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ART. I.—*The Works of Francis Bacon*, Lord Chancellor of England. A new edition, with a life of the author, by Basil Montagu, Esq. in three Vols. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart. 1842.

IT is with unspeakable delight, that we hail the republication in this country, of Montagu's edition of Bacon's works. It is indicative of an improving literary taste, that the enterprising publishers could venture to publish so costly a work, of a kind so entirely different from the great mass of the literature of the day. And we cannot let the occasion pass, of again reverting to the Baconian philosophy. In two former numbers (July, 1840 and April, 1843,) of this periodical, we pointed out its method of investigation, its starting-points, its processes and its foundations. We will now take a general survey of its objects, and its spirit, and the power and influence which it has given to England, and is likely to exert over the human race.

In every age of the world, since the human family has been so numerous as to be divided into separate communities, some one nation has exerted a predominant influence over the rest. This appears to be the economy of civilization. The Grecian Republics, (for they all were but one nation,) and Rome, in their successive order in history, have, of all the nations of antiquity, exerted the most

the preparation which he has already made for doing it, as by the prospect of material advantage to the cause of truth from such an exhibition.

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- ART. V.—1. *A History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines; embracing an account of its principal transactions, and Biographical Sketches of its most conspicuous members.* Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication. James Russell, Publishing Agent. 1841. 12mo. pp. 430.
2. *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.* By the Rev. W. M. Hetherington. New York: Mark H. Newhall, 199 Broadway. 1843. 12mo. pp. 311.

It is somewhat remarkable that two centuries should have elapsed before any separate history of the Westminster Assembly was given to the public. The importance of that body and of its influence during that period, it were in vain at this time to call in question. Neither the historian nor the theologian can be at all excused, who passes it by without the most careful consideration. To Presbyterians especially, it must be an object of no common interest, to have the best possible acquaintance with the persons, character, and doings of those by whom their symbolical books were prepared. For though the inherent value of those documents would be the same, had the names and personal history of the men by whom they were framed entirely perished; there is a natural and useful pleasure in associating them with the worth and piety of their distinguished authors. A knowledge of the circumstances under which they were composed, will also increase our confidence in them as the most accurate and complete exhibition of scripture truth, which has been penned by uninspired writers; and will attach the lovers of doctrinal purity to them as a *form of sound words* adapted, more than any other, to prevent error and maintain the truth.

The journal kept by the clerks of the Assembly appears to have been irrecoverably lost; and most probably other important documents, which would render our knowledge more minute and complete, have also been suffered to perish. Sufficient materials, however, are still preserved to

furnish a tolerably perfect and satisfactory account of the leading facts. The fullest account which has been heretofore accessible, is that given by Neal in his "History of the Puritans." He seems to have had in his possession important documents, which if they still exist are unknown. Copious notes were taken of the discussions and proceedings of the Assembly by many of its members. Of these, the journal of Dr. Lightfoot has been published, extending, however, only to a little more than one year. Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish commissioners, gave, in numerous letters, written by him during the progress of the Assembly, a succinct and very familiar account of its proceedings. These letters have also been published. There exist likewise in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, two manuscript volumes of notes by Gillespie, another of the Scottish commissioners. In Dr. Williams's library, London, there are also preserved three volumes of notes written by Dr. Thomas Goodwin, one of the leading Independent Divines in the Assembly. Occasional facts and notices are sometimes mentioned by other authors, which illustrate or confirm the statements of these authorities; and there are also extant many pamphlets and published sermons, besides larger works written by members, which throw light on the state of things at that deeply interesting period.

As it is impossible for ordinary readers to collect and peruse the authors described, we hail with sincere pleasure the appearance of the volumes mentioned at the head of this article. The first will probably be more attractive to the general reader not only as being less tedious in the historical part, but on account of the interesting Biographical Sketches which accompany the narrative, and which are so arranged that the reader may refer at will to any particular name. To those who are not acquainted with the history of the times, the introductory chapter of Mr. Hetherington will be very useful. The author has also given a more detailed account of the strenuous debates which arose in the Assembly, between the body of the members and the Independents and Erastians. To the student these will be deeply interesting, though we apprehend they will render the book somewhat forbidding to cursory readers. The extensive circulation of these volumes, at the present time, would have a salutary influence upon the cause of truth. The attention of the public mind has been recently drawn to this subject, and it is desirable that the

occasion should be embraced for awakening an interest as widely as possible, and making a deep and lasting impression. A condensed view of the occasion of its meeting, the character, and the labours of the Westminster Assembly, may not prove unacceptable to our readers.

The origin of the Westminster Assembly is to be sought in the state of the kingdom at that period. To understand this, it is necessary to advert briefly to the character of the Reformation in England. That country, like every other, had groaned under the papal yoke. The deadliest errors of that system had struck deep their roots and diffused their pestilent influence far and wide. Priestly insolence and profligacy had reached their height; and a corresponding depression of the people was the natural and necessary result. Avarice, imposture and shameless corruption on the one part, and ignorance, superstition, and abject degradation on the other; were the characteristics of a venal priesthood and a sunken laity. The preaching and writings of Wickliffe had kindled for a moment the lamp of truth; but it was speedily extinguished by relentless persecution, and the stagnant mass again enveloped in the shades of destroying error. But when the Reformers on the continent began to move society by the agency of truth, a powerful sensation was felt also in England. The public mind threw off its lethargy, the deadened sensibilities of the heart were quickened, and men were disposed to inquire for the truth, to examine and renounce their delusions, and to yield the convictions of an enlightened conscience to the testimony of God's word. The Reformed doctrines took fast hold of the minds and feelings of many, and spread with encouraging speed and success; and had the cause been entrusted to suitable hands, there might—humanly speaking—have been achieved one of the most complete and glorious conquests of the gospel over error which was witnessed in that illustrious age. But the results differed materially from those in other countries. The men who led the Reformation on the continent and in Scotland—the Luthers, and Calvins, and Knoxes—were men of incorruptible purity, great singleness of purpose, and undaunted resolution. Whatever were their faults, the great object of their wishes, the aim of all their efforts, and the reward of their fondest anticipations, was the complete emancipation of the gospel. In comparison of this, the distinctions and advantages of the world, were nothing.

