

## LECTURE VI.

ARRIVAL OF THE SCOTTISH COMMISSIONERS, EXTENSION OF THE ASSEMBLY'S COMMISSION CONSEQUENT ON THE ADOPTION OF THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT, DEBATES ON THE OFFICE-BEARERS AND COURTS OF THE CHURCH.

IN my last Lecture I gave you an account of the opening of the Westminster Assembly and of the more important doctrinal debates which occurred during its early sessions, while it was occupied in revising the Articles of the English Church, and adjusting the Solemn League and Covenant. To-day I propose to give a brief account of its debates and proceedings while occupied in drawing up its Propositions concerning church-government, or, as it is now usually termed, its Form of Church-government, as well as its Directories for public worship and for church-government and discipline. Before doing this, however, I am to advert to the arrival and reception of the Scottish Commissioners, and I deem it best, though deviating somewhat from strict chronological order, to introduce this by quoting to you that graphic account of the Assembly which was furnished by Robert Baillie,

one of these commissioners, shortly after the date at which we have arrived, and which, from its unique interest, has been quoted at length by almost all who profess to treat of the Assembly. After narrating briefly to that correspondent to whom he was to intrust so many of the secret actions and motives of himself and his brethren, his admission to the Assembly, and the welcome he received, Baillie (vol. ii. pp. 107-109) goes on as follows:—

‘ Here no mortal man may enter to see or hear, let be to sitt, without ane order in wryte from both Houses of Parliament. . . . The like of that Assemblie I did never see, and, as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor any where is shortlie lyke to be. They did sit in Henry the 7th’s Chappell, in the place of the Convocation ; but since the weather grew cold, they did go to Jerusalem chamber,<sup>1</sup> a fair roome in the Abbey of Westminster, about the bounds of the Colledge fore-hall, but wyder.<sup>2</sup> At the one end nearest the doore, and both sydes are stages of seats as in the new Assemblie-House at Edinburgh, but not so high ; for there

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<sup>1</sup> ‘ The fairest room in the Dean’s lodgings ’ and ‘ for historical associations and artistic accessories second in interest ’ only to the Abbey itself. It got its name either from the representations of gospel scenes on the old tapestry, wainscot, or stained glass, or from its proximity to the sanctuary, the place of peace. See Gilbert Scott’s *Gleanings from* and Stanley’s *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*.

<sup>2</sup> This has generally been supposed to be the hall fronting the High Street, which continued till recently the Hall of Glasgow College. But the proportions of the Jerusalem Chamber are altogether different from those of that hall. It is not wider but narrower than it, and considerably higher in proportion to the length. The only explanation I can suggest is that which I gave at the meeting with Dean Stanley in 1875, that Baillie spoke of a fore-hall or high hall which was demolished even in his own lifetime, and was of different proportions. *Letters*, vol. iii. p. 438.

will be roome but for five or six score. At the upmost end there is a chair set on ane frame, a foot from the floor, for the Mr. Proloquator Dr. Twisse. Before it on the floor stand two chairs for the two Mr. Assessors, Dr. Burgess and Mr. Whyte. Before these two chairs, through the length of the roome, stands a table, at which sitt the two scribes, Mr. Byfield and Mr. Roborough. The house is all well hung [with tapestry], and hes a good fyre, which is some dainties at London. Foranent the table, upon the Proloquator's right hand, there are three or four rankes of formes. On the lowest we five doe sit. Upon the other, at our backs, the members of Parliament deputed to the Assemblie. On the formes foranent us, on the Proloquator's left hand, going from the upper end of the house to the chimney, and at the other end of the house, and backsyde of the table, till it come about to our seats, are four or five stages of forms, whereupon their divines sitts as they please; albeit commonlie they keep the same place. From the chimney to the door there are no seats, but a voyd for passage. The Lords of Parliament use to sit on chairs, in that voyd, about the fire. . . . We meet every day of the week, but Saturday. We sitt commonlie from nine to one or two afternoon. The Proloquator at the beginning and end hes a short prayer. The man, as the world knows, is very learned in the questions he hes studied, and very good, beloved of all, and highlie esteemed; but merelie bookish, and not much, as it seems, acquaint with conceived prayer, [and] among the unfittest of all the company for any action; so after the prayer he sitts mute. It was the canny convoyance of these who guides most matters for their own interest to plant such a man of purpose in the chaire. The one assessour, our good friend Mr. Whyte, hes kepted in of the gout since our coming; the other, Dr. Burgess, a very active and sharpe man, supplies, so farr as is decent, the Proloquator's place. Ordinarlie there will be present above threescore of their divines. These are divided in[to] three Committees; in one whereof every man is a member. No man is excluded who pleases to come to any of the three. Every Committee, as the Parliament gives order in wryte to take any purpose

to consideration, takes a portion, and in their afternoon meeting prepares matters for the Assemblée, setts doune their minde in distinct propositions, backs their propositions with texts of Scripture. After the prayer, Mr. Byfield the scribe, reads the proposition and Scriptures, whereupon the Assemblée debates in a most grave and orderlie way. No man is called up to speak [as was then the custom in the Scotch Assembly]; bot who stands up of his own accord, he speaks so long as he will without interruption. If two or three stand up at once, then the divines confusedlie calls on his name whom they desyre to hear first: On whom the loudest and maniest voices call, he speaks. No man speaks to any but to the Proloquator. They harangue long and very learnedlie. They studie the questions well before hand, and prepare their speeches; but withall the men are exceeding prompt, and well spoken. I doe marvell at the very accurate and extemporall replyes that many of them usuallie doe make. When, upon every proposition by itself, and on everie text of Scripture that is brought to confirme it, every man who will hes said his whole minde, and the replyes, and duplies, and triplies, are heard; then the most part calls, To the question. Byfield the scribe rises from the table, and comes to the Proloquator's chair, who, from the scribe's book, reads the proposition, and says, as many as are in opinion that the question is well stated in the proposition, let them say Aye; when Aye is heard, he says, as many as think otherwise, say No. If the difference of Aye's and No's be cleare, as usuallie it is, then the question is *ordered* by the scribes, and they go on to debate the first Scripture alleadged for proof of the proposition. If the sound of Aye and No be near equall, then sayes the Proloquator, as many as say Aye, stand up; while they stand, the scribe and others number them in their minde; when they sitt down, the No's are bidden stand, and they likewise are numbered. This way is clear enough, and saves a great deal of time, which we spend in reading our catalogue. When a question is once ordered, there is no more debate of that matter; but if a man will vaige, he is quicklie taken up by Mr. Assessor, or many others, confusedlie crying,

Speak to order, to order. No man contradicts another expresslie by name, but most discreetlie speaks to the Proloquutor, and at most holds on the generall, The Reverend brother, who latelie or last spoke, on this hand, on that syde, above, or below. I thought meet once for all to give yow a taste of the outward form of their Assemblie. They follow the way of their Parliament. Much of their way is good, and worthie of our imitation :<sup>1</sup> only their longsomenesse is wofull at this time, when the Church and Kingdome lyes under a most lamentable anarchy and confusion.'

