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THE  
CHURCHMAN

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MAY, 1881.

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ART. I.—ERASTIANISM.

THE term Erastian is one of those "personal" epithets, as we may call them, which it is very easy to use, in controversial discussion, in a thoughtless and vague way. And it is by no means unimportant to consider, every now and then, the real significance which should be attached to such epithets. For in every case when we have a term of this sort used, either *in bonam* or *in malam partem*, an historical question underlies the terminological one. If I call a man, *e.g.*, a Comtist, I should know something of what M. Comte taught, and so put myself into the position of seeing how the epithet came to be applied to those who hold certain philosophical opinions. Instances of these personal epithets are numerous. For every notable leader of thought, whether in a more or less considerable sphere, has adherents or followers who are proud of his name, and opponents who detest it. It will be generally found, too, that the epithet as used to describe the *party* connotes more than could be accurately stated as appropriate to the *person* from whom the party takes its name. Some striking doctrine, or principle, which was brought into prominence by the original teacher, is intensified and exaggerated, either by his followers or by his antagonists, or by both, and the epithet acquires a controversial significance, which may be convenient for the sake of classification of opposing tenets, though it sometimes leads to an unfair estimate of the person from whose name the epithet is derived.

It will be my object in this, and a succeeding, Paper, to remind my readers of the actual circumstances which led to the publication of those treatises of Erastus which have made his name notable, and to give a summary sketch of his "Theses;" then, to show the manner in which the epithet Erastian came to be applied to the opponents of what may be called the strong *clerical* view of the Church; and, thirdly, to offer some remarks

on the practical bearings of the whole controversy upon the present condition of ecclesiastical affairs in the Church of England.

Thomas Lieber, or Liebler, known by his Græco-Latinized name of ERASTUS,<sup>1</sup> has sometimes been termed a German "heretic," and sometimes a German "divine." Neither of these appellations can be strictly predicated of him. He was, indeed, once excommunicated by the Heidelberg presbytery on suspicion of being an anti-Trinitarian; but "the sentence was reconsidered and removed" shortly after it had been pronounced, "Erastus formally declaring that no one could hold the doctrine of the Trinity more firmly than he."<sup>2</sup>

Again, the appellation of "divine" suggests the idea that Erastus was a professed theological writer, even if it does not lead persons to regard him as an ordained minister. His profession was, however, that of a physician, and he published several scientific treatises on medical subjects. But he felt and exhibited great interest in theological questions of the day, and was recognized by such men as Bullinger and Gualter at Zurich, and by his opponent Beza at Geneva, as not only a man of learning, possessed of "eruditio eximia et singularis," but also a man of "vera et sincera pietas," well versed in the Scriptures, and one who had faithfully laboured in "spreading the Gospel." The fact is that we should regard Erastus as, in modern parlance, an intelligent and cultured layman, who joined with earnest zeal in the religious discussions which rose out of the circumstances of his life at Heidelberg, where he held the post of physician to the Elector Palatine, Frederick III. The most appropriate title, then, for him is that by which he is denominated in the preface to the posthumous edition of his "Theses"—viz., "Medicus et Philosophus." The circumstances which induced Erastus to write on the subject of Excommunication, and to lay down those "Positions," from which have been gathered his views concerning the relation between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions in a Christian country, are thus notified in the remarks prefixed by Erastus himself to the last MS. edition of his "Theses," and addressed "pio et veritatis studioso lectori."

It is now sixteen years ago, (he says) since some persons were seized with what I may call an excommunicatory fever ("febre quadam excommunicatoria correpti"), which they decked with the name of Ecclesiastical Discipline, and did contend for as holy and enjoined by God upon the Church, and with this they vehemently sought to infect

<sup>1</sup> This was a fashion of those times. Compare the well-known names, Desiderius, Erasmus, Ecolampadius, and Melancthon as the learned equivalents for Gerhard, Gerhardson, Hausschein, and Schwartzerd.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclop. Brit.*, sub voc. Erastus.

the whole Church. The method they proposed was that certain Presbyters should sit in the name of the whole Church, and judge who were worthy, and who unworthy, to come to the supper."<sup>1</sup>

