

heretics was his avowed object. Thus, interposing in a disputed succession between two noble brothers, he "instantly ordered the territories in dispute to be laid waste with fire and sword, suspended the common laws of war, sanctioned the ravaging their harvests, felling their fruit trees, destroying mills, and driving away cattle."<sup>1</sup> I take these examples purposely from the reign of Innocent III., because he was a man not only undeniably great—the greatest, perhaps, of the long papal line—but one guided by a strong sense of religious duty, however monstrously perverted, and capable of rigorous self-denial within limits of his own fixing, but utterly stern and inflexibly unbending against all whom he viewed as delinquents. In his own eyes he was vindicating the *lessa majestas* of heaven, represented on earth, as he deemed, by himself. This was his highest idea of government, and by its application, thorough and unflinching, he became one of the scourges of mankind.

HENRY HAYMAN.



#### ART. IV.—CONGREGATIONALISM :

##### A SKETCH AND A SUGGESTION.<sup>2</sup>

CONGREGATIONALISM was the child of the storm. It was rocked in the cradle of persecution, and was constrained to be as a man-of-war from youth up. The times were restless. The Holy Scriptures in the mother tongue had opened the gateway of a large hope. The work of Wickliffe and of Erasmus was bringing forth fruit in its season. "It was impossible to silence the great preachers of justice, mercy, and truth, who spake from the Book" (Green). "A new moral and religious impulse" went forth, and men's minds were moved as the wind moves the trees of the forest. The awakening had been slow; but it brought with it the unquenchable desire to know the mind of God directly from the authentic revelation of God, and to have a service of worship in the language "understood of the people."

Henry VIII. was the foe of anyone who did not conform to his imperious will—from the Pope who claimed supremacy in the English Church, to the Protestant who ventured to differ from the Pope and the King in the matter of the Roman

<sup>1</sup> Milman, "Lat. Christ.," ix., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Nonconformist, as well as other authorities and writers, have been consulted and freely quoted in this paper.

doctrine of transubstantiation. The royal quarrel with the Vatican was soon followed by the permission to place a Bible in the church for public reading. In accordance, however, with the intolerant temper of the time, "the King's Highness was minded to have a uniform order throughout the realm." The hanging of heretics was ineffectual to destroy heresy. To forbid without just reason is to arouse antagonism, and to provoke scruple. Dissent asserts itself, and the Protestant puts on his armour. The reign of Edward VI. favoured the Reformation, and the fires of Smithfield, kindled by Queen Mary, inflamed the energy of the truth-seeker. The Spanish Armada caused the Roman Catholic to be regarded as an enemy of the State. Queen Elizabeth had a great opportunity. Protestantism grew apace. The Bible was read in church and home, and "it wrought the wonder of the Reformation."

A new order of service suggested the abolition of the remaining habiliments. Were they not relics of Romanism? and "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Already Hooper had refused to wear the rochet at his consecration. In those days a bishop might not dissent; he was sent to prison. Bishop Ridley regarded the surplice, etc., as "symbols of lawful authority," and persuaded Hooper to yield. Both bishops were in after days burnt at the stake. But the cleavage between Protestant and Protestant had begun. The establishment of the Court of High Commission in 1583 was the enthronement of religious despotism. "Compulsory Uniformity" was made the law of the land: dissent was criminal. The ordinances must be kept, and the official garb must be worn, or punishment for disobedience would be inflicted. Not all regarded obedience as the more excellent way: some preferred exile to conformity. Holland became the refuge of the Puritan Non-conformist, and communion with continental Churches promoted an assimilation to continental methods. Calvin was intolerant as Bonner. Division broke the ranks of the exiles, whose shield of faith was dogmatism. Dissent became sectarian.

We go back a little. The first Congregationalist "little flock" of which there is authentic information had its pasture ground in the Bridewell of the City of London. Its minister, Richard Fitz, was sent to prison, and breathed his last there. A document found in the State Paper Office records the constitution of this community. Its date is 1567. From it we learn that "the marks of Christ's Church are: To have the glorious Evangel preached not in bondage and superstition, but freely and purely; to have the sacraments ministered purely, and altogether according to the institution and good word of the Lord Jesus, without any tradition or invention of

men ; not to have the filthy canon law, but discipline only and altogether agreeable to the Almighty word of our Lord Jesus Christ " (*History of Congregationalism*, 1897). Foxe tells of certain "Congregations" in the City of London as early as 1555, but it is unlikely that they were distinctively Congregationalist. In 1580, Sir Walter Raleigh makes mention of "thousands of Brownists." This was the earliest name by which the Congregationalists were known.