Many memorable meetings have taken place in this Jerusalem Chamber since the middle of the 17th century, but to the descendants of the old Puritans, perhaps none more memorable than that which took place on the 22d July 1875, when the representatives of the Presbyterian churches of England, Scotland, Ireland, the United States, and Canada, having agreed on the basis of our general Presbyterian Alliance, adjourned to the old Abbey of Westminster, and under the guidance of its kindly Dean, clad not in his robes of office, but in plain black gown and bands, streamed into and filled the old chamber where their fathers sat and elaborated those standards which we still revere. The Dean, taking the chair and asking us to regard him for the time as our Prolocutor, proceeded in the frankest way to discuss with us various details referred to in the above extract from Baillie ; with a merry twinkle in his eye he quoted to us some of

<sup>1</sup> It has been adopted more entirely by the American than it yet has by the Scottish churches.

the sharp sayings of Selden, and promised that, in the series of decorations of a historical character then being arranged round the walls of the chamber, a place would be given to the great Puritan Assembly. This promise he was spared to fulfil, though he has made choice of an incident which, notwithstanding the halo of romance with which tradition has surrounded it, is of very doubtful authenticity.

It was on the 14th September that intimation was given to the Assembly that certain Commissioners from the Church of Scotland had arrived, and desired next day to come in to the Assembly, as they had been authorised by the Houses to do. These were Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie—the one their most trusted leader, the other their ablest debater—and John, Lord Maitland, then a ‘very gracious youth,’ and found most useful in keeping up friendly relations between the Scotch and the House of Lords. When they appeared the following day, the Covenant, as finally adjusted, was being read, and when that had been finished, an address of welcome was made to them by the Prolocutor, and seconded by the ever-ready and copious Dr. Hoyle, something being added by Mr. Case, though he had not been specially appointed to speak as the others had been. Henderson, in name of the Scottish Commissioners, made a suitable reply to these addresses, expressing the

deep sympathy of the Scottish nation with them in their many troubles, their earnest resolve to make common cause with them in the war, and to aid them to their utmost power. He also expressed their readiness as Commissioners to take part in the important work in which the Assembly was engaged. At the same time he claimed that, in all matters of uniformity between the churches and the two kingdoms, they should be dealt with, not as so many units in the Assembly, but as the representatives of one of the covenanting churches and nations. After this the Assembly resumed consideration of the Covenant, and full explanations were given to the Scotch Commissioners of the clauses which had been previously debated and the alterations proposed to be made on one or two of them. When all had passed with general consent and cheerfulness, and Dr. Burgess, who had been suspended for opposing it, but had since made his peace with the Houses, had also made his explanations to the Assembly, the Prolocutor gave thanks to God 'for the sweet concurrence' in the Covenant. It was resolved that it should forthwith be taken by the Houses and the Assembly with all solemnity. Accordingly, on Monday the 25th September the members of the House of Commons and of the Assembly met for this purpose in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster. This little church on the north side of the Abbey

is almost dwarfed by its more stately neighbour, but it had a consequence of its own from its being the church to which the members of the Houses, and especially of the House of Commons, were accustomed on special occasions to resort, and where, after the meeting of the Long Parliament, they had insisted on having the Communion administered to them in the old way which had been followed in most parish churches before Laud began his innovations, *i.e.* with the Communion table brought out from under the East wall into the middle of the church or chancel. On that occasion Dr. Gauden had officiated, and preached a very notable sermon. (*Journals*, ii. 24, 37, 41.)

The following is Lightfoot's<sup>1</sup> account of the memorable service at the taking of the Covenant on 25th September :—‘After a Psalm given by Mr. Wilson, picking several verses to suit the present occasion out of several Psalms, Mr. White prayed near upon an hour. Then he came down out of the pulpit, and Mr. Nye went up and made an exhortation of another hour long. After he had done, Mr. Henderson, out of the seat where he sat, did the like—all tending to forward the Covenant. Then Mr. Nye being in the pulpit still, read the Covenant, and at every clause of it the House of Commons and we of the Assembly held up our hands and gave our consent thereby to it, and then

<sup>1</sup> *Journal* in vol. xiii. p. 19 of Pitman's edition of his works.

all went into the chancel and subscribed our hands. Afterwards we had a prayer by Dr. Gouge, and another psalm by Mr. Wilson, and departed to the Assembly again, and after prayer adjourned till Thursday morning because of the fast.' Two hundred and twenty-eight members of the House of Commons on that day lifted up their hands to heaven, worshipping the great name of God, and promising to be faithful in His covenant. Among these is found the name of Oliver Cromwell, who, like Nye, was either not disinclined at that juncture to make common cause with the Presbyterians, or wished not to be thought so as yet. In a few years after, acting on the principle laid down by Nye, in a debate to which I have previously referred, that national ecclesiastical assemblies were pernicious to civil states and kingdoms, Cromwell by his soldiers forcibly dissolved the General Assembly of the Scottish Church which they thought he had covenanted to preserve to them.<sup>1</sup>

A few days before the Covenant was taken by the House of Commons the tide of war which had

<sup>1</sup> 'This act of tyranny,' as Dr. M'Crie says, 'must of course be pronounced justifiable on the above principle;' but then what becomes of the other principle ostentatiously advocated by both of them, of tolerating all Churches? Was it that Cromwell, like many less noble-hearted and less Christian men, found it easier to cut than to loose the Gordian knot, to govern by military power than to consolidate the institutions of the country and to guide and control the deliberations of its free representative assemblies, either civil or religious?

