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ART. I.—CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA.

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Since the introduction of Christianity which constitutes the divine-human centre and turning point of history, no facts occurred which exceed in importance the invention of the printing press, the discovery of America, and the reformation of the Church. The one is the boldest conquest of the Romanic, the other two are the greatest deeds of the Germanic mind, for the benefit of the entire family of Christian nations. They bring to a close and sum up the last meaning of the Middle Age, while they break the way, at the same time, and control the course, of modern history. Though independent of each other and separated by one or two generations, they were yet intimately connected, especially in their prospective bearings. The press is the main lever of modern civilization; Protestantism is the chief bearer of modern Christianity; America is the largest theatre for both. There is no country under the sun, England hardly excepted, in which the press, at least the periodical press, is so free and independent, so ramified and powerful over public opinion, and where Protestantism is so fully and consistently developed, not only in the religious, but also in the whole political and social life of

the nation, as in the United States of North America. Here we see already, as in a second Europe, all the good and bad elements of the old world, in chaotic fermentation, but placed under new conditions and relations, invigorated by their very amalgamation, and preparing for a new era in the ever progressing history of the human race.

Without detracting from the just merit and importance of any nation, we may boldly assert that the deepest intellectual work of Protestantism and the solution of its theological problems have been mainly, though not exclusively, committed, by an all ruling Providence, to the Germans, while the social and political organization of Protestantism, the solution of its moral problems and the spread of modern civilization in all colonial countries and new territories to the ends of the globe, is the peculiar mission of the English and Americans. In view of such great objects, the two main branches of the same Teutonic stock may well extend to each other, across the Channel and the Atlantic, the hand of brotherhood, and celebrate a free Christian love-feast in the metropolis of German science at the invitation of a monarch who protects them both on the strongest Protestant throne of the Continent, and who honestly wishes the unity of the Evangelical Church and the victory of the heavenly King over all the princes and nations of the earth.

The significance of the discovery of America was felt to some extent even by the celebrated Genoese who reared by this deed an imperishable monument to his name. "Let processions be made; let festivals be celebrated; let temples be adorned with branches and flowers. For Christ rejoices on earth as in heaven, in view of the future redemption of souls. Let us rejoice, also, for the temporal benefit which will result from the discovery, not merely to Spain, but to all Christendom." Thus wrote the bold navigator to the treasurer of Spain, on the return from his first voyage to the new world, when he had attained the object of his noble ambition, and established, beyond a doubt, his theory, after eighteen years of suspense and sol-

licitation, in the face of prejudice and superstition, skepticism and sophistry, sneer and ridicule. He was now to enjoy the honeyed draught of popular and royal favor, to be followed, alas, so soon by the bitter cup of envy, calumny and insult. His journey from the port of Palos to Seville and Barcelona resembled the triumphal march of a conqueror, the eager multitudes thronging the streets, the windows, the balconies and house-tops and rending the air with shouts of acclamation. The nobility and cavaliers, together with the authorities of Barcelona, escorted him from the gates of the city to the royal presence. Ferdinand and Isabella, seated under a superb canopy of state and surrounded by all the splendor of the proudest days of the Spanish monarchy, received the distinguished stranger who, a short time before, had been derided at this very court as an enthusiast and a madman, with the most gracious condescension, and listened with tears of joy to his glowing description of the Western islands, illustrated by several living representatives of the simple-hearted natives, and specimens of unknown birds, aromatic plants, and shining gold which he had brought with him as harbingers of greater discoveries yet to be made. When the admiral had finished, the King and Queen, together with the flower of the nobility and the dignitaries of the Church, sank upon their knees, and raising their clasped hands to heaven, they joined in the solemn *Te Deum* of the royal chapel in pious celebration of so glorious a conquest to the crown of Spain and the Kingdom of Christ. Nor was this joy confined to Spain. The whole age, as far as it expressed itself in a few leading intellects, shared in the delight at the startling news. At the court of Henry VII of England, the great event was pronounced "a thing more divine than human." Peter Martyr gave expression to the feelings of scholars, when he wrote to Pomponio Laeto: "You tell me that you leaped for joy, and that your delight mingled with tears, when you read my epistle that assured you of the hitherto hidden world of the antipodes." The whole of civilized Europe was filled with wonder at the discovery of

another world which burst upon it with such sudden splendor, and anticipated from it untold additions to the wealth, knowledge and happiness of mankind.

And yet Columbus and his age could have but a very imperfect idea of the immense bearing of this event. He died in the conviction that he had touched simply on the borders of Asia, that Hispaniola was the ancient Ophir visited by the ships of Solomon, and that Cuba was connected with Spain by terra firma. He could not dream of that still greater discovery of a new world of thought which followed on the very heels of his material discovery; nor could he foresee the future dominion of the Anglo Saxon race which, in consequence of the reformation and in spite of the bulls of Alexander VI, that divided the Western hemisphere between the crowns of Spain and Portugal, became master of the destinies of America.

We would not detract in the least from the merits of Catholicism and of the Romanic nations in Christianizing and civilizing the barbarians of the Middle Ages. But no unprejudiced observer can deny for a moment, that the whole intellectual and moral weight of America is conditioned by the English nationality and the Protestant religion. The most superficial comparison of the Northern, i. e. the predominantly Anglo-Protestant half of this continent, with the Southern or Romano-Catholic half, teaches the immense superiority of the former in every branch of political, social, moral and religious life. The contrast here presented of national prosperity and misery, progress and stagnation, life and death, is even more striking than that which is admitted to exist between the Northern or Anglo-Protestant and the Southern or Celtic Catholic part of Ireland, between the Reformed and the Roman Catholic cantons of Switzerland, between Portugal and Holland, Italy and Prussia, Spain and England. Even from Mexico, which is so highly favored by nature, we hear nothing, alas, but priest craft and military despotism, ignorance and superstition, revolution and anarchy in unbroken succession. The South American sham-republics prove to a demon-

stration, that the mere forms of a republic without the moral basis of self-government, can as little secure the prosperity of a nation as the forms of monarchy, and that political freedom without religious freedom (which is altogether unknown there) amounts to an empty delusion and falsehood.

North America came under the control and fostering care of the English nationality, from the very beginning of its history, when Cabot touched on the shores of Labrador and Newfoundland, A. D., 1497, one year before Columbus set foot on the mainland of South America. But its most important part has outgrown the era of colonial dependence and is evidently the chief representative of the new world; hence its citizens are emphatically called Americans.

The unexampled external and internal development of the United States of North America is the wonder of modern history. Hardly more than eighty years have elapsed since, by the declaration of independence, they took a place among the nations of the earth; and their present chief magistrate was born several years before the death of the venerable patriarch and first President of the Republic in the retired village where I write these lines, and where his father, a plain but honest citizen, originally from the North of Ireland, lies buried. In this short period the confederation has grown from thirteen States, with hardly three millions of inhabitants, to thirty-one States (there will soon be thirty-four) and nine Territories with more than twenty-seven millions. It extends now over an inexhaustibly rich country of about three millions of English square miles, and rules unconquered and unconquerable from the lakes of Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, from the coasts of the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific, thus stretching one arm of its commerce and influence towards Europe and Africa, the other towards Asia and Australia. This extension of territory and population is not the result of bloody wars of conquest, but of the peaceful purchase of Louisiana (1803), Florida (1820), Oregon and Texas (1845), California, Utah and New Mexico (1848), and of a peaceful migration of nations from nearly all parts of Europe, espe-

cially from England, Ireland and Germany, an emigration which, in 1854 alone, amounted to nearly half a million of souls, and which, though it has since considerably declined, will go on more or less without interruption, until the boundless prairies and forests to the base of the Rocky Mountains and the golden shores of California shall be inhabited by civilized men and made available for those purposes for which Providence created them. Equally astounding is the internal growth of the Republic in all departments of industry, art and education, and betrays an energy and spirit of enterprize which knows no difficulty from the mowing and reaping machine to the colossal undertaking of the transatlantic telegraph, and makes America already a successful rival of England. This inward progress is to be attributed, next to the favors of Providence and nature, to the rich inheritance of European civilization with which the States entered upon their career, instead of having to begin with barbarism and heathenism; to the spirit of freedom which animates their civil and religious institutions; and finally to the contact of different nationalities on an Anglo-Saxon basis, which convey new nourishment from year to year to be converted into national American flesh and blood by the digestive power of this fresh and vigorous people. And yet this nation is evidently still in its early youth, full of youthful hopes and dreams, courage and presumption, virtues and follies, and has, according to human calculation, a long and brilliant career before it, unless—which may God prevent—internal distraction and decay should lay the giant youth in an untimely and inglorious grave.

But here arises the question full of interest to every educated and Christian man: Has the moral and religious development of the United States kept pace with their gigantic material and political progress? Is the present condition of Christianity and the Church as flourishing and promising in this Western land, as the state of its commerce, agriculture, and secular arts? May we look forward to as brilliant a period of Church history in this

land of freedom and promise, and to the final victory of the peaceful reign of Christ which will outlast all the kingdoms of this world?