Robert Browne was a clergyman of the Church of England, who held strongly peculiar views on Church government. He, with Robert Harrison, formed a Congregational church in the city of Norwich, in the year 1580. Afterwards he accepted a benefice in Northamptonshire. Impulsive and imperious, he was sent to prison for assaulting his godson. "He maintained that each separate society of Christians, whether large or little, formed a complete Church in itself; that Christ is the head of the Church, and rules it by His word and His spirit; that a true Church is constituted only of godly and believing persons . . . ; that each local church is competent under Christ to regulate its affairs, and is independent of all control but His; that its ordinary officers are a pastor, a teacher of doctrine, elders and deacons; that its officers are chosen by the voice of its members, who also have oversight of one another for the spiritual advancement of the whole; that its relation to other churches is one of brotherly love and mutual helpfulness" (*History of Congregationalism*).

Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, Roger Rippon, John Penry the Welsh evangelist, took up the standard which Browne dropped. "Barrow and Greenwood were, in 1586, prisoners in the Clink for their Nonconformity, and contrived to get a treatise on their Nonconformist principles published in Holland" (Horton). Hence the name "Barrowists," or "Separatists," by which their followers were known.

Lord Macaulay says of them: "Their founder conceived that every Christian congregation had, under Christ, supreme jurisdiction in things spiritual; that appeals to provincial and national synods were scarcely less unscriptural than appeals to the Court of Arches, or to the Vatican; and that Popery, Prelacy, and Presbyterianism, were merely three forms of one great apostasy."

The Holy Scriptures were regarded as the sole rule of faith and practice. "We look for no laws but His Word; for no rules or forms of religion but such as He hath set down in His Word." "The grand charter of the government and power of the Keys," wrote Thomas Goodwin, "is granted, not to ministers in particular, excluding the people, but to the whole body of believers." "The autonomy of the congrega-

tion, acting with the presence of Christ, is the very constitution of the Church" (Horton). "Final decision remains with the Church meeting, coming together in the name of Christ." "A man is a minister no longer than when he has the care of a separate congregation" (Skeats). "The maintenance of the minister is the business of the Church: this provision should be honourable and comfortable" (T. Hooker). "The ideal of Congregationalism is to get back to the primitive Church. The actual spiritual life is the basis of Church unity and visible organization" (Horton).

Apart from the claim to independent Christian communion, and freedom from outside control, with the right to select and maintain the minister, the doctrines of Congregationalism were in general accord with the doctrines of the Reformed Church of England. It does not appear that Robert Browne questioned the supremacy of the Crown in matters ecclesiastical: "the magistrates' sword only wanted an eye to guide it." The confession of the congregation at Amsterdam declared it to be "the duty of princes and magistrates to suppress and root out all false ministries, voluntary religions, and counterfeit worship of God; yea, to enforce all their subjects, whether ecclesiastical or civil, to do their duties to God and man" (Skeats).

Many of the Congregationalists, or Independents, as they got to be called, rejected the use of creeds and confessions. The trust-deeds of their buildings must be referred to in order to determine exactly what the minister is bound to teach. "If we are to have the mind of Jesus and to grasp with new power the Divine truths which are revealed in His person, we must not be hampered with the symbols or the formularies of the Councils or the Synods" (Horton). The minister is the mouthpiece of the congregation. His popularity is an important element in the tenure of his office. Men of pre-eminent power are almost absolute monarchs; men of mediocrity are tenants at will. Some time ago two London ministers met. One looked pale and worn; the other was hale and strong. Said the latter to the former: "You dare not give your people a poor sermon; I dare." The deacons manage the business matters of the church. Pew rents are the chief, and, in most cases, the only source of income.

