult to conceive on what their final opposition rested. As, for instance, they admitted "that synods are an ordinance of God upon all occasions of difficulty: that all the churches

Presbyterianism. It was, however, at once adopted in the Church of Scotland, and has been perpetuated in all her branches.

The next work for which we are indebted to the divines of the Westminster Assembly is the Directory for public Worship. As early as October, 1643, the parliament, having virtually abolished the liturgy, directed the Assembly to prepare "a Directory of Worship or Liturgy, hereafter to be in the Church," with all the convenient speed they could. The

of a province may call a single congregation to account; that they may examine and admonish, and, in case of obstinacy, may declare them to be subverters of the faith; that they have authority to determine in controversies of faith; that they may deny church communion to an offending and obstinate congregation, and that this sentence of non-communication may be enforced by the authority of the civil magistrate; and that they may call before them any person within their bounds concerned in the ecclesiastical business before them, and may hear and determine such causes as orderly come before them." *Reasons and Answers of Dissenting Brethren*, page 138.

Directory was accordingly drawn up and, after much discussion, was almost unanimously adopted. It contains a directory for prayer, with the substance of what ought to be included in the public morning prayer; for the reading of the Scriptures; for the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; for preaching the word, the sanctification of the Lord's day, the solemnization of marriage, the observance of days of public fasting and humiliation, and also of thanksgiving, and for the burial of the dead. In the change then made in the form of public worship, the following things before in use were entirely omitted, viz., the public reading of the Apocrypha in the churches, private and lay-baptism, god-fathers and god-mothers, the sign of the cross in baptism, and the private administration of the communion to the sick. The altar with rails was exchanged for the communion table, kneeling at the Lord's table was disused, burial service, the ring in marriage, all peculiar garments for officiating ministers, and saint's days, were also discarded.

To the Assembly, also, we are indebted for a

metrical version of the Book of Psalms to be used in the public worship of God, and for the general introduction of congregational psalmody.* This version

* Milner's *Life of Watts*, p. 358. "The practice of the primitive church was thus revived. The people were, as Secker expressed it, 'restored to their rights, and taught to sing as well as to pray.' The mode of singing psalms in measured verse, as now practised, was introduced first by Calvin at Geneva, in 1543. He wrote the preface to Marot's metrical version of the Psalms, and took care to have them set to music by the most distinguished musicians. The whole Psalms with music, were first printed at Geneva in 1553. From that church the practice went forth into all the reformed churches in France, and was introduced into England by the Presbyterians, who resided at Geneva, and established an English church there during the *Marian persecution*. The English exiles, while at Geneva, commenced and completed a translation of the Scriptures into the English language. The principal translators were Miles Coverdale, Christopher Goodman, John Knox, Anthony Gilby or Gibbs, Thomas Sampson, William Cole, and William Whittingham. They divided the chapters into verses, and added notes in the margin, and also tables, maps, &c., and

was composed by Mr. Francis Rous, who was one of the lay-members appointed to sit in the Assembly. Although this work was far from being satisfactory, it was adopted as the best then made, both by the Assembly and by the Church of Scotland, where it is still used. In England and America this version has given place to the far more scriptural and

published it with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, in 1560. The Psalms, versified and set to music as in the church of Geneva, were annexed to this Bible. This version has been known as that of Sternhold and Hopkins. The initials of the name of the versifier were prefixed to each Psalm. Thus the Psalms versified in English came into England, and were allowed to be sung before the morning and evening service; and at length they were published with this declaration: *Psalms set forth and allowed to be sung in all churches, before and after morning and evening Prayer, as also before and after Sermons.* And in a short time they superseded the *Te Deum, Benedicite, Magnificat, and Nunc dimittis*, which had been retained from the Romish church. Bayle, Art. Marot. Neal, p. 109. Heylin, p. 213, 214. Rees' Cy. Art. Bible. Burnet, p. 290 Waterman's Life of Calvin, p. 403.

proper version of Watts and others ; while in Scotland repeated efforts have been made to improve their existing psalmody. In their Directory however, under the head "Of the Singing of Psalms," the Assembly do not confine the churches to this version, nor to any version of the *Psalms* merely, since they expressly teach that "it is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms *or hymns*," thus distinctly condemning the modern exclusiveness of those who would prohibit Christians from using in the worship of God any hymns or new songs adapted to the dispensation of the Gospel under which we live. And that this was really the sentiment of the Assembly is made manifest by the very early and constant efforts of the Church of Scotland to provide other scriptural *hymns* for the use of her churches, and by her adoption of more than a hundred such hymns, which are now authorized and in use in that church.*

* The secession church formerly took the same view, since all the hymns and metrical versions of Ezekiel (or, as they would now call them, paraphrases) were prepared by

Such is a rapid summary of the immediate doings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, as the ecclesiastical council of the Long Parliament. Composed of some of the most liberal and learned spirits of the age, and conducted with more wisdom than any other council in any other age, it has given birth to the most complete standards ever framed, furnished the world with some of the most valuable works which have ever been composed by uninspired men, and communicated a general impetus to the cause of education, which is still felt, and thus led to the exaltation of the ministerial office and qualifications.

“By these,” says Mr. Aiton, alluding to the Westminster formularies, “these divines have erected a monument in almost every heart in Scotland. For two hundred years these have withstood the attacks of infidelity, and even many severe wounds from the hands of their friends: yet is the Confession of Faith,

him, at the request of the secession synod, and with a view to their adoption in the public worship of God. See Works of Ralph Erskine, Vol. X.

unshaken as the rock of ages, still found, on a Sabbath afternoon, in the hands of our peasantry, dear to them almost as their Bible; and the Catechism, carried morning after morning, by our sons and our daughters, to the parish school, (the plan of which Henderson devised,) that their contents may enlighten the minds, and spiritualize the nature of the rising generation. Next to the introduction of Christianity itself into Scotland, and the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, the framing of the Confession of our Faith and of the Catechisms has conferred the greatest boon on every Christian in our country.”*

But we are not only indebted to this Assembly for these positive blessings, but also for an indirect and most triumphant proof of the truth of Presbyterian doctrine and polity. It has often been denied that the Articles of the Church of England were designed to be understood in a Calvinistic sense, or that Calvinism was the first and long established

* Life of Alexander Henderson, p. 468.

standard of doctrinal orthodoxy in that church. To our minds the evidence in proof of both these positions is overwhelmingly great. And in the fact that ALL THE REFORMED CHURCHES, in every part of the world, without collusion or consultation, by the study of the Scriptures alone, were led to the adoption of those doctrines, now termed Calvinistic from their greatest advocate and defender, we find an unanswerable presumption in favour of the scripturality and divine origin of these tenets. For on what other supposition can this perfect harmony of so many confessions, differing on other points, be possibly accounted for, and especially when we remember that these doctrines are, and ever will be, most discordant to the natural reason, and unpalatable to the natural feelings of man? Look also at this Westminster Assembly, composed of different parties, of laymen and ministers, of politicians and divines, convened from every portion of the land, and generally unknown to each other. And yet in that whole body it does not appear that there was one single individual who dissented from any of those doctrines which are

included under the Calvinistic system. There was not among them all one Arminian or Antinomian, much less one Unitarian or Pelagian. The same is true in a great degree of the parliament itself. Even among the many hundred noblemen and gentlemen who constituted that body, we do not find a single infidel, Unitarian, Pelagian, or even Arminian.* They were all, or nearly all, the stanch friends of orthodoxy. So that for the truth of our doctrinal standards we have the universal testimony of the ablest, wisest, and best men, both at the period of the

* On March 22d, 1648, a conference was held between the two houses, to compare their opinions respecting the Confession of Faith, the result of which is thus stated by Hetherington: "The Commons this day (March 22d) at a conference presented the Lords with the Confession of Faith passed by them with some alterations, viz., That they do agree with their lordships, and so with the Assembly, in the doctrinal part, and desire the same may be made public, that this kingdom, and all the Reformed churches of Christendom may see the parliament of England differ not in doctrine." Hetherington, 244, 245.

Reformation, and in an age which has been justly styled the glory of England and the golden age of literature.

Equally remarkable is the fact that these bodies, *almost to a man Episcopalian by birth and education*, should, after long, minute, and impartial investigation, reject the scriptural claims of prelacy, and adopt those principles denominated presbytery, as the truly scriptural and primitive polity. In the main features and principles of this system, there was no difference of opinion, either in the Assembly or in the parliament. That there is but one order of the Christian ministry, called indiscriminately presbyters or bishops, ordained by Christ and his apostles, and found in the truly primitive church, ALL, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WERE CONSTRAINED TO BELIEVE. On this ground, Presbyterians, Independents, and Erastians all stood without wavering or doubt. On the subject of divine right, the power of presbyteries, synods and assemblies, and of ruling elders, there were, it is true, differences of views, as there are at this moment, in the bosom of the Presbyterian

church, as well as out of it. The Erastians denied the spiritual independence of the church, and her right to govern ecclesiastically, free from all interference on the part of the state. The Independents denied the propriety of *stated and regular* judicatories, though they allowed the Scripturality of Synods and Presbyteries, *whenever necessary*. But in the great fundamental principle which divides prelatists from all other denominations, every member of the Assembly and every member of the parliament were fully agreed. Is there not, then, great weight in this fact? And when connected with the *unanimous* judgment of all the reformed churches, and the opinions of some of the greatest divines in every age, from that period up to the time of the apostles, does it not demonstrate that the orders of the hierarchy originated not in Scripture, but in custom and the policy of man?

SECTION IV.

THE POLITICAL SENTIMENTS AND CHARACTER OF THE WEST-
MINSTER ASSEMBLY AND ITS ADHERENTS.

BUT we pass on to remark, that in an age of distraction, anarchy, and wild excess, the Westminster Assembly, and the party which adhered to them and to their principles, formed the conservative influence by which peace, order, and truth were maintained, and would have been, if possible, preserved. They were men of liberal views, but they were not latitudinarian. They were consecrated to the cause of freedom, but they sought it in the establishment of constitutional rights, and not in the destruction of the constitution. They were attached to the British government of kings, lords, and commons, and believing that it only required reform to be stable, just, and free, they regarded as unwise, dangerous, and chimerical, the

attempt to establish upon its *ruins* a system of military despotism, or agrarian democracy. They desired a republic in which the president should be elective or hereditary, with the name of king; and in which the force of the democracy and of the nobility should be equally subject to check. They were, in short, conservatives, and not radicals. They opposed, therefore, to a man, the execution of the king. They openly denounced the usurpation by Cromwell of all prerogative and authority. They protested against the *encouragement* which was given to error, heresy, and schism. And they aimed at the union of the whole British Empire in a common bond of Protestant harmony.

Looking back upon the eventful history of those times, and the calamitous results of the wild, ungovernable reign of mere popular license which succeeded, we can see that they were correct. The British people were not prepared, either for subjection to a military despotism, for the freedom and self-government of a republic, or for the unrestrained exercise of an unbridled liberty. Had the party connected with

the Assembly prevailed, instead of having been early defeated and overwhelmed, the lamentable consequences would not have ensued. A republican monarchy would have been established, which might have ripened, ere this, into a constitutional republic. The reign of anarchy, confusion, and blood, would have been prevented. The nation would not have fallen a prey to intestine feuds, and to the voracious maws of innumerable sects. The tide of liberty, which had been for years swelling in its onward flow, would not have been driven back within the channels of arbitrary power. The sun of freedom, which had shone so brightly, would not have gone down before noonday. A disastrous eclipse would not have so soon obscured the hopes of the nation, and buried them again in the darkness of absolute despotism, civil and ecclesiastical. Those ages of licentiousness, formality, persecution, and cruelty, would not have followed, which converted England into the home of infidelity, scattered her pious children, and drove them into exile, and deluged every mountain-pass and deep ravine of Scotland with the

blood of martyred Covenanters. Thanks to God, these efforts of the enemy were unavailing! The precious spark of liberty which the Puritans alone had kindled, was still preserved with the blood of its slaughtered friends, and has burst forth in that freedom which now characterizes the English constitution, and which shines forth in unclouded brilliance in this land of liberty. And when it is recollected what Presbytery has done for Scotland, compared with what Prelacy has done for England; and in Ireland what Presbytery has effected for Ulster, compared with what Episcopacy has accomplished for the other provinces of that unhappy country, who, it has been truly asked, will venture to conclude that the evils which now threaten to overthrow the Protestant establishments in Britain, might not have been avoided, had the Presbyterian polity been universally established.*

* Presb. Review, March, 1836, p. 27.

SECTION V.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND THE PRESBYTERIANS OF
THEIR TIME VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF PERSE-
CUTION.

BUT it is said this Presbyterian party were intolerant and persecuting. Doubtless it is so decreed, for their enemies alone have been their historians, and vilification and abuse their only monument. But have they received justice at the hands of posterity? Far from it. Their true history has yet to be written. Not that they were free from fault—they were men. Not that they had imbibed those views of universal toleration which are the glory of the present age—they lived in the seventeenth century. Not that we can *palliate*, much less *justify*, whatever in their course was inconsistent with the most perfect liberty of opinion and practice. We make no such

apology. But we demand an arrest of judgment. We ask that they shall be tried by the standard of their own age, and the opinions of the men of that age. Trained within the precincts of a state church, they retained much of its spirit, and acted, as axiomatically true, upon many of its evil maxims. By these false principles they were misled—some of them far and widely. They admitted the right and power of the magistrate to interfere with the church, to establish and control her external movements, and thus to establish a uniformity of worship. And hence believing, as they did, that Presbytery was by divine right the polity of the church of Christ, they sought that the civil power should give its sanction of EXCLUSIVE approbation to this system. They protested against the state,—after having bound itself to the cause of Presbyterianism by solemn league and covenant,—recognizing and *encouraging* the innumerable sects which then sprung into existence, from the prolific hot-bed of superstition and ignorance, exposed to the full influence of a licentious and unrestrained license. They could not believe that it was proper that all

men should have unlimited freedom to proclaim sentiments however blasphemous and revolting, and to practice, as acts of worship, immoralities and indecencies too gross to be detailed.* Against *a positive and judicial sanction* to these things, on the part of government, they did solemnly protest. It being on ALL HANDS AGREED that it was the province of the state to adjudicate on this matter, the Presbyterian party argued that it was one thing “not to compel men to come in, and another thing to open the door for the encouragement of error, and to inscribe over it “all kinds of heresies, schisms, and blasphemies, publicly allowed and tolerated here.” And who will deny that this conclusion follows inevitably FROM THE PREMISES THEN UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED? For if it is the right and duty of the state to *establish* and defend religion, then is the state *bound* to enforce only that system which is true, and to discountenance and condemn all other forms of religion. And since the

* McCrie's Scott. Hist. p. 307, 308, 310. Hetherington, Hist of Ch. of Scot., p. 340.

parliament had established the Presbyterian faith and discipline, it was consistently required to patronize it alone. The error was in the *principle* acted upon, which, however, all avouched as correct, and not in the conclusion deduced from it, and which was reprobated only by the party it excluded. The Assembly having been constituted the advisory council of the parliament, and having been led to the conclusion that the Presbyterian system was by divine right, were of necessity impelled to seek the recognition of that divine right on the part of the parliament.

