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I.

SPENCER'S PHILOSOPHY AND THEISM.

THE Theory of Things taught in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer is, in its ultimate elements, essentially Theistic.* That is to say: its hypothesis of evolution and dissolution, although at many points diverted from its business of unifying knowledge, that it may better serve the agnostic argument; yet is derived, as it declares, from data, which we discover are nothing more nor less than the ultimate truths of the hypothesis of creation by external agency, and of the Self-Existence, the Eternal, Absolute, and Personal Being of the Creator.

This conclusion which we have reached in our examination, leads to the corollary, that the hypothesis of evolution and dissolution is true, so far as it is dependent on, or consistent with, the First Principles of the Philosophy; and false, so far as it is informed or influenced by its agnostic argument.

Our further inquiry, therefore, will be, not for the best evidence of the truths of Theism, which we have found already are the ultimate truths of the new system, but for illustrations of these truths from this Theory of Things. And while searching for secondary criteria answering to the absolute criterion of consciousness, we may look for correspondence not only of relative realities with the Absolute Reality, and of relative causes with the Absolute Cause; but also of the relative personality of man the rational creature, with the Absolute Personality of the Creator.

* See PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, July, 1883.

V.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PURITANISM.

PURITANISM was the great religious force of the seventeenth century, the most powerful influence in British thought and life since the Reformation. It was indeed the Protestantism of the Reformation in a new form,—in a higher and grander manifestation. The Reformation in Great Britain was an irresistible movement of the people. It was combated by monarchs, princes, and prelates. It was restrained, so far as possible, by the authorities in church and state. Every effort was put forth to constrain it into prescribed channels. There was a long and intense struggle between the new life and the old forms it was forced to wear. That struggle grew fiercer and fiercer. It became a life-and-death combat. The monarchs and their prelates raised their determination to the pitch of tyranny and despotism. They undertook to crush evangelical liberty and to clothe the Protestant spirit in a semi-Papal uniform. But when patience ceased to be a virtue and endurance reached its climax, the youthful energy and indomitable life of Puritanism burst the bands, cast off the compromising dresses, and monarch and prelates went down in the common ruin.

As a mountain stream springing forth from a deep perennial fountain, strengthened in its progress by numberless brooks and swollen by oft-repeated rains, rises higher and higher, becomes stronger and stronger; the narrow banks press its waters more compactly together; the barriers erected by man to check its flow and utilize its powers, mass its energies for the supreme moment. The last effort of resistance has been made. The flood laughs at any further restraint. It leaps upon the barriers and throws them aside with irresistible onset. It rejoices in its freedom. It spreads an overwhelming flood in all directions. It spends itself and subsides in its original and proper channel. It has wrought ruin to all that has resisted it. But it has enriched the land over which it has flowed with new life and vigor. Such is Puritanism in British History. It has ever been a life-giving stream from God. It has rejoiced in freedom as its birthright.

It has a religious energy such as can be found nowhere else. It has been a devastating force when men have presumed to check it. It was a wild, stormy flood in the times of the Commonwealth. It spent its strength in the enrichment of the national life. It made Great Britain and her colonies the grandest nation, yes, we may say the grandest nations of the world. For it made them above all things a bold, brave, God-fearing people. It enabled them to lead the van in civilization, in commerce, in the arts and sciences, in literature, and above all in social reform and in religious life. The Puritan era is the heroic age for Great Britain and for America. In it were the foundations laid for all that is noblest and best in subsequent times.

It is true it gave birth to a large number of conflicting sects which waged an unrelenting warfare with each other. A gangrene of heresies spread all over England. The stately robes of Anglo-Roman conformity were torn in shreds and every fragment gave birth to a new sect. But out of this vast complexity, this marvellous variety of Puritanism, the stately structure of British and American Christianity has been rising in higher and grander stages; for the unifying principle of Puritanism has been at work as the most potent force in Anglo-Saxon History; working through many generations of conflict, changing intolerance into *toleration*, and checking separation by *comprehension*. It aims, as we believe, at organic unity,—a unity not of uniformity or conformity; but a unity in variety, a unity such as we find in all the great works of God; a unity of life, of liberty, of progress; a unity which is the organizing force of a vast and complex organism, which will come to manifestation in the apex of a pyramid, embracing all the phases of evangelical Christianity. This organic principle of Puritanism is embedded in the great Puritan Symbol, the Westminster Confession of Faith:

“God alone is Lord of the Conscience and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in everything contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship; so that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.” (xx., 2.)

This principle of Puritanism was a growth of centuries, and it had to be wrought into the life and experience of the British people. This could only be brought about by conflict and suffering unto death. The history of Puritanism is a history of struggle for religious liberty. Puritanism is rich in martyrs. It has advanced, like early Christianity, through a series of persecutions. It has gained its victories with the blood and the nerves of its noblest and its best.

