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OF THE

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

1647-1897.

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I.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITION OF
BRITAIN AT THE TIME OF THE CALLING OF
THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY, WITH SPE
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TIMES THAT (*a*), PREPARED THE WAY FOR
THE CALLING OF THE ASSEMBLY, AND (*b*),
EXERTED AN INFLUENCE ON IT WHEN
CALLED.

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THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

I.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITION OF BRITAIN AT THE TIME OF THE CALLING OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

THE Westminster Assembly of Divines was convened in the Westminster Abbey, London, in the year 1643. On our side of the Atlantic it was the era of colony-planting, when none but members of the Episcopal Church were permitted to dwell in the Tidewater region of Virginia, and when none but members of the Congregational Church could vote and hold office in Massachusetts. On the farther side of the Atlantic, the year 1643 marked the central period in the long struggle for conscience and for freedom, when the princes of the earth were taking counsel together to establish the doctrines of religion through the agency of the sword, when Romanists and Protestants on the continent were engaged in the tragedy of the Thirty Years' War, when the infant Louis XIV. was just ascending the most powerful throne in Europe, when Calvinists and Arminians were holding fierce debate in Holland, when John Milton was waging battle for the liberty of the press, when Richard Baxter was learning how to preach and how to pray, and Oliver Cromwell was acquiring the art

of cavalry leadership in the field of war against King Charles I.

The booming of guns was borne to London on nearly every breeze from the north and west during the summer of 1643. Saturday, the first day of July in that year, saw a vast throng assembled in the Abbey church, Westminster. In obedience to the call of England's body of law-makers the city on the Thames sent devout men and women to crowd the house of worship. Dr. William Twisse, the Puritan minister from the town of Newbury, occupied the pulpit. Ten members of the House of Lords, twenty members of the House of Commons, and sixty-nine ministers of the gospel from all England, sat in the congregation to hear the elaborate discourse from the text, John xiv. 18: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." After service the ministers and members of Parliament betook themselves to Henry VII.'s Chapel and there gave answer to their names as the clerk called the official roll of the Westminster Assembly.

Among the clergy of that Assembly were a few Huguenots; all the rest had received Episcopal ordination in England. One bishop in full canonical dress held a seat. Nearly all were clad in the plain, simple garb of Puritan ministers. On July 8, the entire Assembly took the oath of office as a governmental commission under the authority of the English Parliament, charged with the business of revising and amending the Thirty-nine Articles, the constitution of the Church of England. Under our form of government the Assembly might be termed a constitutional convention, called to consider ecclesiastical law.

September 15 marked the reception of commissioners from Scotland as corresponding members. Ten days.

later the Assembly and the Parliament gave pledge to keep the Solemn League and Covenant with Scotland, and thus the two kingdoms were bound together by formal treaty to wage war against King Charles I.

Not the revision of the old church constitution, but the construction of a new governmental basis for the church in England, Scotland and Ireland, was the work now laid upon the Assembly by the Parliament. The law-makers resolved to root out Episcopacy and to plant Presbyterianism in the realm. The Episcopal members shook from their feet the dust of Henry VII.'s Chapel, and journeyed homeward. Additional Puritan members came to assist in the work of revolution. The entire Assembly took up its abode in the Jerusalem Chamber, and there, in the presence of the sacred tapestry, they prepared those standards in church government and doctrine which form the constitution of the Presbyterian system of churches throughout the earth.

One year of labor and of fierce debate resulted in the formulation of the new frame of church government and the new order of religious service. On January 4, 1645, the House of Commons passed sentence of death on William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and gave sanction to the Assembly's Directory of Worship. Thus "the archbishop and the old service-book died together."

Before the bar of the House of Commons on April 29, 1647, the Assembly presented those articles of belief and doctrine, with Scripture-texts annexed, which we revere as the Westminster Confession of Faith. The close of the year 1648 saw the Assembly's active work completed with the Shorter and Larger Catechisms. The Long Parliament gave official sanction to the entire series of ecclesiastical symbols elaborated by the Westminster Assembly, and immediately afterwards, in January,

1649, this same Parliament sent King Charles I. to die on the scaffold. The Presbyterian system of doctrine and polity became the basis of the established religion of England at the moment when the old theory of the divine right of kings was virtually overthrown. In the Westminster Assembly we may behold Calvinism putting on the whole armor of God, likewise taking the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, and going forth unto the final battle against the Church of Rome. The Westminster Standards, constituting the complete charter of the freedom of the individual conscience, thus embody the primary principles of that mighty ecclesiastical and political movement of the seventeenth century that gave both religious and civil liberty to the people of the kingdom of England.

When the Greek poet, Homer, wishes to portray the beauty and the mechanism of a certain famous warrior's shield, he invites the reader into the fabled workshop to see the crude metals under the measured beating of hammers gradually forged into shape. In like manner let us seek to lay bare the heart of the English people in the days of the Tudors and of the Stuarts. Let us watch the operation of those national forces that were casting in the mould of Protestantism the social and political life of England and Scotland. Let us examine the form and spirit of the national organism during the century preceding the Westminster Assembly, if, perchance, we may discern

“What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge, and what a heat,”

were shaped the war shields of our hope.

