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## ARTICLE I.

### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

*History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century.*  
*Volume Fifth.* By J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE, D. D.

We have found the new volume of Dr. Merle to be even a more readable one than either of the preceding volumes. It contains some preliminary notices of the early British Church,—its “oriento-apostolical formation,”—its “national-papistical and royal-papistical corruption,”—the lingering of truth on the island of Iona,—the teaching of St. Patrick, of Columba, of Oswald, and of Aidan,—and the recognized equality of the office of Bishop and Presbyter, in those earlier and purer times, which will doubtless be new and refreshing to many of the thousands of readers which the volume will attract. This volume only comes down to the death of Cardinal Wolsey, in the year 1530. It will be apt to suggest to many of its readers, who have also been readers of the former volumes of the series, a comparison between the Reformation in England, and the Reformation in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Scotland. How was it that the results in England differed from the results in all other countries? We make use of the occasion of the appearance of this volume, when the subject will be in many minds, to present the solution of this question, as it appears to us, without confining our view to the small

period of the strictly reforming era which the volume covers.

Out of the glowing furnace of the Reformation, there came, generally speaking, one single unique stamp of personal character, and one single unique stamp of view and practice on the fundamental principles of Church government. This is a general, not a universal remark. There is apparently a very prominent exception in the Reformation in the Kingdom of England. It is an exception, not as to the stamp of the theological doctrine, nor as to the stamp of personal character, but as to the fundamental principles of church-government. A Calvinistic theology, was the universal theology of the Reformation. Intense activity, and yet a thorough dependence on God, was the universal type of personal character at the time of the Reformation. And the equality of the Christian clergy, in rank and order, was the universal principle of the Reformation,—Church-government, without any exception that we know of, save that which is to be found in the kingdom of England.

Now, if we will correctly conceive of the state of things as it was in the sixteenth century,—that the word of God had been long buried,—that it then had an extensive, if not general, resurrection,—that it struck upon the hearts and consciences of men with a sharpness, a novelty, a freshness of impression, unknown in Protestant Christendom in our day,—that there were then among Protestants, no such historical roots of bitterness as there are now, lying backward in the struggles and the principles of their ecclesiastical ancestry, among the heats and the quarrels of former times, as sources of perpetual division,—but that the spiritual men of that day were a company of new-born sons of the Spirit of God, contemporary brethren in Jesus Christ, *owning* obedience to his sovereign word, and *owing* it to nothing else,—we shall see that there was then the best chance which has occurred in the Church since the days of the Apostles, for “simple conviction,” for upright conscience and un-biassed judgment on the great matters of Christianity, about which men have been, ever since, so prone to differ and divide. The harmony of theological opinion among the children of God in England, and his children

elsewhere at that time, and the harmony of that noble personal character exhibited in England, with the noble spirits of other lands, towards all of whom the Christian reader's heart must go out in deep veneration and ardent affection, are things which may well set us to look into the circumstances of the English Reformation, to find the cause of the variation which did arise on the other subject of church-government. If there ever was a generation of uninspired men whose names deserve to have weight as authorities on party questions, it is the generation of the Reformers of the sixteenth century; from the absence of sinister motives, the freedom from traditional causes of quarrel, the freshness of the word of God to their minds, and the deep and faithful subjection with which they yielded themselves to the Divine guidance.

Looking at the Reformation from this point of view, we have an unbroken testimony to what has subsequently been called, from the name of the greatest thinker among them, a Calvinistic theology. In this sense of the word, Luther was a Calvinist,—Zuingli was a Calvinist,—Cranmer was a Calvinist,—Knox was a Calvinist;—Farel and Viret were Calvinists,—Melancthon and Gualtier were Calvinists,—Melville and Buchanan were Calvinists,—Hooper, Bradford, Jewel and Parker were Calvinists. The only alleged exception to the remark is old Father Latimer, a good man and a good preacher, of popular talents as an orator, but no great thinker;—the George Whitefield of that day,—of whom the most that can be said is, that he left a doubt upon the question whether he was a Calvinist or not,—which none of the other Reformers did.

Looking at the Reformation from this point of view, we also get an unbroken testimony to the great practical truth that the doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty is not the same thing as fatalism;—that it does not legitimately produce a lazy and indolent character, or an inactive life, or a guilty tempting of Providence by waiting for his sovereignty to accomplish its purposes without human agency and the diligent appliance of human instrumentalities. Luther trusted in God's sovereignty,—we may almost say that he *utterly* trusted in God,—yet, Luther was a diligent and incessant worker, an earnest employer

of all human means and appliances. So also did Calvin trust in God and work. So also did Zuingli trust and work. So did Knox. So did Cranmer. So did Hooper. And so did Jewel. So, indeed, have all men of any note, from the days of the Apostle Paul to the moment of the present writing, refuted the great calumny of fatalism brought against the doctrines of Grace, by the shining actions of their lives, speaking louder far, than by the professions of their tongues. Looking, for further example, at the lives of such men as Jonathan Edwards, and John Witherspoon, and George Whitefield, and Samuel Davies, men who were as much alike in the deep and earnest labour of their lives as they were in thorough trust in the sovereign power and purpose of God, and the charge against Calvinism of being the parent of an inert fanaticism is crisped and consumed as thoroughly as the other untruths of time and earth will be, by the searchings of the final day. There was no variation, either of sentiment or of practice, on this subject, worth speaking of, during the times of the Reformation.