In the prosecution of this they neither shunned toil nor feared danger; they were unmoved equally by the caresses and the frowns of princes. Disinterestedness, courage, and energy, combined with deep-toned fear of God, gave them prodigious influence; and the work went forward despite of all opposition and difficulty.

In England it was not so. The Reformation in that country embraced indeed many sincere and decided friends, who sought from conscientious motives the restoration of the church to primitive purity in faith and worship. But these were not the master spirits in the enterprise: they did not give tone to its movements, nor shape its results. The cause fell at once into the very worst hands, and was furthered by the most injudicious methods. Instead of aiming at the divine glory, it became subservient to earthly ambition; and was carried forward by legislative rather than by intellectual and moral force. Its most powerful patrons regarded it as a political manœuvre, and supported it from selfish policy.

That Henry the VIII., a king in whom despotism and vice were personified, espoused the Reformation, first to gratify his passions and then to strengthen his prerogative, is too notorious to require proof. His opposition to popery was the enmity of a personal quarrel, and his friendship to protestantism the favour of an interested patron. Associated with him were the minions of regal power—in many cases a worldly clergy and a servile parliament. The ecclesiastical supremacy which, in mean and obsequious devotion they ascribed to him, became the cardinal idea of English Protestantism, and the germ of lasting evils to the church and nation. The hopes which were founded on the piety of Edward VI. were blasted by his early and lamented death; and again the nation sunk under the dominion of popery. But the fires and tortures of the bloody Mary did less to extinguish the true spirit of the Reformation than the cold, worldly sympathy of her protestant sister. Elizabeth throughout her whole life manifested a leaning towards the doctrines and a sympathy with the rites of the Romish system. But that great queen saw clearly that she could not render popery subservient to her arbitrary but vigorous administration of power. She embraced the Reformed religion with a determination to make it available for her political interests. From this purpose she never swerved; and her success equalled her resolu-

tion. Under her reign the Reformation closed, and the church was definitely settled in its permanent character. That church was precisely such as might have been expected. It satisfied no class of persons except the sovereign and the worldly and ambitious clergy. Sincere papists mourned the mutilation of the ancient order, and genuine protestants turned away pained and disgusted with a church but half reformed.

It is difficult now to appreciate fully the feelings of either class. The popish system had in its favour every thing which could fix it deep and strong in the feelings of those who still remained its adherents. It was a vast, and in some respects a magnificent system, of which venerable cathedrals and time-hallowed institutions were the symbols. It was incorporated with national and family traditions, and invested with the soft and pleasing light of antiquity. It filled the earliest recollections of childhood, and was entrenched in all the strength of later associations. Until the spell was broken by the light of truth, the heart could not without violence be divorced from all it held sacred and dear. As if to mock its sensibilities, the monuments were still preserved of that which it regretted. Ancient and venerated churches, bearing upon them the vestiges of a ruined religion—sculptured decorations, crucifixes, painted windows and interiors, with every thing arranged for Catholic rites and Catholic devotions; a ritual closely resembling the old; a priesthood retaining the same titles; with innumerable traces in the rites and ceremonies, and vestments, to revive the impressions which still lingered in the memory and affections. No marvel that such wept over it as the desecration of all that was greatest and best.

Conscientious protestants on the other hand, looked upon the same things as the remnants of idolatry. They contemplated them with the feelings of a liberated captive when he sees the manacles and fetters in which he once groaned. They knew moreover that the multitude are more impressed by what they see than by what they hear. If the garb of popery met the eye, they knew full well that its virus would infect the heart; and they despaired of a thorough moral renovation without a ceremonial cleansing. There were many things also which involved essential principles and which came in conflict with their consciences—matters neither of taste nor expediency, to which they could not yield without sacrifice of the fear of God.

The Church of England by retaining the oppressive and unscriptural hierarchy of Rome, had separated itself from all protestant Christendom. This drew after it all the corrupting dogmas associated with the notion of a prelatical succession. The assumption of sacramental power in the priesthood; the doctrines of inherent efficacy in the sacraments, baptismal regeneration, and subjective justification; the sickly devotion lavished on vestments and postures and forms, and the corresponding neglect of truth and holiness; were the natural and legitimate fruits of that great error. The worship of the church was disfigured with many of the palpable blemishes of popery; and human rites were placed on a level with divine ordinances and apostolic institutions.

By its unhallowed alliance with the crown, that church became the servile handmaid of tyranny, the enemy of liberty, and an engine of oppression. Every reader of English history knows with what obsequious subjection it continued under the Stuarts to strengthen the hands of the sovereign, and to draw the bonds of the subject to the utmost tension. Preferments were bestowed as the reward of servility; and the *king's creatures*, as bishop Gladstones significantly termed the prelates, seemed to vie with each other in rendering the most abject and degrading homage. They were the advocates of passive obedience in the subject, and of unlimited authority in the prince. The outraged consciences of abler and better men were not allowed the least indulgence; faithful ministers were without mercy ejected from their churches for declining ceremonies which they believed unlawful, and which even their enemies acknowledged to be indifferent; and the least deviation from established forms was visited with the utmost rigour, while vice stalked forth unabashed and unrebuked. All could not, however, extinguish the thirst for the unadulterated doctrines and ordinances of the gospel. The pious sighed more and more for a pure religion, and conscientious ministers longed to be permitted to exercise their sacred functions without the interference of arbitrary power. But nothing could move a venal court and a worldly hierarchy. The rights of conscience were set at nought, the claims of justice and humanity were disregarded, the people were uninstructed, and religion, in its most important interests, suffered to languish. Not only so: but inasmuch as strict piety was found allied to independent thought and discriminating

conscience ; godliness itself became an object of dislike. Those who kept holy the Lord's day, or who maintained becoming fidelity in the practice of religious duties, drew upon them the hatred, if not the vengeance of the prelates ; while if they questioned the lawfulness of festivals, and deviated from matters of ceremony, they were summoned to the court of High Commission, deprived, imprisoned, or subjected to vexatious delays and ruinous expenses.

These evils, burdensome under the treacherous and pusillanimous James, became altogether insupportable under his more resolute but equally faithless son. The inexorable Charles, aided by archbishop Laud, seemed resolved to goad the people to madness. Nothing could open the eyes of the demented king, no appeal could touch the heart of the infatuated prelate, until their reckless career terminated in ruin.