From the first the iron hand of persecution was heavy on the Brownists. Prelacy was intolerant as the Papacy, and Presbyterianism was in its turn as intolerant as either. Archbishop Whitgift had little compassion upon the peculiar sect; nor can we wonder, when Barrowe called him to his face a beast and a monster. Nevertheless, beatings and bondage and the gallows were barbarous penalties for the offence of exercising

freedom of conscience, and for refusal to join in the public worship of the parish church.

When banishment was substituted for imprisonment many of the Puritans and Nonconformists fled the country. Claiming for themselves liberty of conscience, they had not learned to grant it to others. Any lapse from uniformity among themselves was bitterly resented, and was denounced in language unbecoming Christian tongues and tempers. The Genevan exiles published a service-book of their own; and Nonconformity was divided.

After the defeat and dispersion of the Armada (1588), there was a lull in the storm. Many exiles returned to England. Some who were Puritan in principle believed it better to conform than "to break the peace of the Church." The Congregationalists and others refused to conform. "In and around London they gathered in private houses, woods, gravel-pits, brickfields, workshops, ships, and even in prisons, and worshipped God according to His Word, and the dictates of their conscience" ("History of Congregationalism").

Visions of quiet and rest raised the hopes of these brave men when King James I. ascended the throne. At the Hampton Court conference little heed was given to the Nonconformist tale of grievances. Moderate concessions would probably have satisfied the majority; but the King, despite his motto, "Beati pacifici," was despotic in temper and impatient of opposition, and threatened on two occasions to "harry them out of the land," saying that "if they did not conform they deserved to be hanged." One good thing came of the conference: Dr. Reynolds suggested a new translation of the Holy Scriptures. The King approved, and the Authorized Version was the result. Brownists and Anabaptists were driven into exile.

John Robinson was one of those who left his native land for conscience' sake in this second exodus. He founded a Puritan church at Leyden. Thence forty-one emigrants with their families went forth to seek a home beyond the seas. They sailed in the *Mayflower*, and carried Congregationalism into New England (1620). At the end of ten years they numbered only a few hundred souls. Others followed. Before the assembly of the Long Parliament, 200 emigrant ships had crossed the Atlantic, and 20,000 Englishmen had found a refuge in the West (Green). They carried with them the old-world spirit of bigotry and intolerance, and inflicted pains and penalties on any who did not conform to their own doctrines and practices. Indeed, a separation took place in the Independent Congregation at Leyden (1633), where the Anabaptists raised adult baptism by immersion into an Article of Faith.

Their brethren in the motherland suffered much under Charles I. and Laud. The Star Chamber was kept busy. To state his case in a religious pamphlet might expose the writer to whipping, branding, cutting off the ears, slitting the nose, or even more severe treatment. In the National Church under Laud's rule, to be suspected of Calvinism was to have the door of preferment securely barred. The injunction to the clergy to read the proclamation anent the "Book of Sports" (1633) was a strain on the Puritan conscience. The high-handed introduction of the Liturgy into Scotland led to tumult and disturbance, and the Solemn League and Covenant was framed and sworn. The issue of the new Canons of Convocation (1640), insisting on absolute conformity to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, hastened the conflict between the King and the Commons. Independency became a party watchword.

At the Westminster Conference (1643) the few Independents who were present were willing to be included in a new National Church on condition that power of ordination of ministers was reserved to individual congregations, and that they should be subject to Parliament, and not to a Presbytery, in regard to censures. The Presbyterians were in the majority, and "new Presbyter" was found to be "old Priest writ large."

In the Long Parliament Oliver Cromwell proposed the adoption of a scheme of toleration. "The struggle had widened into a great contest for civil as well as religious liberty, and civil war was the expression of the intensity of the strife" (Green). The Independents were now represented by distinguished statesmen. The regiments of Fairfax consisted almost entirely of Independents. In 1648 the army declared against "any restraint laid on the consciences of men for religious purposes." But the toleration of the Independents was limited. It did not include Prelacy, Papacy, and Socinianism. The "Triers" appointed to "purge the parishes of evil ministries" (1654) often made their examination to turn on abstruse points of doctrine, or on declarations of spiritual experience. The Protector was harsher than the Triers, for he forbade the employment of the delinquent clergy as tutors in families. Independents and Baptists took the places of the excluded unfortunates. The jurisdiction of the Court of High Commission and of the Star Chamber, which had so long made merciless war on Puritan Nonconformity, was abolished. Laud was sent to prison. Stafford was impeached. It should not be forgotten that the Independents of the Commonwealth insisted on the duty of Foreign Missionary effort. In 1648 the Corporation of the President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England was appointed.