When we turn our steps backward in time through a period of one hundred years, we may look upon the

England of 1543. The Anglo-Saxon realm is attempting the beginner's part upon the stage of European politics. Under the leadership of King Henry VIII. England is entangling herself in the masquerade of mingled bluster and treachery on the continent where Spain and France are the leading actors. King Henry, second monarch of the House of Tudor, uniting in his own person the royal dignity of the ancient rival lines of York and Lancaster, has worn for more than twenty years the title, accorded him by the Pope, of (*Fidei Defensor*) Defender of the Faith. The king bears well the weight of his two-and-fifty years, and seems untroubled by the memory of two wives executed upon the scaffold, for, with only four years of life yet remaining, he is seeking his sixth royal consort. King Henry is no longer the defender of the Pope's ancient dignity. During a period of ten years England has been in a state of revolt against the political authority of the papacy, and the monarch of the realm is the legal head of the Church of England.

In this same year, 1543, we may look across the channel into Germany to behold the hero who bearded the papal lion in his den at Wittenberg and at Worms. Martin Luther has three years of life yet left for breathing his own warlike spirit into the growing Protestant party on the continent. Only four and twenty years have passed away since the public Disputation of Leipsic,¹ wherein he made the earliest avowal of the conviction that the church can exist without a pope. Since 1520 the German people have been reading his declarations that the priest is only a ministerial officer, and that the consecration by bishops might be dispensed with²; that without faith the sacraments are useless,³ and that it

¹ July, 1519.

² Address to the German nobility.

³ The Babylonian Captivity of the Church.

is foolish presumption "to seek justification through works."¹ Since 1530 the Lutheran theology has been set forth in the Augsburg Confession, prepared by Melancthon: a time still later, 1537, is marked by Luther's Smalcald Articles, signed by the Protestant princes of Germany, who take oath, under Luther's direction, to draw the sword against their emperor, if needs be, in the defence of their religious creed. The last days of the reformer are filled with exhortations addressed to his followers to stand firm and keep the faith in the battle that draweth nigh.

In 1543 we may see John Calvin exalted to the seat of chief law-giver in the Christian commonwealth of Geneva. Calvin has just attained the age of thirty-four, and even already during the previous seven years his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* have been leavening the religious thought of Switzerland, Holland and France with the great principle of the absolute sovereignty of God.

When we turn northward in this same year we observe the superstition of Romanism still hovering like a dark cloud over the land of the Scots. Loyalty to the papacy has led King James V. and his nobles, in the previous year, to make war against Henry of England, only to suffer disaster in the battle at Solway Moss. And now King James V. is dead and the blood of the French Guises, in the person of the infant Mary Stuart, holds the title to the throne of Scotland. But the darkness of the hour is made bright by the flames of a beacon-light of glory. George Wishart, Scotland's second Protestant martyr, is yielding up his life at St. Andrews at the stake, unto which Beaton, the Romish cardinal, has ordered him to be bound. Wishart's death is not in vain, for his teachings against the authority of the

¹ Christian Liberty.

Church of Rome have found a seed-bed in the mind of John Knox.

Ten years of Thomas Cromwell's policy of exalting the royal authority in England has set the realm adrift from its papal moorings. Any man who denies that the king is the supreme head of the Church of England is liable to a traitor's death. In theory this church is still in harmony with the Romish congregations on the continent. She maintains practically every point of Romish doctrine, uses the Latin service-book and governs ecclesiastical affairs through the agency of archbishops and bishops. But King Henry VIII. has taken steps that will lead ere long to changes in doctrine. He has appropriated the papal revenues, has assumed the right to appoint church officials, and has made booty of the lands and treasures of the English monasteries. Beyond all these revolutionary acts, the king has given to his people the Word of God translated into their native form of speech. In 1536, Henry and Cromwell authorized the circulation of Coverdale's edition of the Bible in English. At noon-day in each parish church in this year, 1543, we may, perhaps, behold a group of peasants gathered about the pulpit where the open Bible rests. Perchance the father reads the sacred pages to his listening family, and then all betake themselves to the field, there to labor and to meditate upon the inspired message. The ploughman carries a portion of the printed word in his bosom, and at the end of the furrow pauses to drop into the memory some of the words that will eventually bear fruit in the great spiritual and ecclesiastical revolution among the masses of the English people. When we pass to the England of King Edward VI., we see a beautiful edifice, the new Anglican church, springing out of the heart of the nation to the sound of the sweetest music known to

mortal ears, the chanting of spiritual psalms and hymns in the English tongue. Archbishop Cranmer has organized the Church of England upon the basis of the Episcopal form of government, but he composes a new prayer-book in the English language, and has arranged a doctrinal system of Forty-two Articles of belief drawn from the Augsburg Confession, with the adoption of the Calvinistic teaching concerning the Lord's supper. Throughout the kingdom there is continued smashing of images and of painted glass in the churches. Romish doctrines have received a staggering blow.