But there was another privilege and right which they claimed for the church, and that was her spiritual independence, in all ecclesiastical matters, upon all civil authority whatsoever. This doctrine has ever been dear to Scottish Presbyterians. The history of that country for nearly a century and a half after the overthrow of Popery, presents a series of struggles unexampled in severity and number, to protect and to rescue it from Erastian encroachments. To surrender it to these was deemed no less than

treason to Christ, and the taking of the crown from His head. The sense entertained of its importance, and the ardor of the people's attachment to it were such, that many submitted to bonds, and to the loss of goods and of life, for its sake. The names of the Scottish martyrs, from the era of the Reformation downwards, are one and all associated with its maintenance. The very peasantry of the land understood it—defended it—died for it. And during those twenty-eight years of national suffering which preceded the memorable revolution, the fundamental question in the great controversy upheld by our ancestors against the fearful odds of unprincipled and cruel despotism, was no other than the Headship of Christ, and the liberty and spiritual independence of the Church of Scotland. "The day," says that great man, John Welsh of Ayr, when writing from his prison at Blackness, "on which I should be offered up as a sacrifice for these truths, now the special cause of our imprisonment,—that Christ is Head of His Church, and that she is free of all jurisdiction

but His—I should consider the most glorious day and gladdest hour I ever saw in my life.*

* Mr. Thomas Forrester, in 1674, when minister of Alva, gave in a paper to the brethren of the exercise, wherein he stated that the “two powers, civil and ecclesiastic, are distinct *toto genere*, both as to the original, the subject-matter, the manner of working, and the nearest end designed,—consequently, that THEY ARE CO-ORDINATE, NOT SUBORDINATE ONE TO ANOTHER. That these were kept also distinct—distinct limits being put betwixt them, both in the Old and New Testaments: under the law, a standing priesthood and spiritual sanhedrim established, who were to meddle with matters of the Lord, distinct from matters of the king: that the judgment on Saul and Uzzias was for going beyond their limit: and that, under the New Testament, the Lord Jesus, the king, head, and lawgiver of his church, hath a visible kingdom which he exerciseth in and over the church visible by its spiritual office-bearers given to it as a church; and therefore distinct from, and *independent upon, the civil power*, the keys of the kingdom of heaven being by him committed not to the magistrate, but to the apostles’ successors in the work of the ministry. That as it is clear that this spiritual power was at first committed to church officers, when no

Now this was the great fundamental principle for which the Assembly and the Presbyterian party contended, as even Neal admits. And to show that they were in earnest in maintaining it, they nobly determined, like their present followers, the Free Church of Scotland, that they would not comply with the existing establishment until it was delivered from the yoke of the civil magistrate.

Such were the views embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith; imbedded in the Covenants; and which constituted the rallying motto on the banners of the blue. Such was that church power which the Presbyterians were so anxious to secure,

magistrate was so much as a member thereof, and consequently to be exercised then independently upon him, so it is as clear that our Lord hath commanded the exercise of this power *as intrinsic in the church, whether the magistrate be friend or enemy*, upon moral perpetual grounds, till he come again."—*Wodrow's History*, II., 254.

Mr. Forrester was deposed. He survived the revolution, however; and became Principal of the new College of St. Andrews.

and which has been magnified into a civil authority over men's persons and properties. It had nothing to do with either. It was purely ecclesiastical and spiritual. It is what every church in this country at this moment possesses, the power of conducting its own affairs, and exercising its own discipline, according to its own rules and the dictates of Scripture. Now the claim of this power and the consequent right to keep back scandalous and unworthy persons from the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, was the very head and front of their offending. This constituted the great point in dispute between the Assembly and the parliament. The latter passed a law by which an *ultimate* appeal was, *in every case*, given from the ecclesiastical to the civil tribunals; and by which church courts might be *compelled* to admit and retain in the church the most unworthy members. Against this the whole Presbyterian party protested—and were they not right? The recognition of their exclusive scriptural claims, which the parliament had in effect allowed, and of the spiritual independence of the church upon the state, this was

all that they desired, and with less than which they refused to be satisfied.*

But the annexation of civil penalties did not enter into the claim of the Presbyterians in their doctrine of the divine right of Presbytery. They did not ask to wield the power of the sword, nor the enforcement of uniformity by civil pains. The church, even in Scotland, and in the full plenitude of its power, never did persecute. Expressions indeed may be found which, *as now understood*, breathe the spirit of intolerance. But it cannot be shown that, with the consent and approbation of the public authorities, the covenant was ever *forced* upon any, or that the loss of liberty or of goods was incurred by its refusal.†

* See their own statements in "The Divine Right of Church Government," 1654. Pref. 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, in the work pp. 2, 4, 7, 43, 45, 67. Also McCrie's *Scott. Church Hist.*, p. 303. Aiton's *Life of Henderson*, pp. 558-565. Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, *Dedication to the Assembly*, and *Preface to the Reader*. *A Model of Church Government*, by John Drury, one of the Assembly of Div. Pref.

† Dr. McCrie on *Unity of the Church*, p. 162. Hether-

Such as refused to take the covenant were indeed, in many cases, excluded from places of power and trust. But was not this treatment demanded by a regard to the high interests at stake ; to their own safety ; and to those maxims of prudence by which, in similar circumstances, all people are led most carefully to distinguish such as approve, from those who oppose their interests ? In such a season of national danger and alarm, when all that was dear to the soul was put in jeopardy, who could expect the Presbyterians to intrust *their enemies* with offices of power and trust ? National religion, safety, liberty, and peace forbade. And if such exclusion was intolerant, then is every government and society now intolerant, since they exclude from office such as are disqualified by their opposing views to fill them ?*

ington's Hist. of Ch. of Scot., p 341. McCrie's Scott. Ch. Hist., p. 212.

* Let it be borne in mind, that with all this outcry about the intolerance of the Assembly, the Confession of Faith it drew up was never made a legal standard of orthodoxy—it was never enforced as a term of Christian communion, nor

Beyond this, however, they did not go, and even to this length the greater part were unwillingly driven. "How can we," say they, in their defence of their church government, "tyrannize over any, or in what respects? Not over their states; for, we claim no secular power at all over men's states, by fines, mulcts, penalties, forfeitures, or confiscations. Not over their bodies, for we inflict no corporal punishment, by banishment, imprisonment, branding, slitting, cropping, striking, whipping, dismembering or killing: not over their souls; for them we desire by this government to gain, (Matth. 18: 15,) to edify, (2 Cor. 10: 8, and 13: 10,) and to save, (1 Cor. 5: 5.) Only this government ought to be impartial and severe against sin, that the flesh may be destroyed, (1 Cor. 5: 5.) It is only destructive to corruption, which is deadly and destructive to the soul. Thus the imputation itself of arbitrariness or tyrannicalness to the Presbyterial government is unjust and causeless."*

ever enjoined upon all ministers for forty years after its adoption. Neal, III., 329.

* *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici.* Pref., p. 10.

Such sentiments as the following were also frequently expressed by them in their public sermons. "Fierce and furious prosecution, even of a good cause, is rather prejudice than promotion. We must tenaciously adhere to all divine truths ourselves, and, with our wisest moderation, plant and propagate them in others. Opposites, indeed, must be opposed, gainsaid, reclaimed; but all must be done in a way, and by the means, appointed from heaven. It is one thing to show moderation to pious, peaceable, and tender consciences; it is another thing to proclaim beforehand toleration to impious, fiery, and unpeaceable opinions."* The true sentiments of the Presbyterian party and of the Assembly, may be further seen from the following extracts from Baillie, one of their number: "As for the Church of Scotland, that it did ever intermeddle to trouble any in their goods, liberties, or persons, is very false. What civil penalties the parliament of a kingdom thinks meet to inflict upon those who are refractory and unamenable

* Hetherington, 287.

by the censures of a church, the state from whom alone these punishments do come, are answerable, and not the church. That excommunication in Scotland is inflicted on those who cannot assent to every point of religion determined in their confession, there is nothing more untrue; for we know it well, that never any person in Scotland was excommunicated only for his difference of opinion in a theological tenet. Excommunication there is a very dreadful sentence, and therefore very rare. These last forty years, so far as I have either seen or heard, there has none at all been excommunicated in Scotland but some few trafficking Papists, and some very notoriously flagitious persons, and five or six of you the prelates for your obstinate impenitence, after your overturning the foundations both of our church and state." In another work, published about the same time, he says, "If once the government of Christ were set up amongst us, as it is in the rest of the reformed churches, we know not what would impede it, by the sword of God alone, without any secular violence, to banish out of the land these spirits of error in all

meechness, humility, and love, by the force of truth, convincing and satisfying the minds of the seduced. Put these holy and divine instruments into the hands of the Church of England, by the blessing of God thereupon, the sole and great evil of so many heresies and schisms, shall quickly be cured, which now not only troubles the peace and welfare, but hazards the very subsistence both of church and kingdom ; without this mean, the state will toil itself in vain about the cure of such spiritual diseases.”

“ The Presbyterian party,” says Baxter,* “ consisted of grave, orthodox, godly ministers, together with the hopefullest of the students and young ministers, and the soberest, godly, ancient Christians, who WERE EQUALLY AVERSE TO PERSECUTION AND TO SCHISM ; and of those young ones who were educated and ruled by these ; as, also, of the soberest sort of the well-meaning vulgar, who liked a godly life, though they had no great knowledge of it. THIS PARTY WAS MOST DESIROUS OF PEACE.”

* Orme's Life of, p. 81.

Whatever may have been the rash expressions or improper language of any individual among them, we can prove the kind and liberal conduct of the Presbyterians by the testimony of an Episcopalian of eminence. "Whatever," says Dr. John Edwards, "may be thought of the principles of the Presbyterians on the subject of toleration, IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THEIR PRACTICE, WHEN IN POWER, WAS MARKED BY THE MOST EXEMPLARY FORBEARANCE. The Presbyterian party (though the Assembly of Divines, the representative body of the city, the Court of Common Council, the ministry of the kingdom, thousands and tens of thousands of godly, well-affected persons, the kingdom of Scotland, yea, all the reformed churches, own that way) *in their love and forbearance to the sectaries hath been admirable.* When the Independents were but few, and other sectaries a small number, some half a score or dozen ministers, with three hundred or four hundred people, the Presbyterians gave them the right hand of fellowship, admitted them to their meetings, opened their pulpit-doors to them, showed all brotherly respect to them, even more than

to most of their own way; and notwithstanding breach of agreements, drawing away their people, and many and strange carriages, yet still using all fairness and love, hoping by brotherly kindness, forbearance, and a thorough reformation in the church, (wherein they have been willing, upon all occasions, to gratify and have respect unto their consciences,) at last to have gained them.”*

It is also to be remembered, that whatever was intolerant in the spirit or language of the Presbyterian party, was openly disavowed by some of its most eminent divines, as for instance, by Howe,† and Baxter.‡

But the injustice with which the charge of intolerance is made so exclusively against the Presbyterians of this period, will be still further apparent by comparing them with the Independents. We have no wish to derogate from the just praise which is

* See also Lorimer's *Manual of Presbytery*, p. 230.

† *Works*, Vol. IV., 433, and *Rogers's Life* of, I., 358-364.

‡ In *Neal*, Vol. IV., p. 73

due to this body for their efforts to promote civil and religious liberty. Posterity is, and ever will be, under deep and lasting obligations to them. But that they are *peculiarly* entitled to gratitude on this account, or more so than their Presbyterian brethren, we are not prepared to admit.

It is not true, as is generally supposed, that the great principle of religious toleration *originated* with the Independents. It was promulgated in its germ by many of the reformers who were Presbyterian. Luther taught that "the church ought not to force persons to believe, nor to animadvert capitally on those who follow a different religion," "that to believe is something free, yea, divine, being the fruit of the Spirit, wherefore it cannot and ought not to be forced by any external violence." Zuingli declared that "it is at once contrary to the gospel and to reason, to employ violent measures to extort a confession contrary to conscience. Reason and persuasion are the arms that a Christian ought to employ." Calvin declared that, "though it may be wrong to form friendship or intimacy with those who hold pemi-

scious opinions, yet must we contend against them only by exhortations, by kindly instructions, by clemency, by mildness, by prayers to God, that they may be so changed as to bear good fruits, and be restored to the unity of the church. And not only are erring Christians to be so treated, but even Turks and Saracens." Similar sentiments were also expressed by Knox, Melville, and other eminent Presbyterian reformers. But they were not the sentiments of their age, nor was their age prepared to receive them. They sowed, however, the seed which others reaped. They imbedded these principles in their ecclesiastical constitutions, and in their doctrine of civil government and the function of the magistrate. And it is to Calvinism and Presbyterianism we owe all those controversies and civil commotions which gave birth to the modern republics, and diffused so widely the principles of toleration and freedom.