After a conference among themselves at the Savoy, in 1658, the Independents published a "Declaration of Faith" on the doctrinal basis of the Westminster Catechism. This declaration has been "generally adopted by the Congregational churches" (Short).

During the reign of Charles II. Nonconformity was again called to endure hardship. Evicted Royalists regained possession of their properties, and ejected Episcopalians were restored to their parishes. With the Independent ministers of the Commonwealth, "Episcopacy refused all compromise."

In the Savoy Conference of 1661 the Independents took no part. The following year saw the passing of the Act of Uniformity, which was intended "to exclude as many of the former clergy as possible." To that end the Bill was framed with much strictness, and was made to come into operation on St. Bartholomew's Day, whereby the nonconforming clergy were made to lose the income from tithes of the previous year. The misfortunes of the Episcopal clergy during the period of the Commonwealth, the deprivation and banishment which had been meted out to them, cannot justify this harsh measure of retaliation. Whilst the Act of Uniformity was under debate, and when Lord Manchester reported to the King that its terms were very severe, Sheldon is reported to have said: "Now we know their minds, we will make them knaves if they conform" (Short).

About two thousand of the clergy of the Church of England, nearly one-fifth of the entire body, were driven from their homes, and forced into the ranks of Nonconformity. The Church of England has never recovered from that terrible blow struck by its own misguided hand. The Reformation had separated the Church of England from the Church of Rome: the Act of Uniformity severed many of its ablest and most pious sons from the Church of England.

A series of punitive Acts succeeded which cut off all hope of reunion, and rendered comprehension impossible.

Independents, with other Nonconformists, met by stealth for worship in each other's houses. There, infants were baptized; and the members of the little flock gathered round the table, which was covered with a linen cloth, in order to receive the Holy Communion. The form of service was much the same as at present, albeit "some scruple was entertained about women singing, as well as speaking," in the assembly. Prayer was extempore. The sermon was the chief thing; it was very long. It was by no means uncommon to begin the service at nine o'clock and go on till twelve; and, after a pause, begin again. Those were what Scotch people called "diets of worship."

Excluded from the Universities, the education of ministers was conducted in private "academies." Upwards of twenty of these academies were in existence at the time of the Revolution (Skeats).

With the advent of William and Mary the reign of all-round toleration began. Archbishops Sancroft and Tillotson and Bishop Burnet were alike advocates of "unlimited toleration for the Dissenters." The Toleration Act was passed in 1689. Conscience had conquered. Legalized persecution received a death-blow.

At this time the number of the Nonconformists was believed to be about 110,000 persons, or one in every hundred of the population. During the twelve years immediately following the passing of the Toleration Act 400 buildings were licensed for public worship. For a time the Independents and Presbyterians drew nearer together. A scheme of comprehension was rejected by the stricter sect after a long and acrimonious controversy.

During the reign of Queen Anne, who promised protection to the Dissenters whilst frankly avowing her decided preference for Episcopacy, the cry was raised "The Church is in danger!" Sacheverell denounced the "Schism of Dissent," and condemned the "academies" as injurious to the State. Moderate Churchmen advocated a kindly policy. Excitement ran high. Meeting-houses were pulled down; Nonconformist ministers were burnt in effigy. A few seceded. An attempt to revive legal repression secured the passing of the Schism Bill, which would have closed the academies. The Queen's death took place, and the Act was not brought into operation.

Toleration characterized the Hanoverian dynasty. The pains and penalties of punitive Acts were abolished. The Test and Corporation Acts remained to disfigure the statute-book. The Regium Donum was welcomed by the Nonconformists as a friendly Act on the part of the Government, and was used for 120 years to relieve the necessities of the widows and orphan children of poor ministers. The grant was renounced when its acceptance interfered inconveniently with the agitation against a rate-aided national Church.