At length the period arrived when the fetters of religion and humanity should be sundered together. The public mind was stirred to its inmost depths. Every sensibility of the national heart was feelingly alive to the wrongs which had been suffered, and every fibre nerved to demand redress. The parliament of England assembled. Its meeting was the crisis of civil and religious oppression. Though disparaged and calumniated by a certain class of historians, abilities were there concentrated, and moral worth embodied, such as England had never witnessed in her legislative bodies : and whatever liberty is this day enjoyed by those who speak the English language, is owed, in no small measure, to the wisdom, energy, decision, and patriotism of that body.

On the first of December, 1641, the House of Commons presented to the king their grand remonstrance, in which they specified the grievances of the nation. Among other things they say, " We desire to unburden the consciences of men from needless and superstitious ceremonies, to suppress innovations, and to take away the monuments of idolatry. To effect this intended Reformation, we desire there may be a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned, and judicious divines of this island, assisted with some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us, who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the church."*

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. ii, ch. x.

After considerable delay, and an ineffectual attempt to procure the consent of the king to a bill for the purpose mentioned in the remonstrance, the two houses of parliament passed "an ordinance for the calling of an assembly of learned and godly divines and others to be consulted with by parliament, for settling the government and liturgy of the church of England, and for vindicating and clearing the doctrine of said church from false aspersions and interpretations." This ordinance which bears date June 12, 1643, sets forth the reasons for the measure, names the persons who should convene, the time and place of meeting, and prescribes the duties of the body, with a restriction from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The number of persons named in the ordinance was one hundred and fifty-one; of whom ten were Lords and twenty Commons, as lay assessors, and one hundred and twenty-one Divines.*

Pursuant to the ordinance, on Saturday, July 1, 1643, sixty-nine persons convened in the Abbey Church, Westminster, and the Assembly was opened with a sermon by Rev. William Twisse, D. D., from John xiv. 18. After sermon all the members present adjourned to Henry VII.'s chapel: but the parliament not having given specific instructions, and there not being any subject immediately before them, the Assembly adjourned till the following Thursday.

When the Assembly convened again on Thursday, the instructions of the parliament were laid before them, and they entered upon those deliberations which have had so important a bearing upon the interests of religion. The Assembly thus convened, sat five years, six months, and twenty-two days; during which time they held eleven hundred and sixty-three sessions. This body was altogether peculiar in its structure and powers. It was not an ecclesiastical court, nor did it possess either civil or spiritual jurisdiction. It was, according to the designation in the ordinance of parliament, "an assembly of learned and godly divines and others;" its powers were, "to confer and treat among themselves of such matters and things, touching and concerning the liturgy, discipline and government of the church of England, as shall be proposed unto them by both houses of parliament and no other;" and the result of their deliberations was of no authority whatever, but simply "advice of, or touching matters aforesaid" to the parliament.

* Neal, vol. iii. ch. ii. Hetherington, p. 97. Hist. of W. Ass. p. 18.

The character of this Assembly is a point of much interest in the history of our standards; and happily it is a point which is neither obscure nor doubtful. It has indeed been attacked by virulent and bigoted prelatists with great violence; but their charges savour so strongly of prejudice and malevolence, as to convey in part their own refutation, and their allegations moreover relate to those points which admit of triumphant defence. Charles I. declared them to be "men of no learning or reputation;" the artful Clarendon asserts that all except about twenty "were but pretenders to divinity; some were infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts, if not of scandalous ignorance;" and the notorious Laud affirmed that "the greatest part of them were *Brownists* or *Independents*, or New England ministers, if not worse." But a king whom neither promises, nor solemn treaties, nor oaths could bind, is not valid testimony against his enemies. The noble historian quoted was too much interested in disparaging the Assembly of Divines to be impartial, even if he meant to be so; and his assertions are not only directly contrary to those of much better witnesses, but also to the irrefragible proof furnished by the writings of the men themselves and the undeniable state of religion among the puritan class of divines.

The celebrated Richard Baxter, who knew many of the members personally, who had an excellent opportunity of observing all their proceedings, and who was also much better qualified to judge and withal a moderate candid and impartial man, affirms that "they were men of eminent learning, godliness, and ministerial abilities and fidelity." "And not being worthy to be one of them myself, I may more fully speak the truth which I know, even in the face of malice and envy. As far as I am able to judge, by the information of history and by any other evidences, the Christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines, than this synod and the synod of Dort."

If we consider the purpose for which this assembly was convened; the authority by which it was summoned—the two Houses of Parliament of Great Britain; and the great importance which that illustrious Parliament attached to the step; it will not only seem incongruous but utterly incredible that its members should have been otherwise than such as are specified in the ordinance—grave, learned, and godly divines and others. This presumption is abundantly

sustained by the evidence of witnesses of undoubted veracity, who bear the most decisive testimony to the general character of the body, and also of many of its members, individually. Some of the laymen who sat in the assembly were among the most eminent men of their day; and many of the divines were noted for their theological learning and great abilities. Besides they were men of piety, and faith, and prayer; who valued truth above every thing else. In the roll of this body are found such names as Lightfoot, Arrowsmith, Tuckney, Twisse, Gataker, Palmer, Herle, Greenhill, Reynolds, Wallis, Caryl, Calamy, Burgess, Chyennell, and a host of others; men as famous as any in the kingdom, who corresponded with the eminent men of the continent, and were known by their writings at home and abroad. A large number of the Westminster divines were authors; and their writings, still extant, show them to have been thorough scholars, profound theologians, able polemics, and judicious casuists. Many of them were appointed to literary posts, which they filled with unwonted vigour; and the race of scholars which they trained up, gave ample proof of their abilities and fidelity.

With all these facts before us, we are authorized to regard the spirit which would sneer at this assembly, as the very imbecility of bigotry. Notices of individuals would extend this article beyond due limits. Our readers will find these in the volume published by our Board; and an examination of those sketches will furnish the most satisfactory testimony to the character of those great and good men.