In short, to the bonds, covenants, or leagues, adopted by the Protestants in Germany and France, and by the Protestant nobility and gentry in Scotland, before its reformation;—to the covenant en-

tered into in the form of a national deed in Scotland in 1580, and again in 1638;—and to the Solemn League and Covenant so generally adopted in both England and Scotland, in 1643;—the fathers of our Revolution, were indebted for the idea, nature, form, and much of the very wording of the celebrated Declaration of our national Independence. National reformation and uniformity were combined with national liberty, safety, peace, and law, in these holy bonds, by which the confederates pledged to one another their lives, their property, and their sacred honor, by solemn oath to the Most High God. Let any one read and compare these several deeds with the Declaration of Independence, and they will be led to conclude that to these men, vilified and abused as they are, this country and the world must look as the very source and fountain of their priceless liberties.

These principles, be it remembered, had been stated and theoretically enforced, when the Independents found Presbyterianism about to be established, and themselves excluded. It was *then* they laid hold

of this sheet-anchor of religious toleration, and *in self-defence* pressed it upon the attention of the public. And the truth is, that it was by this very war of opinions, and this strife of interests, the great doctrine of religious toleration was developed. It was by this means at length made manifest that there was no alternative between universal toleration and spiritual despotism. Amid the storm and tempest of the wrath and contention of men, this bow of promise rose upon our afflicted world, and gave assurance that in future men of every creed might dwell together in peace and unity.

The Independents, however, were no more harmonious in their sentiments on this subject, or consistent in their practice, than were Presbyterians. Did they not make the peculiar constitution of the church, *as laid down by them*, an article of faith appertaining to salvation, and thus unchurch and excommunicate all other denominations?*

* See numerous proofs in Paget's Defence of Presb. Ch. Gov't, p. 33. As to the lengths to which they went, Bostwick's Utter Routing—Epistle to the Reader.

not, in their famous Apologetical Narrative, declare that "they give to the magistrates power, as much, and, as they think, MORE than the principles of the Presbyterial government will suffer them to yield?"* Did not Dr. Owen, in a sermon preached before the House of Commons, thus present their doctrine on the subject of toleration?† "Some, perhaps," says he, "by a *toleration* understand an *universal, uncontrolled license* of living as you please in things concerning religion: that every one may be *let alone*, and not so much as discountenanced in doing, speaking, acting, how, what, where, or when he pleaseth, in all such things as concerneth the worship of God, articles of belief, or generally any thing commanded in religion. And in the mean time, the parties at variance, and litigant about differences, freely to revile, reject, and despise one another, according as their provoked genius shall dispose their minds thereunto. Now, truly, though every one of

* See in Dr. McCrie on the Unity of the Church, p. 153.

† Printed in 1646, p. 66, in Hetherington, p. 286.

this mind pretend to cry for mercy to be extended unto poor afflicted *Truth*, yet I cannot but be persuaded, that such a *toleration* would prove exceeding pernicious to all sorts of men." Did not the Independents accept sequestered livings from which even Presbyterians were ejected, as freely, to say the least, as Presbyterians had ever done?*" "When, upon the death of the king, the government of England was changed to a commonwealth, an ordinance was passed appointing an engagement to be taken, first by all civil and military officers, and afterwards by all who held official situations in the universities; and at last it was further ordered, that no minister be capable of enjoying any preferment in the church, unless he should, within six months, take the engagement publicly before a congregation. The consequence of this was, that while the engagement was readily taken by all the sectarians, and by many Episcopalians of lax principles, it was refused by

* Dr. Laing's *Relig. and Educ. in America*, p. 125, and Hetherington, p. 269.

great numbers of the Presbyterians, several of whom were in a short time ejected from the situations to which they had been appointed by the parliament. Cromwell and his council, carrying into full execution this course of procedure, certainly not that of *toleration*, immediately placed Independents in the situations thus rendered vacant by the ejection of the Presbyterians, prohibited the publication of pamphlets censuring the conduct of the new government, and abolished the monthly fasts, which had continued to be regularly kept for about seven years, and whose sacred influence had often been deeply and beneficially felt by both parliament and assembly.”

During the reign of Cromwell, when the Independents were in chief power, were not many of the existing sects, such as the Levellers, the Fifth-Monarchy men, the Socinians, the Antinomians, the Quakers, &c., *forcibly* suppressed?*

Did not the leading Independent ministers bring before the committee of triers, in 1654, a series of requests, in the

* Hetherington, p. 286.

form of a representation, one article of which was as follows:* “That this honorable committee be desired to propose to the parliament, that such who do not receive those principles of religion, without acknowledgment whereof the Scriptures do clearly and plainly affirm that salvation is not to be obtained, as those formerly complained of by the ministers, may not be suffered to preach or promulgate any thing in opposition unto such principles.” And when, in consequence of this representation, it was agreed “that all should be tolerated who professed the fundamentals of Christianity,” and a committee of divines, including Goodwin, Nye, and other Independents, were appointed to draw up a list of fundamental articles, did they not present such an enumeration as effectually to exclude from all toleration Deists, Papists, Socinians, Arians, Antinomians, Quakers, and even Arminians?† Did not their mightiest champions, and the great teachers of the doctrine of toler-

* Neal, Vol. II., p. 621, 622.

† Ibid., Vol. II., p. 621, 622.

ation, and that, too, while discussing this very subject, exclude Romanists from any possible toleration?*

And had the Independents been in a similar majority with the Presbyterians, and possessed the same power, would they have been as willing to tolerate as were these same Presbyterians? Let Dr. John Edwards answer. "I am confidently persuaded," says this writer, "and so I believe are all wise men that have observed the ways of the sectaries, that if they had been in the place of the Presbyterians, having had their power, number, authority, and the Presbyterians had been a small number as they were, and should have offered to have done but the twentieth part of that in preaching, writing, &c., which the sectaries have done against the Presbyterians, they would have trod them down as mire in the street, casting them out in scorn before this time of day, nor have suffered a Presbyterian to preach among us, or

* Milton's Prose Works, Vol. IV., 264, 265—"Of True Religion," &c. Locke on Toleration, in Works, Vol. II., 342, 343, 4to ed.

to have been in any place or office, military or civil, but all would have been shut up in prison, banished, or else hiding themselves in holes and corners ; many godly persons, in some places, having much ado now to hold up their heads to live by them, to preach quietly, to go safely in the streets, or to be quiet in their houses." And if this testimony is not sufficient, then we would point to the New-England colonies, where Independency, as it was then termed, did attain to absolute power, and to the actual persecution and intolerance which was long practised among them, as demonstrative proof that Independents can lay no peculiar claim to an early practice of toleration, nor boast themselves over their Presbyterian brethren.

Shall we now compare the conduct of the Presbyterians with that of Prelatists, both previously and subsequently to these times? But will they endure a moment's comparison? "Supposing," to use the words of the Edinburgh Review,* "that the republican religionists of those days had been more uncon-

* Oct. 1836, p. 53.

ciliatory to their spiritual opponents than the members of the Church of England,—supposing that they had imprisoned, and mutilated, and butchered greater numbers,—even *then* would it be a gross injustice to brand their intolerance with as much moral turpitude. Despotic cruelty, and retaliation, is each to be ranked as a crime in our moral codes; but assuredly as a crime of higher or lower gradation than the other. Wantonness and cold-blooded deliberation enhance the guilt of the one; the partial infusion of justice and the hurry of passion diminish the guilt of the other. And be it remembered that these were the precise moral distinctions of the Episcopalian and Republican. The former had haughtily trampled down, without any necessity, all who dared to dissent from their pretensions; the latter, when the hour of requital came, had higher reasons for gratifying their vengeance. We are far—very far—from exculpating the Presbyterians; they would have shown a glorious magnanimity and a Christian piety in overlooking wrongs; but, nevertheless, we must protest against their being equalized with their foes.” It would be

idle in us to say that the opponents of the Church of England were in “no instances intolerant. Education,—passion, kept many of them ignorant of the true principles of civil and religious liberty. But it is beyond bearing, that party-spirit should make a man so purblind to facts, and so self-contradictory, as to prompt him to institute any thing like a comparison between the intolerance of Charles I. and the intolerance of” his opponents.

“That during the Protectorate,” continues the Review, “there were many instances of unrighteous oppression; that there were numerous sequestrations of the Episcopal clergy, which were most indefensible, must be admitted. But the calm observer of these times will perceive, that *revenge*, not *religious intolerance*, caused such proceedings: and, INASMUCH AS THE LEADING MINISTERS OF RELIGION HAD NO PART IN THESE RETALIATIONS, THEY ARE NOT TO BE URGED AGAINST THEM AS PROOFS OF RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL INSINCERITY.”

But who, we further ask, were the Episcopal ministers who were thus ejected, and on what

grounds were they thus treated? "They cast out," says Baxter,* "the grosser sort of insufficient and scandalous clergy, and some few civil men, that had acted in the wars for the king; but left in near one half of those that were but barely tolerable." He further states, "that in the counties where he was acquainted, *six to one* of the sequestered ministers were, by the oaths of witnesses, proved insufficient, or scandalous, or both." This ejection, then, does not admit of a comparison with that which took place at the restoration, for non-conformity. In this case, the principal ground was either political, because they were considered enemies to the existing government, or, because they were totally unfit for the sacred office of the ministry; whereas the ejected ministers of 1662 were loyal subjects of the king, had had a considerable share in his restoration, and were certainly among the most pious and best qualified ministers in the kingdom. There was another striking difference in the two cases: in the ejection

* Dr. A. Alexander's Hist. of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, p. 142.

by parliament, *one-fifth* of the income of all ejected ministers was appropriated to the support of their wives and children; whereas, in the case of those ministers cast out after the restoration, no provision whatever was made for the suffering families of the ejected ministers; but on the contrary, by severe penalties, they were prohibited from coming within five miles of any incorporated town; so that their opportunities of making a living by teaching, or in any other way, were exceedingly circumscribed." When prelacy had again triumphed; when, through the agency of Presbyterians, the king was restored to his throne; when all power was in the hands of Episcopalians; when Presbyterians confided in their oaths and promises of conciliation and kindness; who can palliate that act of barbarous intolerance by which two thousand ministers were thus ejected, in opposition to the petitions, prayers, and tears of their parishioners,—and then hunted down, fined, imprisoned, and made to suffer a thousand deaths?

“The questions between the revengeful Episcopate that followed the second Charles, and those who

afterwards were driven to non-conformity, were," to continue the words of the Review, "not whether that should be the religion of the state—not whether the Episcopacy should retain its government and revenues—not whether the liturgy should be preserved; but whether the 'Apocrypha' should receive sanction the same as inspiration—whether a few exceptional passages in the ritual should be modified. These, and just such unimportant differences as these, were under agitation. Let us hear Mr. Lathbury,* in his recent defence of the prelacy. 'The alliance,' he says, 'between church and state, the lawfulness of a prescribed form, and other points, on which modern Dissenters entertain such strong opinions, were never questioned by the Presbyterians, either prior to or at the Conference; nay, the necessity of an established church was insisted on as strongly by the one party as the other.' The intolerance of an ungrateful Episcopate—one unhumbled by her afflictions—was therefore for the single purpose of revenge. No matters of principle entered into the discussion."†

* P. 55, Edinburgh Rev., Oct., 1836. † See also Appendix.

SECTION VI.

PRESBYTERIANISM VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF HAVING GIVEN ORIGIN TO INNUMERABLE SECTS, AND THE SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

So much, then, for the charge of intolerance. But it is also alleged by Prelatists that the system of Presbytery, as introduced by this Assembly, has resulted only in the introduction of innumerable sects, and that its tendency is to degenerate into Socinianism and every error. Never, however, was there a mistake more glaring, or a calumny more monstrous. It would be easy to show, did time permit, that Presbyterianism was never generally established in England; that the ordinance of parliament took effect only in a very few counties; that the system, as recognized by parliament, was shorn of its strength and deprived of all power of discipline and independent jurisdiction; and that even as it was established in

some places, it had but little time and opportunity to exemplify its tendencies.* It was strangled almost in its birth, by the young Hercules of Independency, and, after lingering out a dying existence, was finally crushed by the strong hand of prelatic power. It is, we have seen, a fact easily explained by these circumstances, that the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly was not subscribed by any member of that body except the prolocutor, assessors, and clerks, nor was an assent to it required from any minister or layman, as a term of ecclesiastical communion, for forty years afterwards.† Presbytery had no authority to carry out its principles. Its courts of review were nullified, its laws emasculated, and its standards converted into mere paper proclamations. To impute, therefore, the results which followed at

* See Neal, Vol. IV., 204. Price's Hist., II., 340, 408. Owen's Works, 20, 322. Orme's Life of Baxter, p. 71, 72, 80, 81. Baxter's Disput. on Ch. Gov't., Pref., p. 23 and p. 323. Henderson's Review and Consid., p. 33.

† Neal, III., 329, Note by the Editor, and references there given.

this time in England to the system of Presbytery, is most preposterous and absurd. Presbytery found the seeds of these pestiferous evils growing up into maturity around it. They were the offspring of the previous ignorance and superstitions of the people, which embraced the first opportunity afforded by the license of the times, to shoot forth into vigorous growth. These sects were everywhere and always denounced and opposed by Presbytery. They, in turn, regarded Presbytery as their most powerful enemy, and hence were they all found combined in fell hostility to its system of doctrine, discipline, and order. So that instead of fostering these sectaries, the truth is, that Presbytery actually fell a victim to their relentless hate. No—would we trace these evils to their source, we must go back to the lordliness, profaneness and superstition, to the ceremonies, doctrine and worship, of the prelates.*

But we may meet this calumny by an appeal to facts. In France and Geneva a Presbytery was

* See Prynne's Eng. Prel. II., 505.

established, and there, so long as it was allowed to call forth into exercise its internal energies, there were neither sects nor schisms. These churches have since been corrupted only by the Erastian interference of the state, and the destruction of all ecclesiastical discipline. In Scotland Presbytery was established, and there dissenters are not as one to a hundred, compared with England.* In Ireland

* "A few facts," says Mr. Lorimer, in his *Manual of Presbytery*, p. 192, 193, "may be noticed in this connection, not usually adverted to, but fitted to correct misapprehensions, and honor Presbytery. According to the late census, the population of Presbyterian Scotland is about *one-sixth* of that of Episcopalian England and Wales. Hence, if the countries were the same in point of religious divisions on church-government, Scotland should have a sixth of the parties which divide England. The result is widely different; much more creditable to the religious unity of Scotland, and the strength of Presbytery over a nation. The Congregationalists of England and Wales are estimated to have 1600 congregations. If the same division of opinion on church-government prevailed in Scotland, proportionally, there

Presbytery was planted in the province of Ulster, and has it not acted as a purifying element in that land of should be nearly 270 Independent congregations. There are only 105, and 21 of these are reported as vacant.

