

THE

CHURCHMAN

APRIL, 1889.

ART. I.—ERASTIANISM: ITS NATURE AND TRUE LIMITS. THOUGHTS FOR THE TIME.

THE word "Erastianism" will, I doubt not, arouse in many of my readers the feeling of fear or anger, or both. And, perhaps, without asking whether Erastus himself was what is now called an Erastian or not, we may be allowed to use the word for convenience' sake. I suppose it to apply to those who consider the Church to be a mere department of the State, thinking that the State has the right as well as the power to deal with the Church as it pleases.

Nor do I deny that there is a real danger of wrong being done to the Church by the State. We know that the Cæsars of old did not always recognise "the things of God" as they ought to have done. And though we have great cause to thank God for the measure of peace and prosperity which He has given us, and the favours which by His mercy we have found here in England from both rulers and people; yet, so long as sin is in the world, and so long as well-meaning men can make mistakes, we have no right to depend on the prevalence of right principles and sound judgment in the rulers of the State at all times. Whether they be kings or queens, classes or masses, they may be misled—may be actuated by wrong motives, and commit great injustice, inflicting great injuries on the Church.

But, then, the Church herself is not infallible nor impeccable. Taking the promises in their largest sense, it is plain that there is no absolute security from error for the Church of any particular age and any particular country.

Clergy and laity, bishops, priests and deacons, councils, convocations, synods, all are liable to err. And so, considering what the State is, and what we ourselves are, it behoves us to search very diligently, and see very clearly, what God's

will is, lest we should on the one hand get into trouble by a misguided conscientiousness, or on the other hand bring discredit on God's true religion by our cowardice in yielding where we ought to resist.

And this is the more needful for us, because thereby we may hope to be more united ourselves, and so when resistance is needed, to act with greater weight, and to disarm some, at least, of those who would otherwise be hostile to us. In this, as in everything else, union is strength, division is weakness.

The question I wish to consider is, not how far it is right or wise of the State to interfere with the Church, but how far it is right for the Church and her members to submit to the State, its kings, parliaments, judges and magistrates.

I intend therefore not to deal with the Liberationists, who, regarding the Church, not as a single organized body or society, but as an indefinite number of independent societies or unattached individuals, think that the State ought not to take any notice of any of them.

But at the opposite pole from the Liberationists are those who think of the Church and State as two independent bodies of men, who may, like two merchants, enter into partnership on such terms and for such a period as they may agree upon. They suppose that, except under some such partnership, the State ought not to have any authority, or the State Courts any jurisdiction over the Church, in matters properly called spiritual; and that it is the duty of the Church to resist any attempt to exercise such authority or jurisdiction. They think also that the Church ought not to enter or continue in this supposed partnership, except when and so long as the State approves itself to the Church as a truly Christian State, its legislature and courts of justice being regulated on truly Christian principles.

There is no doubt much to be said for this view of things. For it is clear in itself, and clearly declared in Scripture, that we must obey God rather than man.

But, on the other hand, as we are also clearly told that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that those that resist the power resist the ordinance of God, we see that such resistance *may* involve us not only in much trouble, but also in a real contradiction to God's will.

We cannot wonder if this apparent conflict of authorities has led to very serious scruples of conscience, burning questions, controversies, and even bloodshed. And the difficulty is aggravated by the presence of another, which is practically if not theoretically connected with it, namely, how far the authority of the Church is confined to or concentrated in that

of the clergy (whether Bishops or others), or whether the laity ought to have any voice in the Church.

But when we remember that God is a God of order, and that He not only placed all things in order at the first creation, but, since the time that sin brought discord into the world, has made provision for the ultimate "restitution of all things," and in the meantime has promised to those who obey Him a guide and directory by which they may know His will, we may certainly expect to find somewhere a resolution of our doubts, if we seek it aright. Setting ourselves to discover and to do His will, we shall find that there is no such conflict of authorities as to leave us uncertain which we ought to obey.

Where, then, are we to look for a solution of our problem? How are we to find out when and where we are bound by our duty to God to disobey the laws of the State? Our first and highest authority must, of course, be the Bible. After this we may consult the history of the Church at large and our own Church of England in particular.