In the pathway of the reform movement stands the daughter of Henry VIII. and of his first wife, Catherine of Arragon. Queen Mary yields her hand in marriage to that dark-browed son of Spain, King Philip, and hastens to deluge her realm with the blood of Protestant martyrs. She entertains at her royal court an agent of the Pope, and commands the celebration of the Romish mass throughout the kingdom. Those who disobey the mandate are forced into exile, into prison, or to the stake. John Rogers dies in the flames at Smithfield in the presence of his wife and babes. Bishop Hooper is chained to the stake at Gloucester, and Rowland Taylor perishes in like manner at Suffolk. Bishops Ridley and Latimer are burnt at Oxford. "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man," cries Latimer when the fire is kindled at his feet. "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Archbishop Cranmer himself, after six recantations written all in vain, is led out to die. He regains a firmer mind when death is imminent and revokes his recantations. As the flames leap up around him, Cranmer holds his right hand steadily in the midst of them, saying, "This hand hath offended."

The despotism of Bloody Mary was without avail. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of a stronger Protestant church. The heart of the nation was aroused to deliver battle even unto the death against the arch-tyrant in Rome. To-day we claim a share in the halo of glory that encircles the brow of each individual in the noble army of martyrs of Mary's reign. They died in behalf of English liberty as threatened by papal tyranny; they died in defence of the Lutheran-Calvinistic system of doctrine; they died for the right to worship God in that form of speech that is native to Anglo-Saxon lips.

A new England is spread before us as we enter the realm of Queen Elizabeth. From 1558 to 1603 she directs the destiny of the growing commercial empire that still continues to dominate the modern world. It is the era when Spenser, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare hold sway in the realm of literature. The spirit of modern progress manifests great vigor. The sails of the English traders begin to whiten every sea. It is the epoch when explorers flourish; when Walter Raleigh sends expeditions in search of colonial homes, and when Elizabeth's gallant sea-dogs, under the leadership of Francis Drake, singe the beard of the King of Spain, and drive his vessels from the great waters. It is the age of growing science and of great inventions. It is only in Elizabeth's time that men discover the phenomenal facts that light may be introduced into a house through window-glass; that a chimney will lead smoke to the top of a building; that a mattress, laid upon a wooden framework, offers a more comfortable resting-place than a straw pallet; that a feather pillow gives a more gentle support to the head than a log of wood; and that pewter plates and tin spoons are of greater utility and beauty than utensils manufactured from wood.

This epoch witnesses a wonderful development in national sentiment among the people of England. Across the channel they can see the heroism of the people of Holland, who are organizing the Dutch Republic in the face of Spanish oppression. The Huguenots of France, in 1572, pour out their blood in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. John Knox bears the teachings of Calvin from Geneva to Scotland, and the Presbyterian system is there lifting up its head against Mary Stuart and Romanism. All around the horizon the Protestants are in the thickest fury of the battle, and their call is heard in England. Her people have made good use of the preceding thirty years, and the new generation is familiar with the Bible given them by Coverdale. The strong Protestant sentiment of the majority of her subjects leads Elizabeth to make a complete breach with the Church of Rome. The queen is Lutheran in her personal religious creed. She takes to herself the title of Supreme Governor of the Church, and adopts Cranmer's Prayer-Book as the order for religious services. Parliament removes three articles from the creed of Cranmer's time and reissues the Thirty-nine Articles as the constitution of the Anglican Church.

In the matter of doctrine, as well as in the matter of political authority, England is now in complete revolt from the papacy. Not until this time, the year 1570, does the Pope make use of his most potent agencies to force the rebellious kingdom into submission. He issues a decree assuming to depose Elizabeth from her throne, and begins a series of intrigues and plots to elevate Mary Stuart to the seat of sovereignty in England. But Elizabeth's political prestige is unassailable. She can snap her fingers at the man in Rome because a Calvinistic people stand with drawn sword to support their royal leader. Mary Stuart is sent to the block, the Spanish Armada is scat-

tered and broken upon the crags of the North Sea, and England is pushed forward to a position of strength in the world of European politics by reason of the unconquerable spirit of Anglo-Saxon Calvinism.

While the Pelagianism of Rome thus enters into deadly conflict with the Augustinianism of England and Scotland, let us pause in our narrative to discern the actual political and social character of the papacy. In its origin and in its administration, the papacy was a political despotism, the incarnation of the kingdom of this world. It was the result of a two-fold development whereby the bishop of the city of Rome attained great authority as a temporal sovereign, and at the same time climbed to the position of head of the entire church.