The Baptists of England and Wales are rated at 1520. If the same proportion held in Scotland, there should be much the same number—270 congregations; instead of which, there are 58.

The Wesleyan Methodists have, in England and Wales, above 1100 preachers, and about 320,000 members. In the same proportion, in Scotland, there should have been about 200 preachers, and 55,000 members; instead of which, there are only 30 preachers, and 3700 members.

The Roman Catholics have 561 priests in England and Wales, and 18 convents. Were Scotland equally divided, or did it equally favor the same soul-destroying system, it should have had 93 priests, and three convents. It has 80 of the one, and one of the other; and that, though old Popery has held some parts of the Highlands and islands as its ancient seat, undisturbed by the Reformation, and though near neighborhood to Popish Ireland has, in later days, given it superior facilities, which have not been unimproved, for invading the Scottish shores.

I have not been able precisely to ascertain the numbers

spiritual corruption and death? In New England, so long as a system closely resembling the Presbyterian was strictly enforced, error, heresy, and immorality, were comparatively unknown. In Virginia Presbytery was planted, and did it not restore truth and piety to the church; impart vigor and energy to the state; uproot the system of state religion, and introduce that entire severance between religion and the civil power, which is now the glorious peculiarity of this land of freedom?

In fine, to apply to the Presbyterian party generally, what Milton says of the Long Parliament: "Having by a solemn protestation vowed themselves and the kingdom anew to God and his service, meeting next, as I may so resemble, with the second life of tyranny (for she was grown an ambiguous monster, and to be slain in two shapes) guarded with super-

of the Socinian body in England and Wales. Probably they may count 300 congregations. According to this proportion, Scotland should have 50; but so sound has Presbytery kept the country, that she has not five."

stition, which hath no small power to captivate the minds of men otherwise most wise, they neither were taken with her mitred hypocrisy, nor terrified with the push of her bestial horns, but breaking them immediately, forced her to unbend the pontifical brow and recoil; which repulse only given to the prelates (that we may imagine how happy their removal would be) was the producement of such glorious effects and consequences in the church, that if I should compare them with those exploits of highest fame in poems and panegyricks of old, I am certain it would but diminish and impair their work, who are now my argument: for these ancient worthies delivered men from such tyrants as were content to enforce only an outward obedience, letting the mind be as free as it could; but these have freed us from a doctrine of tyranny, that offered violence and corruption even to the inward persuasion. They set at liberty nations and cities of men, good and bad mixed together; but

* See McCrie's *Unity*, p. 160, 161, 165—McCrie's *Scott. Hist.*, p. 108, 106.

these, opening the dungeons and prisons, called out of darkness and bonds the elect martyrs and witnesses of their Redeemer. They restored the body to ease and wealth ; but these, the oppressed conscience to that freedom which is the chief prerogative of the gospel ; taking off those cruel burdens imposed not by necessity, as other tyrants are wont, or the safeguard of their lives, but laid upon our necks by the strange wilfulness and wantonness of a needless and jolly persecutor, called Indifference. Lastly, some of these ancient deliverers have had immortal praise for preserving some of their citizens from a famine of corn. But these, by this only repulse of an unholy hierarchy, almost in a moment replenished with saving knowledge their country, nigh famished for want of that which should feed their souls. All this being done while two armies in the field stood gazing on : the one in reverence of such nobleness, quietly gave back and dislodged ; the other, in spite of the unruliness and doubted fidelity in some regiments, was either persuaded or compelled to disband and retire home."

But we must here pause. Enough has been said to constitute a sufficient claim to our gratitude, and a justification of the wisdom of this commemoration. Romanists receive their missal almost as inspiration, and yet it is an inharmonious patchwork, compiled from materials drawn from every period of the church, like some old cathedral made up of buildings of every order, variety, and age. Episcopalians are never weary of praising their liturgy, which is nevertheless all borrowed, and filled with endless repetitions. And both Romanists and Prelatists laud to the skies their articles and creeds, which admit the most contrary and latitudinarian interpretations,* and shall not Presbyterians honor and commemorate those men who have given to us *original* standards, drawn, not from the muddy streams of human authority, but from the pure and uncorrupted fountain of everlasting truth?

* Witness the Oxford Tractarians, the Newmanites, and the Evangelical parties in England, and the respective interpretations of the Rev. Mr. Carey and Drs. Smith and Anthon in our own country.

Americans annually celebrate the Declaration of Independence, and preserve the memory of its glorious signers? And shall not Presbyterians commemorate the fame of those men to whom that declaration and the spirit that gave it birth can be assuredly traced?

The Israelites observed an annual festival in grateful commemoration of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and on different occasions contributed most liberally to the advancement of their ecclesiastical interests;—and shall we be found less zealous in the remembrance of our deliverance from the bondage of Romish and Prelatical tyranny, or less willing to communicate of our substance to carry on, to diffuse, and to establish those civil and religious blessings which have been achieved for us by blood?

This centennial celebration of the Westminster Assembly is most timely and auspicious. In the standards of that body there is a common and substantial basis, upon which all orthodox, non-episcopal communions can harmoniously unite. It is astonish-

ing to find how very nearly the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in that body were agreed. In all that was essential they were as one. And wherever the doctrines of these standards are fully and cordially embraced, is there not still the same essential unity? There is, among all such, by whatever name they are called, and however in subordinate matters they may differ, "there is one body, and one spirit, even as we are called, in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all." Are we not all brethren, and members together of the household of faith? We are. By all the marks of the true church of Jesus Christ, as laid down in the word of God; by all the principles which constitute the glorious gospel of the blessed God; by all the tests of piety and the evidences of Christian character; by all those hopes and aims and labors to which the Christian is called of God—we are one. This epoch is our common anniversary. We are alike interested in its glorious recollections and in its forthcoming destinies. We feel on this occasion that, notwithstanding our differ-

ences in ecclesiastical arrangements, and baptismal forms, we are one. Like the members of a large family we have been scattered, and lived apart, and gathered around us new and separate interests. But we are on this occasion brought together. We revisit our old ancestral homestead. We read over the original deeds by which we became heirs to the same rich inheritance. The ties of blood draw our hearts together, and we embrace one another in the arms of spiritual affection.

This, brethren, is to me the happiest issue to which this commemoration leads. It will serve to promote other valuable ends. It will contribute to the establishment of the minds of our youth in the principles of our ecclesiastical polity, and thus prevent apostasy. It will tend to the greater elevation and usefulness of our Assembly's Board of Publication, by creating a demand for works of denominational instruction. But its adaptation to promote unity among the different branches of the church who hold the truth, is most auspicious. It has already given birth to overtures of union and friendly

co-operation, on the common basis of Protestant evangelical truth, among all the orthodox, non-episcopal churches of Great Britain; and it will, we trust, eventuate in a solemn league and covenant among all such, for the defence of our common rights against our common enemies. Triumphant in our alienations, these enemies have come up in all their might against us. They are at our gates. We hear their loud bravado shouts of anticipated victory. But, thank God, our hearts are not daunted. God has given to us the spirit of courage and of confident hope. He has enkindled within us the feelings of Christian brotherhood and love. Against Popery, Prelacy in its high-church phase, and heresy, we are one. And endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we shall henceforth be found contending earnestly for our common principles, and for that faith which was once delivered to the saints, until God shall give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. May God grant it, and to his name shall be all the praise.

A P P E N D I X .

THE OBJECTION FOUNDED UPON THE PERSECUTING PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT OF PRESBYTERIANS, ANSWERED.

From the Author's work on Ecclesiastical Republicanism.

BUT an overwhelming argument is brought to bear against all these claims to superior liberality, on the ground that the Presbyterian church has, in past days, cherished exclusive and persecuting principles, and manifested this spirit in her conduct; and that some Presbyterian bodies are still found willing to sanction these principles.* Now to the truth of both these

* Dr. How's Vind. of Prot. Ep. Ch. pp. 47, 48, 374, 375. This charge is not seldom also brought against us by Congregationalists, who stand in need of a common defence. But that, in former days, they made their views of the constitution of a church an article of faith, appertaining to salvation, may be seen by numerous quotations in Paget's Def. of Presb.

facts, we grant our reluctant and most sorrowful confession. And while much might be said to palliate the guilt of such intolerance, and to show that in comparison with the course pursued by the Papacy and the Prelacy, it was fitful, temporary, and partial, while *their* intolerance has been constant, universal, and applied to *opinions* as well as to *forms*;—yet we take refuge in no apology.* We make no excuse. We are rather willing to join in the execration of such principles, and the condemnation of such acts, (so far as facts will show that they were cherished and carried

Ch. Govt. p. 33. As to the lengths to which they then proceeded, see Bastwick's Utter Routing, &c. Epistle to the Reader. See also the history of their proceedings in New England, as given in Clark's Hist. of Intolerance, vol. i. Pref., and in all other histories. Dr. Lang's Relig. and Edu. in America, p. 125, &c., where he shows that 'Cromwell's own clergy,' accepted sequestered benefices of the Church of England. See further, on this subject, from Mr. Lorimer, on p. 232.

This forms the whole strength of Bishop Hughes's argument in proof of the opposition of Presbyterianism to civil and religious liberty. See Discussion.

* See Dr. Binney's Dissent not Schism, p. 74, though an Independent.

out,) as utterly alien to the spirit of the gospel, and to the genius of Presbyterianism. And that a *portion* of the Covenanters should still maintain these views, is a fact inexplicable for its mystery, inexcusable for its absurdity, and unparalleled for its anomaly.

But what have we to do with the conduct of these brethren, with whom, although agreeing in most points, we differ in *this* matter *toto celo*; with whom we have no ecclesiastical *connection* whatever; and for whose opinions on this subject *we* are *no more* responsible, than we are *as Christians* for the corruptions of all those who are called by *that name*. We now advocate the claims, and present the sentiments, of 'THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH' of these United States. For on this subject, alterations were found necessary, in order to adapt our standards to the views of our American Zion. We challenge therefore a fair and impartial verdict, and are willing to compare ourselves with any other denomination whatsoever. We do not, for a moment, shrink even from a comparison of Presbyterianism, *in general*, with Prelacy, *in general*; but in this case we would require, that the *whole* his-

tory of Prelacy, as developed in the Romish, Anglican, and other churches, should be considered ; and then the *whole* history of Presbytery, as developed in the Waldenses, Paulicians, Culdees, and Scotch, Irish, and American churches, should be brought into contrast. In such a comparison, who can doubt the transcendent lustre with which Presbytery would outshine Prelacy. Its most intolerant enactments would appear liberality itself, and its most persecuting doings the forthgoings of Christian charity, when brought into contrast with the bloody annals of councils, canons, decrees, crusades, test acts, acts of uniformity, Bartholomew scenes and massacres, which constitute such an integral portion of Prelatical ecclesiastical history.* Our present concern, however, is with

* Dr. McCrie's *Miscell. Wks. Rev. of the Life of Owen*. See also Presbyterians vindicated from all serious persecution, in Lorimer's *Manual of Presbytery*, p. 230. The writer says, 'The Congregationalists, then, have nothing in point of *practice* of which to boast, over their Presbyterian brethren; and in regard to their earlier holding sound *theoretical* views of toleration and religious liberty, the same great historical authority shows, that as correct sentiments

the Presbyterian church, as known in the standards of our American General Assemblies, both old and

were entertained from a much earlier date, by the Reformers and first Puritans, who were Presbyterian; that soon after the Reformation the same views were common among the presbyterians of Holland and France; that it was not the principles of the sectaries, but of the reformers and their successors, which lay, and still lie, at the foundation of British freedom, civil and religious; that the writings of leading Independents, at the period referred to, betray decided symptoms of intolerance and persecution; and that it was the extravagant and most injurious proceedings of many of the sectaries, which, by driving matters to extremities in England, created a reaction—lost all the immense advantages of a sound, civil, and ecclesiastical reformation, destroyed the monarch, and recalled persecution, with its horrors, under Charles II.’

‘Had this little work not already exceeded the limits which were originally intended, it would not be difficult to vindicate the Presbyterians from any serious charge of persecution, in connection with the signing of the ‘Solemn League and Covenant,’ and kindred subjects. It could be shown, from the testimony of such men as Henderson, Dickson, Cant, and Lord Loudon, that men were not forced to take the covenant, or punished for refusal; that any cases of this kind were rare and unauthorized; that the league was

new school, as compared with the Prelatical communion, either Romish or Protestant. The only proper

most cordially embraced, without any compulsion from church or state, by the great body of the nation; and that any *undue* influence was chiefly employed *against* the covenant. It could be shown, also, from the exhortations of the Westminster Assembly, and the speeches of such members as Coleman, Caryl, Palmer, Thorowgood, &c., that they disapproved of the propagation of religion by force, and that it was mainly the seditious-political, and not the erroneous-religious, against which their exertions were directed, and which gave to their sentiments and proceedings the air of persecution. The case is correctly stated by 'the Reformed Presbytery,' in their Explanation and Defence of Terms of Communion in 1801. 'If any otherwise peaceable and inoffensive subjects, in church and state, had religious scruples in their own mind, both the open doctrine and uniform practice of our pious ancestors recommended all possible tenderness in laboring to have them removed. But, on the other hand, when cruel popish factions, under the fair pretence of only claiming a liberty to serve God in their own way, were plotting the utter ruin of both church and state, and seeking the overthrow of all laws, human and divine; in such a case, indeed, they could not help thinking, that salutary restraint, and well regulated coercion, were indispensably necessary. And what nation under heaven, prop-

parallel in this case, therefore, is the constitution and principles of our own particular church, in comparison with theirs, and not of all who may bear our name.