Religious animosity does not promote spiritual health. Whilst men are fighting for existence they cannot give much heed to the amenities of life. Intolerance tends to pride. Church and Dissent degenerated. Socinianism took possession of Presbyterian pulpits; deism became the creed of fashion; the Congregationalists fell from their lofty ideal; their ministers are described as men mostly without culture, and their system of religion "a sinking cause." Wesley and



Whitfield lifted up their voices against prevailing ungodliness. The few settlements of the Episcopalian Moravian Brethren were centres of Christian life and missionary activity. These were not Dissenters; and John Wesley was to the end decided about not renouncing the services of the Church. Independent ministers like Philip Doddridge wrote and pleaded for "the rise and progress of religion in the soul" (1736). Dr. Watts published hymns and sacred songs which tended to revive the music of the sanctuary, and which are the heritage of all the denominations. He also wrote on the decay of Nonconformity, and argued that "its principles are most favourable to the growth of piety." "An Established Church," he said, "is unscriptural."

It was the rekindling of strife. Congregationalism entered on a crusade against the national Church. Doddridge dissented from Watts; but the attack on the Church as an establishment became the platform of the party. Thenceforward the leading Congregationalists advocated the severance of the union between Church and State.

The condition of the Church favoured a destructive policy. Pluralities abounded; non-residence of rectors and vicars was common; the few Evangelical clergymen who preached and laboured with Apostolic fervour were stigmatized as Methodists; the Bishops gave little or no encouragement to the establishment or to the efforts of the missionary and like societies as they successively arose; for fifteen years a controversy disturbed the religious world whether Churchmen might or might not co-operate with Nonconformists in circulating the Holy Scriptures.

The action of the Nonconformists in regard to the American War and the French Revolution greatly embittered Churchmen. Sympathizing with the revolutionary party in each case, they were regarded as republicans and levellers. The pulpits of the Church resounded with indignant denunciation of their conduct. On their part, the Nonconformists declared themselves the enemies of all ecclesiastical establishments. They naturally insisted on the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and it is to be lamented that this reasonable demand was persistently opposed by Churchmen. In 1810 the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty was formed for the purpose of securing the repeal of every remaining penal Act. The abolition of Church rates was not brought within the purview of this society—"not involving injustice to Dissenters." Eighteen years of strife passed before the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed. Ere long insistence on complete religious liberty was changed into the cry for "religious equality."

In 1831 the Congregational Union for England and Wales became the public representative of Congregationalism.

The Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty was succeeded by the British Anti-State Church Association (1844). This was not approved by all the Congregational leaders. In 1853 its name was altered to the "Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control," commonly known as the "Liberation Society." Edward Baines had said at a general convention in 1834: "Nothing less than complete separation of Church and State can secure equal rights to all classes of the people." Thomas Binney (afterwards chairman of the Union) spoke more strongly at the laying of the foundation of the Weigh House Chapel. The Established Church is "a great national evil . . . it destroys more souls than it saves." The Congregationalists, consistently with this development of view, lent their influence to the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church.

But politics and controversy have not in more recent times been allowed to absorb the energies of Congregationalism. During the early decades of this century it grew in numbers and in influence; men of power and spiritual force occupied its high places; large towns welcomed its ministrations; many of its Sunday-schools became models of thoughtful organization and centres of devout Christian instruction; its mission work among the heathen was distinguished by the services of faithful men, who "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." Madagascar, the South Sea Islands, South Africa, China, tell stories of heroism, endurance, and success which will adorn the annals of the Christian Church "till the Lord come." By the thoughtful pens of its cultured sons theological literature has been enriched. Works of its Puritan Fathers live and speak; and volumes of more modern writers are welcomed to honoured places on the shelves of almost every Churchman's library.

Moreover, the long and persevering struggle for freedom of worship and religious liberty has been an example, and has secured a boon, beneficial to all. The voice of Congregationalism has been prompt to plead for the supremacy of the individual conscience. It has from the first given the laymen a prominent place in the councils of its communities—too prominent, perhaps, for the independence of the ministry. But who shall say that the Church of England would not have been stronger and more powerful for good if its representative lay members had received of right admission to reformed convocations?