It has been well said that “England could produce no Luther in

the sixteenth century, simply because it had had its Luther already in the fourteenth."*

John Wicklif was indeed the morning star of the Reformation, heralding its dawn. He struck at the root of the authority of the hierarchy in his principle of the supreme authority of the Scriptures. He gave us the flaming sword of God with which to conquer every form of Ecclesiasticism and Scholasticism when he said: "The Holy Spirit teacheth us the sense of Scripture as Christ opened the Scripture to His apostles." Wicklif was sustained by potent influences, and passed to his grave in peace; but his followers, who went up and down preaching the gospel to the people of England, sealed their testimony with their blood, and became the front rank of the martyrs of Puritanism. A forlorn hope in the assault upon the battlements of Rome, they opened the way of liberty through the fire and the blood. The Reformation in England differs from the Reformation on the Continent in that it lacked a great heroic leader. There was no Luther or Zwingli or Calvin to lead the nation to evangelical faith and liberty. But England has the vastly greater honor of finding its chief reformer in a hunted man of the people, who gave himself, with self-sacrificing devotion, to the translation of the Word of God for the British nation,—William Tyndale, the martyr reformer, dying at the stake, October 6, 1536, with the prayer: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." He was the true reformer for Great Britain, the man chosen of God to lead a Reform which was deeper, more thorough, longer in its sweep, higher in its range, grander in its destiny, than those branches of the Reformation which sprang from Wittenberg and Zurich. For Puritanism had in it a principle of Reform which was the most far-reaching of the principles of the Reformation. On this account it was doomed to martyrdom, for a series of generations, in order that by prolonged suffering for Christ and his truth the Puritans might become the more profoundly dependent upon God, the closer in fellowship with their Redeemer, the more resolute and athletic in the centuries of conflict before them. For it was the destiny of Puritanism to bear the banner of Evangelical progress to loftier heights long after the Protestantism of the Continent had become stereotyped in varied forms of Scholasticism.

The British reformation early divided itself into two antagonistic parties, the ecclesiastical or conservative party, and the popular or progressive party; the one would keep as near to Rome as possible; the other sought close conformity with the Reformed Churches of the Continent and a complete reformation.

* See Mitchell's *Westminster Assembly*, p. 3; London, 1883.

The Puritan party secured the XXXIX Articles, the Prelatical party rallied around the Book of Common Prayer. The XXXIX Articles took its position among the Reformed Confessions. The Book of Common Prayer retained not a few of the forms of Papacy. This double and inconsistent standard became the bane of the Church of England.

The XXXIX Articles assumed the essential principle of Puritanism in the statement :

“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” (Art. VI.)

But this principle was outraged and violated by the Prelatical party at every stage of the conflict. For the Book of Common Prayer did require, in the Prelatical demand for uniformity, a large number of things which, assuredly, were not contained in Scripture, and which could not be deduced from Scripture. The Puritans took their stand on the 6th Article, and contended that the Romish and unscriptural things should be removed from the Prayer Book.

Bishops Coverdale, Latimer, Hooper, Farrar, and many others, Puritan ministers and laymen, followed Tyndale in martyrdom; but the blood of these martyrs became the seed of the church. The exiled Puritans went to Geneva, the head-quarters of the Reformation, and studied in the school of Calvin. They returned under Elizabeth a new generation to renew the struggle with fresh vigor. And then the Puritan conflict became intense. In Scotland it triumphed under the leadership of the bold and brave Knox. His Scottish Confession (1560) took the advanced Puritan position.

“As we believe and confesse the Scriptures of God sufficient to instruct and make the man of God perfite, so do we affirme and avow the authoritie of the same to be of God, neither to depend on men or angelis. We affirme, therefore, that sik as allege the Scripture to have no uther authoritie but that quhilk it has received from the Kirk, to be blasphemous against God, and injurious to the treu Kirk quhilk alwaies heares and obeyis the voice of her awin spouse and pastor, but takis not upon her to be maistres over the sammin.” (Art. XIX.)

Here the Scotch Confession advances beyond the Anglican and reaffirms the principle of Wicklif; for the Anglican Confession, while it affirms the sole authority of Scripture, bases the canon of Scripture on the authority of church tradition, and leaves its interpretation undefined; whereas the Puritan position lodges the authority of the Bible in itself. God in it speaks the authoritative voice to believers, determining the canon and its interpretation. The Scottish reformation was carried through in doctrine, discipline, and worship. Knox's

book of Common Order displaced the Mass book; Presbytery took the place of Papacy. The Scottish nation as a nation was reformed. In England it was far different. The leader of the English Elizabethan Puritanism was Thomas Cartwright; and he was required to pursue the path of suffering opened up by the Puritan worthies that preceded him. And yet he waged a brave, earnest, and persistent struggle against arbitrary and tyrannical prelatical rule. The Puritans, with few exceptions, were not put to death under Elizabeth by fire and sword, but they were deprived, fined, imprisoned, exiled, and abused in a fashion that was worse than death. But all this persecution could not accomplish its purpose. Nonconformity increased; the better part of the laity sympathized with their deprived pastors, and declined to conform. The nation was more and more alienated from the Prelates and became Puritan.

It is important that we should carefully note the application of the Puritan principle to the conformity that the Romanizing Prelates strove to force upon them. But we should always remember that a noble line of Puritan prelates continued to protect and encourage Puritanism as much as possible.

Puritanism adopted the three great principles of the Reformation: (1) Justification by faith alone; (2) Salvation by grace alone; (3) The authority of the Word of God alone. These three principles, while held by all branches of the Reformation, were differently emphasized by the different churches. The Lutheran Reformation emphasized justification by faith *alone*, over against justification by works of ourselves or others. A living faith appropriates Christ as Saviour, and thereby receives the gift of justification. Faith *only* was the banner erected at Wittenberg about which the Germans rallied. The Swiss Reformation adopted this same principle, only it did not lay so much stress upon it as upon the second principle, salvation by grace alone. This brought about a difference between the Germans and Swiss in the article of faith. Lutherans made assurance of the essence of faith, but Calvinists distinguished between simple justifying faith and the assurance of faith which is the result of growth in grace.* The Lutherans were ever afraid of the doctrine of good works, lest it should undermine the doctrine of justification by faith only; but the Calvinists insisted upon evangelical obedience in connection with their doctrine of growth in faith. The Puritans agreed with the Calvinists here, only they improved the doctrine of good works in relation to repentance and sanctification. They urged that simple justifi-