But it seems to me that the very earnest and very voluminous controversial speeches, sermons and writings, which have crowded our newspapers, pamphlets, and reports of late years, have almost, if not altogether, abstained from any real investigation into Bible principles. These seem to me to have been assumed, as if there could be no question about them. If in this I am mistaken, as is very possible, I wish to be enlightened. If I am right in this, I hope my present attempt will lead abler and better men to "search the Scriptures" more thoroughly, and correct me where I am wrong.

In the patriarchal ages we find no distinction between Church and State. As far as we can see, all authority, civil and religious, was in the same hands. Abraham exercised both, and so did Melchizedek. So did Moses at first. And when the priesthood was established as a separate order under Aaron, Moses still held the highest place even in spiritual things.

So also throughout the Old Testament history, though God did not permit the kings to perform priestly functions in their own persons, the ordering of the priesthood and of all things relating to Divine worship, subject to the command of God, was under their authority. Thus in Joshua i. 8, "Thou shalt command the priests." See also chap. vi. 6; viii. 30, etc. We find abundant instances in the reigns of David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. Among these it has been noticed that Jehoshaphat, in establishing courts of justice, appointed Amariah the chief priest to be the head "in all matters of the Lord." And it has been argued that this

precedent ought to be followed in all cases: so that, though the supreme authority may nominally be in the Sovereign, he can only exercise it by appointing one or more Bishops; and that laymen therefore ought not to be appointed as judges in spiritual causes. But, at all events, the appointment was by Jehoshaphat; and what was done in one instance need not have been done always. Solomon deposed one high priest and appointed another. And throughout the history it is clear that many things were done, and done rightly, by royal authority, without any consultation of or reference to the priests.

It has been said that this action of the Jewish Kings is not to be taken as a precedent, because they reigned by direct appointment from God, the Jewish polity being a theocracy. But it is by God's providence and appointment that all kings reign (Dan. ii. 21-37). And therefore not only is it a sin against God when they oppress His Church. It is their duty, though too often they know it not, to promote God's true religion among their people (2 Sam. xxiii. 3).

Of this we have one instance in the order given by the King of Nineveh on Jonah's preaching. We have another in the history of Nehemiah. For, though he was a Jew, the authority by which he acted was solely that of the Persian King, under whom he was governor. And this instance is worthy of special notice, because of the contest between Nehemiah and the high-priest Eliashib, in which it is clear that the lay-governor's authority was as far above that of the high-priest, as his conduct was more loyal to God.

In truth, from the time when Aaron made the golden calf, to that in which Annas and Caiaphas and the overwhelming majority of the Sanhedrim united in condemning our Lord, we find that even the priesthood appointed and consecrated by God Himself was liable to err, and did err most grievously; and that it was the duty, not only of the Kings, but of all pious Israelites, to resist them. Hence we gather from the whole history of the Old Testament Church that the State authorities were supreme. Is there anything in the New Testament to show that God has adopted a different rule for the Christian Church? We find provision made for the appointment of ministers of divers orders in the Church, who are to have authority over the household of God. But the Old Testament, as a whole, is not abolished. It is still "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And I find nothing in the New Testament to contradict the teaching of the Old Testament in the point we are now considering.

And we must remember that not only among the Jews

were the Church authorities subordinate to those of the State, but that the same custom prevailed in all the civilized nations of the world. In all countries and in all ages the Kings were either themselves supreme pontiffs, or had authority over them. If in God's purpose this order was not to prevail in the Christian Church, we should expect the change to be clearly stated in the New Testament. In fact, we find very much to the contrary. Our Lord's answer to the Pharisees and Herodians, about the tribute-money (Matt. xxii. 21), has been much misunderstood. But the very fact that He in one sentence combined the two spheres of human duty, the two tables of the law, shows that those two clauses are not, as it was thought by some, to be separated, but united (see accordingly Stier, Alford and Ellicott); and this necessarily. For all the things of Cæsar are certainly in God's domain; and therefore some of the things of God must also be in Cæsar's domain. "To Cæsar"—*i.e.*, according to Apostolic interpretation, to bad as well as good, to a Nero as well as to an Alfred, also to the governors, judges, magistrates, and others in authority under them—"render," not only tribute, but all that is their due: obedience, fear, honour, respect; not to despise dominion or speak evil of dignities. But all this with the one all-pervading limit—that we must obey God rather than man.