As late as the third century of the Christian era the bishop of Rome had no authority outside of his own diocese. In the fourth century, however, he became patriarch of the territory around Rome. The prestige of Rome was gradually transferred to the bishop of the city, and a religious basis was afterwards invented for his assumed authority. He played the part of champion for all the churches of Western Europe, and these churches gradually began to acknowledge his superior official dignity. The Council of Chalcedon (451 A. D.), in its twenty-eighth canon, accorded high honor to the bishop of Rome because of his residence in the ancient capital of the empire, but ascribed equal honor to the bishop of Constantinople because he dwelt in the city of the emperor. Leo, bishop of Rome, made protest against this canon, and claimed for himself the place of highest honor in the church because he was the alleged successor of St. Peter, whom he called the first of the apostles. Leo based his entire claim of primacy in the church upon the untenable theory that Peter possessed superior autho-

rity over the other apostles, and that he was the founder and first bishop of the church in Rome. In order to give legal basis to this bold assumption, a stupendous series of forged documents were brought forward to sustain the Roman bishop's claim of authority over temporal rulers. Vast territories were given the bishop by the Emperor Charlemagne, and thenceforward, through intrigue and diplomacy, the bishop of the city of Rome, under the title of pope, asserted his supreme authority in the church and finally in the state. The papacy became supreme over all Europe.

In imitation of the Roman empire, the empire of the church was marked off into provinces. Over each one of these was placed an archbishop, with ancient proconsular powers. Each province was divided into dioceses and parishes, and over these were established bishops and priests in supreme authority. In this vast governmental web all the threads were bound fast to Rome, and the great spider in the centre of the network was the Pope. Monasteries filled with armies of monks held vast regions in the name of their master in Rome. The Pope was superior to kings and princes in every country in Europe, and his officials were not subject to the civil laws of any land. Papal agents were ambassadors, privy councillors, and prime ministers at the European courts. Learning and literature were controlled by the Pope's subordinates. The legal title to one-third of the land in Europe was vested in the papacy. From one-half to four-fifths of the public revenue from the various nations went into the papal treasury at Rome. The papal empire had active charge of education, politics, and social affairs and dominated the entire lives of men from the cradle to the grave. The papacy developed a system of theology that was entirely an affair of the head

and not of the soul. In its sacramental theory it virtually claimed divine power for the clergy. The sacrament was supposed to produce its effect *opere operato*, by the mere performance of the clerical act itself, without reference to the individual upon whom the act was wrought. None but the priest could baptize the infant, perform the rite of marriage, administer blessing to the dying, or bury the dead. In most cases the priests and bishops were the sole administrators of estates. All these public and private interests were in the hands of the clergy, and money was demanded for the performance of every ecclesiastical service. Rome was the centre of the political and social life of Europe. At the same time Rome was the centre of all political and spiritual wickedness. Under the papacy the very light that men possessed became darkness.

The guilt of papal Rome! The blackness of the guilt of the line of church officials who claimed to be shepherds, but were only wolves! In Luther's time Rome was in very truth the scarlet woman! Sixtus IV. was pope from 1471 to 1484. Poison and the dagger were his favorite methods of removing opponents. His personal vices are unnamable. Alexander VI. (Roderigo Borgia) held the office from 1492 until 1503. Under his direction church offices were sold at auction; cardinals and bishops were given poison at his table. His son Cæsar was a monster of lust, who indulged in murder as if it were a pastime.

Julius II. held the office of pope from 1503 until 1513. As an Italian prince, he formed alliances with the European powers, and waged war for the purpose of conquering and seizing the territory of his neighbors. Leo X. (1513-21) began the construction of St. Peter's Church in Rome, and in order to secure money for its comple-

tion, sent his priests abroad to sell pardons for sin. The blasphemies of one of the auctioneers aroused Luther. The monstrous iniquities of the papal clergy, the grievous taxation imposed upon the people, and the claim of authority to sell spiritual privileges in heaven, stirred the nations of Europe into a great ecclesiastical and political rebellion against the Church of Rome.

In the kingdom of England in 1570, Elizabeth claims all the authority previously accorded to the pope. The Thirty-nine Articles are chiefly Lutheran in doctrine, and they avow the Calvinistic view of predestination and the Lord's supper. Theological students carry the Prayer-book under one arm and Calvin's *Institutes* under the other. Calvin and Cranmer have joined hands in the organization of the English church with the Episcopal form of government. But bishops stand on the same plane of dignity with presbyters. Ministers from the continental churches with presbyterial ordination are received without further ceremonial into the English churches. English bishops pass over to the continent, and sit as co-presbyters with the Lutheran and Presbyterian ministers. Harmony seems to reign among the English Protestants. War breaks out, however, over the vestments worn by the clergy.

The exiles driven forth by Queen Mary return from the continent to form an ecclesiastical war-party in England. In the cities on the Rhine, where they found refuge, English churches were organized. Fierce debates resounded in these congregations over the forms of church government and the forms of worship. From Strasburg and Zurich in Elizabeth's reign a party returns to support the Anglican ritual. From Geneva and Basel comes a Presbyterian band, and Frankfort sends a flock of Independents (Congregationalists.) The church war opens in

England when these eight hundred exiles return from the Rhine and the Alps. Doctrine and government in Elizabeth's established church give complete satisfaction. But these English Protestants have seen the simplicity in dress and ritual that marks the worship of Lutherans and Calvinists. They have been nearer to Rome, and have seen the danger from the papal forms. "Away," they cry, "away with the square cap, and the lawn sleeves, and the white surplice, and the sign of the cross in baptism." These are denounced as "badges of popery," and the civil magistrates must not enforce their use. These externals merely transform ministers into papal priests. Because of their demand for greater purity and simplicity in the matter of public worship, the restored exiles are termed Puritans. They continue to denounce the Romish priests of Mary's reign, who still officiate in Elizabeth's churches. Behind the surplices and under the caps they see thousands of unworthy and ignorant men, reading to the people the services of the Prayer-book.