* Schneckenburger's *Vergleich. Darstell. d. Luth. und Reform. Lehrbegriffs*, Stuttgart, 1855, p. 108 *seq.*

fyng faith should grow to the attainment of infallible assurance of salvation, and that it should be associated with repentance into life. This was not a mere turning away from sin, but an appropriation of holiness; and so justification passes over into sanctification.*

The statements of the Westminster Confession on these doctrines transcend anything produced in the other Reformed symbols. They present the high-water mark of the flow of Protestantism—a grand ideal from which later Puritanism sadly declined, owing to the evil influence of a foreign scholasticism imported into it.†

The ethical element is one of the most characteristic elements of Puritanism. The Puritans were not content with the passive attitude of simple faith; they assumed the active attitude of working out their own salvation rooted in faith. Human life was to them a battle with indwelling sin and with external evil. They went into the conflict equipped with Scripture armor and weapons, and were assured of victory. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War* are the culmination of a large number of writings on this subject. They are the most popular because they are in this respect the best exposition of the ethical side of Puritanism.

The ethical battle of Puritanism was fought about the Sabbath as a centre. This was forced by the *Book of Sports*. This book was issued by King James in 1618 "to encourage recreations and sports on the Lord's day." It discriminated between harmless and lawful sports, in which all good churchmen might engage, but from which Papists and Puritans were excluded, and unlawful sports. It seems incredible that Christian prelates should have endorsed such a book, and encouraged the violation of the Sunday in the way they did. The Puritan pastors preferred the law of their heavenly King to the book of their earthly monarch. Rather than transgress the 4th Commandment they gave up their livings and suffered fine and imprisonment. The Sabbath is the citadel of Puritan ethics. It is due to Puritanism alone that Britain and America enjoy the rest and peace and holy worship of the Lord's day. The forced struggle on this and other points gave the Puritan piety an Old Testament cast. They were impelled by circumstances to the brink of legalism. They did not sufficiently apprehend the different stages in the development of Biblical ethics. They imposed upon themselves and others not a few rigorous rules and irksome restraints which have made Puritanism to many a mark of bondage and Phariseism. But such mistakes are common to all great religious movements.‡ They were committed,

* See Lyford's *Plain Man's Sense Exercised*, London, 1655, p. 318, seq.

† *Westminster Confession*, Chapters XIV.—XVIII.

‡ Isaac Taylor, in his *Wesley and Methodism* (New York, 1852, p. 81), makes the following sig-

however, rather by their feebler descendants than by the Puritan fathers. It is essential that we should distinguish between Puritan and Puritanical, between the original and genuine Puritan holiness and its later stereotyped and mechanical Puritanical caricature.

The Puritans were too much influenced by the Old Testament in proportion to the New Testament. They did not sufficiently apprehend the different stages in divine doctrine and morals; but they were faithful to the Word of God as they understood it. And even here they wrought out the doctrine of the Covenants. They introduced it as the structural principle of their theology. They gave the impulse to the Covenant theology of Holland which was the only means of resistance to the scholasticism of the 17th century, and the rallying point for a revival of theology in modern times.* Indeed, the Puritans could not be scholastics. The essential principle of Puritanism was the foe of all scholasticism and ecclesiasticism. The Puritans sought above all union and communion with God by a living faith and a growing faith. They desired above all things to be conformed to God's will; and so they resisted conforming to the prelates' will. Their ideal was a holy life in communion with God. This was the noble aspiration of Puritanism which has made British and American society the most ethical and upright, the most manly and godly society the world has yet seen. The reality and power of godliness have been displayed in Great Britain and her colonies more than in any other lands under heaven. In them religion has been a reality and a power for practical aggressive work in every department of religious and moral reform, and for the extension of the gospel throughout the world.

II. The essential principle of the Calvinistic reformation was salvation by divine grace alone over against the Sacraments, the church, and human instrumentalities of every kind. The Lutheran church believed in salvation by grace alone, but they tied the divine grace too closely to church and sacraments. The Reformed believed that the word, church and sacraments were ordinary means of grace, but that the divine grace itself was free and not confined to the ordinary means. The Calvinistic reformation, however, laid too much stress

nificant reflections: "But thus it is, and ever has been, that those who are sent by Heaven to bring about great and necessary movements, which, however, are, after a time, either to subside or to fall into a larger orbit, are left to the short-sightedness of their own minds in fastening upon their work some appendage (perhaps unobserved) which, after a cycle of revolutions, must secure the accomplishment of Heaven's own purpose—the stopping of that movement. Religious singularities are Heaven's brand imprinted by the unknowing hand of man upon whatever is destined to last its season, and to disappear."

* See Mitchell's *Westminster Assembly*, p. 377, and Briggs' *Biblical Study*, p. 342.

upon the *divine grace alone*. The Reformed Scholastics neglected to discriminate between its stages as the Lutherans neglected the stages of growth and faith. Their order of salvation, like their order of the divine decrees, was a poor mechanical substitute for it. Hence in the Arminian conflict they sharpened the Reformed position into the so-called five points of Calvinism; and in France and Holland divided the church into two hostile camps,—scholastic Calvinists and liberal Calvinists. They emphasized more and more the *sovereignty* of the divine grace, and limited it in the direction of arbitrariness and wilfulness.