It ought to be here remarked, that six Scottish delegates, two laymen, and four ministers, were present in the Assembly as commissioners of the church of Scotland. These took an active part in all the deliberations of the body, but did not vote. Two ministers of the French churches, in London, are also mentioned in the list of members; but they appear not to have taken any prominent or active part in the business of the body.

It is worthy of notice, too, that all the members of the Westminster Assembly, except the six from Scotland and the two French ministers, had been brought up in the Church of England, and were most of them in its communion at the time of their convening; and all the English divines and two of those from Scotland had been Episcopally ordained. So far, therefore, as the influence of education, of early habits and associations, and of prejudice

operated on their minds; their prepossessions were *for* and not against prelacy. Many of them had indeed been long convinced of its unscriptural character; but there were still a number who arrived at the same conviction only upon thorough and mature examination. The great body of the synod met with a purpose to ascertain, define, and embrace truth, and not to defend a system. This did much to keep them from extreme views; and it may be regarded as one reason of the moderate tone of all their documents, that proceeding against time-honoured usage and errors consecrated by national pride, by ancestral renown, and by every hallowed association, they advanced only so far as they were carried by deliberate examination of God's word and deep, solemn conviction. At any rate, it is a fact which stands alone in the history of human opinion; that from the bosom of one communion, allied to wealth, and patronage, and power; so much learning and talent should be collected and employed with concentrated ability and effort in digesting articles of religion which should continue for centuries to be the unchanged standards of a denomination as numerous, intelligent, and independent as the Presbyterian church in different parts of the world.

The labours of the Westminster Assembly were prosecuted with great care, diligence, and fidelity. Mention has been made of the instructions laid before them by the Parliament. These were: 1. That two assessors be joined to the prolocutor, to supply his place in case of absence or infirmity. 2. That scribes be appointed to set down all proceedings, and those to be divines who are out of the Assembly and not to vote. 3. That every member should make solemn protestation not to maintain any thing but what he believes to be the truth in sincerity when discovered to him. 4. No resolution to be given upon any question the same day wherein it is first propounded. 5. What any man undertakes to prove as necessary, he shall make good out of scripture. 6. No man to proceed in any dispute after the prolocutor has enjoined him silence, unless the Assembly desire he may go on. 7. No man to be denied to enter his dissent from the Assembly, and his reasons for it in any point. 8. All things agreed on and prepared for the Parliament, to be openly read and allowed in the Assembly, and then offered as the judgment of the Assembly, if the major part assent: provided, that the opinions of any

persons dissenting, and the reasons urged for it, be annexed thereunto, if the dissenters require it, together with the solutions if any were given by the Assembly to those reasons.

The Assembly also adopted several additional regulations for their own guidance. 1. That every session should open and close with prayer. 2. That after the opening prayer the roll should be called and absentees noted. 3. That the appointed hour of meeting be ten in the morning : the afternoon to be reserved for committees. 4. That three of the members of the Assembly be appointed weekly as chaplains, one to the House of Lords, another to the House of Commons, and the third to the Committee of both kingdoms.

On Saturday, July 8th, the appointed declaration or vow was taken by all the members, lay as well as clerical, in the following words, viz :

“I, A. B., do seriously and solemnly protest, in the presence of Almighty God, that in this Assembly whereof I am a member, I will not maintain any thing in matters of doctrine, but what I think in my conscience to be truth ; or, in point of discipline, but what I shall conceive to conduce most to the glory of God, and the good and peace of his church.” A copy of this protestation was put into the hands of each member, and it was required to be read afresh every Monday morning, that its solemn influence might be habitually felt.

The prolocutor or moderator appointed by Parliament was Dr. William Twisse. Of this eminent man, Baillie gives the following quaint description : “The man, as all the world knows, is very learned in the questions he has studied, and very good, and beloved by all, and highly esteemed ; but merely bookish, and not much, as it seems, acquaint with conceived prayer, and among the unfittest of all the company for any action.” The labours of the Assembly proved too much for him, and at the end of the year he relinquished the chair, in which he was succeeded by Rev. Charles Herle, A. M.

As assessors to the prolocutor, the Parliament appointed Dr. Cornelius Burgess and Mr. John White ; and as scribes or clerks, Rev. Henry Roborough and Rev. Adoniram Byfield.

Neal informs us that the members came to the Assembly, “not in their canonical habits, but chiefly in black coats and bands in imitation of the foreign protestants.” These,

together with the peaked beard and the broad double ruff worn in the Elizabethan style round the neck, must have given to the Assembly a peculiarly venerable and imposing appearance. The graphic pen of Baillie has furnished us with the following lively and familiar *tout ensemble* of the body. "The like of that Assembly I did never see, and as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor anywhere is shortly like to be. They did sit in Henry VII.'s chapel in the place of convocation; but since the weather grew cold, they did go to the Jerusalem chamber, a fair room in the Abbey of Westminster, about the size of the College fore-hall (Glasgow), but wider. At the one end nearest the door, and along both sides, are stages of seats, as in the new Assembly House at Edinburgh, but not so high; for there will be room but for five or six score. At the uppermost end there is a chair set on a frame, a foot from the earth, for the Mr. Prolocutor, Dr. Twisse. Before it, on the ground, stand two chairs for the two Mr. Assessors, Dr. Burgess and Mr. White. Before these two chairs, through the length of the room, stands a table, at which sit the two scribes, Mr. Byfield and Mr. Roborough. The house is all well hung (with tapestry,) and has a good fire, which is some dainties at London. Opposite the table, at the prolocutor's right hand, there are three or four ranks of benches. On the lowest, we five do sit. Upon the other, at our backs, the members of parliament deputed to the Assembly. On the benches opposite us, on the prolocutor's left hand, going from the upper end of the house to the chimney, and at the other end of the house and back of the table, till it come about to our seats, are four or five stages of benches, upon which their divines sit as they please; albeit commonly they keep the same place. From the chimney to the door there are no seats, but a void space for passage. The Lords of the parliament use to sit on chairs in that void, about the fire. We meet every day of the week but Saturday. We sit commonly from nine till one or two afternoon. The prolocutor at the beginning and end has a short prayer. After the prayer he sits mute. It was the canny convoyance (ingenious arrangement) of those who guide most matters for their own interest to plant such a man of purpose in the chair. The one assessor, our good friend Mr. White, has kepted in of the gout since our coming: the other, Dr. Burgess, a very active and sharp man, supplies, so far as is decent, the prolocutor's place.