set in so heavily against them had again turned. Gloucester, besieged 'by the flower of the English nobility and gentry with courage as high as became their birth,' had been relieved by the Parliamentary forces, and a battle had been fought at Newbury in Berkshire on Wednesday, 20th September, particulars of which must have reached them before they held up their hands to heaven. 'Perchance,' Dr. Stoughton has it, 'some held them up all the more firmly in consequence of what they had just been told of the persistent valour of the army. For all along the valley . . . Essex's men, wearing fern and broom in their hats, had fought from four o'clock in the morning till ten at night.' 'Much prowess,' says the contemporary account, 'was showed on both sides, and when night came on the royal forces' still stood in good order on the further side of the heath, but by next morning they were gone, and the Parliamentary army marched quietly over the ground they had occupied.<sup>1</sup> On his return to London the Lord General was received with every demonstration of joy—even the Assembly of Divines waiting on him in the painted chamber

<sup>1</sup> The same morning the following paper was received by Essex from Prince Rupert : 'We desire to know from the Earl of Essex whether he have the Viscount Falkland, Captain Bertue, etc., prisoners, or whether he have their dead bodies, and if he have, that liberty may be granted to their servants to fetch them away.' Truly, as the chronicler concludes, 'there is no victory in civil war that can bring the conqueror a perfect triumph,' and Essex might well be 'sorry for the loss of so many gallant gentlemen on the other side.'

to offer him their congratulations. The Prolocutor made a speech on the occasion, and the General returned thanks for the honour done him.

It was not till the 15th October that the Covenant was sworn by Essex and the peers of the Parliamentary party—'the little house of Lords,' as Baillie calls them,—along with the city authorities, the officers of the army, and the Scotch, resident in the city; and the same day, or on the Lord's day following, it was tendered in a number of the city churches to the parishioners, and soon after was sent into the provinces along with an address explaining those things in it which seemed to create difficulty, and urging its being taken without delay by all leal-hearted supporters of the Parliamentary cause.

The Solemn League and Covenant being adopted, the Scotch did not delay to urge on the practical fulfilment of those engagements for reformation and uniformity in religion which had been placed in the forefront of it and gave it its main value in their eyes. The Westminster Assembly, originally called to reform the government and liturgy of the Church of England and to vindicate and clear its doctrines from false aspersions, had now its mission extended, and elevated into the preparation of a common confession of faith, catechisms and directories for public worship and church-government for the churches of the three king-

doms. The Scotch had long maintained that the question of church-government was the true key of the position, and must be first won if they were to be settled rightly. Others than mere worldly tacticians might have hinted to them that the discussion of it was likely to engender strife and begin alienations which it was their duty and might be their wisdom to allay or delay to the very uttermost ; but they deemed it so necessary that they brought every influence to bear on the Houses to induce them to give directions that it should be set about without loss of time ; and with all their abhorrence of Erastianism they did not scruple on various occasions to bring the influence of the Houses to bear on the Assembly in this way. So on Thursday, 12th October, the Assembly 'being at that instant very busy upon the xvith Article, and upon that clause of it which mentions *departure from grace*,' there came an order to them from both Houses of Parliament enjoining<sup>1</sup> them forthwith to 'confer and treat among themselves of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad ;' . . . and also of 'the directory of worship, or liturgy, hereafter to be in the Church, and to deliver their opinions and advices of and touching the same to

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Journal*, p. 17.

both or either of the Houses of Parliament with all convenient speed. . . .’ It was in pursuance of this order that they began and prosecuted to the bitter end those almost interminable debates with the Independents which, fragmentarily as they are taken down, fill so large a portion of vols. i. and ii. of the MS. minutes of the Assembly, and which are more summarily and sometimes more vividly described in Lightfoot’s *Journal*<sup>1</sup> and in Gillespie’s Notes.<sup>2</sup> The *vidimus* of the several votes and resolutions prefixed to the latter, and probably copied for Gillespie from some official document, is only less valuable as a synopsis of their labours in this department of their work than the ‘Propositions concerning Church-Government,’ and the ‘Directory for Church-Government, Ordination of ministers, and Excommunication,’ in which they themselves embodied the matured results of their deliberations. The work began, like all their most serious work, with a solemn fast—a day of humiliation and prayer to implore God’s guidance in and blessing on their labours. Burgess, Goodwin, and Stanton led their devotions, and Whitaker and Palmer preached. On the two following days the method of procedure was considered, and several keen discussions took place upon it as to whether they should begin by debating generally if the Scripture contains a rule of church-government,

<sup>1</sup> Forming vol. xiii. of his Works.

<sup>2</sup> In vol. ii. of his Works.

or by defining what is the meaning of this word Church, or, passing over these questions in the first instance, should proceed at once to particulars, and debate of the government and governors of the Church. This last course was ultimately agreed on as likely to stave off as long as possible the discussion of matters on which they already began to fear they might not be able to secure entire agreement. The next day careful and elaborate reports were presented to the Assembly by the second and third committees on the subject of the officers of the Church. The third committee presented the first draft of that marvellous paragraph which still stands at the head of the Propositions concerning Church-Government as usually printed in Scotland; 'Jesus Christ, upon whose shoulders the government is, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end, etc., He being ascended far above all heavens and filling all things, etc., hath appointed officers in the Church the names whereof are these' (or, as it was slightly altered by the Assembly, 'hath given all officers necessary for the edification of His Church . . . some whereof are extraordinary, some ordinary'). To this is subjoined a list of their names and of the passages of Scripture which refer to them. The second com-

mittee gave in a paragraph which, with slight alterations, passed the Assembly on the following day, and is inserted by Gillespie in the *vidimus* prefixed to his notes, though it has not been formally embodied either in the Propositions or the Directory: 'Christ, who is priest, prophet, king and head of the Church, hath fulness of power, and containeth all other offices by way of eminency in himself, and therefore hath many of their names attributed to him.' To this were appended the Scripture proofs, and detailed enumeration of the names of office given to Christ in Scripture, viz., apostle, pastor or shepherd, bishop or overseer, teacher, minister or *διάκονος*. The 'captiousness' of the dissenting brethren began to show itself even here, Mr. Goodwin excepting against the introduction of Christ's headship because that was properly no office *in* the Church, but over it. In this debate also one of many conclusive proofs was furnished that however the divines may for convenience have availed themselves of the little gilt English Bibles, which, as Selden taunted them, they carried in their pockets, they could, when need required, refer to and discuss the original text.<sup>1</sup> The last place adduced by the committee in proof

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Journal*, Gillespie's notes, and the MS. minutes show how frequently and ably this was done. In fact there were other little gilt books then in use among ministers, specimens of which are still preserved,—Greek New Testaments bound up with English metrical Psalms, which Selden may have mistaken for the other.

of the kingship of Christ was Rev. xv. 3, where, according to the common or received text, he is called King of Saints (*βασιλεὺς τῶν ἁγίων*). Even Goodwin, who had objected to the other proofs as not quite germane to the subject, was disposed to pass this. But Seaman, the great Orientalist, reminded them that the reading in some copies was not *ἁγίων* but *αἰώνων*, and Lightfoot added that this reading was confirmed by the Syriac version, whereupon the passage was not further pressed.