The Puritans were not as a rule Scholastics, though there were scholastics among them. They were not caught in the meshes of the scholastic formula of Heidegger, Turretine, and Voetius. It was reserved for their descendants to abandon the evangelical theology of British Puritanism for the scholastic theology of Switzerland and Holland. It was a sad day for Puritanism when the systems of Francis Turretine and Markius became the text-books in their colleges and theological seminaries, and the Puritan worthies were displaced by continental thinkers. The Puritans were indeed true Calvinists over against the Arminians; but such leaders as Usher, Reynolds, Calamy, Marshall, Baxter, not to speak of the elder Ball and Cartwright, had the true spirit of the reformation. They did not neglect to lay stress upon human activity in redemption. As they insisted that faith should pass over into repentance unto life, and the full assurance of salvation; so they also urged that the grace of God in the heart should manifest itself in an experience of grace in the life; in a graceful temper and gracious character. They urged the prevenient Grace of God as the sole source of redemption. They magnified the vital energy of the divine grace, and laid stress upon effectual calling and divine adoption, but they carefully guarded the doctrines of predestination and election from abuse; insisting that

“God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, iii., 1.)

There is effectual calling to Jesus Christ, “yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.” But it is especially in the assurance of grace and salvation that Puritanism in this department reaches its height:

“This certainly is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises

are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God." (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xviii. 2.)

And

"It is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness." (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xviii. 3.)

We shall not presume to deny that the Puritans laid too much stress upon the doctrines of Predestination and Election. This they shared with the entire Reformation movement. It was essential that they should take this point of view at that time. All true reformers were agreed here. But we claim that the Puritans guarded these doctrines from abuse better than the Continental divines, and they advanced upon them in urging growth in grace, and in a progressive application of grace in redemption. It has been the misfortune of Puritanism that the symbols which it framed have been interpreted, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the point of view of the alien scholastic writers of the Continent. The circumstances of their historic origin, and the writings of those who framed them, have been neglected and forgotten. It is astonishing how seldom we find a reference to a Westminster divine, or early Puritan, other than the scholastic Owen, in the theological works of the leaders of orthodoxy in the Presbyterian churches of the past century. One who takes the pains to study the Puritans in their writings soon discovers that the grace of God to them was an intensely practical grace,—a grace of experience, a grace of Christian life. The virus of Scholasticism had not yet inoculated them as it did their feebler descendants when they forsook the favorite Biblical studies of their Fathers for a strife over dogmatic commonplaces.

III. But the chief merit of Puritanism is in the third principle of the Reformation, the authority of the Word of God alone, which they emphasized so greatly as to make it their banner principle of Reform. The Continental Reformers also affirmed this principle, but to them it was subordinate to the other two. The Continental Reformers insisted upon the authority of the Word of God itself, but on the question as to the authorized interpreter of the Word they were not sufficiently definite. The British Puritans were here more practical. Indeed, Wicklif and Tyndale had shaped their principle for them, and they had only to employ and apply it. The Puritans made the Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible the sole authoritative interpreter of the Bible, and affirmed that God alone was the Lord

of the conscience, speaking in his Word directly to the believer as the only sovereign and infallible authority.

Circumstances forced the Puritans to this position; for in Great Britain the authority of the Prelates assumed the place of the authority of the Pope, and presumed to prescribe in matters of faith and worship aside from divine revelation, and to determine the Canon and to interpret the Canon. The issue joined was therefore the authority of the Bible over against the authority of the Prelates. The claim of the Prelates rose higher and higher through Parker, Whitgift, and Bancroft, until it culminated in Laud. But the resistance of the Puritans became stouter and stouter through Hooper, Cartwright, and Bradshaw, until it culminated in the Westminster divines. The Long Parliament decided in favor of Puritanism, and the Church of England was reformed by civil authority and deeds of violence. It will reward us to tarry here and note the chief points at issue in the application of the essential Puritan principle.

(1). The issue was joined at first with reference to ceremonies in the article of worship. It became a battle over the Book of Common Prayer. It should be clearly understood that the Puritans did not object to a Book of Common Prayer. As the Reformed Churches of the Continent all had Prayer-Books, so Knox introduced the Book of Common Order into Scotland, and it was observed in Scotland until the adoption of the Westminster Directory, and has never been set aside by an official act of the Church.* The Puritans desired to *purge* the Book of Common Prayer, established in England. There were indeed several revisions of the Prayer-Book in the battle of Puritanism and Prelacy, in accordance with the changing fortunes of the parties. The ceremonies objected to in the Book of Common Prayer were the *Romish ceremonies*: the priestly garments, the bowing at the altar in receiving the Sacrament, the cross in baptism, the bowing at the name of Jesus, etc. The reason of objection was that the ceremonies carried with them the Popish doctrine of the priesthood, the sacrifice of the Mass and vulgar superstitions—they encouraged secret Papists and Krypto-Romanism in the Church of England. There can be no doubt that this was their original design. Every effort was put forth to conciliate the priesthood of Rome and induce them to conform to the Church of England. The Puritans, as sincere Reformers, protested against this compromise with Rome, and were certainly the real Protestant party. The Prelates were more tolerant with the Papists than they were with the Puritans. It

* See Cunningham's *Church History of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1859, Vol. II., p. 65 *seq.*

is difficult for us in this 19th century to appreciate the seriousness of the struggle and the necessity imposed upon our sires to resist the ceremonies. They felt that they compromised themselves with Roman errors or opened the doors for a secret, subtle Roman propagandism which would eventually destroy the Reformation. Therefore hundreds of Puritans in 1634

“were persecuted, censured, suspended, excommunicated or deprived for praying for the conversion of the Queen [a R. C.], for not bowing at the name of Jesus or towards the high altar, or not consenting to the placing of the communion-table altar-wise and railing it in, or for delivering the sacrament to such as did not kneel, or for preaching against Arminianism or Popery, or for refusing to read the book of Sports. And were many of them forced to leave the kingdom and go into Holland, New England or Florida.” (Morice MSS., fol. 7. Dr. Williams’ Library, London.)