Again, in Matt. xxiii. 2, we read: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." Note, our Lord does not say in Aaron's, but in Moses' seat: the seat of the King (Deut. xxxiii. 5). For the Sanhedrim, which took cognisance both of civil and of ecclesiastical matters, contained laymen as well as priests.

As our Lord Himself, so also His Church in the times of the Apostles, found no favour and scant justice from the rulers of this world's power. But still Christians were not only told to pray for Kings and all in authority, but to submit themselves. For even the rule of a Nero was the ordinance of God. And St. Peter says expressly that the King is supreme.

The deference to royal authority which St. Paul enjoined on others he showed himself in a noteworthy case—his appeal to Cæsar. This is the more remarkable from its contrast with the rebuke he had given to the Corinthian Christians. In their disputes with one another on secular matters, which were apparently of the kind which among us would be referred to the County Courts, he had told them that they should rather suffer wrong than go to law before unbelievers. But here it was no secular interest that was at stake. It was a trial for heresy, involving the central truths of Christianity; and St.

Paul distinctly stated it as such: "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Yet, even in such a case, so far was he from refusing to plead before a secular court, and desiring to have this question tried by the spiritual tribunal of the Sanhedrim, he not only pleaded and argued before Felix and Festus, but appealed to Cæsar, to the Roman Emperor Nero!

We are well assured that this was no cowardly device of a man who was thinking only of himself, and hoping to save his life by a mere trick. He never thought of himself: always and everywhere of the cause entrusted to him. And it was this very cause that he submitted to the judgment of Nero. Nor are we to suppose that this appeal proceeded from any sudden fear or impulse of his own mind. We can hardly doubt that it was suggested to him by our Lord's own words, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts xxiii. 2, and see 2 Tim. iv. 17).

We may suppose that the way in which the cause would come before Nero would be this: that the Jewish religion was recognised by the Romans as that of a dependent nation, in the same way in which the Hindu or Mohammedan religion is recognised by our courts in appeals from India; so that the question to be tried may have been, whether Christianity was a heretical departure from the Jewish religion or a normal development of it. Of course, the result of his appeal was uncertain. And if the sentence was against him, he would suffer death rather than deny his Lord. But as God's providence had placed him under Nero's authority, His Spirit might dispose the Emperor's heart to decide rightly. At all events, St. Paul did not consider that there was any sacrifice of principle in his owning Nero's jurisdiction in such a cause.

It is probable that the appeal was successful, as it seems that after his two years' imprisonment in Rome he was set at liberty. But soon afterwards, as we know, a heathen persecution followed the Jewish one. And thenceforward till the time of Constantine the ruling powers were almost always hostile to Christianity, and the questions which we are now considering could not arise.

One remarkable exception occurred in A.D. 272. The heretic Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, favoured by Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, had caused great trouble in the Church, two large synods having failed either to convince or get rid of him. But when Aurelian, the Roman Emperor, had conquered Zenobia, the orthodox Bishops appealed to him, though he was a Pagan. Their appeal was successful, and the

heretic Bishop was displaced. (See Eusebius, E. H., vii., c. 30, and Ecclesiastical Courts Commission Report, i., p. xv.) It is true that civil rights were involved, but those rights depended on the question of doctrine. And if the Emperor had chosen to have that question argued before him, the Bishops who appealed to him could not consistently have refused. They would no doubt have been glad of the opportunity of bearing witness to Christ before Aurelian, as St. Paul had done before Nero, hoping that by God's providence the Emperor would give a just judgment, even if he were not converted to Christianity.