As I thus enter upon my proper task, I ask you not to expect from me on this occasion a variety of geographical and statistical notices which, in so young and rapidly changing a country as America, would become obsolete in a few months; nor a detailed account of the different denominations of the land, which would require several volumes instead of a few sheets, since it would have to embrace all churches and sects of Christendom from Romanism down to Irvingism and Mormonism.

I shall attempt nothing more than a condensed, though tolerably complete and clear, exposition of the *characteristic features of American Christianity as distinct from the European.*

Before we specify the separate traits which constitute the general religious character and condition of the American nation, we must remember that England is the bridge from the Continent of Europe to that of America, and hence furnishes the key for a genetic knowledge of the latter. The United States is, not only as regards language, manners, customs, laws and literature, but also as regards religion and the Church, the daughter of that remarkable island from which the Puritan pilgrim fathers of Massachusetts, the Episcopalian cavaliers of Virginia, the Quakers and Presbyterians of Pennsylvania emigrated two hundred years ago to lay, in the fear of God, the foundation of a new nation. But they go, in principle, an important step beyond the mother country in religion as well as in politics. I say in principle, which is quite compatible with the acknowledgment of the present superiority of the older English over the younger Americans, in all that makes up the actual condition of a matured and well organized national life. The American republic aims at a far more complete realization of the idea of religious and civil liberty and equality on the basis of self-government and popular education, or of that general priesthood and kingship, which seems to be the ultimate end of the history of Church

and State, though it can never be fully attained till the second coming of Christ as the glorious King of nations and of saints. To this must be added as modifying influences, partly stimulating, partly restraining, the different national elements from the Continent of Europe, especially the Dutch and French in New York and New Jersey, and the German in all the middle and western States. America is as yet in every respect less mature, compact and solid, but more elastic, expansive and more capable of universal development than England. It rules not merely over an island, but over a continent and two oceans.

1. *Church and State.*

If we take into consideration first the legal and social basis on which all the denominations and sects of the United States stand, we are confronted at once with what constitutes the most characteristic feature of American Christianity, namely, the *complete separation of Church and State* and the *absolute freedom of religion*. Here the United States have indeed opened a new chapter in church history, which differs widely from the ante-nicene heathen persecution of the Church by the State, from the mediaeval Roman Catholic dominion of the Church over the State, and from the modern European Protestant subjection of the Church to the State. Here they have made the first bold attempt to carry out to its last consequences the Protestant principle of religious subjectivity and toleration and to make it the basis and guarantee of civil and political freedom. Here they have already exerted a powerful influence upon public opinion in Europe, as the steady progress of similar principles in England, (not only) but also on the Continent (think for instance of the Prussian decree of toleration of 1847 and the 12th article of the new Prussian constitution of 1850), the rise and progress of the Free Church of Scotland, the Free Church of the Canton de Vaud, and a considerable number of works of such men as Vinet and others sufficiently testify. The more important it is, that this point should be placed in its proper light and carefully guarded against frequent misrepresentations of European

writers, who can see nothing but culpable indifferentism and hostility to Christianity in any attempt to emancipate the State from the Church and the Church from the State.

It is true, already Constantine the Great gave to his subjects full liberty of religion in his famous edict of toleration of 313; but this was simply a temporary measure of political expediency and a natural transition from the persecution of Christianity to its exclusive dominion in the old Roman empire. It is true, the Reformers of the sixteenth century claimed and exercised the liberty of protest against the Papal uniformity and tyranny of conscience; but they inconsistently denied the same right to others as soon as the new faith was fairly established by law. It is true, a Voltaire of France, a Frederic the Great of Prussia, and a Jefferson of America, brought forth and defended, in the last century, the principle that morality is independent of religion, that religion belongs exclusively to man's private conviction, and that every body should be permitted—to use Frederic's favorite expression—"to save his soul according to his own fashion;" but these distinguished men were more concerned about the liberty of irreligion than the liberty of religion, and that a toleration resting on indifferentism and infidelity may under circumstances pass over into the fiercest intolerance to religion itself, is amply shown by the horrible scenes of the French revolution and the absurd blasphemy enacted under Robespierre of dethroning the Almighty in favor of fallen reason turned mad. With such wicked follies America has nothing to do whatever.

Its liberties, both civil and religious, are of English growth, and resulted from those severe and earnest struggles commencing with the reformation and continued through the greater part of the seventeenth century, in which the Protestant principle, under its most rigorous Puritanic form, was arrayed against the Catholic traditions of the past, and the principle of individual freedom against the principle of general uniformity, until in 1688, they came to a compromise in an established Church, representing the

majority simply of the nation, and tolerating, with certain restrictions, the dissenting minority, still excluding, however, the Roman Catholics, and the anti-Trinitarians from the offices of government. As matters now stand since the abolition of the test act and the passage of the reform bill in 1829, the English dissenters, both Catholic, Protestant and Unitarian, enjoy practically the same amount of freedom as the various sects in the United States, and according to the census report of 1854, they now even outnumber in their combined force the membership of the Church of England and the Kirk of Scotland. But England still maintains in theory and in fact the principle of a religion established by civil law, i. e., the Episcopalian in England and Ireland, and the Presbyterian in Scotland, and regards the toleration granted to all who dissent from it as concessions simply which may be withdrawn again by the same government who gave it (think of the antipapal ecclesiastical titles' bill of 1851). But the Federal Constitution of the United States, formed by the combined wisdom and experience of the revolutionary fathers and patriots under the presiding counsel of Washington, disowns all idea of an ecclesiastical establishment and proclaims the liberty of religion as a sacred right of nature and a permanent principle, by the famous declaration: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."*

* The original Constitution as made by the Convention of Philadelphia in 1787, says nothing of religion except in the third clause to Article VI, which excludes all religious tests as a qualification to any office or trust under the United States. But this is simply negative and secures the independence of the State, but not of the Church. The law as given above is the first article of the Amendments which were proposed in the first Congress, Sept 25th, 1789, having been approved of by three fourths of the thirteen States, were ratified by Congress in December 15, 1791, and thus became part of the Constitution. The article on religion was first proposed, it seems, by Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina, in this form: "The Legislature of the United States shall pass no law on the subject of religion, nor touching or abridging the liberty of the press, nor shall the privilege of the writ of Habeas Corpus ever be suspended, except in case of rebellion or invasion." See Elliot's Debates on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, Vol. V. p. 131.

The connection of religious liberty with the liberty of speech and of the press, and with the right of public assemblage and petition, points out the true interpretation of this article. Religious liberty in the sense of the Federal Constitution, which may be called the political Bible of the Americans, is not only negative, but above all positive, not freedom from religion, but freedom of religion and its actual exercise; just as the freedom of the press is not the negation or absence of the press, but its real existence and active operation. In a sinful world like ours the full freedom of religion does imply indeed the freedom of irreligion, nor can we expect the right use of liberty of any kind to exist without the possibility of its abuse by bad men. But the question is, Whether the abuse of religious liberty so far as it is strictly confined to the sphere of religion and does not violate the civil and political order, belongs to the jurisdiction of the State, or not? The American Constitution answers this question in the negative, and does so, we wish it to be distinctly understood, not from indifference or contempt of religion, but on the contrary from high regard for the same, as a sacred affair of man with God that lies far beyond all physical force and political legislation, and has no value before God and men, unless it be the free expression of the inmost conviction. It was felt that it would be best for the interests of religion as well as for the secular government, to keep them altogether distinct; that this separation was the legitimate result of the freedom of conscience; that the confounding of the spiritual kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of this world would lead to endless difficulties; that this peaceful separation would be the distinctive feature of America and the safeguard against both ecclesiastical and political despotism. The American government then has tied its own hands from the very start, as regards religion and the Church, by declaring them equally independent of its legislation and jurisdiction, as it claims to be independent in turn of any particular profession or creed, whatever may be the religion of its members in their private capacity.

From the European point of view this may appear as a dissolution of the sacred and time-honored alliance of the government with Christianity, as a degradation and contraction of the idea of the State by sundering it from all higher moral duties and conforming it simply to the secular and material interests of the nation. But it should be remembered, that it was a voluntary self-limitation, and that in favor of personal and ecclesiastical rights and liberties. What the State lost, or rather what it never possessed in North America (except in a few colonies before the revolution), accrues to the benefit of the individual, of free associations, and of the Church itself.

This, it seems to me, is the true sense of that article from which must be dated a new epoch in the history of the relation of Church and State. It is not a sanction of irreligion and the infidel philosophy of Voltaire, but a solemn protection and guarantee of religion against undue encroachments of the civil power both legislative and administrative. If time permitted, I might prove this at length, I think, from all the official documents bearing upon the subject, such as the "Madison Papers," the Congressional Debates and Proceedings of 1789 (Gale's edition Vol. I, p. 729, ff), the Debates of the several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution (Elliot's edition in 5 vols. 1845), and the private writings and the personal religious character of its principal framers, especially Washington, Madison, Hamilton and Jay.