The question very naturally arises, then, did the Word speak with a forked tongue on the other subject,—the subject of church-government and the kindred topics,—in the ears of the Reformers? In their honest investigations, and with their faithful consciences, how came they to be divided on this subject, any more than on the others? How did it happen that the Church of England parted company with the churches of other countries on the subject of church-government, as they came out of the furnace of the Reformation? Some investigation of that question is proposed in the present article; and a consequent vindication of the word of God, and the English Reformers, from the charges, respectively, of not having given, and not having received, impressions, homogeneous with those of reformation in other lands. If we shall be successful in this undertaking, we submit whether the result will not be one of the most signal of all proofs which the course of human events has furnished, in the flight of time, of the right which the sceptre of Jesus Christ (that is, his word,) possesses, to rule the opinions and to bind the consciences of men,—in the

fact that nations far apart, speaking different languages, of different national habits, starting under different circumstances, and with different traditions, yet all looking into the Eternal word, with unbiassed judgments and faithful hearts, drew from thence the same stamp of theological doctrine, the same type of practical character, and the same fundamental principles of church-government.

Three things came out of the Reformation in England which did not come out of it in other countries.

I. The ROYAL SUPREMACY; that is, the principle that the king or queen of England is the head of the Church of England.

II. The EPISCOPAL ORDER OF MINISTERS; that is, the principle that important power of government and discipline are exclusively vested in an upper and superior rank of Pastors, to whom other Pastors of the Church are subject and inferior in rank, order and office.

III. The LEGISLATIVE POWER ON EARTH; that is, the doctrine that the Church of Christ has the right to decree and enact rites and ceremonies for itself, which are not to be found in the word of God; and this doctrine so put into practice as to resolve itself into the other and still more flagrant doctrine that the *civil* legislature has the right to make such decrees and enactments for the Church of Christ.

These three things mainly distinguish the Reformation in England from the Reformation in other countries.

Our purpose is to show that the newly uttered voice of the word of God did not produce either of these peculiarities of the English Reformation;—that the Divine word really spoke to the Reformers in that kingdom on these points, with the same sound and voice with which it spoke to the other Reformers,—that it was actually heard and understood by them as it was by the others,—that the causes of the variations of that Church are to be looked for entirely apart from the consciences of the chief servants of Jesus Christ at the time,—that the testimony of the men of that time is, in fact, one, single, and simple, on *all* the points mentioned,—and that we have, indeed, as we might suppose we would have under the circumstances, the unanimous voice, the homoge-

neous views of all the men of that great era, in all countries, and with all their various antecedents, to certain great principles of faith and practice drawn from the word of the living God. And if ever that fond vision of many good, but enthusiastic, men of modern times,—the union of Protestant Christendom into one really pure and truly Catholic communion,—shall ever assume any shape of probability worth attention, it is hard to see a more eligible basis of such union than is to be found in the general consent of those wise and holy men, the Reformers of the sixteenth century.

It is obvious that we must distinguish, at the outset, between the will of the Reformers, and the Acts of Church construction; between what those men would have done who consulted the word of God, and put themselves under its guidance, and what those men did do who set up the English Church; between what the judgments and consciences of the spiritual men dictated, and what the civil authorities decreed and established in the Church.

I. The ROYAL SUPREMACY, which was established in the English Church at the time of the Reformation, and continues in it to this day, being at once a great ecclesiastical blunder, and a great hindrance to the correction of ecclesiastical blunders, comes first to be looked at.

It was about the year 1521, the year on which Luther was arraigned at the great diet of Worms, that king Henry VIII. of England, being a very zealous Papist, and a special admirer of the angelical doctor and eagle of divines, Thomas Aquinas, hearing that Dr. Luther was exciting a great ferment in Germany, and that, among other strange things, the heretical Doctor was hotly assailing his favourite Aquinas, wrote, with his own Royal hand, a book against Martin Luther, entitled "The Seven Sacraments," sent an elegantly bound copy of that book to Pope Leo X., as a proof of his Royal zeal for holy mother Church, and in reward for the zeal and the book, and, in compliment to his right Royal and orthodox wisdom, received from Pope Leo that title of DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, which his successors on the great heretical throne of Europe have ever since proudly worn.

But about the year 1527, there appeared, for the second time, among the maids of honour of queen Catharine, a young woman of remarkable beauty, who had been, for five or six years previously to that time, receiving her education and accomplishments in the city of Paris, and in the retinue of queen Claude of France. She was the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, afterwards Earl of Wiltshire, grand daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, and great grand daughter of the Earl of Ormond, and of Sir Geoffry Boleyn, Lord Mayor of London. She had been a short while at the English Court, five years before this time, and had then been contracted in marriage to young Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland; but Wolsey, in whose train Percy was then a follower, broke off the engagement; and as Percy was very soon married to Mary Talbot, Anne did not find England a pleasant place, and returned again to the French court. By all accounts, queen Catharine was one of the most charming women of her day. She had been the wife of the short-lived Prince Arthur. Henry had been married to her for eighteen years. But with the young and beautiful Anne Boleyn, who was to be the mother of a great queen, and of a great revolution, he now fell very suddenly and very violently in love. It is a question which has never yet been settled, to the satisfaction of observing minds, acquainted with royal human nature, whether king Henry VIII. had already begun to have scruples about the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow before the year 1527, or whether those scruples did not originate exactly contemporaneously with the appearance at the English court, of Anne Boleyn, the the great aristocratic beauty, with the bright eyes, and the Parisian accomplishments. If we are to believe the word of the proud, jealous and uxorious Defender of the Faith, and author of the "Seven Sacraments" himself, some scruples had arisen in his mind before this time. But if we credit the sternest probabilities, especially those drawn from what he afterwards proved himself to be, then we cannot quite give implicit credence to the Defender of the Faith on that point. At least we must allow, that though his scruples about the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow had previously