Erastus proceeds to say that he was astonished at their proposing to take such a step, when scarcely a thirtieth part of the people understood or approved of the Reformed doctrines, and when they were surrounded by hostile religionists. It was rather a time, he thought, for doing all that could be done to attract, rather than to do anything to repel, adherents. He remonstrated, but his remonstrances were in vain. At that time he held the opinion that excommunication was commanded in Scripture, but that the method they proposed was not laid down there. Anxious to see what method was most suitable, and least likely to disturb the Church, he betook himself to study the subject. He studied ancient, "scholastic," and recent writers, but, not satisfied, "he went back to Holy Writ." Here he was especially struck by the fact that in the divinely ordered Jewish Church and commonwealth there were not two diverse courts of judicature in morals—a political and an ecclesiastical—but only one. "What, then, was there," he asked, "to prevent the Church now also, since God had graciously conferred on it the gift of Christian magistracy, from being content with *one government?*" Erastus did not, however, enter into public disputation until forced to do so. Things were brought to a crisis by the visit of a certain Englishman to Heidelberg, who had left England ("propter rem vestiariam"), in consequence of the controversy as to vestments, and, wishing to take a Doctor's degree at Heidelberg, proposed a dispute concerning "things indifferent, and vestments." This was not allowed, but the Englishman proposed some theses in favour of presbyterian discipline.<sup>2</sup> Erastus then thought it well to circulate in MS. some of the thoughts which he had jotted down on the subject. The friends to whom he first sent his MS. do not seem to have dealt with it either in a kind or a candid manner. He then revised his material, and contracted it into a certain

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<sup>1</sup> My quotations are translated from the original edition of 1589. It is entitled, "*Explicatio Gravissimæ Questionis utrum excommunicatio, quatenus Religionem intelligentes et amplexantes, a Sacramentorum usu, propter admissum facinus arcet; mandato nitatur Divino an excogitata sit ab hominibus.*" The lxxv. Theses are followed by the "*Confirmatio Thesium,*" and some letters of Bullinger and Gualter are *ad calcem operis adjectæ.*

<sup>2</sup> Hooker (*Pref.* ii. 9) alludes to this visit, and speaks of the disputant as one who, coming to "a church ordered by Gualter's discipline, and not by that which Geneva adoreth," and "craving leave to dispute publicly defendeth with open disdain of their government that 'to a minister with his eldership power is given by the law of God to excommunicate whomsoever, yea, even kings and princes themselves.'"

number of propositions ("Theses"); thinking thereby to obtain for them easier circulation through many hands. This plan, he says, was to a great extent successful, so that they were widely made known, and those who had been unwilling to read them, when asked by him to do so, were now compelled to read them, even against their will. His opponents, he complains, would not meet him fairly in argument, but tried to prevent his "Theses" being read, and averred that a medical professor had no right to interfere with theological matters. To this Erastus makes a spirited reply: and he concludes his preface by stating that "he revised his hundred 'Theses'" ("sub incudem revocavi"), reducing them to seventy-five, and placing them in proper logical order; and explaining some things in them more clearly, and proving some things more conclusively; doing his best, indeed, to satisfy, so far as could be done in so short a treatise, "all lovers of truth."

These "Theses" were not printed and published until 1589, some six years after Dr. Liebler's death. A mystery was attached to their publication, for place and printer are concealed under fictitious names.<sup>1</sup> Beza, who upon the appearance of the "Theses" in their printed form published the reply to Erastus, which he had before composed and circulated in MS., supposes the book to have been printed in London, or some town in England. And it has been affirmed, on Selden's authority, that Whitgift had the book published, in order to confront the growth of Presbyterian notions of church discipline in England.<sup>2</sup> Beza's treatise is entitled "Tractatus Pius et moderatus de vera excommunicatione et Christiano Presbyterio impridem pacis conciliandæ causa. Cl. V. Th. Erasti D. Medici centum manuscriptis thesibus oppositus et nunc primum cogente necessitate editus." It will be interesting to cite here Hooker's view of this controversy. He considers that, in the disputation, Beza and Erastus have "divided very equally the truth between them; Beza most truly maintaining the necessity of excommunication, Erastus as truly the non-necessity of lay-elders to be the ministers thereof."