I know well enough that Jefferson who took such a leading and efficient part in the separation of government from religion in Virginia as early as 1779, nearly ten years before the formation of the Federal Constitution, was a deist of the French school, and that he meant religious liberty, as he says expressly in his Autobiography, to be absolutely universal and to "comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mahometan, the Hindoo and infidel of every denomination." But he had nothing to do with the framing of the Federal Constitution, being then absent in France, nor could he

ever have succeeded in the overthrow of the Episcopal establishment in Virginia, had he not been strongly supported by the unpopularity of the Church of England arising from its connection with the English government, and by the united influence of all the dissenters in Virginia, especially the Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers, who had no sympathy, of course, with his infidel sentiments.

The framers of the Constitution of 1787 were all Christians, at least in name, and the religious sects which then existed in the land, were all Christian sects, with the exception, perhaps, of a few Jewish synagogues. The liberty, therefore, which they secured to religion, presupposed Christianity as the general basis, and it never entered their minds that heathenism, or Mohammedanism, or Judaism, or any other religion would ever take the place of the Christian, or assume any importance in the country sufficient to justify a restriction of that liberty. Nor were they mistaken in this expectation. Christianity is now far stronger and more deeply rooted in the American people than it was in that skeptical age, and yet there is not a single denomination which would advocate a repeal of the first amendment to the Constitution. Congress moreover appoints chaplains to this day and opens its sessions with prayer—differing widely in this respect from the unfortunate German Parliament of 1848, which voted down a proposition to that effect with sneering contempt, and the President of the United States fills the chaplaincies in the army and navy (mostly with Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Methodist clergymen). All this, as well as the customary appointment of days of public prayer and thanksgiving by the Governors of the several States, may be unconstitutional, as Jefferson maintained; it certainly is not prescribed (though still less prohibited) by the Constitution; yet it is a voluntary, and for this very reason the more sincere and valuable tribute to Christianity, as adhering not, indeed, to the State as such, but to the nation, and consequently also to its representatives in the highest spheres of legislation and administration. I venture to say, that,

with all the absence of constitutional disqualification, it would be far more difficult in the United States than either in Germany, or France, or Russia, to elect an open enemy of Christianity to a high office of State, and if he should be elected, it would not be on account, but in spite of his infidelity, and from purely political considerations.

Whatever may be the abstract merits of the question here under consideration, it must be admitted that religious liberty, and what necessarily precedes it, religious toleration, is not an artificial growth in the United States, nor the violation of any established historical rights, but natural and unavoidable. Whatever may best suit other countries, it is the only possible state of things here, and no other could be established without a radical revolution and the grossest injustice. This land was from its first settlement a hospitable asylum for persecuted Protestant Christians of every denomination, Puritans, Huguenots, Quakers, Irish Presbyterians, Moravians, Salzburg Lutherans, Reformed Palatinates, also English Catholics (in Maryland), who, under the pressure of persecution had learned to appreciate religious liberty, and exchanged their home for the then unbroken wilderness of a new world, in order that they might enjoy this highest, most important, and most sacred of liberties. It is true, in several of the colonies, which were quite independent of each other before the revolution, the government was identified with a particular denomination, in Virginia and other southern States with Episcopacy, in Massachusetts and the greater part of New England with Congregationalism. It is only too true, moreover, that the Puritans in the seventeenth century inconsistently enough persecuted Baptists, Quakers and Papists almost with the same, though short lived intolerance, which had driven their own fathers across the ocean. But in other colonies, such as Rhode Island, Maryland, and especially Pennsylvania, in whose first settlement not only Quakers, but Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, German Reformed, Moravians, etc., took part, the principle of toleration obtained from the beginning.

When the time had arrived for the colonies to become

an independent confederacy of States, there were so many religious denominations in the land, that the governmental patronage extended to one, would have been injustice to the other, while the toleration of one implied of necessity the toleration of all. Hence the Convention of those patriots, who framed the federal constitution at Philadelphia in 1787, were sacredly bound by every consideration of justice and regard to the rights of the various States and religious parties represented by them, to proclaim perfect liberty of religion and its public exercise. This again could not be done without a complete separation of Church and State, since the degree of the union of the two powers always implies consistently a corresponding amount of exclusiveness and intolerance against all dissenters. There was, therefore, no other just course left for them to pursue, but to deny Congress, from the very start and forever, the right of interfering either negatively or positively with matters of conscience and public worship, and to leave them with the various churches and sects of the land.* The coëxistence of these denominations, nearly all of which sprung directly or indirectly from the great protestant movement of the sixteenth century, and which were forced in part, by persecution, to seek a common asylum in this western world, is the historical condition without which the bond of union between Church and State would probably never have been broken, but continue to exist in the United States, as it does in fact in all the central and south

* From this empirical and common sense point of view the matter was regarded by James Madison, one of the chief framers of the constitution and afterwards President of the United States. In the debate of the Convention of Virginia on the adoption or rejection of the federal constitution, he disposed of the objection that Congress might assume powers over religion, in these words: "Happily for the States, they enjoy the utmost freedom of religion. This freedom arises from that multiplicity of sects which pervades America and which is the best and only security for religious liberty in any society; for where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority of any one sect to oppress and persecute the rest. Fortunately for this commonwealth (Virginia) a majority of the people are decidedly against any exclusive establishments. I believe it to be so in the other States. There is not a shadow of right in the general government to interfere with religion. Its least interference with it would be a most flagrant usurpation. Comp. Elliot's Debates, Vol. III, 880.

American republics. The North American toleration and freedom of religion may, therefore, be called the sweet fruit of the bitter European, especially English intolerance and persecution.

As matters now stand, no denomination in the land wishes a change in the relation of Church and State, not even the Roman Catholic. They feel that the liberty of their neighbors is the best and only just security of their own. But whether the same degree of religious liberty be desirable and applicable to Europe, especially to those countries where the majority of the population belong to but one or two confessions, is a very different question, with which we have nothing to do here, being confined simply to the task of giving an objective exhibition of the state of things in America. One remark only I think it proper to make, in order to avoid hasty inferences, that I regard it one of the most difficult problems of Church government and statesmanship to define the exact limits of religious toleration, i. e., not simply the liberty of conscience, which no despot can deny, but the liberty of public worship with the right of proselyting, in those countries which still hold to the principle of some official connection of the government with the Christian religion and a national Church establishment. This problem, I believe, can not be solved abstractly by theory, but only practically and gradually by the irresistible course of events, as was the case in England and in this country. There are questions which are too knotty for philosophy and theology, and can only be satisfactorily answered by history itself.

With the exposition, however, of the relation which the general government of the United States sustains to religion, we have not yet fully disposed of this point. The federal constitution does not prohibit the union of Church and State in the single States. Such a union may exist even in the territories, at least since the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill of 1854, which makes them entirely independent in all internal affairs. In Massachusetts the Puritan establishment continued for many years after the

adoption of the constitution and was only gradually abolished as the exclusive dominion of Puritanism was destroyed partly by an internal apostacy to Unitarianism, partly by the immigration and increase of other sects. Even to this day there exist in most of the States severe laws against blasphemy, the profanation of the Lord's day, attacks on the Christian religion; and in the public schools the Bible must be read or may be read. In one or both of the Carolinas, if I am not mistaken, Universalists are even excluded from appearing as witnesses, because of their denial of the doctrine of future punishment. But with this last exception perhaps, all these regulations are concessions simply which the States make to Christianity, and restrictions they put upon the abuse of religious freedom; but not violations of this liberty itself, as little as laws against theft, murder and adultery can be said to be violations of civil liberty. All State constitutions place the different Christian denominations on a basis of perfect equality before the law, require no religious tests from civil officers beyond the ordinary oath, and levy no taxes for the support of religion. There can be no doubt that the genius of American liberty, if consistently carried out, must lead in every member of the confederacy to an entire separation of the spiritual and secular power as being the most advantageous condition for both.

The only exception to this rule at the present time is the Mormon State or rather territory of Utah; for it has not yet applied and probably never will apply, with its present population, most of which refuse even to be naturalized, for admission into the Union as a member of the confederacy. In the "theo-democratic" government of the Mormons, as they call it, religion and politics are inseparably interwoven, and the civil head (at present Brigham Young, Joe Smith's successor, who was unwisely appointed Governor of Utah under Mr. Fillmore's administration) is also the spiritual head, or high priest of the whole tribe.

But this Mormonism is a monstrous anomaly in America, at war not only with its religion, but equally so with its whole policy and civilization. It recruits itself mostly from

the offscouring of foreign countries, especially England and Wales ; it hates all Christians as heathens ; it stands in open rebellion to the United States government, and will sooner or later have to yield to the armed power of the latter, if not to a war of extermination, unless, what is not improbable, it should destroy itself by internal distractions and moral corruption, or leave once more the territory of the States, before the matter comes to a bloody crisis. The settlement of the Mormon trouble is one of the most important and interesting questions now before the administration at Washington, and may lead to a practical official definition of the true American idea of a republic and the precise limits of religious liberty. At all events the irreconcilable antagonism of the American nationality with the pseudo-Christian, polygamistic, deceitful, rapacious, and rebellious Mormonism is one of the many proofs for the assertion which we made above, that American liberty of religion is not hostility or indifference to religion, and that the separation of Church and State is by no means meant to be a separation of the nation from Christianity, but simply a peaceful emancipation of two distinct, though equally necessary divine institutions for the purpose of enabling them to fulfil the more successfully their peculiar mission.