Ordinarily there will be present above three score of their divines. These are divided into three committees, in one of which every man is a member. No man is excluded who pleases to come to any of the three. Every committee as the parliament gives order in writing to take any purpose to consideration, takes a portion, and in their afternoon meeting, prepares matters for the Assembly, sets down their minds in distinct propositions, backing them with texts of scripture. After the prayer Mr. Byfield, the scribe, reads the proposition and scriptures, whereupon the Assembly debates in a most grave and orderly manner.

“No man is called up to speak; but whosoever stands up of his own accord, speaks so long as he will without interruption. If two or three stand up at once, then the divines confusedly call on his name whom they desire to hear first: on whom the loudest and maniest voices call, he speaks. No man speaks to any but to the prolocutor. They harangue long and very learnedlie. They study the questions well, beforehand, and prepare their speeches; but withal the men are exceedingly prompt and well spoken. I do marvel at the very accurate and extemporal replies that many of them usually make. When, upon every proposition by itself, and on every text of scripture that is brought to confirm it, every man who will has said his whole mind, and the replies, duplies and triplies are heard, then the most part call, ‘To the question.’ Byfield, the scribe, rises from the table, and comes to the prolocutor’s chair, who, from the scribe’s book, reads the proposition, and says, ‘As many as are of opinion that the question is well stated in the proposition, let them say aye:’ when aye is heard he says, ‘As many as think otherwise, say no.’ If the difference of ‘Aye’s’ and ‘No’s’ be clear, as usually it is, then the question is ordered by the scribes, and they go on to debate the first scripture alleged for proof of the proposition. If the sound of ‘Aye’ and ‘No’ be nearly equal, then the prolocutor says, ‘As many as say Aye, stand up;’ while they stand the scribe and others number them in their minds; when they sit down the No’s are bidden stand, and they likewise are numbered. This way is clear enough, and saves a great deal of time which we (in Scotland) spend in reading our catalogue, (calling the roll.) When a question is once ordered, there is no more debate of that matter; but if a man will wander he is quickly taken up by Mr. Assessor, or many others, con-

fusedly crying, 'Speak to order, to order.' No man contradicts another expressly by name, but most discreetly speaks to the prolocutor, or, at most, holds to general terms: 'The reverend brother who lately, or last, spoke, on this hand, on that side, above or below.' I thought meet, once for all, to give you a taste of the outward form of their Assembly. They follow the way of their parliament. Much of their way is good, and worthy of our imitation; only their longsoneness is woful at this time. when their church and kingdom lie under a most lamentable anarchy and confusion. They see the hurt of their length, but cannot get it helped; for being to establish a new platform of worship and discipline to their nation for all time to come, they think they cannot be answerable, if solidly, and at leisure, they do not examine every point thereof."

Nothing of all that has been recorded of this Assembly, conveys to our minds a deeper and more fixed impression of its competence for the great work to which it was called, than the last sentence of the above quotation; and we cannot express the gratitude we feel to divine providence that men were found at that momentous crisis, who so well comprehended, and so deeply felt the solemnity of all their acts. That consciousness of responsibility more than anything else commends them to our confidence. The circumstances under which they met, were most unfavorable to calm and thorough deliberation. They were on the eve of a great moral and political convulsion. The very bonds of society were loosed; the heavens were dark, and wild, and portentous; and every cloud seemed fraught with the elements of destruction. Events of the most startling character kept the public mind in continual agitation; everything was in commotion; and none could foresee whereunto all might grow. The moral, no less than the political horizon was troubled. Ignorance, error, profaneness, and licentiousness flooded the land with sin; while all the interests of religion were unsettled. Every enlightened man regarded religion as the anchor of hope; and therefore all looked with trembling earnestness, with mingled hope and fear to the measures which should be adopted on this subject, as the turning point of the nation's destiny. The occasion seemed to demand haste; the parliament was urgent; and gladly would they have applied, if possible, an immediate remedy to the moral and civil ills of the kingdom. But the work to which they were called could not

be done in haste. They were about to consult the most important interests of man for time and for eternity—religion, liberty and peace; and a random effort would accomplish nothing. Looking away from the excitement and giddy agitation of the scene around them, extending their views forward to “all time to come,” and grasping posterity in embryo; they felt they could “not be answerable, if solidly, and at leisure, they did not examine every point.”

But they felt more than a sense of responsibility: they were equally impressed with their dependence. Not for a moment did they imagine themselves able, by their unaided wisdom, to compass the weighty undertaking before them. The whole of their proceedings indicated a fixed and habitual conviction of their dependence on a divine influence to guide them to wise counsels and salutary decisions. Before entering upon their labours they observed a solemn fast; and the same thing was done at short intervals during the whole time of their sitting. The manner in which these seasons were kept, showed them to be men much in earnest, sensible of their own deficiencies, and deeply persuaded of the efficacy of prayer; and we doubt not that these occasions of humiliation and prayer did have an important influence upon their labours.

The introduction of the Scottish members into the Assembly, was a circumstance of too much importance to be omitted even in a cursory account of its proceedings. Immediately after the Assembly had convened, a letter was despatched from the English parliament soliciting the co-operation of the Scottish nation in promoting the reformation of the church. This letter was conveyed by a joint committee from the parliament and Assembly; Mr. Stephen Marshall and Mr. Philip Nye being the members on the part of the latter.

One object of their mission was to induce the General Assembly of Scotland to delegate a certain number of their most able divines to join the Assembly at Westminster, and to aid that body in bringing about a uniformity in doctrine, and church-government between the two kingdoms. This produced the document so well known, in the history of those times, as *THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT*. It was drawn up by *Alexander Henderson*, approved by the General Assembly, and afterwards by the Convention of Estates. The very next morning it was despatched to the

English parliament, by a special messenger, as the instrument of a solemn compact between the two kingdoms. At the same time commissioners were appointed to attend the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, of whom the following actually appeared in that body, viz., Alexander Henderson, Samuel Rutherford, George Gillespie, and Robert Baillie, ministers; and Lord Maitland and Sir Archibald Johnson, elders.