Those whom Old England refused were welcomed to New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Carolina. They established Puritanism as the religious force of North America. They planted a nation which is now, and always has been, and always will be, a Puritan nation, where Puritanism has had from the beginning a free development, and where it has manifested its excellence and displayed its powers. It has assimilated the weaker forces of other nationalities, or left them in their harmless and unimportant separation. Puritanism has made the United States of America what it is to-day, thanks to Archbishop Laud and Charles the First, whose folly and madness were destined by heavenly wisdom for the forming of a *great Puritan nation*. The battle over the ceremonies has changed its bearings. Many of those things our fathers objected to as involving Romanism no longer are open to this objection. They have been used by Puritan conformists for centuries and adapted to Protestant conceptions. But the old battle over ceremonies goes on, not so much between the Conformists and Nonconformists in England; or between the Puritan Churches of America and Scotland, and the Episcopal Church, which is a little sister among them; but the struggle is now, as it has ever been in the Church of England itself, between the Puritanism in it and the Krypto-Romanism in it, the same old battle which has been waged since the Reformation, and which must ever continue so long as these heterogeneous forces are comprehended in the same organism.

Our fathers were wise and true in their contentions against the ceremonies. These ceremonies carried with them by association grievous errors, and compromised Protestantism. They encouraged secret Papists; but the Puritan movement was forced by the circumstances of the case to extremes which involved the radical section of it and their descendants in sad mistakes. These entered into

a crusade against other things that were not only harmless but to edification.

The Puritan contest against Popish ceremonies was advanced by the radical party into a Puritanical opposition to all liturgies, organs, instruments of music, hymns other than psalms, pictures, statues, architecture and art of any kind in worship. These were serious blunders which compromised the genuine Puritan party, and crippled and retarded the growth of Puritanism among the educated and cultured classes.

It is very evident that the genuine Puritanism was opposed to *Popish ceremonies*, and that only the narrower section of Puritanism was opposed to prayer-books and liturgies. The opposition was stronger in Scotland than in England among Presbyterians because the opposition in England was rather among the Congregationalists than the Presbyterians. The Westminster Assembly found it impracticable to revise the Book of Common Prayer so as to satisfy both nations and all parties. They preferred to make a new Confession of Faith after spending a long time in trying to revise the XXXIX Articles. Revision is more difficult, when we have to do with historical documents, than a construction of new documents. It was still more difficult to construct a prayer-book for Scotland and England than a Confession of Faith. Indeed, it was seen to be impracticable. A *Directory for the Public Worship of God* was the only thing that was practicable. This was successfully constructed, but with the definite understanding that it was not to be *imposed* in every particular, and that it did not determine between the use of free or written prayer. These matters were left to the several churches as the sphere in which to exercise Christian liberty.

This is so admirably explained by Dr. Mitchell, that we quote him at length :

“The tolerant purpose of those who framed it is fully expressed in their letter to the Scottish General Assembly of 1645, in which they say : ‘We have not advised any imposition which might make it unlawful to vary from it in anything ; yet we hope all our reverend brethren in this kingdom and in yours also, will so far value and reverence that which upon so long debate and serious deliberation hath been agreed upon in the Assembly, . . . that it shall not be the less regarded and observed. And albeit we have not expressed in the Directory every minute particular which is or might be either laid aside or retained among us as comely and useful in practice ; yet we think that none will be so tenacious of old customs not expressly forbidden, or so averse to our good examples although new, in matters of lesser consequence, as to insist upon their liberty of retaining the one or refusing the other because not specified in the Directory.’ The materials for prayer and exhortation provided in the Directory were not meant by its framers, as they explain in the preface, to do more than supply help and furniture, of which the officiating minister might avail himself. It was said, indeed, by Mr. Marshall, when he first brought in the part relating to the ordinary services for the Lord’s day, that it did ‘not only set down the heads of things, but so largely as that

with the altering of here and there a word, a man may mould it into a prayer.' But when reminded of this some months afterwards, when he brought in the first draught of the Preface, bearing a statement that this was not intended, he said: 'Some such expression did fall from my mouth; I said as one reason why it was so large, here he might have such furniture as that with a little help he may do it. But there is no contradiction to say that we do not intend it. It is not a direct prohibition.' [MS. Minutes, Vol. II., p. 286 b.] In other words, those who conducted the ordinary services were not directly prohibited from turning the materials furnished to them into an unvarying form of prayer, keeping as near to the words of the Directory as they could; but at the same time they were not only not restricted or counselled to do so, but they were counselled and encouraged to do something more, according to their ability and opportunities." (Mitchell's *Westminster Assembly*, pp. 232, 233.)

The Westminster divines were unable under the circumstances to prescribe in the minute details of worship, and determined to leave the question of free prayer or written prayer to be determined by the circumstance of the countries and the times. They had been bitten so sharply by prescribed forms and imposed ceremonies, that they were indisposed to prescribe them or impose them upon others. Those who in later times sought to prescribe against the use of written prayers and to impose upon others their view of the exclusion of certain things from worship, went in the teeth of the views of the Westminster divines. It is a strange inconsistency on the part of some parties in our day to object to written prayers, which were left by the Westminster divines an open question, and yet change, without hesitation, the succession of parts of worship in the Directory, which order the Westminster divines regarded as very important to worship. It is really more important that the order of topics and succession of parts should be followed in all of our churches, than that these topics should be delivered from written pages, printed pages or the scheme should be committed to memory and its outlines filled up *extempore*.