We have now gained the stand-point, from which alone we can properly understand and appreciate the condition of Christianity and the movements of the Church in the United States of America.

2. *Christianity and the World.*

In consequence of this separation of Church and State we have in America a marked distinction of believing and professing Christians from the unbelieving world which disappears almost entirely on the continent of Europe where every citizen is *eo ipso* also a baptized and confirmed Christian and fully entitled to all the privileges of church-membership at least in the eyes of the law. Another distinction is made, especially in New England, between the Church proper, i. e., the communicating members, and the congregation or society, which includes all who attend preaching

and contribute towards the support of the pastor. The former may be compared to the "fideles," the latter to the "catechumens" of the ante-nicene period. The separation is carried out most fully among the Puritanic denominations, but very imperfectly among Roman Catholics and congregations of continental immigrants.

The separation of Church and State does away, of course, with all compulsory baptism and confirmation. Hence the public profession of Christianity and connection with a particular Church is left altogether to the free choice of every individual. Now this profession is by no means a disgrace or in any way a disadvantage as it was in the days of martyrdom. On the contrary, it belongs to social respectability in America far more than, for instance, in France, where not long since the very reverse was the case, and even in Germany, or any where else on the Continent, to attend at least the preaching of the gospel, and to contribute something towards the support of the ministry. Then we must make allowance for all the educational influences of the family which determine the will of every child more or less, for the high position and influence of woman, who can not live without religion, and for the zeal and rivalry of the many denominations, so that probably very few native American families may be found who are in no connection whatever even as occasional attendants with any Church or sect.

Nevertheless there are many thousands, yea millions in the United States who have never received Christian baptism—not only descendants of the numerous Baptists, but also of indifferent pædobaptist parents—who never make a public profession of religion by confirmation or otherwise, and who leave this mortal life without having ever received the holy communion. The number of church-members, even if we include all the sects, hardly amounts to five millions, or about one fifth of the whole population, and even from these five millions must be deducted thousands who profess religion from impure mercenary motives, and are perhaps much worse at heart than many men of the world.

This is a gloomy fact indeed, and must startle, at first sight, every European who is accustomed to regard his whole land and nation as Christian. But I respectfully ask you—not in a polemical, but historical interest—: Is the proportion of true disciples and followers of Christ to the great mass of purely nominal Christians more favorable in any State-Church of Europe, not excepting even the Church of England, the Kirk of Scotland, the Prussian Wupperthal and the Kingdom of Württemberg, highly favored as they are with all the means of grace? Or has the proportion ever been more favorable in any previous period of church history, except in the first three centuries, when a hypocritical profession was indeed by no means very rare, but far less common than afterwards on account of the persecutions? I ask moreover: Which is the greater anomaly and a more monstrous contradiction, millions of unbaptized and unconfirmed Christians, or millions of baptized and confirmed heathens? The fact that there are cities in Christian Europe where of a hundred thousand inhabitants hardly more than five or six thousand ever attend church, at least as a habit, exceeds every thing which the chronique scandaleuse of America can produce. If the celebration of the Lord's day, the frequentation of divine service and the liberality for religious purposes are reliable criteria of true Christianity, the Americans, as far as my observation goes, must be called the most Christian nation on earth.

The whole difference, then, in this respect, resolves itself into this. In America the unbelievers and indifferentists are mostly out of the church proper, and confine themselves to making money, to politics and other secular pursuits; while in Europe they are all in the church as to the body, and not seldom even preach from the pulpits, rule in the consistories, and teach from the chairs of theology. It is the difference of the snake out of the grass, and the snake in the grass, the devil in the world, and the devil in the house of God. We may regard it as the great advantage of the State-Church system, that it secures to the Church the whole population for baptism, instruction, confirmation,

marriage and spiritual care, and thus gives her an opportunity of doing her whole duty to the whole people. On the other hand, however, every enlightened Christian of Europe must admit, that all compulsion in matters of conscience which is the peculiar province of God, does more harm than good and tends almost of necessity to promote hypocrisy and secret opposition to the Church, as a supposed tyrannical power. "Faith is a free thing," says Luther somewhere, "which can not be forced on any body." Even Tertullian, amidst the persecutions of the second century, told the heathens who tried to force the Christians to offer sacrifices to their idols: "It belongs to the human right and natural power of every one (*humani juris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique*) to worship that God in whom he believes. It is not the nature of religion to enforce religion; for it must be freely accepted, not imposed by power. Even the sacrifices must proceed from a willing heart. If you, therefore, compel us to offer sacrifices, it will be of no advantage to your gods." This is precisely the American theory and practice.

The defects and abuses of American Christianity which abound in every sect, prove indeed that the voluntary principle can not do away altogether with those evils which are often falsely attributed to the system of compulsion and State-Churchism as such. For fallen human nature is substantially the same under all governments. It revealed its corruption even in the apostolical congregations in spite of the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, as every epistle of the New Testament and the state of the seven churches as described in the Apocalypse abundantly show. But the natural tendency at least of the voluntary principle is undoubtedly to ward off from the Church that odium which invariably arises from its alliance with the police; to diminish hypocrisy; to prevent the monstrous profanation of the holy sacraments so common in religious establishments; to separate heterogeneous elements; to facilitate discipline; and to promote the unity and purity of the various Churches within their own limits. Whether these

advantages outweigh the defects of the voluntary system, and the advantages of the Church-State system, I must leave to the European brethren to decide.

3. *Self-support of the Church.*

Another consequence of the separation of Church and State is what is more particularly called the voluntary principle, that is, the necessity of the Church to provide for her own support by the free contributions of her membership, without any taxes imposed by the State. For by depriving itself of all power of control over the Church, the civil government regards itself relieved also of the duty of supporting it, except in the few cases of military and naval chaplains.

In this respect American Christianity is placed on the same footing with the apostolic and anti-nicene Church, with that important advantage, however, that it is not *religio illicita*, but has a legal existence and enjoys the protection of the State as to its property and the public exercise of its functions.

This trait, too, like every other characteristic feature of religion in this country, has two sides. The disadvantages of the voluntary principle are innumerable vexations and annoyances to ministers and theological professors, at least in such congregations which are weak and poor or illiberal and mean—of which there are not a few—or whose membership consists mostly of European immigrants, accustomed to look to the State for the support of religion; the great disproportion in the contributions as compared with the wealth of the donors; and finally the overloading of ecclesiastical assemblies and synodical minutes with financial business, which, instead of tending to edification, exerts unquestionably more or less a secularizing influence. The advantages, on the other side, are the removal of the odium connected with State-Church-taxation; the promotion of attachment of the supporting members to the Church of their choice on the principle, where their money is there is their interest; and above all, the development of habitual, systematic benevolence, which should be regarded as an essen-

tial duty and privilege of the Christian as much so as prayer and attendance on the means of grace.

The objection which is frequently made to the system by Europeans, that it makes the ministry disgracefully dependent on the congregation, I must deny as entirely unfounded, as far as my observation of things in this country goes. For the American admires no trait of character more than manly independence and consistency, and esteems, loves and supports a minister in the same degree in which he discharges the solemn duties of his office faithfully and conscientiously as an ambassador of Christ without fear and favor of man. This at least may be regarded as the rule in all the respectable denominations of the land. The tone of preaching in America is upon the whole more free and bold, I think, than in Europe, and yet no profession is more esteemed and more influential here than the clerical. The only real sufferers of the voluntary system under this aspect, are the clerical mercenaries, idlers and loafers, and they deserve to suffer, so that the individual loss is a general gain to the congregation and the reputation of the ministry. So much, however, must be admitted, that the successful discharge of ministerial duties in a republic like the one we speak of, requires a far higher degree of prudence and caution in the treatment of the individual members of the congregation, and in abstaining from all improper intermeddling with secular affairs, such as party politics, than is the case under monarchical governments.