Together with the seventy-five "Theses" is published a reply by Erastus to Beza, entitled "Confirmatio Thesium," and to this are appended some letters of Bullinger and Gualter, in which those Zurich divines express their concurrence with the opposition

<sup>1</sup> Pesclavii, apud Baocium Sultaceterum.

<sup>2</sup> Warburton says that "Erastus' famous book *De Excommunicatione* was purchased by Whitgift of Erastus' widow in Germany, and put by him to the press in London under fictitious names of the place and printer. This Selden discovered, and has published his discovery in the book *De Synedrüs.*" See the passage cited from Selden in Thorndike's works (Anglo-Catholic Library), vol. i. part ii. p. 741 *note*.

which Erastus was making to the institution of a rigid Presbyterian régime at Heidelberg.

The primary question, then, which stands at the centre of the reasonings of Erastus in the treatises mentioned is the question of excommunication. He takes a strong lay point of view in opposition to a strong clerical point of view. He argues for a wide liberty; the Presbyterian ministers who oppose him argue for a "strict discipline," a discipline which shall not only embrace clergy, but also laity, and shall be independent of any civil tribunal.

The argument of the revised "Theses" may be briefly summarized thus. Excommunication is defined as consisting in exclusion, not from the invisible spiritual societies of believers, but from the "outward, visible, political" society: an exclusion from the Sacraments, especially from the Lord's Supper, after an investigation by the elders (*præunte seniorum cognitione*), the object of the exclusion being that the sinful parties may repent, and be received into communion again ("Th." i.-viii.). The question is then propounded whether any command, or example, from Scripture can warrant the exclusion from the sacraments of a professed believer, because of sinful life ("Th." ix.). "Theses" x. to xxiii. are an endeavour to show that, in the Old Testament and Jewish economy, no one was on account of moral delinquencies repelled from the Sacraments. (By the sacraments Erastus understands the Passover, and "other rites, ceremonies and sacrifices." The uncleanness which excluded certain persons from worship was a *ceremonial*, not a *moral* taint.)

The argument then proceeds on the assumption that the "sacraments" of the Old Testament were, as to their meaning, to be identified with ours—the Lord's Supper, *e.g.*, corresponding to the Paschal feast, as Baptism does to circumcision ("Th." xxiv., xxv.). Our Lord never forbade any one to partake of the (Jewish) sacraments, and never censured any one for using them; and He participated in public worship with Pharisees, Sadducees, and publicans. He did not command Judas to abstain from the Supper. It was not his will that his visible Church on earth should be circumscribed by narrower limits than those which were laid down among the Jews.

As, then, God commanded all that were circumcised to participate externally in the same sacraments and ceremonies, while He enjoined that the wicked should be coerced and punished by the sword and other penalties: so, also, it is now Christ's will that all baptized persons, or Christians, holding right and sound opinions concerning religion, should use the same outward ceremonies and sacraments, but that criminals should be punished by the magistrate with death, exile, imprisonment, and other such penalties. The Parables of the net, the marriage feast, the tares, seem to bear upon this point ("Th." xxxi.).

The Apostolic writings are to the same purpose. In 1 Cor. xi. Paul, in reference to disturbances connected with the Lord's Supper, makes no mention at all of "interdiction" from the Supper. Why? Because he knew that the use of the Sacraments in the Church was not that the vicious might be punished by exclusion from those ordinances (*alium esse usum quam ut eorum negatione morum vitia punirentur*). And so "he enjoins that every one should examine himself: he does not lay down the rule that some should examine and approve the rest" ("Th." xxxv.). The Sacraments were never intended to be *penal* instruments; and it is good that we should hope the best concerning any one who uses them ("Th." xxxvii.). The sacraments are not superior in authority and dignity to the Word, and we do not seek to exclude anybody from hearing the Word. Some will say, "the Word was appointed for all men, the Sacraments for the converted only. Granted: but I am not speaking of Turks, or unconverted men, but of those called by God into his Church, and implanted therein; of those who approve of Christian doctrine; of those who, at any rate in outward appearance, desire to make due use of the Sacraments" ("Th." xxxviii.).