grown very slowly, and been very manageable, through a wedded life of eighteen years, that they now grew very rapidly, in the sight of the sweet face, and the bright eyes, and the Parisian accomplishments of the aristocratic beauty, and came quickly to maturity in a few months.

In the year 1528, on application of the Defender of the Faith, the Pope sent Cardinal Campeggio into England, there to be joined in commission with Cardinal Wolsey, as legates of the Holy See, to try the cause of the king's divorce from Catharine of Arragon. But Catharine of Arragon was the aunt of the great emperor Charles V., and was therefore strongly befriended in Europe; and so the Pope directed Campeggio to avoid an issue of the cause, and to seek delay above all things; and finally, after long temporizing, recalled Cardinal Campeggio from England. During the sluggish length of time, when the king of England was knocking as a suppliant at the door of the Pope of Rome, the Royal Tudor was heard occasionally to drop threats which might have alarmed any other Pope than one who had the terrible fear of Charles V. before his eyes: that "he would do what he wished *of his own authority.*"—"We must prosecute the affair in *England.*" "No other than God shall take her (Anne Boleyn,) from me." If I am not allowed to have my way in that affair, then England shall no longer remain a Popish country." But the Pope could not bring himself to believe that there was danger of the Defender of the Faith himself turning heretic; and so, to please Charles V., he issued an avocation of the cause of the divorce to the pontifical court, and cited Henry and Catharine to appear in person or by proxy at Rome, that the cause might be tried. This was a great blunder of the Pope of Rome, for Henry VIII. had already begun to dislike the idea of a head of the English Church, or of any thing else English having to be sought for out of England, or, indeed, out of the doublet and hose of the Royal Tudor himself.

In the month of July, 1529, king Henry, wearied and fretted with the unending trickery and manœuvring of the court of Rome, rode out of London for a summer airing in the country, attended by Gardiner, afterwards



Bishop of Winchester, and Fox, afterwards Bishop of Hereford; and when he stopped for the night, these two courtiers were quartered with a Mr. Cressy, at Waltham Abbey. This Mr. Cressy had two sons of an age to be getting an education, and so there was a young scholar from Cambridge, a relative of the family, domiciliated in Mr. Cressy's house at the time, as tutor to his two sons. This young Cambridge man had been diligently studying the newly printed Scriptures, like Tyndale, and Frith, and Barnes, and Stafford, and Bilney, and Latimer. He was to return to the University. He was only absent from there now on account of a severe sickness prevailing about Cambridge. He was always a rather timid man—this Doctor Cranmer. Fox, Gardiner, and Cranmer, sat together to supper at Mr. Cressy's hospitable board, and the conversation turned upon the king's divorce, the all-absorbing subject in England at that time. On being politely asked his opinion, Mr. Cranmer replied that he saw no end to the Papal negotiations touching that matter,—that the real question was, what does the word of God say about it,—and he did not see why that question could not be solved as well by the learned men of the English Universities, as by the Pope and his counsellors. When the two courtiers re-joined the king, they of course at once reported to him the novel suggestion of the Cambridge man; and the king instantly cried out, in the true Tudor dialect: "Where is this Dr. Cranmer, for I perceive that he has the right sow by the ear." Dr. Cranmer had made his fortune by this suggestion. He was immediately sent for to London, located in the house of the Earl of Wiltshire, the father of the fair Helen, and directed to write out his opinion concerning the divorce. Then came the sudden fall from his dizzy height, of that once great son of fortune Cardinal Wolsey, who

"At last with easy roads did come to Leicester,  
Lodged in the abbey, where the reverend Abbot,  
With all his convent, honourably received him;  
To whom he gave these words: O, Father Abbot,  
An old man, broken with the storms of State,  
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye.  
Give him a little earth for charity!  
So went to bed."

Dr. Thomas Cranmer now became the king's favourite adviser, instead of Wolsey; and not long afterwards was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of all England.