As to the practical execution of the voluntary principle, America presents, of course, the greatest contrasts. There are congregations in every denomination, who, as far as in them lies, literally "starve out" their ministers, as the phrase is, and I know many a worthy German clergyman, especially in the new settlements of the West, who has to make greater sacrifices with his family than the foreign missionaries who can at least depend upon a regular support from the society in whose service they labor. On the other side, there are congregations, though "few and far

between," who give the ministers, in addition to a regular salary of from three to five thousand dollars, quite a handsome Christmas or New Year's-gift, buy him a fine house or farm, and pay all his expenses for an occasional trip to Europe for the benefit of his health. Some congregations, as the Episcopal Trinity Corporation and the Dutch Reformed Collegiate Church of New York, have come in possession of an immense income by legacies, the rise of real property, or perhaps by speculation of more than doubtful propriety. Experience, however, teaches that large wealth is rarely favorable to the spiritual prosperity of a congregation and has a tendency to lower the standard of liberality among the members. There are rich Americans who give nothing, or a mere trifle, to God in return for his innumerable daily blessings; but there are also others who cheerfully devote more than the tenth of their income to religious and benevolent purposes and prosper only the more for it. I could mention not a few names who have immortalized themselves, not by legacies on the dying bed, but during their life-time, when they could enjoy their wealth, by truly princely donations of thousands and hundred thousands to the Bible—the Tract—the Missionary—the Colonization causes, to Theological Seminaries, Colleges, the building of churches, and other good objects. It must be admitted, that so far New England has stood at the head in the virtue of liberality. It is a remarkable fact, however, that the Unitarians of Boston are fully as liberal as their orthodox neighbors, not indeed, for the church and theology, which is a subordinate interest with them, but for education and philanthropy.* It would be idle to deny the restless and inordinate thirst for wealth, the over valuation of tem-

* Quite recently the London banker, George Peabody, a native of Massachusetts, and now on a visit to this country, donated, besides a number of smaller sums to various objects, \$350,000 to the city of Baltimore, where he laid the foundation of his immense wealth, for the erection of a scientific institute. Another American, Mr. Cooper, a Unitarian, I believe, erects at present, not with the stiffened hand of bequest, but in the vigor of life, immense buildings in New York for a sort of University, which must have cost him already not far from half a million.

poral prosperity and comfort, the large amount of wild speculation and dishonest swindling, which characterizes American life, especially since the annexation of California and the unexampled rise of the new States in the West. But it would be equally unjust to deny the Americans the credit of a large amount of liberality, benevolence and generosity, and if it was not for this and the power of Christianity generally, the cursed worship of the golden calf would undoubtedly ruin the nation in a short time.

The average salary of the Protestant clergy in the United States is supposed to be from \$400 to \$500 per annum. There is at present much complaint made about the inadequate support of the ministry in these times of expensive living. Innumerable newspaper articles, and several books have been written on the subject. It has also been discussed and acted upon in ecclesiastical assemblies. So much may be said to be certain that the same amount of talent, education, zeal, labor and moral worth, which characterizes the American clergy, would command a much higher temporal reward in any other profession or occupation in so prosperous a country as this.

Taking, however, all things into consideration, we may perhaps be surprised rather, that so much is done in this respect. The comparative success of the voluntary system may, upon the whole, be regarded as the greatest glory of American Christianity. The Free Church of Scotland alone, with its heroic sacrifices, deserves the same, perhaps still greater praise. Next to it come the dissenting bodies in England, especially the Methodists, who are reported to raise larger sums annually for missionary purposes than the entire Church of England. But the Continent of Europe has nothing to be compared with it. I was told a few years ago by some of the most distinguished men in Germany, France, and Switzerland, that the withdrawal of the government support would bring perhaps more than one half of the preachers and theological professors on the brink of starvation, at least for the moment. Now, in contrast to

this admission, I ask you to consider the fact that the Americans not only sustain, with their voluntary contributions, without any aid from the government, all their ministers, domestic and foreign missionaries, the operations of the Bible—Tract—and other societies, but erect and repair also innumerable houses of worship, establish theological seminaries, colleges, academies, support poor students for the gospel ministry and encourage a hundred other benevolent objects of a local, sectional and general character.

I beg leave to prove my assertion with a few statistical facts. You have heard, no doubt, of the great spiritual destitution among the hundreds of thousands of German immigrants, especially in the new settlements of the western States. The same complaint is made by the Roman Catholics with regard to the equally numerous Irish immigrants. This is all perfectly true, and has its reason partly in the enormous tide of immigration from Germany and Ireland, with which the education of ministers in a few feeble seminaries cannot possibly keep pace, and partly in the poverty of these foreigners, a large number of whom have first to struggle for a material existence. But no inference should be made from this as to the average supply of the country with the means of grace. This, on the contrary, surpasses that of many established Churches in Europe. According to the official census report of 1850, there were at that time in the United States twenty-six thousand eight hundred and forty-two ministers of the gospel (not including the numerous local, or lay-preachers of the Methodist bodies), i. e., more than one for a thousand souls; thirty-eight thousand, one hundred and eighty-three houses of worship, estimated at eighty-seven million four hundred and forty-six thousand seven hundred and seventy-one dollars, and furnishing accommodation for fourteen millions two hundred and seventy thousand one hundred and thirty-nine persons, i. e., for more than the half of the population, which, in 1850, numbered twenty-

three millions one hundred and ninety-one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five; while even the rich and highly favored Church of England, according to the census report of 1851, had accommodation only for five millions three hundred and seventeen thousand nine hundred and fifteen souls, to which must be added four millions eight hundred and ninety-four thousand six hundred and forty-eight sittings of dissenting chapels, thus making the total number of sittings at the highest estimation, ten million two hundred and twelve thousand five hundred and sixty-three for a population of seventeen million nine hundred and twenty seven thousand six hundred and nine (for England and Wales).* A comparison with the Continent of Europe gives a result still more favorable to the United States. Paris had, in 1855, only forty-six churches for a population of one million one hundred thousand souls; this, on an average, would hardly give one house of worship to twenty-three thousand souls; but the disproportion was so great that the fourth district numbered forty-five thousand nine hundred inhabitants and only one church. In Berlin, with all its recent zeal for Church extension, the state of things in this respect is not much better, in Hamburg perhaps still worse. Let us now take some statistical facts of a few American cities from Lippincott's reliable Gazetteer for 1855. In 1858 the city of New York had a population of five hundred and fifteen thousand five hundred and forty-seven and no less than two hundred and fifty four houses of worship (viz: forty-four Episcopalian, thirty-seven Presbyterian, nineteen Dutch Reformed, thirty-seven Methodist, thirty-two Baptist, six Congregational, six Lutheran, twenty-two Roman Catholic, two Unitarian, etc.); Brooklyn had sixty-six churches for one hundred and twenty-five thousand inhabitants; Philadelphia, with four hundred and eight thousand seven hundred and eighty-two souls, numbered

* Religious Worship in England and Wales. Abridged from the official reports made by Horace Mann to George Graham, Registrar General. London. 1854. p. 67, ff.

two hundred and seventy-five places of public worship (viz: sixty-two Presbyterian, Old and New School, together with the smaller branches, thirty-eight Episcopalian, sixty-six Methodist, twenty-seven Baptist, twelve Lutheran, ten Dutch and German Reformed, twenty-one Roman Catholic, etc).

We may, therefore, boldly assert that, so far, the system of ecclesiastical self-support has fully justified itself in the United States. Church extension has kept pace with the increase of population in the cities and villages and new settlements of the West. A few years ago the Congregationalists alone raised in one day, if I recollect aright, one hundred thousand dollars, for the building of churches in the missionary charges of the great West; a year afterwards the New School Presbyterians did the same; and thus one general effort of two denominations facilitated the erection of several hundred houses of worship in the new States and Territories. It is true, our houses of worship are not Byzantine and Gothic cathedrals, (although even such have been erected within the last ten and twenty years not only by Roman Catholics, but also by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and even Baptists and Unitarians); but they are generally better adapted to the wants of Protestant worship, which addresses itself mainly to the ear and intellect through the preaching of the Word, than the colossal structures of mediæval Catholicism, which makes much account of imposing ceremonies and operates chiefly through the eye upon the imagination. The American churches, whatever be their defects in an artistic and aesthetic point of view, are generally comfortable and kept warm during the cold season. This, no doubt, contributes to secure a regular attendance, while the chilling cold in the huge churches of the Continent keep off thousands of people during the winter. In addition to this, the American, with characteristic freedom and boldness, frequently converts school-houses, streets, market-places, meadows and groves into temples, and stones, steps, store-boxes and stumps into pulpits.

As to the numerical relation of pastors and churches, the collegiate system, so frequent in Europe, is very rare here, and where it exists, it is apt to foment envy, jealousy and party spirit. Generally speaking, a charge has but one minister who then feels the whole responsibility resting upon him. Experience teaches that this is upon the whole the best system. But in communion seasons, where the services are generally protracted for several days, it is customary to invite the assistance of neighboring brethren. It is also a part of clerical courtesy to offer the pulpit to a travelling minister in good standing, though he be of a different denomination. The writer of this, for instance, preached often in Reformed, Lutheran, Presbyterian, occasionally also in Episcopal and other churches. There is far more freedom and friendly intercourse in this respect in America, than even in England, where, till quite recently, not even a foreign Episcopalian was permitted to officiate in the established Church, not to speak of the Continent, where similar prohibitions more or less rigorous, exist to this day.

In regard to Church extension and the multiplication of parishes, German governments, especially in the growing capitals, might learn a good lesson from the zeal and activity of American Christians. But it would be altogether premature to make the comparative success of the voluntary principle in America an argument for its introduction in Europe. For it must be kept in mind, that the reward of labor and the general prosperity of the people is much greater in the United States than in the old world, with its thicker population and less rapid motion; secondly, that the Americans, by the nature of their young and growing country and by long habit, are more accustomed to pecuniary contributions for all sorts of public improvements than the continental Europeans; and, finally, that the Protestant Churches of Germany, for instance, have a just claim upon the State for support, because the government secularized their large property and thus of course assumed

the sacred duty of allowing the Church at least a part of her own original revenue.

4. *Self-government of the Church.*

For the trouble of self-support the American Churches enjoy the full right of self-government, and thus differ widely from the various forms of Cæsaropapism, or as the English generally call it, Erastianism, which, in every Protestant country of Europe, lodges the supreme government of the national religion in the temporal head.