These war cries are spoken in an age devoted to formality and display. Elizabeth's reign is filled with pomps and royal processions. Every inch of space on the queen's state dresses is adorned with jewels. Her bespangled robes are draped over vast farthingales, spread out like tables on which her arms may rest. "Her appearance when thus attired has been compared to that of an oriental idol." The extravagances of the rich are imitated by the poor; women whose families are suffering for bread go abroad in velvet clothing. Puritanism begins to demand spirituality in the church. "No more pomp and ceremonialism," they cry. Away with the vestments and the bowing of the knee that recall the degenerate worship of the papal administration!

In 1563 the Council of Trent completes its work of

mild reform, and the papacy establishes itself upon a basis of austere morality. Seven years later, with the papal curse resting upon her, Elizabeth engages in conflict with the Jesuits and with the Puritans. Both of these parties are persecuted. In defence of the Calvinistic creed, Thomas Cartwright, professor of divinity at Cambridge, sets forth the view that the management of church affairs belongs unto the church through her selected representatives. He declares that the rule of bishops is unlawful, and that the only scriptural form of ecclesiastical government is the Presbyterian.¹ The great mass of the Puritans follow Cartwright's leadership. A smaller band adhere to the Congregationalist theory of Browne, publicly advanced in 1588. Hooker utters a call for peace in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, but Bancroft, afterwards archbishop, lays the foundation of the theory that claims divine right for the Episcopal form of government and for the apostolic succession of bishops. Nevertheless the Presbyterian party gains prestige by upholding the queen in her conflict with Spain and Romanism. The English universities become hot-beds of Calvinism; the new generation of clergymen are nearly all disciples of Geneva, and often ascend the pulpit in the black Geneva gown. Even the higher bishops abstain from bowing at the name of Christ. Stained glass disappears from the windows, and the communion-table stands in the centre of the church. The entire ritual is approaching a Calvinistic simplicity when Elizabeth dies and the throne is claimed by James Stuart of Scotland.

A great crisis was at hand in national affairs when King James I., son of Mary Stuart, journeyed southward to London in 1603. James was awkward and ungainly

¹ The earliest Presbyterian church in England was established on the Thames river, near London, in 1572.

in person, but his mind was more full of sharp angles than his body. He was a canny Scot, shrewd at striking bargains and making compromises. He was possessed of a quick wit, and had some knowledge of theology. He desired to pose as the British Solomon, although Henry IV. of France termed him "the wisest fool in Christendom." He was deficient in common-sense, and was filled with self-conceit. A Calvinistic training super-added to the partial French nature of King James rendered him a bigot in religion and a tyrant in politics. He claimed to be the Lord's anointed vicegerent, commissioned to re-establish the Davidic theocracy in the British realm. He claimed divine right to exercise absolute personal authority in his kingdom. His experience with presbyterial courts in Scotland, moreover, had inspired in the king an intense hatred of the Presbyterian system.

Eight hundred Puritan ministers met the king with a petition for certain reforms in connection with ceremonies and the character of the clergy. They raised no objection to the Episcopal form of church government. They demanded an educated, spiritual ministry, and the abolition of the square cap, white surplice, and the sign of the cross in the ritual. The king heard these complainants in the Hampton Court Conference. He accepted the suggestion of Reynolds and ordered a new translation of the Bible. "No bishop, no king" was the maxim that formed the basis of the policy of James. His bearing was full of arrogance. When a Puritan minister used the word Presbytery, James flew into a passion: "A Scottish Presbytery agreeth as well with a monarchy as God with the devil. Now Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet and at their pleasures censure me and my council . . . let that alone." At

a moment when slight concessions from the king, in accordance with those practically made already by some of the English clergy, would have preserved the unity of his kingdom, this haughty assumption of absolute authority by James brought ruin. "I will have one doctrine," said the king, "one discipline, one religion in substance and ceremony." He burst out in rage against the Puritans, and shouted: "I will make them conform or I will harrie them out of this land, or else worse."

The great religious and political conflict was opened. The landed gentry, the merchants, and the professional men, and a few of the nobility were Puritans, and their stronghold was the House of Commons. They possessed wealth and education. They were filled with unyielding antagonism toward Romanism. When James spoke of Rome as the "mother church," when he sought the hand of a Spanish princess for his son Charles, when he made promises of indulgence to Romanists, the Puritans recalled to memory the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. Their spirit as Englishmen was aroused when they beheld toleration granted to Romanists and not to Puritans. The Commons met his royal claims at every point. They refused to vote money for the expenses of his administration. The King outraged national sentiment by contracting marriage for Charles with the Roman Catholic princess of France, Henrietta Maria. As a further unwise act, he ordered the publication of the *Book of Sports*, enjoining games and other festivities after service on the Lord's day.