Now, let us mark the course of events, and what point of reform it is which they signify. In the year 1530, a royal proclamation was issued, forbidding the introduction into, or publication in England, of any bull from Rome, under pain of the royal displeasure, and of legal penalties. In the year 1531, the clergy of England were indicted in a body, in the Court of King's Bench, for having acknowledged the legantine authority of Wolsey in the affair of the divorce. In the year 1532, an act of Parliament was passed, abolishing the payment of annates, or first fruits to Rome. In the year 1533, Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn were married at Whitehall, and Cranmer was made Archbishop of Canterbury.—In 1533-'4, acts of Parliament were passed, declaring it to be no heresy to speak against the Bishop of Rome, otherwise called the Pope; and that the Clergy of England should hereafter be subject to the King's majesty, and not the Pope;—that there should be no appeal taken, thereafter, from England to Rome, under penalty of a *præmunire*;—that Bishops and Archbishops should be elected under the king's letters patent, and not presented by the Pope, as formerly,—and that Peter's-pence, and all other taxes hitherto paid to Rome, should be abolished. In the session of Nov. 1534, the king was confirmed, by the advice of Thomas Cromwell, in the office and title of Supreme Head of the Church of England on earth, with the sole right to reform and correct all heresies by his own authority,—and the first fruits, and also a yearly tenth of all spiritual livings, were made over to the crown.

This is the first chapter of the English Reformation, so far as it consists of those acts of public authority by which the Church was constructed. It is very plain that it was of the earth earthy,—almost simply and only, a revolt from a Pope at Rome to a Pope in England,—from a priest pope to a king pope,—from a pope who might not have any lawful wife at all, to a pope who would have for wife whom he would have for wife. It is equally plain

that the doctrine of the king's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, originated with the king and the parliament and from the quarrel with Rome, and the supposed exigencies of the times, and not from the word of God.

It is true that the under-current of a spiritual reformation had begun to flow in England, by means of Erasmus's Greek Testament, and Tyndale's English Bible, and the teachings and expositions of Bilney, and Frith, and Stafford, and Latimer. But this true reforming work of the Divine word and of the Divine Spirit, had very little to do with those who were working out the English visible Church. The two movements were totally different things. They met only in Cranmer, and in some of the laymen of the House of Commons.—In the Session of Parliament of Nov. 1530, acts of Parliament were passed, leveled at the exactions of the Clergy, for the probate of wills, mortuaries, non-residences, and for their practice of being farmers of lands. But it was with the laymen in the House of Commons, who were believed to favour Luther's doctrine in their hearts, that these bills originated. They were strenuously opposed by the spiritual peers in the House of Lords, and as strenuously advocated by the temporal peers; and the king gave them his royal assent, much as a traveller in the east threshes his valet, to *strike terror* into the Pope, by letting him see what the Royal Tudor could do, if the Royal Tudor should be driven to extremities. They were as strenuously opposed by the Clergy out of Parliament, as they had been by the Clergy in Parliament.\*

It was fourteen or fifteen years after this time before any change was made in the Romish Common Prayer Book of the kingdom of England. The king retained his papist convictions concerning other matters of religion besides the supremacy. And we have the authority of Bishop Short, in his History of the Church of England,—his own Church,—for asserting that that Church could not be called a Protestant Church at all, under Henry VIII., in any other respect than that the king was the head of it, and not the Pope. In fact, the Church of England, visibly considered, received its stamp much

\* Burnet's Hist. Ref., vol. i., p. 134.

more from the Royal mind, than from the word of God, through the whole four reigns of the Reformation period. Henry VIII. was an English Roman-Catholic, and so the Church of England was an English Roman-Catholic church, under Henry VIII. Edward VI. was a strong Protestant in inclination, and so the Church of England inclined strongly to Protestantism under Edward VI. Bloody Mary was thoroughly popish and Romish, and so was the vast mass of the Church of England in her day. Elizabeth was half popish and half Protestant in heart, with the strong necessity, from her political position, of taking the Protestant side, and such also was the English Church under Elizabeth. In fact, if queen Elizabeth had not been the daughter of that Anne Boleyn, to find the way to whose arms the king of England had quarrelled with the Pope of Rome, so that both the splendours of the throne and the honours of legitimate birth, conspired with whatever of filial affection she possessed, to throw her upon the English side of that dispute, there is not wanting some good ground to think, that, at one time during her reign, she was willing to make the same sort of return to Rome that her sister Mary made before her.

The student may find at length in Burnet, (vol. i., p. 229 and 230,) the arguments by which the supremacy of the king was attempted to be justified at the time when it was established; where he will be amused to find no distinction made between the king's civil supremacy over the ecclesiastics, and his ecclesiastical supremacy over them;—a total confusion of the rightful authority of the king over them in civil cases, when they are regarded as citizens of the country, with the king's authority over them in spiritual matters, when they are regarded as members of the Church of Jesus Christ.—One of the grossest abuses of Rome had been to deny that churchmen could be punished by the civil authorities of England, even for the most aggravated offences against social good order and public morals. The arguments for the royal supremacy do fairly meet that assumption; and fully refute that monstrous piece of popish arrogance. They are totally irrelevant and impertinent to prove that the king, or any one else, is, or

can be the head of Christ's Church on earth, in spiritual matters, and considered as a Church,—that great point of spiritual freedom, which the Church of Scotland has, in all ages, shown so much true valour, and won so much true spiritual glory in vindicating. Nor are Rome and Scotland to be placed side by side, in the same condemnation, with any truth or justice, as was sometimes done by the tame and sorry Erastianism of the *Via Media*, so called. Had Rome asserted that the word of God was of higher authority in matters ecclesiastical than the Parliament of England—as Scotland asserts,—then Rome would have been right, as Scotland is right.—Rome claimed exemption from the civil laws for the crimes and violence and outlawry of her hordes of shaven myrmidons, as well as their religious independence. Scotland claims freedom from the laws of man for the consciences of her Christian men, in purely spiritual matters, and under the guidance of the Divine word, and the administration of her own constitutional religious tribunals.