In the fortieth "Thesis" and what follows, Erastus deals with the Scripture passages on which his opponents rest their arguments in favour of excommunication (Matt. xviii. 15, &c.; 1 Cor. v.; 1 Tim. i. 20; v. 17, 20). The principal points worthy of note in Erastus' interpretation of these Scriptures are these: he considers that the passage in Matt. xviii. refers not to any authoritative exclusion from Sacraments of public offenders, but to the pious dealing with, and settling of, private injuries. And he interprets the clause, "Tell it to *the Church*," as meaning that the injured person was not to appeal to a heathen tribunal in vindication of himself until he had brought the matter before the *Jewish Sanhedrim*.

Erastus interprets the phrase "delivering to Satan" of the Apostolic prerogative of inflicting diseases and death upon grave offenders. He repudiates the argument for two sets of elders based upon 1 Tim. v. 17. He also denies the applicability of Matt. vii. 6 to the refusal of Sacraments to persons professing to be Christians. He draws a distinction between "shunning the company of the wicked," and "excluding persons from a Sacrament." (*Illæ pœna quidem est politica, hæc sacra. Illæ præcepta nobis est, hæc mandata non est.*—"Th." lxvi.)

He does not wish to condemn "the holy Bishops who, soon after the Apostles' times, commenced" the practice of excommunication; but he holds that they acted upon grounds of expediency rather than on warrant of Scripture ("Th." lxix.). The design with which "excommunication" was introduced was that, "by means of it, there might be some restraint of, and

some penalty for, viciousness. "But afterwards, when the Church got possession of the sword—that is, when the magistrates had become Christian"—the bishops still maintained that authority, partly because they believed it was divinely ordained, partly because they did not like to give up so formidable a weapon of coercive power. The opinion about excommunication was strengthened by a superstitious view of the Sacraments ("Th." lxx.). Erastus says that all must be aware of the baleful effects of Papal excommunications, and that it was not to be expected that modern administrators of it would necessarily be *meliores vel continentiores* than those of olden times ("Th." lxxii.). He would advocate an analogous government in the Christian Church to that employed in the divinely ordered Jewish commonwealth ("Th." lxxiii., lxxiv.), and not have a new kind of judicature established which would reduce the magistrate to the condition of an ordinary subject. Such a tribunal *de moribus* is not enjoined in Scripture, though Erastus holds that in cases of doctrine (*de doctrina*) the magistrate ought to consult experts (*consuli a Magistratu semper debent in ea exercitiores*).

In the case of churches living under an ungodly government (*videlicet Pontificio vel Turcico*), pious arbitrators should be chosen to settle disputes, and together with the ministers to admonish, and reprove, and to punish, if necessary, by some public mark of reprobation, but not to excommunicate ("Th." lxxv.).

A survey of this short treatise shows that Erastus was inspired with a fear of clerical (or ecclesiastical) despotism;<sup>1</sup> that he was in favour of a large charitable construction of motives in regard to all who openly professed themselves to be Christians, and were willing to join in public worship; that he objected to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper being made the instrument of penalty to any; and that he considered that, in a Christian country, *coercive* jurisdiction should be left solely in the hands of the civil rulers.

The fact that Erastus argued not only against a particular method of excommunication, but against any exercise of prohibitive jurisdiction on the part of a separate "spiritual" court, in reference to the Lord's Supper, was capable of being understood as if he meant to deny any official *status* to the clergy.

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<sup>1</sup> He was not alone in this apprehension. A remarkable letter of Gualter (to Count Ludovic of Witgenstein, Aug. 26, 1574) speaks of an *ambitiosus rigor* which needed to be curbed, and was in danger of bringing in *novam in Ecclesias tyrannidem, Pontificia nihilo tolerabiliorem*. Later on occurs this passage: "*Emergent hinc novæ tyrannidis cornua, et paulatim cristas attollent ambitiosi Ecclesiarum pastores,*" &c. Bullinger, too, in writing to Peter Dathe, speaks of an *oligarchia ecclesiastica* springing up, against which Erastus was right to protest.