Long and exhaustive debates followed about the officers of the Church, both the extraordinary, who were defined to be the apostle, the evangelist, and the prophet; and the ordinary, under which designation were included the pastor and teacher, the elder and the deacon. There was much discussion as to whether the teacher or doctor should be defined as an officer distinct from the pastor, as he had been by several of the Reformed Churches in their confessions or books of discipline, or should be represented simply as a pastor discharging a particular set of duties, which it was competent for all to discharge, but which, where there were more than one pastor, might be competently assigned to that one among them whose gifts best fitted him for teaching or expounding Scripture. The Independents contended not only that the offices were distinct, but also that every congregation, as far as possible, should have its doctor

as well as its pastor. The Scots rather inclined to distinguish the offices, but to hold, with their own second book of discipline, that the chief use of the doctor was in universities and schools. But the English divines, who were many of them reluctantly giving up bishops because they had no proper divine institution to urge for them, were altogether averse to recognising any divine institution of the doctor as essentially a distinct office-bearer from the pastor. Burgess, Herle, Temple, Palmer, and Vines all united in this, and Gataker reminded them that matters of divine institution were never left obscure and indefinite in Scripture, but 'like stars of the first magnitude shone out bright and clear.' On Monday, 20th November, while this debate was still going on, the other two Scotch Commissioners, Samuel Rutherford, who was to take so active a part in the debates of the Assembly, and Robert Baillie, who was to preserve in his letters such a life-like narrative of them, and whose first impressions of the Assembly I have quoted, were welcomed by the Prolocutor 'in a long harangue,' and took their places in the Assembly. But even with their help the Scotch Commissioners failed to carry the chief of the English divines fully with them in regard to the doctor's office, and with the assistance of Dr. Burgess and his committee Mr. Henderson endeavoured to arrange a 'temper,' as Lightfoot calls it, that is, an

accommodation which, by a benign interpretation, would leave both parties free to enjoy their own sense in the matter disputed between them. The first attempt did not go far enough to satisfy the English, but the second was more successful, and came near to the words which we still have in the Propositions concerning Church-Government as ultimately passed and printed. It was while this debate was going on that an order came from the House of Commons that the Assembly should report whether Mr. Rous's psalms might be authorised to be sung in churches, and each of the three committees was directed by the Assembly to examine and report on fifty of these psalms. All were carefully revised, and a favourable report on the version was ultimately presented to the Houses.

The subject of ruling elders was next taken up, and the discussions about their office were more keen and prolonged than those about the doctor's. Here too, at least for a time, the Scotch found themselves forsaken by a number of their best English friends, and that on a question which they were far more unwilling to settle by compromise than the preceding one. The following is Baillie's somewhat homely but graphic narrative of the proceedings upon this question :<sup>1</sup>—'The next point whereon we stick is ruling elders. Many a brave dispute have we had upon them these ten days. . .

<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Journals*, vol. ii. pp. 110, 111, also 116.

I profess my marvelling at the great learning, quickness, and eloquence, together with the great courtesy and discretion in speaking of these men. Sundry of the ablest were flat against the institution of any such office by divine right, as Dr. Smith, Dr. Temple, Mr. Gataker, Mr. Vines, Mr. Price, Mr. Hall, and many more.' Then follows a clause which I can reconcile with the facts of the case as disclosed in the MS. minutes of the Assembly only by taking it away from the sentence going before and prefixing it to the sentence which follows. 'Besides the Independents, who truly spake much and exceeding well, the most of the Synod were in our opinion, and reasoned bravely for it, such as Mr. Seaman, Mr. Walker, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Newcomen, Mr. Young, Mr. Calamy. Sundry times Mr. Henderson, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Gillespie—all three spoke exceeding well. When all were tired it came to the question. There was no doubt we would have carried it by far more voices; but because the opposites were men very considerable, above all gracious and learned little Palmer, we agreed upon a committee to satisfy if it were possible the dissenters. For this end we met to-day, and I hope ere all be done we shall agree. All of them were ever willing to admit of elders in a prudential way (*i.e.* as an expedient human arrangement), but this to us seemed most dangerous and unhappy, and there-

fore was peremptorily rejected. We trust to carry at last, with the contentment of sundry once opposite, and the silence of all, their divine and Scriptural institution.'

'This,' Baillie adds, 'is a point of high consequence, and on no other do we expect so great difficulty except alone on Independency, wherewith we purpose not to meddle in haste till it please God to advance our army, which we expect will much assist our arguments.' How far the expectation expressed by Baillie in the above extract was ultimately realised is a question on which difference of opinion has long existed and may fairly exist, even among those who peruse with care the notes of the debates contained in the MS. minutes and in Lightfoot's *Journal*. My own opinion is that the utmost that the Assembly at this stage of its proceedings could be got to formulate was, that the office of elder was scripturally warrantable, not that it had been expressly instituted as an office that was to be of perpetual and *universal* obligation in the Church like the ministry, or that that was not to be regarded as a true or complete congregational Church which wanted it, but only 'that Christ furnisheth some with gifts for it and commission to exercise them *when called thereto*.' Their main scriptural warrant for it and for the ordination of those holding it was derived not from the New Testament but from the Old, from the example of

those elders of the Jewish people who had a place in the local councils and in the great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem along with the priests and Levites. 'As there were in the Jewish Church elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the Church, so Christ, who hath instituted a government and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in his Church, besides the ministers of the Word, with gifts for government and with commission to exercise the same *when called thereunto*, who are to join with the ministers in the government of the Church, [which officers reformed Churches commonly call elders].<sup>1</sup> The texts adduced in proof of this proposition from the New Testament were Romans xii. 7, and 1st Corinthians xii. 28. But neither proof-text was held by many of them to amount to a positive and distinct divine institution of this office. The text which was appealed to throughout by more zealous defenders of the divine institution of the office was 1st Timothy v. 17, and had they got that inserted among the proof-texts they would have gained their case beyond dispute. On the other hand, I do not regard the common Presbyterian interpretation of that text as having been positively rejected by the Assembly at this date,—but as held over for further consideration if at any future period of their sittings God