The lower House of Convocation in England passed the act of supremacy with a bad grace, and put in a proviso: *quantum per Christi legem licet*,—as much as may be by the law of Christ. And if the authority of Le Bas—a flaming Episcopalian—is to be taken, then that cowardly good man, the reforming Archbishop Cranmer himself, in a speech on the subject of a general council, delivered in the House of Lords in the year 1535, when Scriptural opinions had been making much progress in his mind, distinctly asserted and maintained that Christ had left no head of the Church on earth.\*—The doctrine of the king's supremacy over the Church, sprang from the king's divorce. It never did spring from the word of God. It was never nurtured by the word of God. It never will or can be. The doctrine appears, indeed, in a very mitigated form, in the 37th of the Articles, which were framed in the year 1562, after the translated Bible had begun to teach the people of England spiritual truth. In fine, it is sufficient to make good the position that the royal supremacy grew

\* Le Bas's Cranmer, vol. i., p. 88.

not from the word of God, to quote the admission of this point of Richard Hooker himself,—one of the ablest advocates with the pen that any church polity ever had, and withal a most thorough-going partizan of the Church of England,—when he says: “As for supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs, the word of God doth no where appoint that all kings should have it, neither that any should not have it; for which cause it seemeth to stand altogether by human right, that unto Christian kings there is such dominion given.”\* The royal supremacy, therefore, never could have been established by men putting themselves solely under the guidance of the Divine word. The other churches of the Reformation required a positive warrant from Scripture for what they set up, either in their polity or their worship; but the Church of England adopted the very different principle that silence gives consent; that they might do whatever was not contrary to the word of God. On the same principle, they might have introduced, as parts of church-government or divine worship, a voyage with Gulliver to Lilliput, or a slumber with Endymion in the Grecian woods, or an aeronautic expedition to the moon, or any thing else about which the Scriptures are totally silent, and which they cannot therefore be said to forbid.

II. We come now to consider the SECOND VARIATION of the Reformation in England from the Reformation in other countries, namely, *the Episcopal order of Ministers*; or the principle that important powers of government and discipline are exclusively vested in an upper and superior rank of pastors, to whom other pastors of the church are subject and inferior in rank and order.

The republican tendency of a church-government by synods of clergy of equal rank, mingled with the representatives of the people, is admitted by every writer and thinker of any account on such subjects in modern times. It is admitted by David Hume, (*Hist. Eng.*, Harper's edition, vol. iv., pp. 141, 385 and 572,)—an authority utterly worthless, indeed, on any religious question, except where he praises, contrary to his own prejudices, as in this case;—by Sir James McIntosh, (*Hist. Eng.*,

\* *Ecc. Pol.*, Book viii., chap. 2, sec. 5.

vol. ii., p. 126,) a much higher and purer authority;—by Macaulay, (*Hist. Eng.*, vol. ii. p. 13, and many other places.) It is constantly admitted, charged, and insisted on, in that work of great research, and of a very impartial bitterness towards all religion, the *Pictorial History of England*, recently published under the auspices of the Society for the diffusion of useful knowledge, (*Book vii.*, chap. 2, pp. 461-464 et passim.) It is admitted by Edmund Burke, (*Policy of the Allies*, *Wk.* vol. ii., p. 130,)—by bishop Short, in his *History of the Church of England*, p. 223,—by Sir Walter Scott himself, (*Old Mortality*, p. 7,) who is probably the worst enemy to republican liberty, and to spiritual religion of modern times, because he is the most thoroughly prejudiced, the least fair, but the most specious, the most tinselled with a coat of affected and almost canting liberality, over a heart of the cruelest hatred to some of the noblest of his country's dead, and the most gifted and influential of modern romancers. The same thing was vociferated by king James I., at the Hampton Court Conference, in his famous saying: "No bishop no king." And the same view of church-government is well known to have been entertained by an English civilian of far higher and nobler name than even the high and noble names of Burke, MacIntosh and Macaulay,—the highest and noblest name, indeed, in all the manifold lustre of the British annals,—JOHN HAMPDEN, who declared when dying, and dying on a battle-field fought for republican liberty in Church and State, that though he thought the doctrines of the Church of England, in greater part, conformable to the word of God, yet he "could not away with (tolerate) the governance of the Church by bishops."—*Picto. Hist. Eng.*, *Book 6, chap. 1.*

Now, it is very easy to see why such a church-government should not have been adopted, scriptural or unscriptural, in England, in the sixteenth century, under the sceptres of Tudors, and those sceptres invested with supremacy in affairs ecclesiastical. A Tudor king, and his daughter, a Tudor queen, the two most despotic monarchs of England since William the Conqueror, with servile parliaments at their heels, amid the sunset rays of mediæval Europe, in a kingdom having an aristocratic

rank in the civil state, set to work to make a church to suit their own tastes, to fit in beneath the throne, and to correspond with the civil state, and finding an aristocratic order of preachers, Lord Bishops, ready made to their hand in the Roman Catholic Church, where it had naturally grown up, amid the monarchical and feudal institutions of the middle ages, they simply permit it to remain untouched in their English establishment. It was not even intended to throw out the Roman incumbents of the bishopricks, if they would take the oath of the Royal supremacy. Many of them did so, with a ready facility. We actually find such a wretch as Bishop Bonner, taking the oath of supremacy, and taking out a new commission for his bishoprick, from Henry VIII!—And of Kitchen, of Llandaff,—a very prominent Dugald Dalgetty of the English Reformation,—it was remarked that he always believed according to the last act of parliament;—English Catholic under Henry VIII,—Protestant under Edward VI.,—Papist under bloody Mary,—Semi-Protestant under Elizabeth, he kept *his place* through all the changes, and died bishop of Llandaff, in the sixth year of Elizabeth!