It is important, therefore, to note that, in subordinating the "ecclesiastical" administration to the magistrate, Erastus always contemplates the rulers as Christian, and as doing nothing contrary to the Word of God: and, while he repudiates two distinct jurisdictions, he does not on that account confound lay and clerical functions. He specially remarks (with reference to Uzziah's case, which was brought up against his theory of "magisterial supremacy"), "*Hoc considerandum aliud esse res sacras curare et gubernare, aliud agere. Multas regit res Magistratus quas ipse per se non facit.* And so Uzziah might order, govern, and rule the priests, and arrange their duties according to what God prescribed, but he might not sacrifice or offer incense"<sup>1</sup> (*C. T.* iii. 1). In the same chapter, which is entitled *De munere et distinctione Magistratus*, Erastus lays down that all right government of men is visible or invisible:

Of the invisible (internal, heavenly, spiritual) province God is the Governor; of the visible (external, human, corporal), the only ruler is the magistrate. A commonwealth in which there are two distinct and equal magistracies is a monstrosity like an animal with two heads. The Papal solution of the problem of government is that the ecclesiastical power is superior to the civil, and that this must be therefore subordinated to that. Hence the saying *Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rodolpho*. If we reject this method of adjustment, it remains that we must accept the civil magistrate as supreme in all departments, but bound to consult specialists in each department (*consultere peritos debet, quorum consilio administret; vel idoneos homines cuilibet muneri præficere qui suo nomine recte singula curare velint ac possint*). It must be understood, however, that as in civil matters the magistrate may not transgress the laws of the State, so "in disposing and ordering sacred affairs or those connected with Divine Worship, it is far less legitimate for him to depart from the prescribed Word of God: this he is bound to follow as a rule in all things, and never to depart even a hair's breadth from it." The *gubernatio externa* is divinely committed to the magistrate, both in respect of civil life and of religious life. There cannot be two jurisdictions in a country "where rulers and subjects profess the same religion, and that the true one." Where it is otherwise, some sort of division of jurisdiction is tolerable (*In alia in qua videlicet Magistratus falsam tuetur sententiam certo quidem modo tolerabilis videri fortasse possit divisio rectorum*).

We are now in a position to see that the views held by Erastus himself fall considerably short of the developed "Erastianism" which was afterwards made matter of reproach in controversial discussions. "Indeed, it may be doubted" (as Dr. Lee points out<sup>2</sup>) "whether, with the exception of the Genevan

<sup>1</sup> Compare the language of our Article XXXVII. ("Of the Civil Magistrate").

<sup>2</sup> In an interesting preface to an English edition of the "Theses," published in 1844. In this preface Dr. Lee vindicates the Church of

divines," the Reformers "did not all of them maintain something very much resembling" Erastus' theory of the supremacy of the Christian magistrate in respect of ecclesiastical matters in the country where he held jurisdiction. The reason of this is that they regarded "the Church and State as one subject, or *suppositum*, considered under two different aspects or relations—being the Church in relation to religion, the State in relation to temporal and secular affairs; the same men being the State as they were men; the Church as they were Christian men." This, indeed, is practically Hooker's theory: not that he actually identifies the Church with the Commonwealth, for he distinguishes them "in nature," one from the other; but he holds that the Church is the Commonwealth on its spiritual side, and in respect of religion, while the Commonwealth is the same community in a different aspect and different relations. But they are not two "corporations," independently subsisting, each by itself.<sup>1</sup>

Erastus quotes, with approbation, a passage from Wolfgang Musculus, in which he denounces as *nocentissimus error* the view taken by some advocates for ecclesiastical discipline—viz., that the Christian magistrate was to be regarded in an entirely secular light, and placed on a level with a heathen ruler (*quasi nihil a profano magistratus pius differet, etc.*—"Th." lxxiv.).<sup>2</sup>

It may well be that in the 16th century some of those who were deeply interested in the emancipation of the human conscience from superstition, and yet were unwilling to give it over to anarchical individualism, were induced by a reaction from the burdensome sense of Papal tyranny to overrate the power and goodwill of princes, and to imagine that they would necessarily find in the "civil power" that justice and liberty of which hierarchical pretensions and Papal claims had to a great extent deprived the Church.