<sup>1</sup> This was added on 14th Nov. 1644, Lightfoot's *Journal*, p. 330.

should give them further light and greater unanimity. While they did not indorse at this period what has been termed the 'presbyter theory' of the elder's office, they did not, as some assert, positively reject it ; and ere the close of their sittings, when 'gracious and learned little Palmer' had gone to his reward, and the Scotch Commissioners had returned to their native land, Mr. Marshall, in preparing answers to the so-called Erastian Queries of the House of Commons, brought in to the Assembly from the committee the following proposition :—'The government which is *jure divino* is that which is by *preaching* and *ruling* elders in presbyteries and synods by way of subordination and appeal;' and certain persons named in the minute, being a majority of those then in attendance on the Assembly, judged the proposition true, and expressed their willingness to bring in the proofs of it : viz., Drs. Gouge and Burgess, Messrs. Marshall, Case, Whitaker, Delmy, Cawdrey, Calamy, Young, Sedgewick, Ashe, Seaman, Gipps, Green, Delamarch, Perne, Gibson, Walker, Bond, Valentine, Conant, and Strickland.<sup>1</sup> If they had in any sense rejected the 'presbyter theory' of the elder's office, they could never have entertained the proposition given above, and referred it to a committee to bring in the scripture proof of it. Neither could they have allowed the London ministers

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Assembly, p. 525.

under their very eyes to have maintained it in their *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, and to have adduced in its support the obnoxious text. Dury, who was a member of the Assembly and famous for his efforts to promote union among the Protestant Churches, in his *Model of Church-Government*, printed in the same year, advocated the same theory and by the same text, as did also Dickson and others in Scotland. James Guthrie of Stirling, in his *Treatise of Ruling Elders and Deacons*, took a similar view of the office and of this famous text, as Rutherford also did in his MS. Catechism. And I hold that it remains as free to any one owning the Westminster formularies to do so still as it was in the British Presbyterian Churches before the Westminster Assembly met.<sup>1</sup> If that Assembly did not indorse the presbyter theory, it certainly did not proscribe it in any manner of way, and most assuredly the Church of Scotland has not done so either in earlier or later times.

But the subject on which the most protracted and embittered discussions occurred was that from which Baillie and the Scottish Commissioners shrank as long as they possibly could, because they foresaw only too clearly that another force than that of argument was being arrayed against them, and was growing in strength and determination,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note G.

<sup>2</sup> Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, vol. ii. p. 122.

and that however victorious they might be in the field of debate, and however large their majority in the Assembly, yet if their battalions in the other field did not keep up with the 'Ironsides' of Cromwell in deeds of daring and prowess, the conflict was likely to end, as in fact it did end, in that armed minority overruling Assembly, Parliament, and the majority of their supporters, overturning the constitution from its foundations, and setting up a military despotism—it might be a mild and beneficial one—but still replacing the despot Charles by one as absolute and uncontrolled by Parliament, if far more capable than he. The points to be discussed were, *inter alia*, whether many congregations might be under a common presbytery, or each with its own presbytery or eldership ought to form an independent church; 2d, whether appeals might be carried from congregations to a common or classical presbytery, and from that again to a provincial synod and national assembly, and might be authoritatively disposed of by them, or whether such synods and assemblies ought to be advisory only; 3d, whether the power of ordination to the ministry did not properly vest in the common or classical presbytery, or whether it might be competently, at its own pleasure, assumed by any single congregation which might without inconvenience associate with others. These were questions which, apart from political scheming and personal

feeling might, one would have thought, have been calmly and temperately, and within reasonable time, discussed and settled, so far as the Assembly or the Parliament could claim to settle them. At first even, according to the confession of Baillie, the Independents conducted themselves with becoming modesty and good temper, and spoke ably and well. They signed the manifesto of the leading members of Assembly, dissuading from 'the gathering of churches till the questions in dependence should be determined.'<sup>1</sup> In that 'Apologetical Narration' in which they prematurely brought the controversy before the public, they claimed for themselves 'forbearance in the midst of provocations,' 'quiet and strong patience,' agreement with their Presbyterian brethren in matters of doctrine, and readiness to yield in matters of discipline 'to the utmost latitude of their light and conscience,' desiring only 'a latitude in some lesser differences' in which they might not be able to come up to the common rule.<sup>2</sup> But they allowed themselves to be

<sup>1</sup> *Certain considerations to dissuade men from further gathering of churches at this juncture*, the last being that it is not to be doubted but the counsels of the Assembly of Divines and the care of Parliament will be not only to reform and set up religion throughout the nation, but will concur to preserve whatever shall appear to be the rights of particular congregations according to the Word, and to bear with such whose consciences cannot in all things conform to the public rule so far as the Word of God would have them borne withal. (E. 79, No. 16.)

<sup>2</sup> Even after the expulsion of Dr. Featley the injunctions of the Houses against divulging the proceedings of the Assembly by

unduly provoked by some passionate replies which were made to their somewhat untimely publication, and the debates in the Assembly not only became keen but embittered. Candour and charity fell sadly into abeyance on both sides, and things went from bad to worse till the attack culminated in that disgraceful outbreak to which in my last I referred, when Nye in the presence of his parliamentary friends, arraigned that Presbyterian system, about which he had previously said such kindly things, as prejudicial to the civil state, and maintained that the system of gathering into one the Churches of an entire kingdom tended to encroach on the civil

printing or writing continued to be ignored. The following notice by an intelligent correspondent of the *Mercurius Britannicus* will show how widely hopes of a favourable settlement at this time prevailed :—‘ The Assembly have made as yet a happy, peaceable, and learned progress through the Articles of religion and through the officers of the Church, extraordinary and ordinary, and they have discussed all by a lighter brightness than their own—that of the holy Scriptures. I cannot but expect from them an excellent draught of government with a glory more than ordinary, [they] having been so long in the mount with God: for this I dare affirm there is almost the piety and learning of two nations. England and Scotland, in one room.’ Then after referring, in terms of high commendation, to their letter to the foreign reformed Churches, the writer proceeds : ‘ There is of late a paper set out by our reverend brethren, but by no Independents, viz., Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. Greenhill, Mr. Bridge. In this you may see how long they hold us by the hand, and where they let go and take us by the finger. They have the same worship, preaching, praying, and form of sacraments, the same church officers, doctors, pastors, elders, deacons, the same church censures in the abridgment but not at large. So I suppose here is all our difference, yet they allow an equivalency to our presbytery and