We shall add an extract from Francis Makemie, one of the founders of the American Presbyterian Church, as a presentation of a later Scotch-Irish view of the subject:

"I shall begin with Common Prayer and ceremonies, and concerning them, we differ in these particulars, waiving many of our reasons to avoid *offence*: 1. We dare not receive nor comply with studied, composed, and imposed *forms* or *lyturgies* of worship because not *commanded* nor *warranted* by the Word of God, nor known in the purest and original centuries of the *gospel churches*, but composed without *divine commission*, and required merely by *men* in the *degenerate* and *latter ages* of the gospel. 2. Though we *deny* not altogether, but *allow* many *forms of prayer* in many cases, as studied forms for ones self, and composed easy and plain form for the *ignorant* and *unskillful*, as young ones, early converts, as crutches for the weak and lame; yet we cannot and dare not, *ordain* and call any man to be a *minister* of the gospel, and to take *charge of souls*, that hath not given sufficient proof, and demonstration of their *praying* and *preaching* gifts and abilities at all times, and suitably or pertinently for all occasions and conditions, without *prescribed forms* read in a book; and we never denied the lawfulness of joyning with the sound words of others in prayer. 3. Such ministers as have received of God, and have given sufficient proof to many of their *praying* gifts and abili-

ties, dare not ordinarily, and in their ordinary administrations, tye themselves to, and only use these prescribed and *book* forms, least they should be guilty of not using and improving, but hiding or burying their *gifts* and *talents*, and so incur the character of *unlawful servants*." (Francis Mackemie, *Truths in a True Light*, pp. 12, 13, Edinburgh, 1699.)

No parts of worship have been so sharply debated in Presbyterian circles as psalmody and instrumental music. With regard to the latter, it is held in many quarters that it is against the principles of Presbyterianism to use instrumental music in worship. Prof. W. D. Killen, of Belfast, has recently shown in an admirable tract* that this is a mistake. He shows that the banishment of musical instruments from the worship of God's house was the result of a radical movement in Scotland and Ireland, and that the Westminster divines are not responsible for it. This and other such matters they left to be determined in accordance with the Puritan principles of liberty and toleration of difference in non-essentials.

It might easily be shown that it was the radical party among the Puritans which disgraced the great reforming movement by the destruction of images and pictures and the architecture of churches.

But still there can be no doubt that Puritanism as a whole has been compromised by the narrower and more radical party in the movement. It has still the task of relieving itself from the burdens such intolerance and radicalism have put upon it. It must return to the genuine principles of the original Puritanism, and carry out the broader policy of the Westminster divines.

In recent times much of the fault has been retrieved in Great Britain and America, but still more needs to be done. Here is the weakness of the great Puritan bodies of our day. There is nothing in the principle of Puritanism that should prevent any worship of God in forms of Christian art, whether music or painting or sculpture or architecture, provided these are mere forms to give the most beautiful or orderly or grand expression to sincere worship and to common prayer. Puritanism is the foe to all *formalism* in worship, to all *insincerity*, to all *error*; but the experience of two centuries has taught us that even in the simple forms of Puritanism there may be *formalism* and *insincerity* and *error*, as well as in the elaborate ritual of Anglican, Roman, or Greek Christianity. Puritanism will ever be opposed to *prescribed* forms and *imposed* ceremonies; it demands liberty of worship, but that liberty finds its best expression where the intellectual, moral, and æsthetic faculties combine to give the religious energies forms of truth, beauty, and excellence.

* *The Westminster Divines on the Use of Instrumental Music in the Worship of God*. Belfast, 1883.

(2). The next stage of the battle was about preaching and prophesying. The Puritan principle emphasized preaching rather than the sacraments and the public prayer. They accused the vicars who could not preach, but who merely read the service and the printed homilies in the graphic language of ancient prophesying, "dumb dogs." They gave their strength to expository preaching and to exhortation in their meetings for prophesying. This preaching of the Gospel had a powerful effect upon the people. It became the stronghold of Puritanism. The Prelates of the Anglo-Roman cast put forth every effort to suppress it, but there were always pious Puritan Prelates to encourage it. When the preachers were silenced in the churches pious laymen established lectureships, and the work of exposition went on with greater freedom and redoubled energy. The prophesying in public was prevented, but it was conducted in secret and became all the more powerful means of grace. Thus by persecution the Puritans were constrained to be great preachers, and they enjoyed the gift and learned the art of free prayer. Such a band of preaching and praying ministers as gathered in the Westminster Assembly the world had never seen before. Hence the difference between Anglican and Puritan worship which has continued until the present. The preaching of the Gospel and the Prophesying or prayer-meeting have been two leading features in all Puritan regions. These have been only partially appropriated by the Church of England and her daughters. The Nonconforming Churches of England, the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and the Puritan Churches of America have maintained their pre-eminence in this respect. The gift of prayer has been bestowed in marvellous richness and efficacy in all the free churches.