But this was, as I have said, an exceptional case. In general, the Roman Emperors before Constantine were hostile to the Church; and this fact deprives us of much help which we should otherwise have had from the early Church for our present inquiry. For during those centuries, while the Church organization was being gradually consolidated, almost the whole power of the Church fell into the hands of the Bishops and clergy. We cannot tell what shape the primitive Church would have assumed under Christian Emperors. Long before Constantine's time the Church had left her first love, lost her first purity, was distracted by heresies and schisms, and even the Catholic Church had in a great measure become corrupted and worldly. Hence, when the rulers of the State became Christians, the Church had, in part at least, lost the power of leavening the nations; and all the efforts of an Athanasius, an Augustine, a Chrysostom, were unable to stem the tide, which in course of time brought the Empire to its fall and well-nigh overwhelmed the Church. So, whether we look to Constantinople, alternately ruled by monkish fanaticism and courtly frivolity, or to Rome, with its clerical ambition growing into Popery, we can only with reserve take as a ruling precedent what was done in those days.

It was natural for the Emperors, imperfectly acquainted with Scripture and with few landmarks to guide them, sometimes to shrink from the responsibility of giving any decision, and sometimes roughly to throw the sword into the scale, in order to settle some party dispute which was disturbing the Church.

But though often the Church suffered by the officious and unwise meddling of the State authorities, though often the Emperors or their favourites supported grievous heresies, yet as a whole, I believe that their interference was beneficial, as checking more serious evils. For the Church was neither pure enough nor united enough to stand alone safely. At all events, it is clear that in general the authority of the Emperors was owned by the Church.

I may name four Emperors who took a large part in the management of the Church—Constantine, Theodosius, Justinian, and Charlemagne. Of Justinian we read that the Eastern Emperors, “and he most of all, regarded themselves as clothed with a supreme executive authority over the religious no less than the secular society. No such distinction as was afterwards claimed in the West between the temporal and spiritual powers had then been thought of.” (“Dictionary of Christian Biography,” iii. 556; see also 558.) Of Charlemagne we read that in A.D. 796 the newly-elected Pope sent him, in token of submission, the keys and standard of the city and the keys of the sepulchre of St. Peter (“Dictionary of Christian Biography,” i. 458); that after his coronation he was adored by the Pope, “more antiquorum principum” (*ibid.*, 459); that he appointed Bishops as he appointed Counts (*ibid.*, 460); that in ecclesiastical administration Charles insisted on the submission of all ecclesiastical authority to the kingly and imperial; that Bishops and Counts were alike summoned in the same terms to the great national assemblies (*ibid.*, 461. See also Hallam, ii. 218. I may also refer to the “Dictionary of Christian Antiquities,” s.v. “appeal” and “jurisdiction,” and to the account, in the same work, of the Third Council of Toledo under King Reccared). 2:17

From the *later* Church history on the Continent there seems more to be learnt in the way of warning than example. We cannot admire either Guelphs or Ghibelines. But we should notice that Charlemagne’s death, A.D. 814, very nearly marks the beginning of that great revolution which set the Church above the State, which brought more than one monarch to the Pope’s foot, and under which the Christian world is still suffering more than many of us are aware. For it was soon after Charlemagne’s death that the famous *forged decretals* first appeared. Accepted as genuine in an uncritical age, and cited by Pope Nicholas I., they afterwards formed the basis of Gratian’s “Decretum,” and so of the whole canon law of Rome.¹

Turning now to the Church of England, I suppose we may take as sufficiently correct what is said in the Statute of Provisors, 25th Edward III., that it was founded in the estate of prelacy by Edward I. and his progenitors, and the earls, barons, and other nobles of the realm and their ancestors.

The Bishops of the Anglo-Saxon Church were appointed by the Kings either with or without the Wittan. The Bishop and the Sheriff used to sit together in the administration of

¹ See Dr. Salmon’s “Infallibility of the Church,” pp. 444, etc.; also Döllinger’s “Erklärung,” and Janus on the Vatican Council. ¶

justice. But William the Conqueror separated the Church Courts from the civil. The results of this step soon began to be felt. The Roman canon law, based, as I have said, on the forged decretals, was introduced into England and attempted to be enforced by Thomas à Beckett. The "freedom of the Church," guaranteed by Magna Charta, seemed only to put a papal tyrant in the place of a regal one. Bishop Stubbs, in his "Ecclesiastical History," describes the Church Courts of those ages as centres of corruption, which the Church failed to overcome, but acquiesced in the failure rather than allow the intrusion of the secular power (vol. iii., 373). So it seems that what were technically called "Courts Christian" were not always really Christian Courts.