A few of the Puritans fled to Holland to unite with the Separatists, who were making ready to sail to Massachusetts in the "Mayflower." Most of them remained to offer battle in the House of Commons against the claim of absolute sovereignty on the part of the monarch, who

made use of his alleged divine prerogative to yield the realm of England to Rome and to Spain. He was degrading the morals of the people; he was supporting at his court profligate favorites like Buckingham; he was increasing papal ceremonies in the church, and he was holding friendly conference with Spain, the champion of Romanism, when death came to claim him, in 1625.

The conflict was continued between Charles I. and Parliament over the king's income and the governmental revenue. Charles claimed authority to levy and collect taxes; the Commons asserted that the power of taxation belonged to them as the representatives of the people.

The differences in religion became greater. The Huguenots of France and the Protestants of Denmark were going down before the power of Romanist rulers. King Charles possessed a Romanist wife, and supported Romanist favorites at the court. Arminian doctrine became more prevalent, and Montague, Manwaring, and others of this creed, likewise defended the king's authority and denounced the claims of Parliament. The Arminian clergy began to revive ancient ceremonial forms, and in Durham Cathedral the communion table was permanently located at the east end of the chancel.

Calvinism remained dominant in the Commons and grew in strength among the people. The subjects of King Charles were reading with keen eagerness the version of the Bible issued in 1611. They began to entertain great reverence for the literal word of Holy Scripture. Some of them went to extremes in assuming an external deportment of solemn seriousness. Some upheld a Pharisaic observance of the Sabbath day and gave Bible names to their children. But under occasional excess in the strict observance of the letter of the sacred law there lay

that earnestness of character that constitutes the strength of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The claims of the king seemed to the Puritans in the Commons to open the way for the entrance of the ceremonies and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and they girded themselves for the battle against the royal despotism. They denied that Charles was the supreme ruler of the realm, and declared that they alone were authorized to voice the sentiments of the sovereign people of England.

Charles accepted the gage of battle. He sent Eliot, leader of the Commons, to die in the Tower of London. He used the Court of Star Chamber, composed of his privy councillors and others, as the instrument of personal tyranny. The king's opponents were condemned and punished without fair trial. The year 1633 saw William Laud made Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud secured the republication of the *Book of Sports*, and labored to make Sunday afternoon a time of revelry. He attempted to locate all communion tables in the eastern end of the church. He was a martinet in matters of ritual. He broke up the congregations organized after the continental model. The scourge, the pillory, and the prison were ready for non-conformists. To the Puritans Laud seemed to be leading a retrograde movement that would bring the Church of England again under the power of the Pope. He advocated the doctrine of the apostolic succession of the English bishops. He upheld the divine prerogative of the English king. He erected a crucifix in Lambeth chapel. The communion table was railed off at the east end of the church and called an altar. Laud's clergy began to talk of the invocation of saints. The queen celebrated mass in the royal palace. She entertained there an agent of the Pope. License and de-

bauchery ran riot. Indelicacy and indecency ruled at the court. Lax morality and reckless luxury went hand in hand. The seat of government was the centre of gorgeous ritual and ecclesiastical tyranny under the direction of Laud, to whom the Pope was offering the red hat of a Romish cardinal.

The spiritual life of England was at stake. If the prelates and courtiers were not leading the church toward Rome, then they were assuredly leading the people into settled debauch. From his country home at Horton, John Milton looked forth upon that spectacle of gilded license to declare, in the poem called *Comus*, that the courtesies of the court were "glozing lies"; that gorgeous apparel might cover men who gloried in their shame; that the carnival of sensuality was due to the power of wine and sloth that had come from France and Italy. The creed of the court, said Milton, was this :

"'Tis only daylight that makes sin."

Honor was there stigmatized as a cheating voice, a juggling art, a vain idol. The breach of one moral law was adduced as an argument for the violation of a second. In Milton's poem the true church is portrayed as a virtuous woman sitting in the palace paralyzed, "in stony fetters, fixt and motionless."

Against this governmental return toward the debauchery of the papal church of the Middle Age, Calvinism, in the English House of Commons, resting upon the authority of the individual conscience, stood ready to decide the issue in the hall of debate and upon the field of battle.

The war in behalf of purity in religion began in Scotland. Laud prepared a new Prayer-book and sent it to Edinburgh for the use of the churches. On July 23,

1637, the priest of St. Giles Church came forth in white surplice to read the new ritual. Jennie Geddes flung her stool at his head, and a riot drove the minister from the chancel. All Scotland arose in arms against Laud's innovations, and in 1638 the National Covenant was signed, binding the Scottish people to labor for the purity and liberty of the gospel. In the same year, at Glasgow, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland deposed the bishops and reëstablished the Presbyterian system. Two brief wars with Scotland were waged by King Charles, but the lack of money compelled him to summon the representatives of the people. The combatants stood face to face in the arena of debate. The issues of religious and of civil liberty were at length to be decided in a conflict between Charles Stuart and the English Parliament.