Now, from the extracts already presented, it must be manifest that there can be no greater liberality, nor any protest against both the spirit, principles, and practice of intolerance, more powerful than that delivered in the standards of our church. In addition to what has been adduced from them, let the following be considered. Chapter xx. of our Confession of Faith, is on 'Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience.' In this it is taught,* 'God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring

erly consulting her own safety and happiness, in time of danger, would not find it advisable to act on the same great principle?'

* § 2, p. 109.

an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.'

Again, in chapter xxiii. 'Of the civil magistrate,' it is declared, 'civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or in the least interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing-fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner, that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger. And as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief.

It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner, as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury, to any other person whatsoever; and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.'

'It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity or indifference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him; from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all, to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.'

So also in Form of Government, chapter i. section 1, as quoted above,* and in chapter viii. section 2, where, speaking of all our ecclesiastical courts, it teaches, 'These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative.'

To this let me add the following extracts from 'An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church,' by the author, which has been approved by various portions of our church, and by some of its leading divines.† In chapter v. section 1, 'Of the nature of church power,' it is asked, 'Is the power which church officers possess, such as to affect the civil interests of men?'

'No; it is altogether ecclesiastical; and such as to affect men only in their relation to the church, and to God.'

'How else may you describe this power of the church? It is spiritual, and addressed to the consciences of those who are subject to it.'

* Eccles. Rep. p. 218. † A third edition has been called for.

‘Have church officers any power or authority, even in ecclesiastical matters, independently, or in themselves considered? None whatever—they act altogether ministerially.’

‘Do Presbyterians, in our country, ascribe any power to the church, which interferes with the authorities of the state? No; Presbyterians maintain, that the church is independent of the state, and distinct from it, in its laws, its administrations, and its objects; and that it is governed by its own laws, which are purely spiritual.’

‘Do Presbyterians in our country desire, then, any alliance between their church and the state? On the contrary, they believe, that any such alliance ever has been, and ever will be, equally injurious to the state and to the church; and that it is to be deprecated by every Christian, as the baneful source of corruption and intolerance.’*

* The only portions of our standards, besides the doctrines of election and predestination, which Bishop Hughes could pervert to a sense opposite to civil and religious liberty, is the explanation given of the Second Commandment, (Breckin-

Let any man candidly study these passages, in connection with the constitution of this freest and most

ridge and Hughes's Discussion, pp. 318, 344, 372,) which, among other things, is said to require '*the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.*' 'If I understand the reasoning,' says Dr. Breckinridge, 'he means to charge us with holding, that *force* of some kind is a duty; or that some *method* of '*removing the monuments of idolatry,*' at war with the rights of others, is expressed. For I suppose he will not say, that if we *oppose false worship*, and remove these *monuments of idolatry*, in a constitutional way, and *without* disturbing the rights of others, this would be *wrong*, or *against* liberty, civil or religious.' 'He will not *say* that it is persecution, to oppose idolatry by discussion, moral influence, and prayer. The question then is, as to the *manner of doing it*. Does our doctrine utter or imply tyranny, or force, or a hinderance to the free exercise of religious worship? If so, we should like to know it. So far is this from being the fact, that he has himself owned '*that the Confession of Faith was amended, (at the adoption of the American Constitution,) to suit the constitution and the new order of things.*' What he thus admits (as '*an amendment*') to be true, may be easily shown, by reference to all those parts of our standards, which relate to the freedom of wor-

liberal of all governments, and will he not say that they are, in spirit, perfectly the same, and that, in the principles delivered in these standards, our puritan fathers found the germs, the elements, of that perfect civil and religious liberty, which every citizen of this great republic equally enjoys. Real liberality cannot possibly coexist with any system which does not recognize the principle, that individual conviction is the only worthy basis of true faith, and the consequent right and duty of private judgment. In this doctrine, the very essence of real liberality, both political and religious, is involved. It is when this principle is received as *an axiomatic truth*, that the

ship, and the use of force, by the civil magistrate, in matters of conscience.

‘ Yet it is not said of *our* particular church, but of all Christian denominations, that the civil magistrate should protect them. Religion is one of our *common* rights—and a *civil right* to be protected in it. But Mr. Hughes replies, this ‘ *excludes us idolaters.*’ No. We say ‘ *all religious* and ecclesiastical assemblies,’ are to be ‘ *protected,*’ though it be an antichristian system. But shall we, for this reason, be *silent* about their errors? May we not use the liberty of speech?’

exercise of such liberality is not (as it is too often represented) of the nature of a *lenient indulgence*, or a *benevolent concession*, but stands forth, not on the ground of concession, but of principle,—not of indulgence, but of right,—not of favor, but of justice,—not of compromise, but of steadfast maintenance of the truth,—each upholding what he believes right, without denouncing the other as wrong ; all uniting for objects in which they agree, without compromising one point in which they differ.*

Now, as interpreted in our standards, Christianity sanctions and does not destroy this freedom ; elevates and does not dethrone reason ; encourages and does not fetter inquiry ; secures and does not withhold liberty of conscience ; since it enforces only a *voluntary* subjection to its requirements. It is the doctrine of Bossuet, and the church to which he belongs, and not the doctrine of the Presbyterian church, that ‘ all attachment to private judgment is heresy, it being the property of a heretic to have a particular

* Prof. Powell, of Oxford, on State Educ. London, 1840, pp 81, 82.

opinion.* And as this doctrine has been shown to lie at the very foundation of American republicanism,† in connection with the entire severance of politics and religion, of civil and religious matters, the absurdity of the charge of any connivance at intolerance, as made against our church, is as great as if alleged against the Constitution of the United States itself.

* Variations of Prot. vol. i. p. 17.

† Tocqueville's Democ. in Am.

THE END.

LATELY PUBLISHED, BY THE SAME AUTHOR,
PRESBYTERY AND NOT PRELACY
THE SCRIPTURAL AND PRIMITIVE POLITY;

PROVED FROM THE

*Testimonies of Scripture; the Fathers; the Schoolmen; the Reformers;
and the English and Oriental Churches.*

ALSO,

THE ANTIQUITY OF PRESBYTERY;

INCLUDING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT CULDEES, AND OF ST. PATRICK.

ALSO

ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM;

OR, THE

REPUBLICANISM, LIBERALITY, AND CATHOLICITY

OF

PRESBYTERY,

IN CONTRAST WITH PRELACY AND POPERY.

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CRITICAL NOTICES, WHICH HAVE ALREADY APPEARED:

*From the Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., Professor in the Theological  
Seminary, Princeton.*

I HAVE read the volume entitled "Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity," &c., with unfeigned and high pleasure; and although not able to acquiesce in every opinion and statement which it contains, yet I consider it, in its great outline, as clear, learned, powerful, and altogether conclusive in the refutation of Prelacy and establishment of Presbyterianism. It takes a more comprehensive and complete view of the whole controversy than is to be found in any other single volume with which I am acquainted, and appears to me to be eminently adapted to be useful, and well worthy of the thanks and patronage of every member of the Presbyterian Church. It is eminently a learned work. The author has not suffered himself to write, as too many of the ignorant and arrogant advocates of the sect which he opposes have done, without an acquaintance with more than his own

side of the question. I doubt whether there is another individual in the United States who has read so extensively on this subject, and especially who has made himself so familiar with the works of the highest and best authorities of the Episcopal denomination. Mr. Smyth is undoubtedly entitled to the character of an able advocate and benefactor of the Presbyterian Church. With regard to every important Episcopal claim, he has not only shown that it has no support whatever in the word of God, but that it has been given up as untenable by the most learned and venerable authorities among Prelatists themselves.

With regard to the second work, of smaller size, by the same author, entitled "Ecclesiastical Republicanism," it merits the same general character with its larger companion. It is learned and ample in its compass, forcible in its reasoning, and perfectly unanswerable in its statements and conclusions.

These works cannot fail of making a deep impression on all minds capable of estimating the weight of either authority or argument. Every Presbyterian in the United States ought to feel himself a debtor to the author.

*From the Biblical Repertory.*

We have here two new volumes by the indefatigable author of the Lectures on Apostolical Succession. The more elaborate and important of the two is constructed on the same general method with its predecessor, but with the advantage of appearing in a more digested, systematic form. In either case, the circumstance which first strikes the reader is the number and variety of authors quoted. None but a well stocked and selected library could furnish the material of such a volume. It is in this richness of material that the value of the work chiefly consists.

If, in addition to the summary view which we have given of the author's plan, and the more general remarks preceding it, we thought it necessary to characterize this treatise as a whole, we should call attention, in the first place, to the comprehensiveness of its design. We are not aware of any interesting or important question, involved in the controversy, which is left untouched. The extent and variety of the author's reading, upon this and kindred subjects, have made him acquainted with the various aspects under which the whole dispute has been presented, and with the precise points which are now at issue. If he has not always made them as distinctly visible to the reader as they must be to himself, it has arisen from the difficulty, which we have already pointed out, of executing with uniform success a somewhat peculiar and complicated plan. We are free to say, however, that no one can attentively peruse this volume without having fully, and

for the most part clearly, brought before his mind the various theories of church government, and the grounds on which they are supported, often in the very words of their respective advocates. This latter circumstance, while it detracts, as we have seen, from the unity and absolute consistency of the author's own argument, adds much to the historical and literary interest of his performance. Its merit, in this respect, is greater than any but an attentive reader would imagine. We are constantly surprised at the industry with which all accessible authorities have been resorted to, and so cited as to furnish the means of more particular examination on the reader's part. In this the author has done wisely, not so much for mere immediate success as for permanent utility and reputation. This volume, like its predecessor, will be apt to alarm American readers by its bulk and show of erudition. Those who have been nourished on the modern diet of newspapers and cheap literature have little taste or stomach for more solid aliment. But even some who are at first repelled by the magnitude and copious contents of the volume, may hereafter resort to it as a guide to the original sources of information, and thus be led to read the whole. In this connexion, we must not omit to mention a valuable catalogue or index of the most important works upon the subject, which the author has prepared, and appended to the volume. Most of these works are in his own possession, and have been employed in the construction of this treatise.

Another creditable feature of the work, considered as an original argument, is its freedom from extremes, and an enlarged view of the subject of church government, which could never have resulted from mere solitary speculation, but which has obviously flowed, in this case, from an extensive comparison of opinions with the grounds on which they rest. By such a process one becomes aware that what might otherwise have appeared to be a happy discovery is nothing more than an exploded error, and that much is to be said, and has been said, in favor of opinions, which dogmatical ignorance would at once set down as obsolete absurdities. We think it the more necessary to make this general commendatory statement, because we differ from the author as to some points, both of his reasoning and interpretation, only one or two of which could be even hinted at on this occasion.

These are particulars in which our native publications are too commonly defective, and which we hope will contribute to the circulation of the one before us, abroad as well as at home. On the whole, we look upon the volume as another pleasing and creditable proof of what may be accomplished by untiring industry, not only in retirement or in academical stations, but amidst the labors of an important pastoral charge. That such a situation is no excuse for idleness, is clear from such examples as those of Mr. Smyth and Mr. Barnes.

*From the American Biblical Repository.*

**ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM, &c.**—Mr. Smyth is already well known and duly appreciated as the author of several volumes on ecclesiastical polity, Apostolical succession, Presbytery and not Prelacy Scriptural, Ecclesiastical Catechism, &c. The present volume is designed to show that Presbytery is preëminently republican, that it is liberal and catholic, and admirably adapted, in its principles, both dogmatical and ecclesiastical, to our system of civil polity.

We have always wondered how those who hold to episcopacy could contend for its republicanism and adaptedness to our system of representative government. It seems to us too manifest to be denied, without a blush, that the principles of presbytery, in its extended sense, are precisely those which lie at the basis of our political structure, that they are essentially liberal and republican, and equalled by no others in their accordance with the free spirit of our popular government.

The author has done his part well, and his work merits the commendation of all non-episcopal, and the attention of all episcopal communions. At the present crisis, it is especially demanded, when so lofty claims are set up by those who deem themselves the only conservators of the rights and privileges of God's house. May the writer be rewarded for his work of faith!

\* \* \* \* \*

**PRESBYTERY AND NOT PRELACY, &c.**—It is not in our power now to devote as much space to a notice of this work as its merits certainly would justify. It is well worthy of an extended review, and we should be pleased to have one offered for our pages, as we fear our own pressing and multiplied engagements will not allow us the time necessary for its preparation.

Mr. Smyth has taken hold of a great subject with great zeal, and stands up manfully in defence of non-episcopal polity. The day seems to have come when we must again buckle on the armor for a conflict with the papacy and sub-papacy, or Newmania! We must show the people that we stand on solid ground, when we maintain the parity of the ministry, and undertake to substantiate our claims to as high and holy a succession, and as rightful and regular an administration of the ordinances of Christ's house, as ever belonged to Pope or Prelate.

But to the volume. Mr. Smyth has here furnished an armory, where the presbyter can be readily supplied with a panoply, all-sufficient for his defence against the hottest onsets of his antagonists, and indeed one in which he can go forth with confidence of victory.

\* \* \* \* \*

*From the Southern Quarterly Review, for October, 1843.*

It was with much pleasure that we noticed, the other day, that Princeton College, N. J., had conferred on the learned and pious author of this work, the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity. No Southern Divine is more worthy of the high distinction, and the Faculty of that time-honored institution have exhibited a proper discrimination, in this instance, which will meet with the approval, not only of the friends of that gentleman, but of the whole body of scholars throughout the South. Dr. Smyth has, after many years of laborious research, at length completed his great work on "Presbytery and Prelacy," which is a monument at once of his learning, his industry, and his impartiality. It is an argument in behalf of Christian liberty, in which he advocates, in a style of great force and elegance, and with profound learning, "principles which are common to Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Reformed Dutch, Lutherans, Baptists, and Methodists."