Here American Protestantism runs parallel with the political self-government of the nation, and is considerably influenced by its parliamentary forms. We must, therefore, say a few words on the latter, in order to place this important feature in a clear light for the European mind.

The American republic rests throughout on the basis of *self-government*, and would not last six weeks without it. This truly English word * signifies in a general way the political maturity of the people on the basis of the moral self-control of its individual citizens. It enables and entitles them to take an active part in the legislation and administration of public affairs, but in an organic way and by a proportionate number of representatives, not as a chaotic mass, like the degenerate Athenian market-democracy after the time of Cleon, the tanner, or the French *peuple-empereur*, of revolutionary memory, which is only a boastful name for mobocracy. Self-government aways implies

*Dr. Francis Lieber, an Americanized German, who, strange to say, wrote the best work extant on "Civil Liberty and Self government," (Philadelphia, 1858, in 2 vols.), directs attention to the fact (I, p. 207) that this "proud word," doubtless an imitation of the Greek autonomy, was originally used in a moral sense by the divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; that subsequently it seems to have been dropped for a time, but reappeared again towards the end of the last century, both in England and the United States, and is now used as far as Anglian liberty prevails. You look in vain for it either in Johnson's or even in Webster's Dictionary, among the many words compounded with self. Dr. Worcester has it but marked with a star, which denotes that he added it to Dr. Johnson's, and gives Paley as authority, which Dr. Lieber assures us is an error. The *self*, in this word, signifies the object of government, and has, therefore, a reflective meaning; while in autocrat, *Selbst-herrscher*, self-ruler, as applied to the Russian Czar, it is used in the substantive and exclusive sense (he who rules alone, and nobody else).

two apparently opposite, but in fact complementary elements, liberty and loyalty, sense of independence and love of order, manly self-respect and respect for others, coöperation in the making of new laws and obedience to the existing laws until they are constitutionally repealed. It secures the rule of the majority, but fully as much also the sacred rights of the minority and a lawful opposition ; for this, in a free government, like the English and the American, is generally the guardian of the popular liberties and puts a wholesome restraint upon the majority, thus keeping it from the abuse of power to which weak human nature is always exposed. It goes on the assumption that there is no right without a corresponding duty, no liberty without the supremacy of law, no power without self-limitation. For this reason self-government, in its various ramifications from the general departments down to the municipal and domestic, which, like the tender fibers of a living organism, reach to the extremities, constitutes the firmest, yea, the only base of free institutions and a bulwark against revolution ; while centralized despotism, whether individual or collective, monarchical or republican, is indeed the simplest and as long as it lasts, the strongest, but at the same time the unsafest form of government, which may be overthrown by the shot of a pistol successfully aimed at the despot's brain.

Self-government has its natural root in the Germanic, especially the Anglo-Saxon nationality, and was developed and matured under the influence of Protestantism during the severe struggles which agitated England for the greater part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which gave rise to the first and most influential settlements in North America. We may say, self-government is Protestantism itself, viewed as a social and political principle, or the general kingship as an emanation of the general priesthood of true Christians. It is the soul of the Anglican liberties and their guarantee against anarchy and dissolution. It is the secret of the gigantic power of the English nation

which now rules, from its island-fortress, over five millions of square miles and more than two hundred millions of souls, that is one fifth of the population of the globe. It is the strength and glory of the Anglo-Saxon republic. It explains the astounding fact that the people of the United States of America enjoy the highest degree of security for their lives and property without a standing army; for the immense country has not half the number of regular troops as the city of Paris alone, or even Berlin; and these ten thousand soldiers are mostly stationed on the Indian frontiers, so that you might travel for days and weeks through the States without seeing a uniform or a bayonet. They cannot do without a police, of course; but the police men of American cities, like the constables of London, are not armed, and not even distinguished by peculiar dress, for they are there for no other purpose than "to assist the people, and the people are ever ready to assist them;" while on the continent of Europe, the military and the police seem to maintain a threatening attitude to the people, as if they needed the constant watch and superintendence of the cocked hats. The word which Napoleon III spoke at what is called the *fête* of the eagles, in 1852: "The history of nations is in great part the history of armies," may be true of France, but fortunately it is absolutely inapplicable to the United States.

The American self-government celebrates its greatest triumph every four years, on the fifth of November, in the universal calm which succeeds the storm of the Presidential election. During the summer and autumn of last year the thirty one States, from Maine to Florida, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, were divided into three hostile armies, a Democratic, a Republican, and a Know-Nothing or Native American; each of them strained every effort to secure the vote of the people for its own candidate; the most retired villages, as well as the cities, were carried away with the national excitement and resounded with political speeches; some ministers even—though not to their credit of course

—“took the stump” and mixed in the wild warfare; and many false prophets foretold the inevitable dissolution of the Union, unless the candidate of their choice were elected. But when the fourth of November arrived, the people marched in quiet majesty to the polls, to decide the battle, and when on the day following the result became known, through countless telegraphs, the beaten minority submitted to the *vox Dei* as it had spoken through the *vox populi*, without dreaming of a revolution, or even the possibility of a *coup d'etat* after the French fashion, and every branch of business went on as if nothing had happened. And yet not only was a new President elected, but according to the doubtful maxim, “To the victors belong the spoils,” which, at Marcy’s suggestion, has been in operation since Jackson’s administration, the whole army of federal office-holders was placed upon the resignation-list, to make room for a tenfold greater army of office-seekers. I doubt whether any country, England excepted, could stand every fourth year such an unbloody general political revolution without running into anarchy, and without falling at last into the iron grasp of military despotism as the only means of restoring public order.

We freely admit that the American self-government is often put to the severest test, and that with the fullest enjoyment of rational freedom we have also a large amount of libertinism, its hideous counterfeit. It is a painful fact that most of our large cities, especially New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, abound in lawless “rowdies,” who not only give vent occasionally to their wild passions in bloody street riots, but control even to a certain extent the fire-companies, and exert a considerable influence at the primary meetings in the nomination (which as far as the party is concerned is tantamount to an election) of candidates for the municipal offices, for seats in the State legislatures, and at times perhaps even for Congress. It is a fact that disgraceful excesses frequently take place at our elections, and that the politics of the country generally, at least in its

lower branches, without distinction of party, is awfully corrupt and contaminated by the meanest selfishness, bribery, slander and falsehood. No wonder that thousands of the best and most orderly citizens turn away from it in disgust and abstain from voting, to the injury of the public interests. Many occurrences of the last few years, above all the scandalous troubles in the newly organized territory of Kansas, which, owing to the interminable slavery question, in connection with the approaching Presidential election, was for some time, on the very brink of civil war and demanded the interference of the military force, are indelible spots in the annals of this proud nation. While I am writing, the peace of New York, where "cuncta undique atrocias aut pudenda confluent celebranturque," to a greater extent even than in Rome at the time of Tacitus, is jeopardized by a serious conflict between the old city police and the new State authority, so that possibly the orderly citizens may be forced at last, like those of San Francisco, in 1856, to the desperate remedy of a vigilance committee and temporary suspension of the ordinary wheels of government.

Such phenomena must fill the heart of every American patriot with humiliation and grief, and may well undermine for a moment his faith in the capacity of the masses for self-government and the ultimate success of this republic. So much is certain that nothing can permanently secure the American liberties but the Christian religion and its moral influence on the people.

But, on the other hand, we should never form our judgment from momentary impressions and single events. These anarchical outbreaks, compared with the general state of society in America, are after all but as a drop in the bucket. The great mass of the American people are unquestionably conservative, orderly and peaceable. Yea, if we take into proper consideration the awful corruption of human nature, and the fact that the large cities and new settlements of the United States, where by far the most of

these excesses occur, contain in connection with the best elements of society, the very offscouring of all nations in Christendom, including the American, unrestrained by a standing army, or even a sufficient police-force, we should be surprised rather that the violations of the public order are not much more frequent and of a far more dangerous character. If we observe, moreover, that order and peace are always restored after every such outbreak of a disorderly spirit; that the sound sense of the people speedily and successfully reacts against these excrescences; that, in spite of unprincipled and selfish demagogues, who disgrace the city councils, the legislatures, and at times even Congress itself, the country prospers, progresses and enjoys upon the whole as much security of person and property as Germany, France or England: the desponding fears concerning the future should give place to cheerful hopes and the firm conviction of the steady, though often interrupted progress of history in the path of true liberty. Sober reflection and impartial consideration will lead at last to the conclusion that self-government is after all no empty dream or vain boast, but a fact, the greatest and most imposing fact in the social and political life of the English race, and especially of the republic of the United States.

The same judgment may be applied to the religious and ecclesiastical life of America. However numerous the instances of disorder and confusion, especially among the more radical sects, it is nevertheless a fact, a most important fact, that the Protestantism of this country is characterized, upon the whole, by a degree of self-government, a capacity of managing its own affairs in a popular way and taking care of its general interests without any assistance from government, as no Protestant Church in Europe, unless it be the Free Kirk of Scotland.