But we ought not to forget that our Puritan fathers, who were forced to emigration and to separation, were also urged by circumstances to a position which they would not otherwise have taken. It seems to us that in the features of common prayer and the service of song, and in the celebration of the sacraments, we have something to learn from others. If the Established Church of England has to learn from the distinctively Puritan bodies in the items of preaching, prophesying and free prayer, we have also to learn from it in the items of the service of song, in common prayer, and in sacramental observance. There is a liturgical tendency in many Puritan Churches which is really a reaction to the position of the earlier Puritanism, which aimed at a Protestant, Puritan Service Book, with the freedom of extempore prayer; a liturgy which should be a help and guide, and not a master or fetter. The Puritan principle is a principle of freedom in worship. It will work powerfully in the improvement of all forms

of divine service. It has freedom for action. It is without bondage to tradition. It is unfettered by ecclesiastical law. It is free to advance and seek earnestly the best things. It will in the end work out a service which shall be a model of beauty and harmony and grandeur, where preaching and praying and singing and sacramental observance will have proper proportion and harmonious expression in holy unity and variety, where the freedom for the time and place and circumstance will harmonize with the conformity to a common order, in which the communities and lands and countries will realize the communion of saints.

(3). The Puritan battle reached its height in the struggle over the government of the church. The real Puritans were not opposed to episcopacy, as such, if the episcopacy could be reduced to New Testament dimensions of a presiding Presbyter. They were opposed to a prelacy which presumed to govern the church without regard to the Presbyters and the church and people.* The struggle did not become intense here until Bancroft claimed divine right for episcopacy. It was then that the battle of the divine right of the three forms of Church Government,—Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism,—became serious. All parties now appealed to the Scriptures. It would have been a blessed struggle if they had fought the battle with Biblical weapons; but unfortunately they appealed to the civil power, and the sword was used to overthrow

* We give here two extracts from documents not accessible to the public to illustrate this statement. Calvin has been repeatedly charged with being the author of all the quarrels in British Christianity. Benedict Pictet, the Swiss divine, defends him in a letter to Dr. Nicholls, 1708 :

“If Mr. Calvin had entertained any prejudices against the Episcopal order, or if he had had any thoughts of propagating the polity of the Genevan church among other countrys, or if he had thought that that would best conduce to keep up good order in the church, how comes it that long letter which he wrote to the Duke of Somerset concerning the Reformation of the Church of England, he does not speak one word against the dignity of Bishops? For then he had a very fair occasion of breaking his mind upon this head, and deserving well of the church. How comes it to pass that when he wrote to A. Bp. Cranmer he gives him all the honorable titles which are paid to that character? Nay, be pleased to hear what he says in his book of the necessity of a Reformation in the Church, *Talem nobis*, etc. Let them give us such an Hierarchy in which Bishops may be so advanced that they may not refuse to be subject to Christ and may depend upon him as their only head and refer themselves to him and so cultivate a brotherly fellowship among themselves, that they be not bound together with any other knott than that of the Gospel truth; then we shall confess them to deserve ye Heaviest curse who shall not reverence it; and pay a willing obedience to it. And writing to his friend, Mr. Farell, he observes that there ought to be among Christians such a hatred of schism, that they must, upon all occasions, to the utmost of their power, avoid it.”

Francis Makemie, a few years earlier, expressed his view as follows :

“A third thing wherein we differ, is concerning the *government* of the church by *archbishops, chancellors, commissaries, deans, and chapters, archdeacons, &c.*, as not having foundation in the *Scriptures*, nor the government of the *gospel churches*, nor agreeable to the government of the *first centurie* after our Saviour. And though we are for *Scripture Bishops* both name and office, and wish with Dr. Wild in his poetical flight, *where there is one, there were ten*, neither would refuse the government of the first two or three hundred years after our Saviour; and it is known most of the *Presbyterians in England* offered to embrace *Dr. Usher*, his model of *church government*; yet there are several things in which *we* dissent, and which many of *yours* dislike in English or *Diocesan Bishops* or *Prelacy*; as, &c.” (Francis Mackemie, *Truths in a True Light*, p. 17.)

Episcopacy and establish Presbytery. It was not long before it became clear that Presbytery might be as tyrannical as Episcopacy, and Presbytery was soon crushed between the two other parties, who were determined to be rid of its authority. Congregationalism was never established in old England, but it became the established church of New England; and it was soon evident there that Episcopacy and Presbytery, as well as the Baptists and the Quakers, had no rights which it was bound to respect. Yes, to complete the picture, the Baptists and Quakers displayed their intolerance in other quarters. Thus, by practical experience, all parties have learned that it was the authority of the State that could use any ecclesiastical policy for purposes of intolerance and bigotry. But it has also been learned in the experience of the Free churches of Great Britain and America that tyranny may concentrate itself in purely ecclesiastical bodies,—an Episcopal Convention, a Methodist Conference, a Congregational Association, or a Presbyterian General Assembly or Synod. *Ecclesiasticism* is the bane of British Christianity as *Scholasticism* has been the bane of the Continent Reformation. The principle of Puritanism, that God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and that He speaks from the Scripture alone the authoritative word to the believer in all things, has been a matter of profession rather than of practice. Even the most faithful of the Puritans have not discriminated between the *Word of God* and their expositions and their interpretations of the Word. They have not seen the all-important difference between the *conscience* assured by God and the conscience stiffened by human argument and private wilfulness and passion. In the more radical types of Puritanism mere trifles have become questions of conscience to bring about strife and separation. The conscience of the individual has been used to outlaw the conscience of the Christian world. The Father of Presbyterianism in England, Thomas Cartwright, was compelled to contend against the Prelatical impositions, on the one hand, and the Brownist Separatists on the other. In 1590 he wrote a letter to Mrs. Stubbes, his sister-in-law, “to persuade her from Brownism.” Among other fitting remarks and arguments we find the following :

“Howbeit our Saviour by his callinge not being able to remedy these evils, he chose rather to ioyne himself unto the company of most notorious wicked men, then that he would separate himself from the holy things and in them from God whose they are. And seinge that by beinge of the wicked unwillingly I take noe harme, and am greatly hurte by separacion from the holy things of God there is no cause why I should lose the fruite of the one for the presence of thother. And consider whether by this meanes, you, whose glory is to throwe out of the church, are not yourselves throwne out and after a sort excommunicated from the holy things of God by every particuler man, who either in deede or in your opinion beinge onmeete to communicate, is either not

so judged by your church, or if he be, yett is in favour or feare supported by it." (Harl. MSS., 7581, British Museum.)