We have just received these works, and, amidst a multiplicity of engagements, have not yet had time to give them more than a cursory perusal. Our impressions are, upon the whole, most favorable. We intend to place them in the hands of an eminent Presbyterian theologian, for the purpose of review,—a respect which is due to their high literary character.

*From the New-York Tribune.*

PRESBYTERY AND NOT PRELACY THE SCRIPTURAL AND PRIMITIVE POLITY. By Thomas Smyth. New-York: Leavitt, Trow & Co., 194 Broadway.

This book professedly enters into the controversy between different religious sects; and it is obviously improper for us to express an opinion as to the conclusiveness of the argument which the author has made. But we readily bear full testimony to the learning, the ability, industry, and enthusiasm which the author has brought into the very important discussion with which the book is occupied. He professes to place himself upon ground held in common by all denominations of Christians except Prelatists and Papists, and comes forward as a representative of them all, against Episcopacy in any form. He regards the present day as a most important crisis in this great discussion. The efforts of the Roman and Episcopal Churches to establish their exclusive right to be considered the true and primitive Church, which are perhaps more rigorous and general than they have been heretofore, render necessary, in his opinion, more labored fundamental arguments in defence of non-episcopal tenets. He has accordingly sought to furnish in this work an armory whence proofs and authorities may

be drawn in the controversy. In the first book he aims to show from the Holy Scriptures that Presbytery is the Apostolical order of the Church of Christ; he does this by referring to the condition of the Church at the time of and immediately after the Saviour's ministry, by appealing to the Apostolic age of the Church, and by showing that presbyteries are clothed by Apostolic authority with the functions of the ministry and by divine right with ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the power of ordination. In the second book he attempts to show the same points by an appeal to the Fathers; and the third book treats of the antiquity of Presbytery, with an exhibition of the presbyterianism of the ancient Culdees of Ireland and Scotland, and also of St. Patrick. From this statement the theological reader will readily infer the extent and nature of the argument, which is conducted by the author with signal ability and learning. The work cannot fail to be highly useful, and must be greatly prized by those who feel a decided interest in these discussions. Mr. Smyth is a well-known divine of South Carolina, and is the author of several other religious works of merit and popularity. The present work is published in a very neat form, on clear type, in an octavo volume of nearly 600 pages.

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**ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM.** By Thomas Smyth. New-York: Leavitt, Trow & Co., 194 Broadway.

The purpose of this work is to disprove the determined claim, which the Prelatic and Romish Churches are said to prefer, to a greater conformity in spirit and in order to our republican institutions than any other denominations. The author is well known to the religious public as the author of several works upon subjects nearly allied to this; and his present work is the result of certain studies into which he was compelled quite largely to enter in the progress of preparing those already issued. The subject is evidently one of great and growing importance; and those who take an interest in it will find it here discussed with great learning and ability. The argument is condensed, and yet comprehensive; and we commend the work to the attention of those for whom it was specially written.

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*From the New-York Evangelist.*

We expected to find the evidences of learning, research, candor, and signal ability in this volume, and have not been disappointed. The author is a clear and cogent reasoner, an honest lover of the truth, and possesses a kind Christian spirit, and rare qualifications for the work to which he has addressed himself. The claims of Prelacy are examined in all their aspects, and are

frankly met and fairly disposed of. We hardly know how any question, not within the reach of a mathematical demonstration, could be more effectually settled. We cannot coincide with all the views taken, but the main citadel he has so completely carried, that we cannot withhold our voice from the chorus of victory.

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**ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM**; or, the Republicanism, Liberality, and Catholicity of Presbytery, in contrast with Prelacy and Popery. By Rev. Thomas Smyth. 12mo.

The author's design has been to show the despotic tendencies of Popery and Prelacy, by contrasting with them the free, liberal, and catholic influence of non-Episcopal forms of church government. The term "Presbytery" he applies in a generic sense, to all denominations who reject prelatical bishops. He maintains its republican tendency in its ecclesiastical and doctrinal character, and presents an array of facts and arguments which show the danger of the sects he opposes. The work is written in a free and animated style, well adapted for popular effect. It is very timely, and should find many readers.

*From the New-York Observer.*

**ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM**; or the Republicanism, Liberality, and Catholicity of Presbytery, in contrast with Prelacy and Popery. By Thomas Smyth, Author of Lectures on the Apostolical Succession, &c.

An eloquent and able treatise on a delicate subject, and unless we mistake the temper of the times, the book will attract some attention and provoke discussion. Particularly will it be an offensive doctrine to many that Presbyterianism is more congenial to our free institutions than other forms of church government; but this point our author defends valiantly by history and argument.

Mr. Smyth is one of the most voluminous writers of the day. But his books are not merely *volumes*. They are the result of deep study and minute investigation, and as such are worthy of being read by intelligent men.

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"**PRESBYTERY AND NOT PRELACY** the Scriptural and Primitive Polity," &c.

The author of this handsome octavo of 550 pages, is Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, S. C., whose former works have introduced him to the favorable notice of the public as an expert controversialist, a diligent student, and a man of extensive research and considerable vigor of mind. In the book before us he has with labor, which we do not envy him, collected a vast array of

testimony from Scripture, the fathers, the schoolmen, the reformers, and the English and Oriental churches, to show the antiquity of Presbytery, and to establish the fundamental doctrine of his work, that Presbytery is the Apostolic and Scriptural form of church government.

At this time very many clergymen and laymen are turning their attention anew and with zeal to the investigation of this subject; and to all such, whether Episcopalians or Presbyterians, we commend this volume, as a valuable digest of the evidence in favor of the Presbyterian side of the question. Clergymen who are writing on the subject will here find reference to numerous authors, and will be spared the labor of much investigation by consulting Mr. Smyth's armory. It may be found at the principal bookstores in the chief cities of the United States.

*From the Christian Observer.*

This handsome volume is an octavo in size, containing about 570 pages, printed on fine paper and in excellent style. It is divided into three books, which are also subdivided into chapters.

Such, briefly, is the ground occupied by this volume. We have no personal acquaintance with the writer—but we regard his work as important and valuable, and well adapted to promote the interests of truth. The great subject, which he has ably discussed, is assuming new importance in the estimation of the public. The claims of Prelacy, and the ominous movements in the Episcopal Church, are calling attention to it. Many minds are awake to the tendencies of Prelacy, watching its developments as affecting the purity of Christian doctrine, the spirituality of the Church, and the rights of Christian men. Many are seeking information and truth on this subject. To such, this work will be truly acceptable. Its numerous extracts from the works of distinguished writers of every period in the history of the Church, will render it highly valuable to ministers, to students, and to the class of general readers to which we have just referred.

Of the work on Ecclesiastical Republicanism, this paper says:—

The character of this work is indicated by its title. The subjects ably discussed in it are important and worthy of the attention of American citizens, &c.

*From the New England Puritan.*

We have read this book with much satisfaction. It is the fruit of extensive research. The author has had access to abundant

materials, and has well improved his advantage. He is a sanguine *ex animo* and *jure divino* Presbyterian; and his predilections have led him into some errors. He finds Presbyterianism where we find Congregationalism. Indeed, we can hardly quarrel with him for this; since his definition of Presbyterianism is so broad, as to embrace such men as Dr. Owen. Let us have Presbyterianism after Dr. Owen's stamp, and we concede that the Scriptures and the Primitive Church favor it.

With the exception above named, the argument of the book is powerful and conclusive. It is not only a valuable offering to the Presbyterian Church, but it will be read with profit by all denominations; and we hope it will have an extensive circulation.

*From the Christian Watchman.*

The plan and design of the author are briefly indicated by the title-page. He has dedicated his work to the Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed Dutch, German Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist denominations, and declares in his preface that the aim of the work is catholic and not sectarian.

The subject embraced in this treatise, describes the great battlefield on which are to meet the friends and the opposers of evangelical piety. All mankind must have a religion. Enlightened nations cannot tolerate idolatry, it is too absurd. It matters little what the form is, if it have not the elements of evangelical piety. The gospel plan is simple. It is sustained and carried forward by the power of the Holy Ghost. If you set aside this plan, you must have pomp and ceremony, and the natural tendency is to a priesthood.

The work of Mr. Smyth is elaborate. He seems to have surveyed the whole ground, and has been at great expense in collecting and digesting whatever has been written upon the subject. With the peculiar views of the author on the subject of Presbyterianism as opposed to Congregationalism, we have no sympathy, but in the main question we concur with him.

The work is divided into three books, &c.

*From the Presbyterian (Pittsburgh) Advocate.*

We have also received by the kindness of the author, Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, S. C., his recent elaborate work, entitled—"Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity" of the Christian Church. This book consists of twenty-four chapters, and is a learned and elaborate discussion of

the important topics brought under review in the controversy on Church Government with Papists and Prelatists. The design of the writer, as he informs us, was to condense the substance of the innumerable treatises which have been written on the subject, and to arrange their various topics in a more complete and comprehensive order, so as to present them in as perfect, clear, and satisfactory a manner as the limits of a single volume would permit. That Mr. Smyth has succeeded in his design, is testified by many competent witnesses, such as the *Biblical Repertory*, and others of the same high standing. After years of laborious research and comparison of the views of a large number of the ablest writers upon the subject, he has given us the result in this handsome octavo of 560 pages. It is very neatly got up, and printed upon fine paper; and in connection with an equally elaborate and applauded work, on the Apostolical Succession, and a third on Ecclesiastical Republicanism, all issued within a few years, forms a very creditable testimony to the genius and industry of the author. These works may be had at Carter's, Market-street.

By a private note from the same author, we are gratified to learn that the third edition of his "*Ecclesiastical Catechism*," will be immediately issued from the press. This manual of instruction, designed to explain in familiar question and answer, the Presbyterian form of Church Government, has also received high commendation from various most respectable sources.

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*From the North American.*

PRESBYTERY AND NOT PRELACY the Scriptural and Primitive Polity, proved from the testimony of Scripture, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, and the English and Oriental Churches. Also, the Antiquity of Presbytery, including an account of the ancient Culdees and of St. Patrick. By Thomas Smyth, author of *Lectures on the Apostolic Succession*, &c.

This is an octavo volume, beautifully printed, and containing 600 pages. It is for sale by W. S. Martien, S. E. corner of Seventh and George streets. As the work of a most able and learned writer, it will doubtless be extensively read among all classes of Protestants whose faith and discipline are adverse to Episcopal government. More than this it is not the part of our press to say.

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*From the N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*

SMYTH ON PRESBYTERY AND PRELACY.—The title-page of this elaborate work indicates the object and design of the author. It is as follows:—

Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity, proved from the testimonies of Scripture, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, and the English and Oriental Churches. Also, the Antiquity of Presbytery, including an account of the Ancient Culdees, and of St. Patrick. By Thomas Smyth, author of Lectures on the Apostolical Succession, &c.

The author declares the aim of the work to be catholic, and not sectarian. He has dedicated it to the Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed Dutch, German Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist denominations, whose common principles of ecclesiastical order, in contrast with those of Prelacy and Popery, it is mainly designed to advocate.

Here, in the compass of an octavo volume of 540 pages, Mr. Smyth has condensed the substance of all that is valuable in the innumerable treatises that have been published on this great controversy. In the collection of these works in London and on the Continent of Europe, great expense was incurred; and in perusing, collating, and digesting them, the labor of years has been applied. The lucid arrangement adopted by the author tends much to enhance the interest of the various topics so ably and satisfactorily discussed. The work is divided into three Books, each of which is subdivided into several chapters. Book I. is designed to show that Presbytery, (under which term the author includes those generic principles common to all the non-Episcopal Christian denominations,) is the Scriptural and Apostolic order of the Church of Christ. In Book II. the claims of Presbytery to the true Apostolic or ministerial succession are sustained by an appeal to the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, and to the Romish, Anglican, and other Churches. Book III. treats of the antiquity of Presbytery; and describes the Presbyterianism of the ancient Culdees of Ireland and Scotland, and also of St. Patrick.

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SMYTH ON ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM.—The necessity of compressing the preceding work within the briefest compass, compelled the author to leave out certain chapters originally designed to be embodied in it. Part of these related to the republicanism, liberality, and catholicity of Presbytery, in contrast with Prelacy and Popery. These have been published in a duodecimo volume of 300 pages and upwards, bearing the title prefixed to this paragraph. The author successfully exposes the futility of the arguments commonly advanced in favor of the claim preferred by the Prelatic and Romish Churches, to an exclusive catholicity, and to a greater liberality than other denominations. In contrasting the different ecclesiastical systems, he shows triumphantly the superior adaptation of Presbytery to the system of our republican

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government—its greater conformity, in spirit and in order, to our institutions.

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*From the Presbyterian.*

Not long since we had the pleasure of commending to the notice of our readers an octavo volume on the Apostolical Succession, from the author whose fertile pen has now produced the two above named works. As our readers may perceive, these volumes bear upon the same great subject, and are the results of much study, and very extensive reading. \* \* \* \* As in his "Apostolical Succession," so in these volumes, Mr. Smyth has investigated his subject thoroughly, and constructed a full and conclusive argument in favor of Presbyterianism. In the former work, the claims of Presbytery as the true Apostolical order of the Church of Christ, are sustained in an argument of much force and great variety.

The second work, on "Ecclesiastical Republicanism," is one peculiarly suited to the times. The author very successfully proves that Presbytery is republican in its doctrinal and ecclesiastical systems. He investigates its structure, and from every part of it deduces this character of it, and not only so, but proves that in comparison with other forms of Church polity, it is pre-eminently so. It indeed constitutes the best defence of Presbyterianism against the current slanders of the day, with which we have met, and while we hope the former work will find an honorable place in the library at least of every Presbyterian clergyman, this we should hope will be found in every Presbyterian family as well adapted to popular reading. Hoping that these books will be reviewed in our Monthlies and Quarterlies, we conclude our short notice of them with thanks to the author for his indefatigable labor in these particular departments, to which the controversies of the day have given unusual prominence. Prelacy with its arrogant pretensions will and must be defeated by the resistance which it is now arousing.