There is here, first of all, a free, well organized, Christian congregation consisting of voluntary professors of religion, as distinct from an accidental heap of passive nominal Christians which meets us so often in the State-Churches

of Europe under the name of a congregation or parish. There are in America innumerable congregations with a constitution based upon the Bible and one of the great confessions of the reformation period; electing their pastor from the regularly ordained ministers of the denomination to which they belong, not as a hireling, but as their divinely appointed and ecclesiastically sanctioned spiritual-head; associating with him as assistants a number of elders and deacons from the most worthy and zealous members; exercising discipline against gross offenders; managing their affairs in the fear of God, with prayer, calmness and well-drilled business tact, under the official presidency of the minister and according to the constitution; and taking an active part in all the general interests of the kingdom of God. Contrast with this a congregation of German immigrants, especially one that is independent of any Lutheran or Reformed Synod, assembled to consult on their local concerns: and there you will behold a motley mixture representing the various shades of belief and unbelief of the mother country; suddenly emancipated from the maternal control of the State-Church-system; compelled to take care of themselves without the capacity of doing so; every one anxious to rule and none willing to obey; a chaotic mass destitute of public spirit, talent of organization and parliamentary tact; hiring some clerical mercenary or vagabond, yet suspiciously excluding him from a seat in the consistory; and after much useless and pointless talk breaking up in hopeless confusion, unless some prudent and self-denying German minister, or some benevolent American friend should succeed by his cool self-possession, meekness and patience, to keep them together and lead them into the path of order, until they are Americanized in the best sense of the term, i. e., enabled to rule themselves.

This contrast is not overdrawn. It is a singular fact, that while the German stands unrivalled for freedom, independence and boldness in the sphere of science and speculation, and excels also by peculiar excellences in a religious

point of view, he should be so far behind the Englishman and American in all that pertains to political and ecclesiastical self-government. But the simple cause lies in his want of training in this direction; for self-government, like every other art, must be gradually acquired. It is impossible to learn to ride without handling horse and bridle, or to swim without venturing into the water. It may be a dangerous thing to emancipate the congregation in those countries, where the civil community, and not the voluntary profession of religion, is the basis of the Christian congregation, and the danger is increased when indifference and infidelity prevail. The above contrast shows that a sudden emancipation from the accustomed control of the higher authorities would lead to endless confusion. But, on the other side, it will hardly be denied that the Protestant idea of the general priesthood of believers, if true at all, must lead to a certain degree of congregational independence or self-government, and to an active coöperation of the laity with the ministry. The American experience proves, beyond contradiction, that such kind of congregationalism, (I take it here in its theological, not in its technical denominational sense) instead of injuring the interests of the Church and religion and undermining the influence of the ministry, greatly promotes them. Hence we heartily wish God's blessing to descend upon all the efforts now made by the Church authorities of Prussia and other parts of Germany, to revive true congregational life, by introducing the office of lay-presbyters and lay-deacons, where it does not already exist. The process may be slow; but every solid building must begin with the foundation. The effect will be good in the end and may greatly benefit also the German Churches of America, through the improved character of the immigrants. Already there is a manifest difference between those Germans who come from a free congregational life, as it prevails, for instance, in the Wupperthal, and those who were brought up in the system of absolute passivity.

For this capacity of popular self-government in the

Church, America is indebted, no doubt, to the consistent development of the Reformed element, partly in its Presbyterian, partly in its Congregational form.

In connection with this congregational maturity and activity, we have also in the United States a true synodical life. Our regular annual or semi-annual meetings of Presbyteries or Classes, Synods, and General Assemblies or Conventions, serve the same purpose as the free pastoral conferences and the Church Diet for Germany, being bodies for the promotion of unity and all the general interests of the kingdom of God in and through its different branches or visible churches. But in addition to this, they are also, at least in the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches, legislative bodies, and thus answer, at the same time, to the consistories and other ecclesiastical tribunals in the German State-Churches. Their resolutions are not recommendations simply, but legal enactments, to be obeyed by all the ministers and congregations represented. To them belong the final settlement of disciplinary questions, the control of theological schools, the examination and ordination of candidates for the ministry, the support of the education-cause, of domestic and foreign missions, and the encouragement of every enterprise that pertains to the external and internal prosperity of the Church. These meetings give annually a powerful impulse to the activity of ministers and people, and are a special blessing to the communities in which they convene, and from which they receive in return the kindest hospitality.

The same self-government, parliamentary tact, love of order, and public spirit, that characterize the meetings of the local congregations, attach, in a still higher degree, to these synodical bodies, together with a very considerable amount of oratorical talent. It is true, the weakness of human nature reveals itself here also in various ways. There is always danger of an excess of legislation, of hasty resolutions, which remain a dead letter, and a useless display of eloquence. But have ecclesiastical assemblies—not to speak of political ones—ever been free from such exerescen-

ces? Does not Gregory of Nazianzen, who himself presided for some time over the second oecumenical council at Constantinople, bring more serious charges against the great synodical meetings of the Nicene age? Was there not "much disputing" even in the apostolical council at Jerusalem, before they reached that wise conclusion concerning the relation of the Gentile converts to the law of Moses? And did not even St. Paul get into an open collision with St. Peter before the assembled congregation of Antioch? Human imperfection enters into the very sanctuary of the Church militant, and the celestial treasure is committed to earthen vessels, that no flesh should boast and all glory be given to God alone.

One of the most important features in the evangelical Synods of America is the lay-element. It flows from the protestant idea of the general priesthood, and forms the best check upon the hierarchical spirit, which Gregory of Nazianzen charges as one of the worst faults upon the old Catholic councils, and against which even St. Peter found it necessary to warn the elders of the apostolical congregation. The fundamental principle of Anglican liberty: "No taxation without representation," is characteristic also of American Christianity. It thoroughly disowns the view that the Church is identical with the clergy, and that the congregation is doomed to blind obedience. The ministers take the lead, of course, in all ecclesiastical matters, except the financial, and will always do so because of their superior knowledge and zeal. But the lay deputies are by no means passive spectators; they have generally the same number of votes and often take the most lively interest in all synodical transactions, even those of a purely theological character. They are chosen from the most worthy elders of the congregations, and a genuine American congregation, I must repeat it, is not a motley heap of a few dozen converted disciples and several hundred baptized heathens, but a well organized body of living Christians. Such laymen are never dangerous in Synods, but exert almost invariably a salutary conservative influence.

The lay representation in connection with the Presbyterian form of government, is most fully carried out in the various branches of the Reformed communion of Dutch, Scotch, English, and German origin. But even the organization of the Episcopal Church, which, of all Protestant denominations, approaches nearest the Roman hierarchy, has undergone a very significant modification in this country, by admitting a regular lay delegation, equal in number to the clerical representation, into its diocesan conventions, and into the lower house of its triennial general conventions (the upper house is exclusively composed of bishops). As far as I know, the American Episcopalians are not likely ever to give up this popular feature in their ecclesiastical polity. Even in the mother Church of England it has recently found warm advocates, and it is more than probable that it will be incorporated at some future day in the contemplated reorganization of the convocations, which at present have a mere nominal existence, the government of the Church being in the hands of parliament and the privy council.

There are, however, two important exceptions to this rule in America, which we cannot pass by unnoticed. Methodism and Romanism, although diametrically opposed to each other, agree in the exclusion of the laity from all participation in the government of the Church.

The former gives rise, for this very reason, to occasional protests and secessions in the United States as well as in England. Of these seceders the Protestant Methodists are the most important. But the purely clerical government of the Methodist Episcopal Church does not rest on a hierarchical basis, and is merely a matter of policy connected with its missionary character. Moreover, what it refuses the laity in the sphere of discipline, it restores to them in the department of worship by the important institution of lay, or local preachers, class-leaders, and in the weekly prayer meetings, where the laymen are permitted to make the largest use of the general priesthood. Hence its peculiar and very efficient organization does not prevent it from

being one of the most numerous and popular denominations of the country; it marches in the van of the great westward tide of American emigration, preaching every where with great earnestness, repentance and faith, and exciting the flame of practical piety.