domain, and was thrice over pernicious to the State.<sup>1</sup> This meant seemingly that he was prepared to make common cause with the Erastians, and rather than allow the majority to have the orderly Presbyterian establishment they desired, would unite with these in cramping the independence of the Church, and in discrediting every form of church-government but his own. Had he been professedly a voluntary, one could to some extent have understood him, but besides the fact of his holding a parish in a national Church (which drew into one the Churches of the kingdom), in the hope of latitude to be allowed him under the new government, he ought to have remembered that in this respect the Presbyterians were but claiming what almost all the reformed Churches claimed, and that the dishonour he cast on the Scotch extended to all the rest. The excitement and ill-feeling occasioned by this unfair attack on the system the majority favoured was never thoroughly got over on either side, nor was confidence ever again fully restored between them, councils and excommunication of Churches, which is consociation with Churches and non-communication with Churches. Is it not a pity we should break for such a little knot in a golden thread? Only this I must say, they tell us how disengaged and disinterested they were in their holy pursuit after a form, and had no state or kingdom in their eyes, and that may be the reason (with reverence to their cause and persons) why they straiten the form to single congregations and make it of no more latitude, and so have happened their differences from us—having rather the model of their private Churches in their thoughts to provide them a more public.' (E. 81, No. 20.)

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, note H, for Rutherford and Gillespie's view.

though Nye for a time exerted himself to be unusually complaisant to the Scotch. They had trusted him once, and in reliance on the fair professions he made in the day of his country's sore distress, had hazarded their earthly all in a struggle in which they were only indirectly concerned, and in which Henderson for a time had doubted whether they ought to take an active part at all; and to be told so bluntly to their face that their beloved presbytery was thrice over pernicious to the civil state by one who had so lately been a suppliant to their Assembly as well as to their Parliament for aid, and had spoken so kindly of their order, was an act which fully warranted them to be on their guard in all their dealings with him thereafter.

The debates were resumed again and again. The nature of the Church and the rights of congregations were insisted on by one side, the power of presbyteries in government and ordination, and the right of appeals to even higher courts, and the examples of such furnished under the Jewish as well as under the Christian dispensation, by the other, till every possible argument had been adduced, and both sides were thoroughly exhausted. Reasons of dissent from the decision of some of the questions in dispute were given in, and answers to the reasons were drawn up. 'Truly,' says Baillie, 'if the cause were good, the men have

plenty of learning, wit, eloquence, and above all boldness and stiffness to make it out; but when they had wearied themselves and over-wearied us all, we found the most they had to say against the presbytery was but curious idle niceties, yea that all they could bring was no ways concluding. Every one of their arguments, when it had been pressed to the full in one whole session and sometimes in two or three, was voiced and found to be light unanimously by all but themselves.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Stoughton's commentary on this account of Baillie hardly shows his usual candour:—'The reasoning of the Independents,' he says, 'would of course be found wanting when weighed in the Presbyterian balance, and the majority of the Assembly would naturally consider their own votes an ample refutation of their adversaries' arguments.'<sup>2</sup> But the whole Assembly was not, as he admits in other places, wedded to the Presbyterian system. A number of the members had leanings to another, and were only brought to acquiesce in the Presbyterian as allowable in consequence of these debates, and the fact that all pronounced against the Independents was a thing of more importance than he grants, especially when we couple it with the other fact that these had said in their Apologetical Narration that they had with deliberation

<sup>1</sup> *Letters, etc.*, vol. ii. p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Church of Civil Wars*, vol. i. p. 419.

selected this theatre whereon to plead their cause, as one they might count on to be fair and just, where much of the piety, wisdom, and learning of two kingdoms are met in one, honoured and assisted with the presence of the worthies of both Houses.<sup>1</sup> But this was not all. The mass of the members of Parliament who heard the debates soon began to give practical if dilatory and partial evidence that they knew if victory was to be decided by votes either of the Assembly or of their own supporters, it would not declare for the Independents. Many endeavoured to get a fair accommodation for them within, others to secure them a toleration outside the national Church; but few indeed would have ventured to pronounce that they had beaten their opponents in argument, or won over any considerable part of the Puritan laity, and that the national Church, to give general satisfaction to these, must be reconstituted after their model. On the contrary, votes began to pass the Houses which showed clearly that the national Church was to be Presbyterian not Congregational in its polity, and that the Churches of the kingdom were to be gathered into one whole, though to guard against consequences Nye had insinuated its independence was to be cramped or compromised by appeals being allowed from its highest courts to Parliament. It was at this

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 27, etc.

juncture, and with Dr. Hetherington<sup>1</sup> I incline to think that possibly it was to put off this work of reconstruction till he and his party were stronger and able to overbear those they could not outvote, that Cromwell obtained an order from the House of Commons to refer it to the Committee of both kingdoms 'to consider the differences of the members of Assembly in regard to church-government, and to endeavour an union between them if possible, and otherwise to consider how far tender consciences that cannot in all things come up to the rule to be established may be borne with according to the Word.' 'They knew,' says Baillie,<sup>2</sup> 'when we had debated and had come to voicing, they could carry all by plurality in the Committee; and though they should not, yet they were confident, when the report came to the House of Commons, to get all they desired there passed. So without the Assembly they purposed immediately from this Committee to get a toleration of Independency concluded in the House of Commons long before anything should be gotten so much as reported from the Assembly anent presbyteries. Here it was that God helped us by [*i.e.* beyond] our expectation. Mr. Rouse, Mr. Tate, and Mr. Prideaux, among the ablest of the House of Commons, opposed them to their face. My Lord Chancellor, with a spate of divine eloquence,

<sup>1</sup> *History of Westminster Assembly*, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters and Journals*, vol. ii. p. 237.

Warriston with the sharp points of manifold arguments, Maitland, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Gillespie, and all made their designs to appear so clearly that many did dislike them; yet Harry Vane went on violently.'