But where were the truly spiritual men of England on this subject all this time? Did the work of God speak a language to them on this point different from what it spoke to the other renewed souls of the Reformation?—Let us see. Columba, upholding the early Christianity on the island of Iona, had taught that “Bishops and presbyters are equal.”—*D’Aubigne*, vol. v., p. 27. John Wickliffe, in another day and time, drew his reforming doctrines simply from the living word of God; and John Wickliffe declared it to be his opinion, that by the institution of Christ, “priests and bishops were all one.”—*LeBas’s Wickliffe*, p. 300. In the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., the more spiritually-minded bishops published a book, entitled “The Institution of a Christian Man,” designed for the instruction of the people, in which it is declared that bishops and priests are the same order, and that diocesans are of human appointment.—*Short*, p 83. A revised and enlarged edition of this work was published soon afterwards, with a somewhat different title, but it contained the same state-



ment on this subject.—*Burnet* I., 586. There was a celebrated brief confession, which *Burnet* says that he had seen, (I., 585,) signed by Cromwell and the two Archbishops, by eleven Bishops, and twenty divines and canonists, containing the same declaration that bishops and priests are the same order. *Cranmer's* opinion to the same effect is admitted by *Bishop Short*, and might be very easily proven if it were not. In a celebrated sermon delivered in the year 1588, on a public occasion, *Dr. Bancroft* undertook to maintain, for the first time, so far as is known, from the mouth of a spiritual man in Protestant England, that bishops were of a different order by divine right from ordinary pastors;—but this was too good news to *Archbishop Whitgift* to be at once received, and that prelate remarked that he “rather wished than believed it to be true.” It did not so well please others of the clergy and laity; and *Dr. Raignolds*, Professor of Divinity in Oxford, came out with strictures upon it as follows: “All that have laboured in reforming the Church for five hundred years past, have taught that all pastors, be they entitled bishops or priests, have equal authority and power by God’s word; as first the Waldenses, next *Marsilius Petavinus*, then *Wickliffe* and his disciples; afterwards *Huss* and the *Hussites*; and last of all *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Brentius*, *Bullinger*, and *Musculus*. Among ourselves, we have Bishops, the queen’s Professors of Divinity, and other learned men, as *Bradford*, *Lambert*, *Jewel*, *Pilkington*, *Humphreys* and *Fulke*, who all agree in this matter; and so do all Divines beyond sea that I ever read, and doubtless many more whom I never read. But why do I speak of particular persons? It is the common judgment of the Reformed Churches of *Helvetia*, *Savoy*, *France*, *Scotland*, *Germany*, *Hungary*, *Poland*, the low countries and *our own*.” So speaks an Oxford Professor of Divinity, about the year 1588, in the thirtieth year of the reign of queen *Elizabeth*. And he settles the question, as to the views of the spiritual of his own, and other countries, and this vexed point of church-government. Among others, he sweeps away, in his full train, the supposed great Anglican champion, *Bishop Jewel*. But we will not delay on this point; as it is a subject usually attended by much

more of warmth than of doubt,—of doubt, there is just none at all;—of warmth, yet much: On this subject the word of God made no different impression on spiritual minds in England from what it made on such minds in other lands.

Two parties were speedily formed in the Church of England, as might have been expected; the one the party of Court Divines, who took their impulses from the civil authorities, and consequently were stout upholders of what the Royal will had set up;—the other party was the party of the Puritans, who insisted on further reformation, in obedience to the word of God; and they were unquestionably, as a general remark, the men who, of all their generation, imbibed most deeply the love of the word of God. These two parties grappled in dire conflict for a round hundred years from this sermon of Dr. Bancroft. Star-Chamber and High-Commission were swept away, as the small devourings of the coming power. The head of king and prelate rolled in the dust. Throne and Cathedral vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision. The whole moral world trembled with the power of the rising spirit, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. It is true that hypocrites from elsewhere crept in, and put on puritanism as a cloak, and thereby defiled the good name of that sacred cause; just as baseness and hypocrisy are often seen to render a very solemn homage to truth and righteousness by borrowing some of the most awful of their robes. Yet still, out of that mighty struggle for freedom and purity in Church and State, blessings have descended to the Anglo-Saxon race,—the dominant race of the modern world,—for which that race will never cease, while they are free and sane and wise, to give thanks to Almighty God, and under God, to the Hampdens, Cromwells, and Vanes, puritan, covenanter, republican, and all the circle of strong men, who stood up for truth and freedom in those grand old days. Out of the furnace of the Reformation in England, came just what came from it in other lands, on the subject of the Christian ministry. The word of God spoke with no forked tongue on this subject, any where, to spiritually-minded men.