These words are prophetic of the evils of that separation for trifles which has characterized the radical type of Puritanism among both Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

Richard Baxter, in a private letter to Thomas Gataker, in 1653, expresses his view of the evils of disunion in one of the grandest sentences in the English language:

"Alas, that not only godly Christians, but so eminent able preachers of the gospel after such experience of the effects of division as the world scarce ever knew before, that have seen what it hath done in Scotland and felt what it hath done in England, and soe what it is threatening to the foreign Reformed churches, and have read what it hath done in all ages since Christ, should yet have so little mind of unity and no more deny themselves to attain it, nor bestir themselves more industriously in following after it. Are such fit for the everlasting peace and unity? Do they consider the sum of the 2nd table of God's commandments? Do they understand and deeply consider the article of the creed, the Catholic church and the Communion of Saints? Are they fit to say aright the first word of the Lord's prayer, which intimates that Christians should worship God as members of the universal body, and not as divided into parties, and should come upon the common interests of Christians and not upon dividing interests." (See p. 687 of this REVIEW.)

It has only gradually been learned that there are many consciences—equally sure that they are right—and that a conscience assured by God will be exacting for itself, but tolerant to others. It is nowhere said, in Scripture or reason, that the conscience of any individual or group of individuals shall be the conscience of a church or of a nation or of the world. When will men learn that the Puritan principle forbids the imposition upon any man's conscience of things which his own conscience will not admit to be the will of God?

In the light of the better study of the Bible and of history we must admit that the contestants were alike in error. Richard Baxter, and a few kindred spirits, were the only consistent Puritans. None of the forms of church government is of divine right. None of them represents the apostolic model as it is presented in the New Testament or the recently discovered "*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*." Only the simple forms common to all the great religious bodies can claim Scripture authority. The government of the Church must adapt itself to the circumstances of the age and the land and the people. And so it must assume the form that will best express the religious life of the Christian people. Hence we see a gradual assimilation in all the Puritan churches. They have largely the same offices and institutions, under different names. The Protestant churches of the Continent are drawing nearer to the Puritan churches of Great Britain and America. The Puritan element in the Established

Church of England is also under the influence of the same great movement, which is directed by the principles of Puritanism and of Protestantism. We are not surprised that the anti-Protestant and anti-Puritan element in the Church of England should also tend to assimilate itself to Greek and Roman Christianity.

The battle of Puritanism has gone on for centuries. It has not resulted in conquest or in subjugation of any of the great parties. They are as strong to-day as ever, each and all of them. The outcome has been coexistence, toleration, forbearance, and mutual recognition and respect. But this is not all: another and a deeper movement has been in progress in the various churches, and it has become potent in our times. The churches themselves have been long agitated by parties. It has been found necessary not merely to tolerate on the outside in different ecclesiastical organizations, but to tolerate on the inside in the same ecclesiastical organizations, and hence the second great achievement of Puritanism has been *comprehension*. But a third and higher movement is now in progress, and is rapid in its development. Parties leap the barriers of the denominations. The walls of separation have been very largely broken down, or convenient gates of passage have been forced through. Protestant Christianity is constructing itself in two or three great lines on the issues of the day. Progressive men, the inheritors of the true Puritan spirit in all the churches of Protestantism, see eye to eye, and are determined to march forward with mutual co-operation for the attainment of the grand ideal of Christianity. The issues of the 17th and 18th centuries are gone. The issues of our 19th century are upon us, and we are preparing to face the questions of the third Christian Millennium.

The conservatives are no less determined to maintain the traditional types of theology and their varied forms of scholasticism. In the centre are the men of prudence and caution—the ecclesiastics who adhere to the present lines of order and authority. What will the result be? Are we to have a great reform movement to carry on the Reformation and Puritanism to greater heights in Christian theology or Christian life? Is there to be a new and better church of the twentieth century to embrace the best of all the older churches? Or is there not rather to be toleration and comprehension on a grander scale than the world has yet witnessed, in which the essential will be the point of union, the non-essential of tolerated and recognized differences—the assured word and will of God the one centre of unity, and the human opinions about that word ranged about it in infinite variation and variety?

It seems to us the Puritan principle faithfully maintained and

thoroughly followed will accomplish this. For if "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his word or beside it in matters of faith or worship" (West. Confes., xx. 2); and "the authority of the Holy Scriptures for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God the author thereof" (West. Confes., I. 4); and "the supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (West. Confes., I. 10); then the three principles of Protestantism rise to a higher unity in Jesus Christ in the religious principle of vital union and communion with the living Saviour as the vital source of Christian knowledge and of Christian life; for the faith *alone* of Protestantism is a living faith which enters into vital union with God in Christ; and the grace *alone* of Protestantism is an effectual grace that enters with prevenient energy the soul of man to unite him to God by an irresistible impulse of the Holy Spirit in indissoluble union; and the authority of the Word of God *alone*, is an authority of the voice of God in the Bible to the soul of man, giving infallible assurance in all matters essential to doctrine and life, and which will assure the church in all those things which it is ready to appropriate in constructing that which is better than ecclesiastical organizations or systems of theology, namely; holy, Christlike lives, comprehended in one holy catholic church adorned as a bride for her bridegroom.

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