These Commissioners were received with great cordiality and marked respect; and proved a most important accession to the strength and ability of the Assembly.

Two of these commissioners had already displayed abilities of a high order, combined with great wisdom, firmness and discretion in the public affairs of the Church of Scotland. No man, since the earlier reformers had possessed in a more eminent degree those qualifications, and that weight of personal character adapted to great emergencies, than Alexander Henderson. He had been the chief instrument in bringing about the second great reformation of the Scottish church, and had been the moderator of the memorable Assembly of 1638; and to his counsels, his undaunted courage, his deep penetration, and his inflexible decision, more than to any other human agency, the glorious results of that meeting were owed. Of the same Assembly, Sir Archibald Johnstone was the clerk; and contributed no little to the skill and success with which its important measures were conducted.*

Samuel Rutherford had also been a member of the Assembly of 1638, and was an able and skilful debater. His reputation as a scholar and divine was so well established, that he was not only appointed to important professorships at home, but also received several calls to foreign universities.

George Gillespie was a young man, but he displayed prodigious abilities in debate as well as an accurate and profound knowledge of church government. His influence in the Westminster Assembly was probably not inferior to that of the ablest of its divines.

Robert Baillie was probably a man of greater erudition than any other in Scotland. He was well versed in Oriental learning, was master of thirteen languages, and his latin style was said to be worthy of the Augustan age. He took

* Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, pp. 300-307.

no part in the public debates of the Assembly, but his advice had great weight in private conference. It is to his quick perceptions and graphic pen we are indebted for our most vivid impressions of that venerable body.

It may be supposed that such men would exert personally a great influence in the deliberations of the Assembly. That influence was much augmented by the relation in which they stood to the synod. They declined taking their seats as members; but chose to sit in the capacity in which they appeared there—as commissioners of the Church of Scotland. Simultaneously with their introduction, *The Solemn League and Covenant* was received by the parliament and transmitted to the Assembly. This pledge was shortly, thereafter, taken by the two houses of parliament, by the Assembly, and extensively throughout the kingdom. A distinctness was now given to the object of this great Synod, and the line of their future labours definitely marked. Before the arrival of the Scots, they had been occupied with a revision of the articles of the Church of England; but neither the parliament nor the Assembly seemed to have before them a very definite aim. The energies of the Synod were now concentrated on a distinct object. The grand purpose of the *Solemn League and Covenant* was “the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches,” and to procure in the three kingdoms, the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, form of Church Government, Directory for worship and catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.” This was a great work, and from that moment, the efforts, wishes and prayers of the Assembly were employed in a continuous and arduous endeavour to realize this conception. Although nearly every matter connected with the state of religion in the kingdom came more or less directly before the Assembly; the great points to which their attention was directed, and of which they never lost sight, were those indicated in the above statement—the order, doctrine and worship of the church.

It is difficult to trace the exact order in the deliberations of the Assembly, inasmuch as more than one subject was usually in progress at the same time; and the same topic

was not pursued singly to its issue, being sometimes laid aside during the discussion of a different subject and afterwards resumed. Nor is it necessary to ascertain this precisely. It is sufficient for our present purpose to notice briefly, the several documents completed and approved by that venerable body.

1. The most urgent work imposed by Parliament on the Assembly, and that which involved the greatest practical difficulty, was the business of settling the Constitution, Government and Discipline of the Church. It has been already stated, that prelacy was retained in the Church of England contrary to the example of all the Protestant Churches and against the wishes of the best friends of the Reformation in the kingdom. The system, however, had worked badly; and while many were dissatisfied with it because they believed it unscriptural, that dissatisfaction was greatly increased by its practical abuses. The prelates were the supporters of tyranny and the instigators of oppression; and the inferior clergy were, in many cases, either irregular in their lives, or entirely unqualified for the work of the ministry. This led the Parliament first to deprive the prelates of their seats in the House of Lords, and then to abolish the hierarchy altogether. Their views are expressed in the ordinance for the calling the Assembly, as follows:—"for that, as yet, many things remain in the liturgy, discipline, and government of the church, which do necessarily require a further, and more perfect reformation, than as yet hath been attained; and whereas it hath been declared and resolved by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, that the present church government by archbishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers depending upon the hierarchy is evil, and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and government of this kingdom—and therefore they are resolved, that the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the church, as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the church of Scotland, and other reformed churches abroad."

The religious state of the country was now deplorable. Prelacy had been abolished and nothing substituted in its

place. An uninstructed and misgoverned people, infuriated by a sense of their wrongs, but ignorant of the proper remedy; gave vent to their rage in the most wild and extravagant manner. They were freed from the bonds of spiritual despotism; but untaught to yield a reasonable subjection to wholesome and necessary discipline, they rushed headlong into delusion and excess of every kind, from the irregular excitement of true religious feeling, to the maddening fervour of fanaticism. Something was required to calm the turbulent elements, to restore peace, and to establish on a safe and scriptural basis the order and discipline of the church. In accordance with the ordinance of Parliament, which by the mouths of so many distinguished lords and gentlemen uttered the deep conviction of the kingdom, the Assembly took in hand the preparation of a form of government and discipline. They soon found that it was easier to abolish that which was evil, than to establish something good. On the points connected with this subject there occurred long, able, and strenuous debates. The Assembly was divided into three distinct but unequal parties; which, though united in discarding prelacy, differed materially among themselves respecting the proper constitution of the church.

The first of these was Erastian. The theory of this party was—that the pastoral office is simply persuasive; that the church possesses in itself no power of discipline; and that the punishment of all offences, whether of a civil or religious nature, belongs exclusively to the civil magistrate. The prominent advocates of this scheme in the Assembly were, Dr. Lightfoot, Mr. Coleman, and the learned Selden; all eminently distinguished for extensive oriental and rabbinical learning. This small party was not only formidable from the prodigious talent and learning of those who composed it, but likewise for the powerful support given by the Parliament, in which Erastian sentiments extensively prevailed.