III. The third and last variation of the Church of England which we have to consider, is its *claim of legislative power on earth*: that is, that the Church has a right to establish rites and ceremonies not found in the word of God; and this doctrine so put into practice as to resolve itself into the other and more errant doctrine still, that the *civil legislature* has the right to make these decrees for the Church of Christ.

The first clause of the twentieth Article of the Church of England, which asserts that "the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of Faith,"—is a piece of palpable Romanism. It certainly was not to be found in the original draft of the Articles, as signed by the Bishops and Archbishops, in 1562,—but it is said to have been added to the Article by the right of the Royal supremacy, and, indeed, by the very hand of Elizabeth. It is hardly necessary to waste time to show, what is to be met with in all books on the subject worth reading, that the taste of Elizabeth ran very strongly in favour of a gaudy, and splendid, and striking religious service; and that she followed her own taste, without much reference to the question whether such things as she desired to have set up had any Scripture warrant or not. In fact, she had about as strong a taste as any character known in history for gay and gaudy sights of every kind;—that fond passion for pictures, painted, carved or acted, which is the characteristic of the immature years of the life either of an individual or a nation,—in reference to which, the reader of Scott's Romance of Kenilworth will see what excessive pomps the great favourite, the Earl of Leicester, employed to please his royal mistress,—and which peculiarity of taste made her the most fitting mother of a religion of pomp, and show, and of the holiness of dress and attitude, that has been seen in a Protestant church in any age. The silence of Scripture was made to serve as good a purpose as the warrant of Scripture. In the third Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, the student may find a bold and frank and manly defence of the right which that very zealous partizan, and very able man, thought the Church possessed to establish rites and ceremonies for herself, without warrant of Scripture. The necessities of

Elizabeth's position made her a Protestant. She was the daughter of Anne Boleyn, of the divorce, and of her father's quarrel with the Pope. So she gave effective aid to the Reformation in Scotland. She championed Protestantism in Europe almost as gallantly as Oliver Cromwell and William of Nassau did after her. But at the same time, she kept enough of popery in the chapel in which she personally worshipped; she never did become reconciled to the marriage of the clergy; and was as imperious as Henry VIII., or William the Conqueror himself. She once issued an ecclesiastical mandate to Cox of Ely, which that prelate hesitated to obey,—and she sent him a short note thus: "Proud prelate, you know what you were, before I made you what you are; if you do not immediately comply with my request, by G—d, I will unfrock you." We tremble to indicate by consonants the awful oath which was customary in the mouth of the Head of the English Church. If this "good queen Bess" were now alive, she would be apt to be thought the queen of Viragoes, without a particle of what Protestants call religion, very little of what ladies call refinement, and about as little of regard for the word of God as either.

The protest of the word of God against the garments and the pomps of the English Reformation, had already commenced before "good queen Bess" came to the throne. It was as early as the year 1550, during the brief reign of Edward VI., that Dr. John Hooper, one of the ablest and most evangelical men of that day, on being elected to the see of Gloucester, refused for a long time to take upon him "the feathers of the mass"—as he called the vestments and ceremonies of consecration. Much has been written about this man's (so-called) obstinacy, in scrupling to submit to things admitted to be indifferent. But such arguments prove, with treble force, the usurping guilt of the tribunals, in changing the nature of things indifferent into things indispensable;—and Hooper himself, spoke in true prophetic strain on the subject, when he said: "*if these things are kept in the Church as indifferent things, at length they will be maintained as necessary things.*" The political authorities thought it very strange that Hooper should plead con-

science about things indifferent; while Hooper's position was that of the Scriptures; and what he scrupled was the change of things indifferent into things necessary. Hooper, with better reason, thought it strange that the civil authorities should admit such things to be *indifferent*, and yet so pertinaciously insist upon them. After years, which are the best witnesses, have shown that Hooper was right, and that such things do come to be maintained with more tenacity, when once brought in, than far more important things about which Scripture is not silent. With Hooper agreed the no less famous and excellent Bishop Jewel: "They tell us" says he, "of a golden mediocrity, I wish it may not prove a leaden one." "They hoped" he says again, "to strike the eyes of the people with those ridiculous trifles. These are the relics of the Amorites: that cannot be denied." He wishes that, at some time or other, all these things may be "taken away and extirpated to the very deepest roots."—*Burnet*, iii., 434. Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, was of the same mind. You can almost hear him groan, when in writing to Gualtier of Zurich, he says: "I confess we suffer many things against our hearts, groaning under them. We cannot take them away, though we were ever so much set on it. We are under authority, and can innovate nothing without the queen; nor can we alter the laws. The only thing left to our choice is, whether we will bear these things, or break the peace of the Church."—*Burnet*, iii., 475. Jewel even went so far as to say that "in the days of queen Mary, Christ was kept out by his enemies, but in the days of queen Elizabeth, he was kept out by his friends." *Life*, p. 12. We love and honour these faithful men the more, when Burnet tells us (vol. iii., p. 476,) that they themselves acknowledged that it were better for the Church that these ceremonies were laid aside: and affirmed that they (the bishops,) "had often moved in Parliament that they might be taken away, that so the Church might be more pure and less burdened." This entirely unexceptionable testimony of Gilbert Burnet, Lord Bishop of Salisbury, would of itself suffice for our present purpose, to vindicate the pious men of the English Reformation. But there is much more to the same

- purpose. The English Church very narrowly escaped a reformation on this point, and a paring down to something like the Puritan model, at the hands even of a convocation, in the year 1562, when forty-three of the members present voted for such a reformation, and thirty-five against it; but when the proxies were called for and counted, the vote was said to stand, fifty-eight for, and fifty-nine against reformation.—*Burnet*, iii., 455.