Notwithstanding this unpromising commencement many conferences took place between the leaders of both sides of the Assembly under the direction of this Committee, and these at a later period were renewed, and various written papers passed between them which were ultimately published, first under the title of 'The Reasons presented by the Dissenting brethren against certain Propositions concerning Church Government, together with the Answers of the Assembly of Divines to these Reasons of Dissent,' etc.; and again under the title, 'The Grand Debate concerning Presbytery and Independency, by the Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster by authority of Parliament.' Full particulars as to the debates on Church-Government and Ordination, both in the Assembly and before the Committee on Accommodation, are given by Dr. Hetherington in his history, and I the more readily refer you to his pages for details, as that is undoubtedly the most valuable part of his book. It is sad to think that men should have come so near as these men did in matters of doctrine and worship, and so far in church-order too, and yet

should not have been able amicably to arrange the remaining points of difference between them. But the more I have studied the documents the less inclined do I feel to throw the whole blame, or even the larger share of it, on the Presbyterians while admitting that there were faults on their side as well as on the other, infirmities of temper, failure in candour, and thorough straightforwardness, and at times also too stiff and narrow a view of the whole case, and that the Scottish representatives were not more perfect than their neighbours. But, on the other hand, it is to be borne in mind that infirmities of temper and uncandid dealing were not monopolised by them. These failings were shown, at any rate, to an equal extent by their opponents, and they were but a small minority of the nation—probably not as yet in larger proportion among the ministry outside, than they were in the Assembly itself. It was something akin to presumption (and only the more offensive presumption—obstruction we should call it nowadays—if ostentatiously backed by their friends in the army) to demand that the national Church should either be constituted according to the model they advocated, or should get no constitution at all till legal security outside of it were first assured to them. Thus far certainly the Presbyterians had reason on their side when they said : Settle first what the rule is to be ;

make the national Church as comprehensive as you can, preserving its Protestant character; but do this without more delay, and so give reasonable satisfaction to those who are likely to constitute it, before you proceed to make arrangements for a small minority who are not likely to enter it, and who in fact tell you they are not likely to do so unless you yield to them in other matters than those of the constitution of presbyteries and the authority of synods. Neither were they altogether without reason, according to the generally received principles of their day, when, while promising to forbear with brethren so orthodox in doctrine and consistent in life—even if they elected to remain outside the Church—they refused to do this by opening a door for the toleration of *all* sects and opinions, even of those who, if they got the upper hand again, would tolerate none but themselves. The orthodox Independents as yet hardly went that length, and even Cromwell in the height of his power did not venture practically to concede that.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'We are degenerated into that old, dark, and Egyptian spirit that we seemed to have escaped . . . in the putting a stop unto any further light and further reformation above what their carnal principles would bear, and in compliance with and clasping about the powers of the world for their defence therein, and for the putting a check upon all further truth and reformation than that which consisted with the safety of their place, order, and nation, and suchlike worldly interests; which course, as it was the ruin of them that are already fallen, so will it prove to this generation if they repent not and do their first works.'—*A lamenting word, showing that there is a desertion come upon us*, etc. London, 1657.

Dr. Owen enumerated no fewer than sixteen fundamentals which all who were to be tolerated should hold. The amount of indulgence the majority were prepared to grant them within the Church was such as their own predecessors would have accepted with gratitude at the hands of the bishops. They were to be permitted to hold lectureships and even parishes without being subject to the *classes*, provided they did not attempt to gather congregations from other parishes. Their adherents in other parishes, if they ordinarily attended their parish churches, were not to be pressed to communicate there, and would no doubt have been winked at in communicating now and then elsewhere. But their claim to be allowed to hold charges in the national Church, and yet to gather congregations out of other parishes and congregations within its bounds, was one that could not possibly be conceded, and to that they tenaciously adhered. Neither could their claim be granted to exclude from sealing ordinances without appeal, all in their parishes who, however credible their profession might be, or blameless their life, did not exhibit such evidence of a work of grace as to satisfy the congregation that they were truly regenerate persons. In this they had the Parliament more decidedly hostile to them than even the Assembly, and were the first to feel the effects of that Erastian interference which they had themselves rather encouraged. It

was on this rock the scheme of accommodation was really and finally wrecked, according to their own confession, 'as the House had not thought meet as yet to give power by a law to purge the congregations, and as the rule for purging proposed by the Assembly was not only short but exclusive of what they thought was required in church members.' Gillespie, Henderson, Reynolds, and many others, would have yielded much to retain them within the reconstituted church, but this they could hardly yield without turning their backs on the National Reformed churches generally, and becoming in fact Independents themselves.

I have said that the Independents did not venture to plead for a general or unlimited toleration of sects in the Assembly. So far from it that, while they generally objected to the *expediency* of inserting in the Confession of Faith the strong statement in chap. xx., that for publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature and the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation, etc., heretics may be proceeded against, not only by the censures of the Church, but by the power of the civil magistrate, only one of them ventured to record his dissent against the *truth* of the proposition.<sup>1</sup> The leading Independent ministers were not so greatly in

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Assembly, p. 297.

advance of the Presbyterians in regard to toleration as is generally supposed, and their brethren in New England even lagged behind many of the Presbyterians in old England. It was only by circumstances that they were led latterly to make common cause with the sectaries. The earlier utterances even of such a man as Owen, already referred to, are not much in advance of the following earlier ones of Gillespie:<sup>1</sup> 'When I speak against liberty of conscience, it is far from my meaning to advise any rigorous or violent course against such as, being sound in the faith, holy in life, and not of a turbulent or factious carriage, do differ in smaller matters from the common rule. "Let that day be darkness, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it," in which it shall be said that the children of God in Britain are enemies and persecutors of each other.' They are still less in advance of those expressed by the ministers of Essex in their *Testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ*, in which, while soliciting the ratification of the Confession of Faith and the establishment of church-government as set forth by the Assembly, and mourning that under pretext of liberty of conscience, Popery, Arminianism, So-

<sup>1</sup> Sermon before House of Commons. To the Assembly he said, 'I wish that instead of toleration there may be a mutual endeavour for a happy accommodation . . . There is a certain measure of forbearance, but it is not so seasonable now to be talking of forbearance but of mutual endeavours for accommodation.'

cinianism, and various other heresies are tolerated, they yet state that they 'judge it to be most agreeable to Christianity that tender consciences of dissenting brethren be tenderly dealt withal.'<sup>1</sup> I have shown you in a former lecture that some of the earlier Puritans had very sound ideas on this subject of toleration.<sup>2</sup> The plea for it published in the beginning of the 17th century, even if it be not, as it professes, the production of a Puritan, would not have come out in the name of one, if there had been none among them favourable to the principle of toleration at that date. Nay, even in those times of excitement and commotion, when from their dread of the wild opinions that came to light on the removal of the old ecclesiastical restraints, several were giving utterance to very rash and narrow sentiments, there were others among *them* as well as among the Independents who were working their way to sounder views. Take for instance the following from the *Vindication of the Presbyterial Government and Ministry* issued by the Provincial Assembly of London in 1649:—