The "Reformation Settlement" has been the subject of so much observation and discussion that I need say nothing on it here beyond this, that I believe Mr. L. T. Dibdin is right in his opinion,¹ that, in fact, the legislation which concerned the doctrine and substance of the Church was by the combined Act of Convocation and Parliament, while that which concerned discipline was by Parliament alone. This also, I think, has been the course since the Reformation.

I must now call attention to the writings of some of our greatest Church authorities on the question now before us.

To Richard Hooker our Church system, as it then existed, appeared quite satisfactory. I do not therefore find much in him which bears on our present question. But there is one sentence to the point in E. P. VIII., vi. 13: "They that received the law of Christ were for a long time scattered . . . Christianity not exempting them from the laws which they had been subject unto, saving only in such cases as those laws did enjoin that which *the religion of Christ* forbade." This religion is surely that of the pure Word of God, from which nothing may be taken, and to which nothing may be added by man. So, according to Hooker, it is this alone which exempts us from human laws.

My next authority is Bishop Andrewes, who in his "Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine," pp. 326-340, shows that as the highest authority rests in the Sovereign, he is to be obeyed unless it appears clearly and evidently that his commands are cross to the immediate commands of God; and that, in case of doubt, the command of a superior is sufficient cause to remove the doubt, he being God's deputy. The same principles were enforced by Bishop Andrewes in his "Tortura Torti," of which a summary by Canon Meyrick has been published at

¹ See his "Church Courts," second edition, Hatchards.

Messrs. Rivington's under the title, "The Limits of the Royal Supremacy in the Church of England."

In quoting from Jeremy Taylor's "Ductor Dubitantium," my only difficulty is an *embarras de richesses*. But if any of my readers who are not familiar with his writings will only be persuaded to study the whole of the third book of this great work, they will be richly rewarded for their trouble.

In chapter iii., after discussing the nature of the supreme civil power in any commonwealth, whether it be in one person or more, he quotes the saying of a martyr: "Because we are sure that these laws are against the commandments of God, we despise them." Then Taylor adds: "But if we be not sure, but are in doubt whether the laws are just or no, we are to presume for the laws and against our own fears" (Heber's edition, vol. xiii., 442).

At p. 470 we have Rule iv.: "The supreme civil power is also supreme governor over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastical. . . . If this rule were not of great necessity. . . . I should have been unwilling to have meddled with it, because it hath so fierce opposition from the bigots of both parties—from Rome and from Scotland, the Papist and the Presbyterian; and they use not to be very kind to any man who shall at all oppose them." At p. 492, Rule v.: "Kings have a legislative power in the affairs of religion and the Church." At p. 493: "The things of the Church, which are directly under no commandment of God, are under the supreme power of Christian Princes. I need no other testimony for this but the laws themselves which they made, and to which Bishops and Priests were obedient, and professed that they ought to be so—*e.g.*, divers Popes who gave command to their clergy to obey such laws, which themselves had received from imperial edicts. For there are divers laws which are by Gratian thrust into his collection which were the laws of Christian Princes."

At p. 498, Rule vi.: "The supreme civil power hath a power of coercion of every person in the whole order ecclesiastical." At p. 501 the Bishop quotes from Balsamo: "The patriarch shall be judged of the Emperor, who hath cognisance over the power of the Church for sacrilege or heresy or any other crime." At p. 504: "If the pulpit says amiss we are not bound by it; but if the Court [of Judicature] judges ill we may complain, but we must submit."

At p. 518, Question v.:

Whether is to be obeyed, the Prince or the Bishop, if they happen to command contrary things? To this I answer that it is utterly determined that the Emperor is to be obeyed against the will of the Bishop. . . . Whatever is left undetermined by God, that the supreme power can

determine. And in such things, if there could be two supreme powers, the government were monstrous, and there could be no obedience. Now the supreme power hath in this no limit, but that which limits both powers, the laws of nature and the laws of Jesus Christ; and if there be anything commanded by the Prince against these, the Bishop is to declare the contrary, *i. e.*, to publish the will of God, provided it be an evident matter, and without doubtful disputation . . . I do not say but a temporal law may be against the canons of the Church, but then we are to follow the civil law, because the power is by the law of nature supreme.