Then came the teachings of Thomas Cartwright, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge; boldly and ably advocating simplicity in worship, until he was deprived of his office by Cecil, the minister of queen Elizabeth, in the year 1570.

In 1579, Mr. Strickland moved, in Parliament, for a further reformation of the Church, boldly asserting that some superstitious remains of Popery might be removed without danger to religion. But her majesty the queen took this movement of Mr. Strickland's in such high dudgeon, that she sent for him into the council, and there severely reprimanded him, and forbade his future attendance in Parliament,—in which purpose she would, in all probability, have persisted, but that the Commons, growing stout, and assuming for a time the tone of freemen, took fire at this invasion of privilege; and then, by one of those tricks of policy by which she always yielded when there was real danger, she very gracefully and graciously set Mr. Strickland at liberty.

In 1582, the House of Commons, getting pretty full of pious men, resolved to go to the Temple church, to open its session with religious worship, and prayer for the Divine guidance on their deliberations. This event warms our hearts, as a type, through which we can see, at some distance yet, the approaching era of 1643. The queen heard of it, and sent her vice-chamberlain to express her surprise to the Commons, that they should make such an innovation as to hear preaching, and pray together, without "her privy and pleasure first made known unto them." The faithful Commons humbly acknowledged their great fault, and humbly craved her gracious majesty's forgiveness.—*Pic. Hist. Eng.* The time was not yet come. 1581 could not be 1643. Not a Stuart, but a Tudor, was on the throne. John Pym was not to

be born for yet three years. John Hampden's life was thirteen years in the future. Oliver Cromwell would not be born for eighteen years;—nor Sir Harry Vane, the younger, for twenty-seven years. The time was not come.

So, then, this variation of the English Reformation,—its decreeing rites and ceremonies for itself without warrant from God's word, does not lie at the door of the spiritual men, any more than do the other variations.—They would gladly have complied with the word of God on this point, but were not at liberty to do so. The Divine word spoke with no forked tongue on any of the subjects which have been named; it spoke in the same accents, and was heard with homogeneous impressions, as a general remark, by men every where, at the great forming era of the Reformation. Every where there came out of the furnace of the Reformation, more or less clearly developed in the minds of spiritual men, that doctrine which is the very corner-stone of religious freedom, that Christ alone is Head of the Church,—that other doctrine dreaded as the hammer of despotism every where, that all Pastors are of equal rank and authority under Him,—and that other doctrine still, which guards the purity of his prerogative that He alone is Law-giver in Zion, and is to be worshipped as is prescribed in his own word.

We have already seen how universally a Calvinistic stamp of doctrine came out of the Reformation; and how as universally, no man then waited for the Divine sovereignty to accomplish its purposes without the use of means, and the diligent appliance of all human instrumentalities.

And if the present attempt has been successful, then we have the authority, on *all the points* mentioned, of the most favourable period of time since the days of the Apostles, for "simple conviction" and unbiassed judgment. We have the unanimous voice, the homogeneous testimony of all the men of that remarkable era, in all countries, under all circumstances, and with all their various antecedents and traditionary influences. We submit whether this result does not furnish one of the most signal of all the proofs which human events have

any where exhibited, in all the flight of time, of the right which the sceptre of Jesus Christ (which is his word,) possesses, to rule the opinions, and to bind the consciences, of men.

In our humble sphere, it has long seemed to us that such a vindication as is faintly shadowed forth in the foregoing pages, was due to the spiritual men of the English Reformation, that we might see how thoroughly one in spirit were all the principal men among the newborn sons of God at that great era; and that we might still deeply cherish the memory of the noble-spirited children of God in that nation, at that time, even when we are compelled to feel so little of real respect for the Reformation as it went on in divorces, royal edicts, acts of parliament, star-chamber sentences, and high-commission fines and imprisonments. No better or purer specimens of individual piety were exhibited in any country, than in England, at the time of the Reformation.— There are no purer or holier names on the modern rolls of spiritual honour, than the names of Bilney, Tyndale, Stafford, Latimer, Hooper, Bradford, Ridley, Jewel and Cartwright. There are no more refreshing records of deep faith and holiness, in the whole of modern religious annals, than those which contain the personal history of the English Reformers, when the word of God first beamed upon their minds, and the Spirit from on high was first poured upon their hearts. They are not the ecclesiastical ancestors of such men as Sand and Sacheverel and Pusey. We see them stand deservedly at the head of those rolls whereon are inscribed, lower down, the clear and venerable names of Owen, Baxter, Howe, Bates, Charnock, Flavel, Alleine and Bunyan. They are ours. We will not give them up.