Very different is the position of the Roman Catholic Church. This ancient and unchangeable body maintains, of course, also in the United States its old ground, that the clergy is the Church, and regards the Christian people merely as the sandy plain on which the colossal pyramid of the hierarchy rests. As the first Napoleon, the greatest and most genial incarnation of absolute despotism, made it his maxim: "Every thing for the people, (i. e., in his sense for himself, *l' état c'est moi*), nothing by the people": so the Roman Church says: Every thing for the congregation, nothing by the congregation. But by this very principle it stands in direct opposition to the national genius of America, which, in religion, as well as in politics, follows the maxim: Every thing for the people, nothing without the people. The absolute papacy, as well as the Napoleonic military despotism, which sees only common soldiers under the emperor general, may indeed easily connect itself with a certain kind of democracy. The hierarchical pyramid requires a dead level to show off in its grandeur. But the people here are not a living organism, with inherent rights and liberties, but a dependent mass, moving only at the absolute command of the priesthood. In her relation to the State, the Roman Church enjoys in this republic perfect liberty and independence, and can exercise her hierarchical self-government, if we may so call it, to the fullest extent. In this respect her condition is even more favorable than under the Roman Catholic governments of Europe, which are all more or less tinctured with Gallicanism. But she meets here with a more powerful opponent in public opinion, and the genius of free America, which is thoroughly Protestant with all its religious, social and political institutions, sympathies and tendencies. Hence we need not be surprised that Romanism, with all its undoubted growth,

has not been able to keep pace with the immense immigration of Irish and German Catholics, which, within the last twenty years has been perhaps twice as large as the entire present membership of this Church. Still less has it been able, with all its imposing cathedrals, sisters of charity, and well organized benevolent institutions, to gain the sympathies of the people. On the contrary, just in proportion as the papacy extended, the American spirit has risen against it, and recently produced even a powerful political party, called the Know-Nothing or American party, which is professedly based upon hatred of Romanists and foreigners, and has for its object to destroy their political influence. This Know-Nothingism spread, in 1856, with lightening rapidity all over the Union and threatened for a while to absorb the old Whig party and to annihilate the Democratic party then in power, until it was most signally defeated in the last Presidential election, being forced to succumb to anti-slavery republicanism in the North and to the democracy in the South. Its proscriptive spirit is directly opposed to the fundamental American principle of the political equality of all Christian sects. But for this very reason it reveals the more strikingly the irreconcilable antagonism between Romanism and native Americanism, as intelligent Catholics, especially the able dialectician, Brownson, the only really important American convert to that Church, have on several occasions reluctantly admitted. It would be absolutely impossible to organize a political party against any Protestant denomination of the country. For Mormonism, which is still more unpopular than Romanism, does not belong to Protestantism in any sense whatever, and has much more affinity with Mohammedanism than with Christianity. The future must show whether the Roman Church, with her unyielding tenacity, will be able ultimately to resist the powerful Protestant current of this country, or whether she will be carried away by it and undergo an important process of transformation.

The United States of North America is the most Protestant country in Christendom. Even its toleration, which

Romanism likewise enjoys, and should by all means be permitted to enjoy without the least molestation, is a legitimate fruit of Protestantism, and operates upon the whole more against than in favor of Romanism. The United States is the greatest world-and church-historical conquest which has been made by the genius of the Reformation since the sixteenth century, and which far outweighs all the Roman acquisitions of baptized heathenism and barbarism in South America. North America is, therefore, emphatically a land of hope for Protestantism, not negative, rationalistic and pantheistic, but positive, scriptural, evangelical catholic Protestantism, which takes its stand on Christ and his everlasting Gospel as the only source of salvation and the only guarantee of true civil and religious freedom.

Here we must bring our report to a close. We sensibly feel its imperfections and incompleteness in view of the mass of material which might claim our attention. Much might be said on American theology, which for German taste is rather too dry and mechanical, somewhat unchurchly and, as to the doctrine of the holy Sacraments, even rationalizing, but which, in other respects, is strictly scriptural and confessional, better adapted to the intelligence of the people and the wants of the congregation, than the German, and promises to produce a new phase in the sacred science by combining German learning and research with English orthodoxy and solidity ;—on the many theological seminaries and the method of theological study, which, in the United States, is not as thorough, comprehensive and free as in Germany, but safer and more practical, since it is not entered upon simply as a profession and for a decent support, but from religious motives, and hence conducted with the view to a growth in piety as well as in learning, and with constant regard to the pastoral office in a particular denomination ;—on the innumerable religious papers, magazines and reviews, which represent all possible shades of piety and fanaticism and carry in hundreds of thousands of copies truth and falsehood to the most distant dwelling ;

—on the Christian life, which has a predominantly Reformed stamp, full of vigor, energy and enterprise, and presents all the excellencies and defects of a practical common sense Christianity, more broad than deep, strong in outward action and weak in inward meditation, laying hold of the understanding and will, rather than the imagination and feeling, running frequently into the errors of Pharisaism and legalism, but very rarely into the opposite extreme of Sadduceism and antinomianism, to which the German mind is exposed;—or the American celebration of the Lord's Day, which, with all its Judaizing and legalistic features, is an imposing weekly testimony of the nation's reverence for God's holy law, a mighty bulwark of public religion and virtue, and in its practical workings infinitely preferable to the European pseudo-evangelical laxity;—on the American pulpit, which, whatever be its defects as compared with the European, is upon the whole, perhaps, superior to it, and must be said to be free, bold, energetic and decidedly evangelical in its tone, rousing the conscience with great earnestness and power, urging repentance and faith in Christ and a holy walk and conversation, shedding the light of God's word upon all the important questions of society and exerting more influence for good upon public opinion than the combined power of the press;—on the extensive activity of free associations, as the Bible, Tract, Sunday School, and African Colonization Societies, which rise superior to our sectarian divisions and distractions and present a field for united action to the various evangelical denominations;—on the growing missionary zeal of the leading Churches which follows the western tide of emigration to the base of the Rocky Mountains and the shores of the Pacific, supplying the new settlements with the means of grace, and which sends, at the same time, the messengers of the cross to the heathen on the Sandwich Islands, in China and the East Indies, to the negroes on the western coast of Africa, and to the stagnant sects of the decaying Turkish empire, extending to the ven-

erable seats of primitive Christianity and binding thus the extreme west to the ancient east by the gospel of love and peace. All this and many other things I can merely allude to; for a detailed account would not only transcend the limits of this report, which I would like to condense still more, if I had time, but also lead me into the field of the inner divisions and controversies of Protestantism, and these the Evangelical Alliance would rather forget for a moment in the enjoyment of that deeper unity and harmony, which, after all, underlies the various branches of evangelical Christendom.

For the same reasons I can only make one short remark on the most difficult problem of American statesmanship and philanthropy, which, in addition to its political and social bearing, presents also a very important moral and religious aspect and connects itself with the ultimate Christianization and civilization of Africa. Although there is little prospect of a speedy cure of the sore evil of negro slavery, which preys upon the very vitals of the American Union and threatens its dissolution, it will as certainly be healed in due time, as its root, the African slave trade, and slavery itself in all the northern States, was abolished. This desirable result, however, will not be attained by any undue foreign interference, which a nation as sensitive and high minded as the American will either indignantly repulse, or ignore; nor by political agitation, which so far at least has rather thrown back the process of emancipation and called forth a fanatical pro-slavery reaction in the southern States; nor by a dissolution of the Union and the terrors of a civil war, which may God in mercy prevent; but it will be brought about partly by the silent influence of physical and material causes, such as climate, agriculture, industry, railroads; partly by the irresistible progress of Christianity, humanity and freedom; and especially by the adorable wisdom of the almighty ruler of events, who makes even the wrath of men to praise him, who delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and of Babylon, and who will in his own good time

gloriously solve this dark mystery by the elevation and salvation of the entire African race.

Yea, Jesus Christ, by whom all men were created and redeemed, will, according to the sure word of prophecy, raise at last his banner of freedom and peace over all nations and races, over all continents and islands, and heaven and earth shall resound with the triumphal song: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." His visible Church is still unfortunately divided by human guilt, though not without wise providential design, into many hostile camps; yet in the deepest source of her spiritual life and in her invisible head she is but one, and when each division, be it Protestant, or Roman, or Greek, shall have fully accomplished its separate mission, the hidden unity of life will also visibly appear arrayed in the beauty of infinite variety. Before this paper can reach the capital of Prussia, the transatlantic telegraph will bind the two hemispheres together, and Europeans and Americans will be no more antipodes, but neighbors. Who would have dreamed, twenty years ago, of such wonders in the natural world? And why should not the invisibly omnipresent power of divine love be able to unite the most distant parts of Christendom, for which it bled on the cross, into one, holy, catholic brotherhood of faith and love?

May the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance strengthen the consciousness of present unity in the midst of strife, give a fresh impulse to Christian zeal and activity, and help to prepare the way for a true and abiding union of believers of all countries and nations, all tongues and confessions, in Him who is their common Lord and Saviour!

With this wish and prayer I transmit to you, dear brethren, being unable to appear among you in person, this written contribution to your feast of love, hoping that under the blessing of God it may contain some comfort and encouragement to the faith of the evangelical Churches of Europe, which we Americans shall always gratefully

revere and love as our mother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all the children of God.

P. S.

Mercersburg, August 10, 1857.

ART. II.—HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Grammar, if it would do justice to its object, must be historical as well as rational. Historical grammar investigates the origin of words, of their inflexions and derivations, and of their constructions. Historical grammar, also, shows the alterations which the material and the rules of a given language have undergone in the course of time. To fulfil this task, it compares the cognate languages, because these, in a number of cases, have preserved the original forms, and because they furnish analogies illustrating the gradual alterations of those forms.

Rational grammar arranges the material in a logical order.

The English language is a compound chiefly of Saxon, Latin and Welsh words and derivations. A historical grammar of the English language will examine each of its constituent parts.

1. An examination of the Welsh element will not be given here.
2. The Latin element has either been borrowed immediately from the Latin, or it has passed through the lips of the French. For the latter part, the other daughters of Latin, as Italian and Spanish, may be compared to advantage.
3. The Saxon element may be compared first with the