In our own land the opposition of *regal* to *papal* supremacy (an opposition which was really a development of former conflicts between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction), became, as we all know, a prominent factor in the national Reformation in its legal and governmental aspect. The earlier Anglican view of the Royal Supremacy did in fact, to a considerable extent, agree with Erastus' view of "magistracy," as exercised in a Christian land, and upon Christian principles. During the

Scotland from the charge of Erastianism, and at the same time shows that the epithet "Erastian" does not necessarily infer such a formidable indictment as some of those who used it supposed.

<sup>1</sup> See *E. P.*, Book viii. 2-7.

<sup>2</sup> The "civil magistrate" is generally spoken of in all the Protestant Confessions with remarkable respect—sometimes as *Vicarius Dei*. The *Confessio Basileensis prior* condemns those "turbulent spirits" (*turbarum spiritus*) who assert "that magistrates cannot be Christians."

twenty years (1568-1589) which elapse from the date at which the "Theses" were first circulated among the Continental Reformers to the date at which they were published, the struggle going on in England between the "Prelatist" and "Puritan" parties was a contention for the supremacy of the "magistrate" as against the supremacy of the "Presbytery" in ecclesiastical matters.<sup>1</sup>

A complication of the whole controversy regarding the proper adjustment of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions in a Christian State was produced in the further issues of the Puritan Revolution. Both parties in that conflict contended for the power to enforce a uniformity of doctrine and discipline. The question was, where the authority was to reside, what was to be the ultimate jurisdiction? On the one side, was urged the *jus divinum* of the presbytery, as opposed to the coercive jurisdiction of the chief magistrate. On the other, whilst the prerogative of the Sovereign, as supreme in ecclesiastical as well as in civil causes, was stoutly maintained, the *jus divinum* of bishops was asserted as a countercheck to the Presbyterian claims; and the claims of royal prerogative were pushed into an extreme and mischievous theory of passive obedience and non-resistance. When the Puritan revolt against the arbitrary policy of Charles I. and Archbishop Laud had been successful, and a Scotch policy was in the ascendant, as indicated in the fact that the Solemn League and Covenant was signed by the Members of Parliament, it seemed as if "Presbyteral" domination were in a fair way of succeeding to "Prelatic" rule. But the lay and legal mind of the Parliament came into opposition to the prevalent ecclesiastical tendencies as these were manifested in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In that assembly, the small party of ERASTIANS, who "did not except against the presbyterial government as a political institution proper to be established by the civil magistrate, but were against the claim of a divine right," represented a large and important section in the House of Commons. The Westminster divines again and again pressed the claims of "the Church" as contrasted with merely civil authority. Their view is most concisely formulated in the first section of chapter xxx. of the Westminster Confession: "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers distinct from the civil magistrate." By this government is meant the authority to inflict and remit "Church censures," which are "admonition,"

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Sandys, writing in 1573 to Henry Bullinger, and giving a summary of the new disciplinarian ideas, places first in his list the assertion by "these new orators" that "the civil magistrate has no authority in ecclesiastical matters. He is only a member of the church, the government of which ought to be committed to the clergy." "Zurich Letters" (1st series)—Letter cxiv. (*Park. Soc.*).

“suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper for a season,” and “excommunication from the Church.”

“The fiercest contention,” says the historian of the Puritans, “between the assembly and the Parliament arose upon the power of the keys which the former had voted to be in the eldership or presbytery.”<sup>1</sup> Selden and Whitelocke spoke strongly against any excommunication whatsoever; the former arguing (as Erastus had done) that excommunication was a human invention; the latter contending that excommunication was not proper *pastor’s* work, and questioning both the commission and the competency of the *ruling elders*. Nor did he think the discipline proposed to be necessary. “I have heard many complaints,” he said, “of the jurisdiction of the prelates who were but few; now in this ordinance there will be a great multiplication of spiritual men in government, but I am of opinion that where the temporal sword is sufficient for punishment of offences there will be no need of this new discipline.” Eventually, the Parliament passed an ordinance, allowing certain presbyteries to suspend from the Sacrament in specified cases of ignorance or scandal, with a proviso, added to the rules laid down, that there should be a final appeal from the Church courts to the Parliament. There were also further limitations provided. “By these provisos,” says Neal, “it is evident that the Parliament were determined not to part with the spiritual sword, or subject their civil properties to the Church, which gave great offence to the Scots Commissioners and to most of the English Presbyterians, who declaimed against the ordinance as built upon Erastian principles, and depriving the Church of that which it claimed by a divine institution.”