November 3, 1640, the Long Parliament came together. That Puritan lion, John Pym, was the leader of the House of Commons. Pym labored in behalf of personal liberty for the people upon the basis of the declaration, that "the greatest liberty of our kingdom is religion." He proposed the impeachment of the Earl of Strafford for threatening to lead an Irish Catholic army into England. Archbishop Laud was sent to the Tower and Strafford was sent to the scaffold upon the charge of treason. The tyranny of Charles I. in church and in state was checked, and all of his despotic powers were stripped from him. The Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission, instruments of his absolutism, were abolished. The Commons put the question of religion to the front. They passed an ordinance against Laud's ceremonies and the Sunday sports, and expelled the bishops from the House of Lords. The Grand Remonstrance was then enacted, a restatement of all past grievances against the king, fol-

lowed by a demand for cabinet ministers, and for the reference of church matters to an Assembly of divines nominated by Parliament. Charles appealed to his pedigree as his title to divine authority, and flung his standard to the breeze on August 22, 1642. Unto his standard flocked that party in the Church of England who believed in Laud's ceremonials and in the supreme authority of bishops and archbishops. The House of Commons accepted the gage of battle, and the war began. The political issue between king and Parliament as to the form of civil government was to be fought out by religious parties; Presbyterians and Independents combined against Episcopalians.

Charles and Laud denied that they sought to reëstablish the papacy in England. Their statement was probably true. Nevertheless, they were laboring in the interest of a type of religion as degenerate as that of the Church of Rome. They sought to make the English monarch a virtual pope, supported by a hierarchy of English churchmen. This Anglican model set as low and degrading an example in spiritual and moral matters as that permitted by Romanism. The tyrannical policy of the mediæval popes was surpassed by Charles and Laud when they sought to force their system upon the people by breaking down representative government in Parliament. They attempted to destroy the right to worship, the right to think, and the right of self-government, all at one fell blow.

The Commons sent an army to the field under Essex, and in 1643 summoned the Westminster Assembly to reconstruct the religious system of the kingdom. The first work of the Assembly was the attempt to revise the Thirty-nine Articles. But the battles of 1643 were not favorable to the parliamentary forces. Cromwell was

just learning the art of war in cavalry skirmishes, and Rupert's horsemen were holding the field for Charles. Pym resolved to ask aid from the Scots. Commissioners were sent to Edinburgh, and the treaty was signed, called the Solemn League and Covenant. Five days after the battle of Newbury, September 25, the English Parliament and the Assembly stood with uplifted hands in St. Margaret's Church in London, and took oath to keep the Solemn League and Covenant. Scotland sent an army to fight against the king, and Parliament pledged itself virtually to establish the Presbyterian system in England. The Westminster Assembly at once began the work of bringing the English Established Church into harmony with the reformed churches on the continent, and more particularly into sympathetic touch with the church in Scotland. The English Presbyterians constituted the majority of the great party that was laboring in behalf of constitutional government. They were the revolutionists who led the nation in the battle against the absolute monarchy of James I. and Charles I. Their work gave England the mental preparation for the overthrow of the power of Charles I. in 1649, and for the Revolution of 1688. Their thinkers had developed an English type of Calvinistic theology, but in the Assembly they were ready to accept the views of the commissioners from Scotland who were strict constructionists of the school of Geneva.

The national traditions and modes of thought of the English people committed them to the supremacy of the laity over the local clergy in matters of religion. Very few of the English Puritan leaders accepted the Scottish view of Presbyterianism as a divine institution. The English followers of the religious party organized by Cartwright looked upon the Presbyterian system as an eccle-

siastical form of parliamentary government. The Assembly of divines was called to work under the control of the two Houses, and the clergy in the parishes were to be subject to the direction of the lay elders. The Presbyterian system commended itself to many in England because it rested for ecclesiastical authority not upon the king, but upon the nation itself through its organization by means of elective representatives. This representative system could still further be controlled in accordance with the sentiments of the mass of the people, by holding the ecclesiastical courts themselves in subjection to the great body of civil representatives, the House of Commons.

From the beginning of the reign of the Stuart dynasty the Presbyterian party was dominant in the House of Commons; but in 1641 that House supported the Root and Branch bill for the abolition of episcopacy and for the transference of the authority of the bishops to committees of laymen in each diocese. During the sessions of the Westminster Assembly the Presbyterians in the Commons held to the theory that all ecclesiastical jurisdiction must be based upon the authority of a civil, constitutional government. The real aim of the English Presbyterian party in the Commons was to render both church and king responsible to Parliament. In the Westminster Assembly little debate took place in connection with the formulation of doctrinal propositions. All Puritans alike were opposed to every form of Romish belief; therefore the leaven of Scottish faith was mingled with English Presbyterian theology, and the finished work, the Confession and Catechisms, have come down as the most efficient creed whereby a militant Calvinism may enter into battle in behalf of civil liberty.