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*From the Charleston Courier.*

Two very able polemic works, the one entitled "Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity," and the other, "Ecclesiastical Republicanism," from the pen of the Rev. Thomas Smyth, have been received and are for sale at the different bookstores in this city. The author in the composition of these works has shown himself an able controversialist, reasoning with clearness and cogency, and exhibiting great learning and

research. These volumes certainly place him high as a writer, and entitle him to rank among the foremost as a champion of his Church. Our neutrality on matters of religious controversy precludes us from an examination of the subjects discussed; and we therefore simply refer our readers to the following notices of these works, in other papers, to show the estimation in which they are held.

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*From a Writer in the Charleston Courier.*

The Rev. Mr. Smyth's promised Treatise on Presbytery and Prelacy, has at last appeared, and will be found to sustain, in every way, his high reputation as a polemic and a controversial writer. In fact, he has proved himself absolute master of his subject, and fully competent to its discussion throughout the minutest details.

In the present work he assumes, however, a new position, and deserting his former posture of defence, assails his opponents with singular vigor and dexterity. There are, of course, two sides to every question; but he has fortified his views with such abundance of quotation from authority, such fertility of illustration, and such ingenuity of reasoning, that we shall wait with some impatience of curiosity to see what grounds of reply have been left to his antagonists.

Whatever else may result from these disputes, one thing is certain; that no theological library can be considered as properly furnished, in regard to this topic, which shall not contain these well-written and highly interesting volumes.

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*From the Rambler, by John B. Irving, M. D. (Charleston, S. C.)*

Smyth's works on Presbytery and Prelacy and Ecclesiastical Republicanism, from the press of Crocker & Brewster, Boston, are before us.

The rule we have laid down for ourself in the conduct of the Rambler, forbids our entering into the discussion of any subject connected either with politics or religion; but we are bound in justice to *Southern Literature*, to notice in the most favorable manner the works before us, evidencing as they do the research and fine literary attainments of the author. These publications, like many others, should be attentively read by all seeking the truth—"either to make or break a faith." For our own part we are free to confess that *we have no prejudices*, and cheerfully read any work put into our hands on doctrinal points, happy to be set right whenever it is satisfactorily proved to us, that we have been

in error. Of all prejudices on earth, the most fatal to the spread of truth, to peace and good will among men, is religious prejudice !

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*From the Southern Christian Advocate.*

This elaborate Treatise, from the pen of our accomplished fellow-townsmen, the Rev. Mr. Smyth, is dedicated to the Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed Dutch, German Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist denominations, whose common principles of ecclesiastical order, in contrast with those of Prelacy and Papacy, it is mainly designed to advocate. The work is divided into three Books: the first, showing that Presbytery is the Scriptural and Apostolical order of the Church of Christ: the second, exhibiting the claims of Presbytery to the true Apostolical or Ministerial Succession, by an appeal to the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, and to the Romish, Anglican, and other Churches: the third, presenting the antiquity of Presbytery, with a detailed historic account of the ancient Culdees of Ireland and Scotland. The whole forms a contribution to sacred letters, for which the country in general, the South in particular, is laid under special obligations to the author. The subject discussed, important at any time, is vitally so at the present day. Upon it hinges a ten years' controversy, in which an unprecedented amount of learning and vigor has been expended, and around which, all that is vital in Christianity, and hopeful for the redeemed race of mankind, is gathered.

Although we may not go the whole way with the author, in the minuter details of his subject, we agree with him in the leading principles he advocates, and thank him for the noble vindication which this publication, in connection with his work on Apostolical Succession, asserts against the growing intolerance of the times.

The work is beautifully printed, and for sale at the Methodist Southern Book-room, 240 King-street.

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**ECCLESIASTICAL REPUBLICANISM.**—A Treatise under this title has recently been given to the world by the Rev. Dr. Smyth, of this city, who is advantageously known to the Christian public as the author of several valuable works on subjects of vital importance at the present time to Protestant Christendom. We have carefully read this publication, and do not hesitate to say that, in our opinion, it is one of the author's best productions, both as to force of reasoning and finish of style.

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It is but due to Dr. Smyth to add, and we take pleasure in doing so, that we except his publications entirely from the foregoing cen

sure. His notice of the Methodist E. Church in his work on Ecclesiastical Republicanism, is frank and kind; and although he has not presented the peculiarities of its organization in the point of light which we think sheer justice demands, yet he has not descended from the port of the catholic Christian, the accomplished scholar, the finished gentleman, to misrepresent and injure.

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*From the Charleston Observer.*

It is about two years since the Rev. Mr. Smyth, of this city, issued a large volume, entitled "The Prelatical Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession examined, and the Protestant Ministry defended against the assumptions of Popery and High Churchism"—and this is now followed by an 8vo volume of nearly 600 pages. The larger part of the work is devoted to the proof that Presbytery is the Scriptural and Apostolical order of the Church. Then the claims of Presbytery to the true Apostolic Succession are sustained by an appeal to the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, and to the Romish, Anglican, and other Churches—and the work concludes with proofs of the antiquity of Presbytery; with an exhibition of the Presbyterianism of the ancient Culdees of Ireland and Scotland, and also of St. Patrick. In defining his position, Mr. Smyth maintains that Presbyters are the only Bishops recognized in the word of God—that they are empowered to discharge all the offices and functions of the Christian ministry—that they succeed to all that authority, and to all those duties which have been devolved, by the Apostles, upon their successors in the ordinary and permanent ministry of the Gospel, and that there is no other order of Ministers distinct from and superior to them, to whom is given the exclusive possession of all ecclesiastical authority. He then openly denies the truth of the position, as maintained by Prelatists—that there are three original and distinct orders in the ministry—Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons—each instituted by Divine right through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and each of them essential to the valid constitution of a Church of Christ. His work is, therefore, both didactic and polemic. He shows both what is, and what is not, the Primitive, Scriptural, and Apostolical order of the Church. Besides frequent brief appeals to the Scriptures, he has brought about fifty passages in particular illustration of the positions which he has assumed; and his references are numerous to the most eminent writers on the subject, both ancient and modern. From the rich sources of information in the possession of the author, he could have compiled a work of great service to the truth and to the Church; but he has done much more. He has furnished as original a production as the nature of the subject would admit—

admirably arranged—and if there be any fault, it is in the superabundance of the proof brought to sustain positions which cannot be successfully controverted. So that if any should undertake to answer it, they will pass lightly over the main argument, and seize upon some of the appendages to which even the author has attached very little value. It is possible that Prelatists may pass this work by, under the assumption that their claims are beyond the reach of any such appeal. But whether they notice it or not, it will commend itself to the judgment and conscience of every intelligent and impartial reader. There is, moreover, very little, if any tuing, which may properly be called sectarian, in the work. All but Prelatists may read and enjoy it, and we feel no hesitancy in recommending it, especially to those who are set for the defence of the Gospel. This, together with the work on the Apostolic Succession, forms two of the best TRACTS FOR THE TIMES with which we are acquainted.

*From the (N. Y.) Baptist Advocate.*

An octavo, of nearly 600 pages, handsomely printed on clear paper, and neatly bound. It is designed, not to exhibit and enforce all the doctrines and views of Presbyterianism, but merely to prove, from Scripture, history, and reason, that instead of three orders in the ministry, as Churchmen claim, there was instituted by the Apostles, and has continued throughout a great part of the Church till the present day, but one order, that of Presbyters or Elders, holding one, and a uniformly equal office. To sustain this view, the author has collected a mass of testimony and evidence from ecclesiastical writers, which evinces a degree of research not often expended in our day in preparing a volume for the press. The prelatial assumptions of Puseyism are wrested from them by the force of weapons taken from the hands of illustrious Churchmen, and little is left to cover their mortified defeat, but their own imperturbable effrontery.

The author does not fail of argument, but the chief merit of the work consists in its abundant and appropriate extracts, quotations, and citations from authors not accessible to many readers. Care is taken, we believe, in every instance, to give in a note the book and page referred to in the body of the work.

*From the Southern Baptist Advocate.*

That these are able, learned, and, on the whole, candid works, it needs not our suffrages to testify. Mr. Smyth, in a commendable spirit of charity, would construe the word Presbytery as em-

bracing the Eldership of all non-prelatical Churches. Let him speak for himself on this important point. \* \* \* \* \* This first work will materially aid the young student of ecclesiastical government in arriving at that understanding, and as such, we cordially recommend it to his attention. We wish we could copy the whole of Mr. Smyth's "Contents," but this our limits do not permit. Those of the first three chapters of Book I., and those of Book III., will give a fair idea of the whole.

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*From the Southern Chronicle.*

We have received of the Reverend Author, "Presbytery and not Prelacy the Scriptural and Primitive Polity, proved from the testimonies of Scripture, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, and the English and Oriental Churches." Also, "Ecclesiastical Republicanism; or the Republicanism, Liberty, and Catholicity of Presbytery in contrast with Prelacy and Popery;" both by the Rev. Thomas Smyth, D. D., of Charleston.

The author is already favorably known to the religious public through his "Lectures on Apostolical Succession," and other works; and although we have not had time to form any opinion of the merits of the works before us, we have no doubt, from his established reputation, and character for piety and learning, they will be an acquisition to the theologian and patriot.

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*From the South Carolinian.*

In this work, as we gather from its preface, etc., not having had leisure to read it, the design of the author has been to condense the substance of all that is valuable from the various treatises which have been written on this great controversy, in England and on the Continent of Europe. And, to arrange the various topics in a complete and comprehensive order, the work is divided into three Books, each of which is subdivided into several chapters.

The Rev. Author of these works is an able and accomplished scholar, whose writings are too well known and too highly appreciated by the Christian community, to require any encomium or approbation from us; and those before us have elicited the highest testimonials of approval and regard from many of the ablest religious papers and most eminent divines in the country; from among which, we select the following, by the Rev. Dr. Miller, than whom few, if any, can have higher or more deserved influence with those who concur with him in religious doctrines:

"We return our sincere thanks to the respected and gifted author, for the volumes before us, whose high character cannot fail

THE  
PRELITICAL DOCTRINE  
OF  
APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION  
EXAMINED,

AND THE PROTESTANT MINISTRY DEFENDED AGAINST THE  
ASSUMPTIONS OF POPYRY AND HIGH CHURCHISM,

In a Series of Lectures.

BY THOMAS SMYTH,  
*Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.*

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CRITICAL NOTICES.

Overture adopted by the Synod of S. Carolina and Geo. at its session in 1841

That the publication of works intended to advocate the distinctive order and polity of our church should be encouraged, and their circulation among our people rendered as general as possible; and it having come to the knowledge of this Synod, that one of their number, the Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, has recently given to the Church, among other valuable publications, 'An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, for the use of Families, Bible Classes, and Private Members,'—and a series of lectures on 'The Prelitical Doctrine of Apostolical Succession Examined, and the Protestant Ministry Defended against the Assumptions of Popery and High-Churchism.' Therefore, *Resolved*, That the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia regard with pleasure and approbation these publications, as containing an able defence of the divine authority of the Protestant Ministry, and a full and satisfactory exposition of the order and government of our Church; and as demanded by the present state of the controversy on these subjects. And the Synod does, therefore, cordially recommend the said publications to all our Ministers, Elders, and private members, as works of high value, and calculated to advance the intelligence of our Church, on our distinctive peculiarities and doctrines.

Extract from a review of the work in the *Biblical Repertory*, for Jan'y, 1841.

'This book does no small credit to the industry and talent of the author. The importance of his subject, the correctness of his views, and the abundance of materials which he seems to have had at his command, entitle his performance to the most respectful notice. The author's mind is not only strong but lively, and his book exhibits traces of both qualities. The natural, (and may we not say,) national, vivacity with which he seizes on his topics and discusses them, enlivens in a very satisfactory degree even those parts of the subject which might otherwise have proved most irksome and fatiguing. In a word, the book, (which by the way is elegantly printed,) may be freely commended to the favorable notice of the public; and we doubt not that wherever it is read it will be useful, in apprising those who read it what the high church doctrine really is, and on what grounds it may be most triumphantly and easily refuted.'

**From the Southern Christian Advocate.**

‘We have the pleasure to announce the probable publication of these Lectures at no distant day. As far as opportunity has allowed it, we have attended Mr. Smyth’s course, and been both pleased and edified. Pleased, in witnessing a fine combination of candor, kindness, and strength, in the discussion of difficult and soul-rousing questions. Edified, in listening to a vigorous discussion of important first principles, where the lecturer was master of his thesis, and backed his reasoning by extensive authority of the highest value in this controversy. This volume, in which the Prelatic Doctrine of Apostolical Succession is considered, will be highly valuable to the theological student.’

**From the Christian Intelligencer, of the Reformed Dutch Church, N. Y.**

‘This is an exceedingly neat volume of five hundred and sixty-eight pages, beautiful in its mechanical execution, and upon a subject of grave and exciting importance. The work is seasonable, and from the cursory examination which we have as yet been able to give to it, we believe that it will prove to be exceedingly valuable. The work before us, at the present crisis, is seasonable and necessary. It is more ample in its discussion than any that preceded it. It is the result of much and patient research, and will be found to reflect credit alike upon the talents and learning, and we will add also, the temper of the author. He has rendered the Protestant community a debtor. We desire that the work may have the widest circulation, and receive the careful perusal both of Episcopalians and Christians of every other name.’

**From the Christian Advocate and Journal, of the Methodist Church, N. Y.**

‘This is a large octavo volume. The author makes thorough work of his subject, examining the pretensions of Prelacy with care and candor, and exposing their fallacy with unanswerable force and perspicuity. He gives the claims which are set up by Popery and High-Churchmen in their own language, and refutes them by arguments drawn from reason, church history, and Scripture. The Christian world seems to be waked up anew to the high and exclusive claims of Prelacy by the astounding assumptions of the Oxford divines; and we admit that such a book as that before us seems to be called for by the occasion, and will no doubt be read with great interest.’