Here, then, was a revival and a development of the Erastian controversy on a far wider scale than that on which it had originally been conducted. The Presbyterian divines contended that the independence of the Church was at stake: the Parliamentary statesmen contended that civil liberty was put in hazard. They objected to the multiplication of irresponsible “judicatories” within the kingdom, and contended that coercive power of Church-government should be in the hands of the civil magistrate.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neal’s *Hist. of Puritans*, vol. iii. chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> In the answer of the House of Commons to the Scots Commissioners they remonstrate against the blame which has been laid on them as if they were reluctant to “settle religion,” only “because they cannot consent to the granting an arbitrary and unlimited power and jurisdiction to near ten thousand judicatories to be erected within this kingdom; and this demanded in such a way as is not consistent with the fundamental laws and government of the same, and by necessary consequence excluding the Parliament of England from the exercise of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction.”—(Neal, *ubi supr.*)

The Presbyterians did not approve of any control of "Church censures" by the civil power, and the term Erastian became thenceforward a term of reproach, applied to all who advocated the subordination of ecclesiastical tribunals to the civil magistrate, and to all who "deny that Christ has appointed a distinct and independent *government* in the Church for the regulation of its affairs." The English Presbyterian under the Commonwealth was in a somewhat ambiguous position. To a certain extent the Presbyterian form of Church government had been adopted as the recognized form of the National Church, but the limitations above alluded to were incompatible with the complete Presbyterian platform, and "presbytery" was not, therefore, fully established. Independents and sectaries were now, from the side of *liberty*, as antagonistic to "discipline" and "eldership" as Episcopalians and Royalists had been from the side of *authority*; and what seemed to the strict Presbyterian to be anarchical toleration more and more prevailed. He wished to give all due honour to "magistracy," but he was unwilling that it should be confounded with "ministry." He attempted to hold the mean between the "Anabaptist" and the "Erastian." This is illustrated by the following extract from an exposition published shortly before the Restoration :<sup>1</sup>—

Now as the magistrate must take heed of Anabaptists on the one hand, who offend in defect, and give him too little ; so he must take heed of Court clawbacks, who offend in excess and give him too much. They make a god and idol of him for their own ends, obeying his commands against God's commands, and preferring great men's wills before God's holy word. Those cry up kings as Gods, calling them unlimited, independent, not to be questioned by any authority, &c. Thus the Arminians, to curry favour with great ones, and the better to suppress synods, super-superlatively extolled the power of the magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs ; and this is the policy of many sectaries in our days to cry up magistracy, that they may the better cry down presbytery, which they know would curb their errors and profaneness. Thus Erastus, a physician, but rotten divine, puts all Church censures into the hand of the magistrate, and so confounds magistracy and ministry together, which are two distinct offices, having distinct bounds and duties belonging to them which they must not transgress upon pain of God's displeasure. If Uzziah the king will be so bold as to offer sacrifice, which belonged to the priest, let him expect a leprosy for his pains (2 Chron. xxvi. 18-22).

The Anglican view of the ecclesiastical situation at that time may be inferred from the writings of Bramhall, Sanderson, and

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<sup>1</sup> An exposition of the 82nd Psalm, entitled *The Beauty of Magistracy*, by Thomas Hall, B.D., "Rector of Kings Norton, in Worcestershire," published in 1659, and inserted in Swinnoek's Works (Vol. iv. pp. 147, &c.).