With reference to the method and forms of ecclesiasti-

cal jurisdiction, the English Presbyterians, at least in the House of Commons, were less revolutionary than in the matter of doctrine. They manifested a spirit strongly conservative in the sphere of church government. In the Westminster Assembly three parties confronted one another. The Presbyterians were supported by the six Scotch commissioners, Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford and Robert Baillie, ministers of the gospel, and the laymen, Lord Maitland and Archibald Johnston. The Independents were represented in the Assembly by five ministers, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, and Sidrach Simpson. These ministers had lived in exile in Holland during the days of Laud's supremacy, and returned to take part in the parliamentary reformation. A third party, called Erastians, was composed of two divines, Thomas Coleman and John Lightfoot, and of many lawyers who sat in the Assembly. Throughout the year 1644 the Independents held the floor of the Assembly in fierce debate over ecclesiastical ordination and discipline. They upheld the extreme democratic view that each separate congregation of believers possesses final ecclesiastical authority in opposition to the Presbyterian system of successive courts, presbyteries, synods and assemblies, with jurisdiction granted to each higher court over the lower body. The Presbyterians outvoted the Independents in the Assembly; but during this same year Cromwell's army of Independents was winning the victory of Marston Moor, and prestige was thereby added to the five Congregationalist brethren. During a portion of the years 1645-'46 the Assembly resounded with the fury of the Erastian controversy. This party advocated the view that the English Parliament is one with the English church, in full accordance with the ancient Jewish theo-

crazy. Selden's argument against the exercise of discipline by church courts was rendered ineffective by Gillespie's knowledge of the Scriptures, and the Assembly established itself in favor of the principle that there is biblical authority for a government exercised by church officers distinct from that of the civil magistrate.

As conservatives the Presbyterians wrought out their views in the Assembly. As conservatives they sought to deal with the king. But Cromwell's Independents won the battle in the field of war against Charles I., and they brought the monarch before the judicial tribunal. The Presbyterians were ready to accept the promise of King Charles that he would establish their ecclesiastical system under his monarchy. The Independents made full adoption of Presbyterian principles concerning representative government as opposed to monarchy. They expelled the Presbyterians from the House of Commons, and sent the king to the block. The Presbyterian system of ecclesiastical government was never widely extended among the English churches; it had to seek acceptance in other lands. Nevertheless, its great revolutionary work in England was completed. Romanism had found a grave in English soil. The old principle of monarchical absolutism in the church and in the state was no more. Forty years later, when the English people saw that the rod of the papacy was indeed broken, and that the necessity no longer existed of joining the church to the state in order that the latter might preserve the existence of Protestantism, then were they ready to adopt, to a certain extent, the principle of religious toleration for all creeds.

In conclusion, let us hear the words of Samuel R. Gardiner, the highest authority on the period of the Puritan revolution, with reference to the movement of

1640-'49: "The Presbyterians had done their work. They had overthrown the monarchy, never, in the sense in which Charles understood the word, to rise again in England." He says further: "The restored kingship of Charles II. was fettered by Parliament in a way which would have been unendurable by Charles I.; and if, ecclesiastically, the church of Sheldon and Morley appeared in very truth the church of Hooker and Laud, there is a sense in which its historical continuity is to be detected in what, in 1646, was known at Westminster as the Reformed Church of England. When bishops ultimately ascended their ancient thrones, they sat on them because they were favored by Parliament rather than because they were favored by the king. The supremacy of lay England in its collective capacity over king and church was, in reality, the main object for which the Presbyterians were contending, and their object and not Charles' object, was obtained with the full co-operation of the party of the Cavaliers, when king and bishops reappeared in 1660 under changed conditions."

Fathers and brethren of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, I greet you as among the most consistent heirs and defenders of the faith handed down by the Westminster Assembly. That Assembly of Englishmen and Scotchmen girded on its armor and led Calvinism to victory against the hierarchical system that derived its origin from Romanism. Never again can the scarlet woman, nor the divine right of kings and bishops hold their former sway. But the Westminster Assembly itself did not, and perhaps could not, adopt the principle of complete religious liberty. The Scottish settlers in the province of Ulster, Ireland, bore the seeds of that principle to our own Appalachian ridges and foothills. The open Bible, the Westminster

Confession, and the Shorter Catechism taught them the principle of resistance to kings, and they formed the bone and sinew of the revolutionary party that wrought out the independence of the American colonies. Presbyterian principles led to the glorious action of the people of Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, in the year 1775. The Hanover Presbytery played a large part in securing the insertion of the principle of religious liberty in the Virginia Bill of Rights in 1776. In 1785 the same Presbytery forced through the Virginia Assembly Jefferson's bill for the establishment of religious freedom, and thus, for the first time in all history, secured the complete divorce of the church from the state. In the year 1861 our own Southern Assembly committed us to the principle that the sole function of the church is the adjudication of spiritual affairs. May we keep our Zion pure and holy. May her officers be always men of spotless life and uprightness in heart. May our blue banner continue to be the standard of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and beneath its folds may righteousness and truth hold undisputed sovereignty.