'We abhor an over rigid urging of uniformity in circumstantial things, and are far from the cruelty of that giant who laid upon a bed all he took, and those who were too long he cut them even with his bed, and such as were too short he stretched out to the length of it. God hath not made all men of a length nor height. Men's parts, gifts, graces, differ; and if there should be no forbearance in matters of inferior

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<sup>1</sup> E. 438, No. 4, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 16.

alloy, all the world would be perpetually quarrelling. If you would fully know our judgments herein we will present them in these two propositions : 1. That it is the duty of all Christians to study to enjoy the ordinances of Christ in unity and uniformity as far as it is possible.' Then, after showing that Scripture calls for such unity as well as for purity, and that God had promised it and Christ had prayed for it, they proceed to argue that it was certainly a duty incumbent on all Christians to labour after it. 2. 'That it is their duty to hold communion together as one church in what they agree, and in this way of union mutually to tolerate and bear with one another in lesser differences,' according to the golden rule of the Apostle set forth in Phil. iii. 15, 16. Then, after stating that this was the practice of the primitive Christians, they proceed : 'We beseech you therefore, brethren, that you would endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, for there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. . . For our parts we do here manifest our willingness (as we have already said) to accommodate with you, according to the word, in a way of union, and (such of us as are ministers) *to preach up and to practise a mutual forbearance and toleration in all things that may consist with the fundamentals of religion, with the power of godliness, and with that peace which Christ hath established in his church.* But to make ruptures in the body of Christ and to divide church from church, and to set up church against church, and to gather churches out of true churches, and because we differ in some things to hold church communion in nothing, this we think hath no warrant out of the word of God, and will introduce all manner of confusion in churches and families, and not only disturb but in a little time destroy the power of godliness, purity of religion, and peace of Christians, and set open a wide gap to bring in Atheism, Popery, heresy, and all manner of wickedness.'—Pp. 119-121.

Or we may take the views of Dr. Reynolds, as set out at length in his two sermons preached before the

Parliament after Cromwell's death when the Presbyterian Church may be said to have got a new lease of power and been in more hopeful case than ever before. In the case of the unavoidable differences of good men, 'there ought to be mutual charity, meekness, moderation, tolerance, humanity used, not to judge, despise, reject, insult over one another, not to deal with our weaker brethren . . . as with aliens, but as with brethren.' In order to this, he says we 'must distinguish of opinions,' some being fundamental relating to those necessary doctrines on which the House of God is built, the errors contrary whereunto are pernicious. Others are only in the superstructure—not points of faith but questions of the schools. Such, in the Apostle's time, were the disputes touching meats and drinks and days; and such in our days are those 'touching forms of discipline and government in the Church wherein men may abound in their own sense with meekness and submission to the spirits of the Prophets.' 'When the foundation and necessary doctrines of law and gospel, of faith and worship and obedience are safe . . . there, in differences of an inferior nature which do not touch the essentials . . . of religion, *mutual tolerance*, meekness and tenderness, is to be used.' In regard to the duty of the magistrate he says: 'If undue passions and exasperations happen, the Christian magistrate may interpose by his authority to forbid and moderate them.

He may . . . call colloquies wherein there may be a fraternal and amicable debate and composure of them. And if after all this, differences be not perfectly healed . . . brethren must mutually bear with one another and pray for one another, and love one another; whereunto they have already attained they must walk by the same rule and mind the same things, and wherein they yet differ, wait humbly upon God to reveal his will unto them; *where one and the same straight road to heaven is kept, a small difference of paths doth not hinder travellers from coming to the same inn at night.*<sup>1</sup> 'It admits of being shown,' says Dr. M'Crie in his *Annals of English Presbytery*,<sup>2</sup> 'that even the hypothetical intolerance of some of our Presbyterian fathers differed essentially from Romish and Prelatic tyranny. . . . In point of fact it never led them to persecute, it never applied the rack to the flesh, or slaked its vengeance in blood or the maiming of the body . . . If there is one point in which the English Presbyterians may be said to have failed, it was in their extreme reluctance to *impose* subscription to their creed, even as a term of ministerial communion. So sorely had they smarted from oaths and subscriptions under the *régime* of Laud and his high church predecessors, that they had conceived a rooted aversion to all sorts of "*impositions*," name and thing.' Even Baillie, who was more narrow than

<sup>1</sup> Reynolds' Works, pp. 937, 948.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 190, 191.

many of the English, in his *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, thus endeavours carefully to distinguish between what he desired and the Court of High Commission had practised: 'But if once the government of Christ (meaning of course presbytery) were set up among us we know not what would impede it *by the sword of God alone, without any secular violence*, to banish out of the land those spirits of error, in all meekness, humility, and love, by the force of truth convincing and satisfying the minds of the seduced. Episcopal courts were never fitted for the reclaiming of minds. Their prisons, their fines, their pillories, their nose-slitting, ear-croppings, and cheek-burnings did but hold down the flame to break out in season with the greater rage. But the reformed presbytery doth proceed in a *spiritual method* eminently fitted for the gaining of hearts; they go on with the offending party with all respect: they deal with him in all gentleness from weeks to months, from months sometimes to years, before they come near to any censure.' No doubt it was by means of preaching and teaching, by church discipline and censures that the best of them intended and hoped to keep the English as well as the Scottish nation united in one great national Church, but whether they would have succeeded had they been allowed untrammelled to carry out their purpose, or whether, if they had failed, the more narrow-

minded would have refrained from invoking the aid of the civil magistrate to supplement their censures with his pains and penalties, he would be a bold man who would pronounce too confidently. In Cromwell's own parliaments the majority at times were found ready to go further in that direction than the Protector was disposed to allow. And in the Long Parliament, which he first 'purged' and then dismissed, as well as in the Assembly, there were many 'who were frightened out of calm thought and wise consideration by the monstrous apparitions which were rising on all sides and threatening their newly established church,' and who 'acted as if they had been stricken with panic in a great emergency when their most sacred interests were exposed to imminent hazards of which they had little knowledge and no experience.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Halley, as quoted by M'Crie (p. 312). See also Note I.