Another party, also comparatively small, consisted of the Independents. At first they numbered only five—Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, and Sidrach Simpson. They were men of considerable talent and learning, of undoubted piety, but distinguished more for successful intrigue and skilful artifice than for the open, frank and candid spirit manifested by the great body of the Assembly. Their fundamental

principle was—that each particular congregation of Christians is independent of every other, and competent to all the acts of discipline authorized by the word of God. But in the debates which arose in the Assembly, these brethren seemed rather to oppose and obstruct what others attempted, than to propose and defend definite views of their own.

From the beginning there was in the Assembly a body of strict Presbyterians, very able and decided. There was also a large number who were Presbyterians as to the fundamental principles of the system, though perhaps undecided as to many of the details. Besides, few of the English divines were acquainted with the practical operation of presbyterianism as fully constituted. But as their investigations went forward, the views of all these attained greater clearness, became more harmonious, definite and decided; and were finally digested into that admirable completeness and order exhibited in the Form of Government drawn up by the Assembly.

The fundamental elements of this system were embodied by those divines in one simple but comprehensive proposition:—*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.* A divinely appointed ministry, with authority both to teach and to rule—an eldership with ruling functions only—and the junction of particular congregations in one body by a bond not only of union but of discipline; these are the few simple and scriptural principles of the system, which is drawn out with surprizing exactness and fulness in the formularies of the Westminster Assembly. It was doubtless well ordered by Divine Providence, that every particular item of these underwent an examination so thorough, and that every principle was subjected to a scrutiny so rigid: and that by the keen debates through which they passed every objection was considered and every defect obviated as nearly as human wisdom and ability could do.

A careful and impartial examination of the rules of discipline will also leave the mind impressed with the great wisdom, justice, and Christian spirit which characterizes the whole administration. We are bold to say, that no community on earth so effectually provides for its own purity, and, at the same time, so amply secures the personal rights of its members, as the Presbyterian church.

2. The doctrinal standards of the Westminster Assembly,

consist of the *Confession of Faith* and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*. In the preparation and thorough revision of these, the Assembly expended much time and assiduous labour. Not only every proposition and every proof-text underwent repeated and careful examinations, both in the several committees and in the body at large; but almost every phrase and term received particular attention. The labours of the body on these important documents, were not interrupted by debates, properly so called. All those eminent men agreed substantially in their views of divine truth and of Christian duty; and their deliberations were directed almost alone to the object of rendering their articles lucid and correct. For this they were eminently qualified. They were men well versed in logic, familiar with the great masters of Reformed Theology, and thoroughly practiced in the business of analyzing and expressing truth in perspicuous propositions. We cannot go into any particular examination of these documents separately. Suffice it to say, that they contain the doctrines of the Reformation as deduced from sacred scriptures alone; and are deformed neither by superstition, fanaticism, nor scholastic puerilities. The great truths of the gospel are delineated in the simple, grand, and solemn features of revelation; and with a clearness, simplicity, and brevity not elsewhere found. They consist, not of arguments, but of lucid statements and comprehensive definitions of truth; and no one who has not minutely analyzed and expounded them, can be at all aware of the logical precision, the fullness, the symmetry, and withal the seriousness and unction of those statements. The *Shorter Catechism* in particular, may be considered as one of the most complete and accurate summaries of divine truth ever couched in uninspired language. Never were so much time, and learning, and labour bestowed on documents of the same compass: and never were care and ability expended on a more deserving object, or with greater success.

3. The Westminster Assembly also composed a *Directory for public Worship*. Indeed this was completed earliest of all their formularies, as it was urgently demanded by the state of the kingdom. The liturgy in use in the Church of England, had never from the first given satisfaction to true protestants. At the commencement of the Reformation there were in use several different forms of service, each diocese having its own particular one. In the second

year of Edward VI. a committee appointed to prepare a form of public service for general use, collected and compared the *missals* which had been in use in the five popish bishoprics of Sarum, Bangor, Hereford, Lincoln and York, and from them digested a Book of Common Prayer to be used throughout the kingdom. Copies of this book were sent to Calvin and other distinguished protestant divines on the continent, for their examination. It was found to contain many things so grossly popish, that, at the suggestion of those eminent men, it underwent another revision and considerable alteration. Still a number of articles remained which deeply grieved the more pious and evangelical; and attempts were subsequently made at various times to have them removed, but either by the arbitrary interposition of the sovereign or through the influence of the ecclesiastics of the court they were always unsuccessful. The matters which occasioned greatest dissatisfaction were such as the following:—The reading of the Apocrypha in public worship—private and lay baptism—the use of godfathers and godmothers, and the sign of the cross—private administration of the communion to the sick—the altar instead of the table at the Lord's Supper—the observation of festivals and saints' days, &c.

When the Assembly came to examine the book carefully, it was found to contain so many things which were objectionable, that upon mature deliberation it was wholly rejected; and they determined to prepare an entirely new and independent manual which might serve as a guide to a simple and scriptural worship. The reasons for this step are assigned in the preface to that document. "Long and sad experience," say the Assembly, "hath made it manifest that the Liturgy used in the Church of England—notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers—hath proved an offence, not only to many of the godly at home, but also to the Reformed Churches abroad. For, not to speak of urging the reading of all the prayers, which very greatly increased the burden of it,—the many unprofitable and burdensome ceremonies, contained in it, have occasioned much mischief as well by disquieting the consciences of many godly ministers and people, who could not yield unto them, as by depriving them of the ordinances of God, which they might not enjoy without conforming to these ceremonies. Sundry good Christians have been by means thereof kept from the Lord's table,

and divers able and faithful ministers debarred from the exercise of their ministry. Prelates and their factions have endeavoured to raise the estimation of it to such an height, as if there were no other worship of God amongst us but only the service book, to the great hindrance of the preaching of the word, and in some places of late to the jostling of it out as unnecessary or at best inferior to the reading of common prayer.

“In the meantime, papists boasted that the book was a compliance with them in a great part of their service; and so were not a little confirmed in their superstition and idolatry.

“Add hereunto, that the Liturgy hath been a great means of making and increasing an idle and unedifying ministry, which contented itself with set forms made to their hands by others, without putting forth themselves to exercise the gift of prayer, with which our Lord Jesus Christ pleaseth to furnish all his servants whom he calls to that office.