Evidence of the present condition of Congregationalism is somewhat contradictory. At the census in 1851 there were

3,244 places of worship belonging to the denomination in England and Wales. A contributor to the *Contemporary Review* gives 2,441 as the number of ministers at the present time.<sup>1</sup> A leading Nonconformist newspaper states that "in London Congregationalism stagnates," and that "half our churches in a dozen counties are languishing." The same paper, in another issue, describes its state as satisfactory. Dr. Horton, in a work recently published, says: "In the smaller towns Congregationalism holds its own. In the larger towns it has not been equal to the situation." "It has no ground of complaint, because other Churches have entered in to supply its defects. We are at present in a period of arrest."

With much that is excellent and Scriptural in the doctrines of this influential Christian community, it is deplorable that it should continue to occupy a camp hostile to the national Church. We want its alliance and aid in the warfare against national unrighteousness. The mountain of mediævalism and the abyss of the liberationist block the approach to an understanding and a truce. But mediævalism is not the authorized doctrine of the Church of England, and the Liberation Society is not the legitimate offspring of pure Congregationalism. Moreover, each owes the other some amends for undue severity and unjust treatment. The Church made cruel war on Nonconformity; the Independents retaliated; and since then neither has been always fair to the other. The Congregationalist bears the marks of oppression and animosity; the Churchman's work for God has been injured and discredited by the disestablishment and disendowment crusade; and many a parochial clergyman has been subjected to the ill-will of parishioners moved to disaffection by outside agitators, and has been compelled to expend means and strength on Church defence which should have been devoted to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ. It is time to "let the dead bury their dead."

If organic unity cannot yet be looked for, is not a friendly approach and a brotherly understanding and a cessation of all hostility possible? The advance should be made by Churchmen, and the Lambeth resolutions should not remain a dead letter. Prayer when acted on tends to its own fulfilment. The things which separate "are things seen and temporal"; the things which unite "are unseen and eternal."

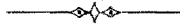
Long ago Archbishop Sancroft counselled bishops and clergy to "have a tender regard to their brethren, the Protestant Dissenters, to visit them at their homes, to receive them kindly at their own, to persuade them if possible to join the Church;

<sup>1</sup> 2,881 is the number just stated in a Congregationalist paper.

and, under all circumstances, to unite heartily and affectionately with them in prayer."

Thirty years ago the young vicar of a northern town was invited to attend the anniversary meeting of one of the Non-conformist congregations. He argued thus with himself: "If some of my parishioners will not meet me in church, but wish to meet me in the town-hall or in a school-room, why may I not deliver my message to them there?" He went, was welcomed, and was unconstrained in speech and sympathy. A similar welcome was offered at other anniversaries until it became a habit to attend them. Only goodwill came of it. The morning after such a meeting, an old member and former deacon of the most influential congregation of Dissenters in the town said to his minister, a strong and determined liberationist: "If you ask the vicar to attend our anniversary, you will have to give over preaching about the disestablishment of the Church."

ALFRED OATES.



#### ART. V.—HUMILITY.

I. "TRULY this man was the Son of God!" So said the Roman soldier, the representative of the proudest race of mankind, as he stood beside the cross of Jesus of Nazareth, and saw him die in forlorn ignominy, the object of the hatred, scorn and derision of the authorities of Church and State in His own nation. And it is one of the subsidiary thoughts which lead us to the same tremendous conclusion, that we find our Lord with such quiet, persistent, unhesitating originality always laying stress on the primary importance of the unpopular virtue of humility.

By experience and reflection man has found out this importance to be true, but it was not previously a received opinion. It is only a Christian who can say: "Humility is the greatest of virtues, for all others follow where it is found, and fly away where it is not; it is a plant that was little known among the ancients, and first grew to perfection, violet-like, in the retired and shady hills of Judæa. Without it, ambition, always aiming at great fruits, finds them, when they come to maturity, to be full of bitterness and ashes. Without it learning is full of presumption. Without it that which is called 'glory' is nothing more than inflated vanity and lollow-hearted applause. Without it we have the strange spectacle of many ancient and renowned heroes of antiquity