**From the New York Evangelist.**

‘A large and elegant octavo volume, on a most important topic. Its object is the examination of the claims of the Popish hierarchy, and of that portion of the clergy and laity of the Episcopal Church which sympathizes with them, to the exclusive right to the functions and privileges of the Christian ministry and Church. These claims, always unscriptural, have of late assumed new arrogance and vigor, by the brief currency of the Oxford publications, and the greatly quickened zeal of the Papacy among us. The time has certainly arrived when their exclusive notions should be subjected to the searching test of reason and scripture. If there are those among us who will vauntingly assume that theirs is the only, the valid ministry, that with them are to be found the only authorized ordinances of salvation, that there is no safety but within the pale of their own denomination: let their pretensions be sifted, and the emptiness of their claims be exposed by the clear light of truth. That such a contest with the principle of Prelacy is yet to be waged, and that it is to be abandoned, there can be no doubt. We hail every effort to throw light upon the subject. Mr. Smyth has entered vigorously upon the field of controversy, and has spared neither pains or strength to do it justice. He has gone over the whole ground in a more extended manner than any writer before him in this country, and in an able manner.’

**From The Presbyterian.**

‘The volume before us contains a very full and minute discussion of the doctrine indicated in its title, and is to be followed by another which will vindicate the claims of Presbyterianism. The necessity of the work arises from the

increasing boldness and arrogance with which the Episcopal Church obtrudes its claims as the only true church, with the only valid ordinances, and the only divinely constituted ministry. As to the manner in which he has accomplished his task, we are disposed to judge very favorably, from the necessarily partial manner in which we have been able to examine his work. He has acquired a clear and distinct view of the question discussed in all its bearings, and to each specific point he has brought a mind stored with the fruits of extensive reading. We have admired the extent of his research, and his diligence in learning all that had been said by preceding writers which could throw light on the discussion; and indeed we have rather regarded him as too redundant in his authorities; a fault, by the way, not often committed in this age of jumping at conclusions. Mr. Smyth states the question of Apostolic succession, so much in the mouth of modern Episcopalians, and he views it in all possible lights, weighs it in just balances, and pronounces it wanting. He not only proves that the assumption is unscriptural and unreasonable, but he traces the boasted succession, and shows its broken links, and finds after all the flourish of trumpets, that prelatists are glorying in a mere shadow. He carries the war, moreover, into the enemy's camp, and he carries off many trophies. Mr. Smyth is undoubtedly an able controversialist, and prelatists will find him well armed at all points, if they are disposed to attack.'

From the Southern Christian Advocate.

'The work before us is, we believe, the first distinct treatise published in this country on the subject of the Apostolical Succession, and in opposition to its arrogant assumptions. A very ably argued and well written work has been recently given to the English public, entitled 'An Essay on Apostolical Succession,' by the Rev. Thomas Powell, a Wesleyan minister, of which Mr. Smyth makes honorable mention. We consider, therefore, the publication of these Lectures as a valuable contribution to the religious literature of the time, demanded withal by the claims of that portion of our common Christianity, which is so unfortunate as to have no participation in the anointing oil of prelatial consecration, and which lies beyond the range of apostolico-succession-covenant blessing. Mr. Smyth has executed his task in a candid, kind, and courteous spirit, while he has subjected the theory of Apostolical Succession to the scrutiny of a thorough, extensive, and fearless examination. Innumerable authorities are cited, and a copious index concludes the volume, which embraces upwards of five hundred and sixty-nine pages, and is gotten up in the finest finish of the typographical art.'

From the Charleston Observer.

'Notice was taken of these Lectures while in course of delivery. They are now published, and with the notes, which contain as much reading as the text, make a large volume of five hundred and sixty-eight pages. The typographical execution is in the best modern style, from the press of Crocker and Brewster Boston. Our design, at present, is simply to apprise our readers that the work is published, intending at our leisure to give it a more formal notice. As the basis of the opinion controverted, rests upon what is familiarly known as the Apostolical Succession, it is here that the author has exhibited his chief strength. And were we to say that he has made good his position, it might be regarded as only a judgment expressed in accordance with previously existing prejudices in its favor. But we hope, on the other hand, that none will undertake to condemn it unread. The advocates of High-Churchism, whether Roman or Anglican, are chiefly concerned in the discussion, and possibly they may find in the work something that will moderate their exclusive zeal, and lead them to the exercise of more charity for the opinions of those from whom they differ.'

From The Presbyterian.

'MR. EDITOR:—I ask room in your paper to commend this work to the attention of the ministers and intelligent laymen of our Church. If there be any among them who doubt whether a work of this sort was called for, their doubts will not survive the reading of the first Lecture, entitled 'The Necessity for an Exam-

ination into the Prelatical Doctrine of Apostolical Succession.' The discussion, therefore, in which Mr. Smyth has embarked, was provoked by the growing disposition among High-Church Episcopalians, to unchurch the Presbyterian body, and challenge exclusive salvation to the members of churches under Diocesan Bishops. His work is not an attack, but a defence—a defence conducted with great ability and skill. I venture to commend it to the notice of your readers, because I am satisfied they will be instructed and profited by the perusal of it. The lectures are evidently the result of much study, and very extensive research. No single volume I have seen, contains such a mass of authorities and seasonable testimonies, on the Prelatical controversy as this work. It is equally creditable to the author's talents and industry, that he should have found time to prepare, in the midst of his pastoral duties, an octavo of five hundred and fifty pages, on a subject requiring so much study, and involving an examination of several hundred distinct works on either side of the controversy. Such labors ought not to go unrequited; but his brethren will be rendering themselves and the cause of truth a substantial service, by placing it in their libraries; and it is for this reason that their attention is invited to it by one who has no other concern in it than that which is common to every Presbyterian.'

From the New York Observer.

'A formidable volume this is in appearance, and on this very account will repel many who might otherwise be attracted to examine its pages. In a course of twenty-one lectures the author has, with great industry and research, and no mean ability as a controversialist, examined the question before him, and presented, in the compass of a single book, a mass of testimony that must be of value to those whose time and means will not allow them to pursue the investigation through all the original sources, which Mr. Smyth has so perseveringly explored.'

From the Watchman of the South.

'We offer a few general remarks at present, intending at an early day to notice them, or at least that last named, far more fully than we usually do. One thing must strike every one who knows the history of the author of these works. We refer to his industry. Without very firm bodily health, and having a very laborious pastoral charge, he still economizes time sufficient to bring out, through the press, from time to time, important contributions to the cause he loves. This is as it should be. Mr. Smyth is, of course, a *growing* minister. His influence and usefulness are constantly extending. It is also obvious to any one who reads Mr. Smyth's works, that he has, or has the use of a very good library, and is a man of no mean learning. His works show the importance of ministers' salaries being such as to enable them to 'give themselves to reading.' But Mr. Smyth is not a mere reader. He arranges and uses what he reads. His character as a writer rises every year. Mr. Smyth is also ardently attached to Presbyterianism. Further remarks may be expected in a week or two.'

From the Charleston Courier.

'We would call the attention of all those who profess any regard for the literary character of our southern community, to a work recently published by our esteemed fellow-townsmen, the Rev. Thomas Smyth, entitled 'Lectures on the Apostolical Succession.' Whatever may be the opinion of the intelligent reader on the subjects of which it treats, he will acknowledge it to be a striking example of extensive and profound research, and most diligent investigation. The author appears to have enjoyed some remarkable advantages in the prosecution of his inquiries. Possessing, as he does, one of the best private libraries in this country—probably the most complete in the theological department—he has had access to an immense mass of authorities, not usually within the reach of the American scholar, and his abundant and voluminous references make his book an absolute index for the use of future writers. His industry, indeed, has left but scanty gleanings, as it would appear, for any who may desire to follow him in this discussion. His style is easy and animated, and the interest of the reader is kept up, without flagging, through an octavo of nearly six hundred

pages. We hope the success of this highly creditable effort may be such as to induce the learned and reverend author to complete his task, by giving promptly to the public the second volume of his course, promised in his preface.<sup>2</sup>

From the Christian Observer.

'From a cursory examination of this work, we think it well adapted to accomplish the good purposes for which it is designed. It exposes and refutes the extravagant assumptions of High-Churchmen, who claim to be the successors of the apostles in the ministry, exclusive of all those who reject their views of Prelacy. The work is worthy of a more extended notice, which shall be given at an early day.'

From the Christian Watchman. (Boston — a Baptist paper.)

'This volume has lain on our table a considerable time, to enable us to give it such an examination as the subject and the merits of the book demand. The discussion throughout is conducted with candor, impartiality, and kindness; and displays no small share of ability, learning, and diligent research. It is decidedly the most able and thorough vindication of the Presbyterian view of the subject which we have ever seen. The discussion, too, is timely, when Episcopal popery is receiving a new impulse from the Oxford writers, whose sentiments find so much sympathy even in our own land. We commend the book therefore, to the attention of our brethren in the ministry, not as taking in every instance that ground which we, as Baptists and Independents should prefer to see taken, but as an able defence of the truth, and an extensive collection of authorities and facts.'

From the Christian Examiner and General Review, (Boston,) Nov. 1841.

'We by no means intend to intimate that the work is ill-timed or superfluous. Such is not our opinion. We believe it will do good. It will meet the new phase of the controversy, and supply what we have no doubt is, in some parts of our country, a pressing want. Even the greatest absurdities, iterated and reiterated in a tone of unblushing confidence, will gain some adherents. Besides, the old treatises on the subject are in a manner inaccessible to the general reader, and will produce a deeper impression, even if it be not more applicable, which in ordinary cases it will be, to the state of the times. The present volume we regard as not only suited to the times, but in itself a production of no trifling merit. It indicates great industry, and no little research on the part of the writer, and its statements appear, from such an examination as we have been able to give it, entitled to confidence. . . . There is an earnestness, good temper and thoroughness which mark the work, which we like, and we can very cordially commend it to the attention of all who feel an interest in the subject.'

From the Southern Quarterly Review.

'This is one of the ablest works of theological controversy, that has appeared during the present century, and we are happy to be able to add that it is the production of a Charleston clergyman. . . . We say then, in the outset, that the Presbyterian church has, in our opinion, in the author of the work before us, a powerful champion, who wields a polished pen, and one who seems to be eminently fitted, by his learning, his talents, and his industry, to maintain manfully the cause he has espoused. We have read his book with deep interest, and with great respect for his ability, and the general candor and fairness of his arguments.' [April, 1843: pp 534 — 537.]

• From the Magnolia, a Literary Magazine and Monthly Review.

'The Doctrine of Apostolical Succession is here examined in an elaborate course of Lectures, twenty-one in number, by the Rev. Thos. Smyth, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston. It is not within our province to examine them. We can say nothing, therefore, of the question which Mr. Smyth discusses. No doubt he discusses it ably. He certainly discusses it ear-

nestly. He is ingenious and forcible, and displays a wonderful deal of industry and research. Here now is an octavo of near six hundred pages, brimful of study, and crowded with authorities. We perceive that Mr. Smyth wins the plaudit 'well done,' from numerous high sources, advocating the same doctrine with himself. They seem to think that his argument has done ample justice to his subject; and we may add, so far as we have been able to examine it, that it has been urged in a candid and Christian temper.'

From —, Attorney General in the State of —.

'Your Lectures I read with the highest satisfaction, and take great pleasure in acknowledging the obligations which I think the friends of Christian truth, religious liberty, and I will add, of the pure undefiled gospel, owe to you for them. Your vindication of the Church, by which I mean the humble followers of our Lord, by whatever name called, from the claims of usurped ecclesiastical domination, seems to me to be complete; and whilst you have, in succession, destroyed and dissipated every ground of doubt on the subject, in the minds of the unprejudiced, your extensive and enlightened research and discrimination, have enabled you to furnish an armory, where every one may supply himself with weapons for defence against individual attack. Nor am I less gratified with the candid and charitable tone and temper with which your views are propounded, than with the overwhelming mass of argument and illustration by which they are demonstrated. Your lectures seem to me to have been written in a truly Christian spirit; and if they have been cavilled at on that ground, it can only be because men always feel attacks upon their prejudices to be unkind.'

From the New England Puritan.

'This large octavo, of five hundred and sixty-eight pages, is a highly seasonable offering to the Protestant Churches of our country, and displays an amount of learning, of research, of skill and power in argument, of fertility in illustration, of combined candor and earnestness of spirit, rarely to be met with in any volume either of home or foreign origin. We have not had it in hand long enough to master the whole of its contents—but long enough to be satisfied of its happy adaptation to the sad times on which we have fallen, and of the richness of the treasures it offers to the acceptance of the true friends of Christ. The volume before us, though perfectly calm and candid in its discussions, leaves this matter plain as sunlight. More formidable foes to Christ and his apostles are not to be found amid all the tribes of religious errorists, than those arrayed beneath the banners of Popery and High Churchism. It is to be hoped that our brethren in the ministry will avail themselves of the labors of Mr. Smyth, to become thoroughly acquainted with this imposing form of error, and arm themselves with 'panoply divine' to meet it and confound it, ere it attains the preëminence to which it aspires, and which, unresisted, it will inevitably attain.'

From the Boston Recorder.

'This is truly an elaborate work. Our attention has been but recently called in a special manner, to its contents, but our highest expectations of the candor and ability of the discussion have been more than satisfied. The object of the author's animadversion is not episcopacy, as such; but the arrogant and exclusive claim of High Churchmen and Romanists to be the *only* true Church of Christ; his *only* real ministers, and the 'only sources of efficacious ordinance and covenanted salvation.' The volume is eminently appropriate to the times and, if read with a sincere desire for the truth, must, we think, prove an immediate corrective of any tendencies towards the Church of England or of Rome.'

From the Christian World, by the Rev. Mr. Stockton, of the Protestant Methodist Church.

'The Lectures which have led us to these remarks, are a valuable addition to religious literature, and more particularly, the polemical department of it. The number twenty-one, and fill a handsome volume of five hundred and fifty pages. The chief aim of the author has been to test the prelatial doctrine by Scripture