Jeremy Taylor.<sup>1</sup> All three writers insist strongly upon the royal supremacy, and on the ultimate subordination of ecclesiastical persons and causes to the royal authority. They vindicate the position of bishops and the function of synods, but declaim against the *clerical* claims of the Presbytery in strong language. "The Presbytery pretends mightily to the sceptre of Jesus Christ as the Pope does to the keys of St. Peter," says Taylor.<sup>2</sup> "The discipline," says Bramhall, "is the very quintessence of refined Popery, or a greater tyranny than ever Rome brought forth."<sup>3</sup> Sanderson ranks the "disciplinarians" with the Papists in respect of their exclusion of the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate. Anti-papal as they profess to be, he says, they are like them in this point, that they take away from kings all ecclesiastical power, authority and jurisdiction, and claim them for themselves alone, and their classes and assemblies. The "Erastians," on the other hand, another species of Reformers, "deprive clerics entirely of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and assign the whole right of the external government of the Church in every respect ("ex asse et in solidum") to the Civil Magistrate." To his own mind, the truer and safer opinion is one between the two extremes. The right of making ecclesiastical laws is vested in "a legitimate synod": yet so that the exercise of its right or power should in every Christian commonwealth be dependent on the authority of the supreme political magistrate."<sup>4</sup>

With the Restoration, the Erastian controversy, in the *technical* sense, "was transferred to Scotland,"<sup>5</sup> and it is, indeed, specially a Presbyterian controversy. But the change in the balance of the English Constitution effected by the Revolution of 1688, the new point of departure in State policy manifested in the Toleration Act, the secession of the Non-jurors, and the influence of the Jacobite faction both in political and ecclesiastical matters, brought about in many of the English clergy a considerable modification in their views of the royal supremacy. And a "High Church" party arose, whose *clerical* claims<sup>6</sup> were adverse to the tolerance and comprehension advocated by the Liberal, "Low Church," or "Latitudinarian" party, and led to an ambitious view of the status and functions of the Convocation,

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See especially, Sanderson's *Prælectiones*, vii.; Bramhall's *Fair Warning to take Heed of the Scottish Discipline*; and *The Serpent's Salve*, Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, Book iii. c. 3. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Duc. Dub.*, iii. 3, Rule 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Fair Warning*, &c., c. i.

<sup>4</sup> *Prælectio*, vii. §§ 29, 30.

<sup>5</sup> See Cunningham's *Historical Theology*, ii. 581.

<sup>6</sup> Hallam speaks of them as "distinguished by great pretensions to sacerdotal power, both spiritual and temporal" (*Constit. Hist. of E.*, ch. xvi.).

such as would co-ordinate it with, if it did not make it independent of, Parliament. These claims were, doubtless, entitled to be called *anti-Erastian*. It may be doubted whether they were judicious.

WM. SAUMAREZ SMITH.

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## ART. II.—OUR OLD INDIANS.

BY ONE OF THEM.

IN the first number of *THE CHURCHMAN* appeared a true and graphic account, by Canon Ryle, of the various parties, sections, and "schools of thought" in the Church of England at the present time. Though Dr. Ryle's enumeration of their several species and varieties is extensive, it is not, and does not claim to be, exhaustive. In particular, he omits one subdivision of our ranks sufficiently numerous, distinct, and influential to deserve a separate notice, the more so as they are marked off by common characteristics, and are as much banded together as any other of the groups which were named by Bishop Ryle. As indicated by the heading of this article, they are "Old Indians," claimed as "*ours*" as being among the Evangelical Churchmen whom this magazine is intended to represent. The writer does not speak as their mouthpiece, nor lay claim to photographic accuracy in his portraiture of them. Sometimes, indeed, he may, on the principle *ex uno disce omnes*, assume that his fellows think the same as himself; but in the main he will endeavour to keep to the inductive method from actual facts that have come under his own observation. And in generalizing them, he would follow the fashion of our Indian agency houses, and while trying to give a correct account, qualify it at the foot by *E. E.*, or errors excepted.

Old Indians then, as every one knows, are simply retired members of the various services or of the mercantile class in India, who having finished their work there, are now settled at home. They have all these features in common—considerable knowledge of men and things, comfortable incomes, and leisure, with average capacities for employing it, according to their individual tastes. But there have been great changes in their characteristics from time to time, corresponding to the changes that have passed over home life, and changes in the administration of India. The genuine old Indian who had grown up before the charter of 1813, was a favourite subject of satire at home, and was cleverly caricatured by the caustic pen of Theodore