“Upon these, and many the like weighty considerations, in reference to the whole book in general, and because of divers particulars contained in it, not from any love to novelty, but that we may in some measure answer the gracious providence of God, and satisfy our own consciences, and answer the expectations of other Reformed Churches, and give public testimony of our endeavours for uniformity in divine worship; we have, after earnest and frequent calling upon the name of God, and after much consultation with his holy word, resolved to lay aside the former Liturgy with the many rites and ceremonies formerly used in the worship of God.”

The mode of public worship is of great practical importance. Whether we consider the character of God to whom it is offered, or the condition of man who presents devotional homage; whether we regard the fitness of public worship to the relations of both or its effects on the worshippers; it cannot be a matter of indifference in what manner God is worshipped. It is only a becoming service which is acceptable to God, and adapted to chasten, purify, and elevate the worshipper. All low, crude, and mean expressions of devotion are unsuited to the majesty of God who is *glorious in holiness* and *fearful in praises*; and such expressions tend to debase the mind and affections of those who are habituated to them. On the other hand the

most decorous formality is not less hurtful to the spirit of devotion than degrading improprieties; and the most scrupulous care should be employed to secure the worshipper against the influence of either defect.

The Directory for public worship prepared by the Westminster Assembly, is a remarkably judicious prescription for a simple, chaste, and scriptural celebration of divine service and dispensation of the word and sacraments. It is well adapted to secure, on the one hand, a decorous and edifying order and uniformity; and on the other, to preserve the unction and devout affections of the pious worshipper. Wherever its directions are strictly followed, public worship and ordinances will be refreshing to the fervent Christian, and at the same time the most fastidious mind will be shocked neither by unscriptural innovations nor revolting improprieties.

In digesting the Directory, the Assembly proceeded on the same fundamental principle which guided them in the preparation of their other formularies. They held that no rite, or ceremony, or usage, ought to have a place in the public worship of God, which is not warranted by scripture. Accordingly the services of the sanctuary are conformed in every essential feature to the precept and example of the apostles; and everything is studiously excluded which is not thus sanctioned or enjoined. Reading and expounding the scriptures, singing the praises of God, solemn prayer, the faithful preaching of the word, and administration of the gospel ordinances; constitute the stated services of the sanctuary. In no one of these parts is the worshipper left to the mercy of the officiating minister's caprice or unaided discretion; and yet in no one is the servant of Christ shut up to a mere mechanical function or the worshipper doomed to the uniformity of an unvarying liturgical office. Scope is given for the exercise of ministerial gifts and graces; and yet latitude is not permitted to a vagrant fancy: the great cardinal elements which must enter into the devotions of a redeemed sinner are embodied, while space is left for all the fullness and vicissitude of Christian experience to be regarded.

Such are the standards of faith and worship prepared by that illustrious body. The principles neither of doctrine nor of policy indeed originated with them. They are essentially Christian and apostolic; and were held as fully before as they have been since they were digested into their present form. They were found in the primitive church,

among the witnesses of the truth, and were brought forth anew by the Reformers. But never had they been embodied in a form so exact, comprehensive, and symmetrical. It should be matter of thankfulness that divine Providence caused the talent and piety of so many eminent divines aided by so many able statesmen to be employed on this great work. We should prize a work upon which such an assembly expended so much time, and pains, and prayer. And now when a frivolous spirit pervades the public mind; when error is putting on a bold front and vice is taking gigantic strides; when some are pointing to an external priesthood and ritual saying, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these*; and when others are collecting the shreds and cast off patches of popery and calling upon us to fall down and worship them; it becomes us to embrace with a more heart-felt devotion and to hold with a more vigorous grasp the standards of gospel truth and order—to *hold fast the form of sound words*.

We venerate these standards, partly because they embody the wisdom of an august Synod; because they come down to us associated with the memory and faith of saints and martyrs and embalmed with their blood; but we love them most of all because they contain the truth of God—that truth which forms the foundation of our hopes. As our fathers prized them, and we prize them, so may our children and our children's children love and preserve them.

Though disappointed in their hope of seeing the faith and order expressed in these formularies established as the uniform religion of the three kingdoms; those eminent men by no means bestowed their labours in vain. They were immediately adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and continue to this day to be the standards of that church, and of various bodies of Presbyterians throughout the world. With some modifications, they are the symbolical books of our own church; and we trust will long continue to be held in veneration by all our members. We scarcely know whether the failure of the precise scheme of the Assembly is to be regretted. We do not wish to conceal the faults of those great and good men. It is not necessary to publish them. The world knows them by heart. They have been held up to the mockery and merriment of the profane; and monstrous exaggerations of them have constituted the embellishments of novels and reviews, till thousands who know nothing of their worth, can ridi-

cule their frailties. We do not dissemble our apprehension, that if these excellent standards had been enforced by the civil power on the three kingdoms; we might have had less decisive proofs than we now possess of their value. As it is, they have continued by the simple force of inherent truth, the weight of moral excellence, to exert a wide and mighty influence. They have left a deep impress on the moral character, they have moulded the sentiments, and established the principles of many generations. They have accomplished good which neither an Erastian parliament nor an army of sectaries could preclude. No documents—neither Magna Charta, nor legislative acts, nor bills of right, have done so much to promote the interests of those who speak the English tongue as have these brief formularies. The principles which they embody have not only sunk down into the hearts of those who embraced them; but they have silently worked their way through the prejudices, and greatly affected the modes of thinking of those who disdain them.

Geo. W. A. Sanders.

ART. VI.—*Annual Report of the Board of Education, of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America. Presented May, 1843. Philadelphia. Published by the Board.*

IN connexion with this admirable document, it is our purpose to offer some reflections on the duty of the church, to pray and labour for the increase of a pious and learned ministry of the gospel.

The great, appointed, tried and permanent means of giving men the gospel, is the ordinance of preaching. Other agencies have done their part, as invaluable aids, but this it is, which has been essential and universal, and which, as divinely ordained, will so continue to the end of time. The pious admonition, the tract, and even the written word, are not so generally the instrument of great increase. It was the institution of preaching, which, under God, wrought the astonishing changes in the first age, in the spread of religion through all the countries which became truly Christian, in the Reformation from popery, and in the diffusion of our own church in the British isles and in America.