At page 530, Rule vii. : "The supreme civil power hath jurisdiction in causes not only ecclesiastical, but internal and spiritual." At page 537, "The supreme civil power hath authority to convene and to dissolve all synods ecclesiastical." At page 540, "The supreme civil power hath a power of external judgment in causes of faith."

At page 543, Rule viii. : "The supreme civil power is to govern in causes ecclesiastical by the means and measures of Christ's institution—that is, by the assistance and ministries of ecclesiastical persons." But this is only stated with some reserve; for we read in page 545 :

But that this manner of empire may not prejudice the right of the empire, it is to be observed that in these things the Emperors used their own liberty, which proved plainly that they used but their own right. . . . This I observe now in opposition to those bold pretensions of the Court of Rome and of the Presbytery, that esteem Princes bound to execute their decrees. If the Prince must confirm all that the clergy decrees, he hath not so much as a judgment of discretion. He must by a blind, brutish obedience obey his masters of the consistory or assembly. But if he is not bound to confirm all, I suppose he may choose. . . . So when it is said that Princes are to govern the Church by the consent and advice of their Bishops, it is meant not *de jure stricto*, but *de bono et laudibili*. . . . So now there is nothing that can prejudice their authority, unless they decree against the law of God.

Of course, the extracts I have given from Jeremy Taylor's great work can show only a very little of the profound learning, deep thought, and careful discrimination which characterize it; but I have given enough to show that he entirely supports my conclusion.

To the same effect is Bishop Burnet's Commentary on our 37th Article. He says :

It is certain that this power does not depend on the Prince's religion; whether he is a Christian or not; whether he is of a true or false religion. By the same tenure that he holds his sovereignty he holds this likewise. Artaxerxes had it as well as David or Solomon, . . . and the Christians owed the same duty to the Emperors while heathen that they paid them when Christian. Every soul is subject to the higher powers. As to ecclesiastical causes, it is certain that as the magistrate cannot make void the laws of nature, so neither can he make void the law of God. . . . The only question which can be made is concerning indifferent things; for instance, in the canons or other rules of the Church. . . . It seems

very clear that in matters that are indifferent and are determined by no law of God, the magistrate's authority must take place and is to be obeyed (Page's ed., pp. 596-97).

In the early part of the last century there was a hot debate on this very question. Bishop Gibson's "Codex," first published in 1713, was looked upon by some as an attack on the liberties of the laity, on the supremacy of the Crown, and the authority of Parliament. In 1735 a very severe criticism on Gibson's work, by Michael Foster, afterwards Justice of the King's Bench, was published at Lord Hardwicke's suggestion. One of Gibson's notions there censured, was that the canons were binding on the laity. This, however, was put an end to by the decision of Lord Hardwicke and the Judges of the King's Bench, in the famous case of *Middleton v. Croft*. An answer to Michael Foster's work, written, as it was said, by Dr. Andrews, an ecclesiastical lawyer, at Gibson's suggestion, appeared shortly afterwards.

Thus we may consider Gibson and Andrews as representing the High Church Party of that day.

Bishop Gibson was in favour of "spiritual causes being referred to spiritual persons." But he admitted that the last resort of all ecclesiastical courts was given to the King, and that the King might appoint laymen as delegates. Of the Church laws, common, canon and statute, Gibson admitted that this last was reckoned the first in authority. And though he complained of some of our State legislation in Church matters, he said that the view with which he mentioned this was not upon a question of law, but of expedience only.

Dr. Andrews speaks to the same effect. He says that nothing is said in the introduction to the "Codex" that could be pretended to be a denial of the power of Parliament to interpose in ecclesiastical matters when and in what manner they may think fit.

[For further information as to this controversy I may refer to a paper of mine, to be found in the Report of the Derby Church Congress.]

What, then, shall we say to these things? If there is any truth in the principles here laid down; if the teachings of Holy Scripture are at all like what they are here described; if those Bishops who appealed to Aurelian were right; if all those Early Fathers were right who looked to and depended upon the help and authority of the professedly Christian Emperors; if our 37th Article and 55th Canon are right; if Hooker and Andrews, and Jeremy Taylor and Burnet were right; if (*i.e.*) we are under no such dual system of government as has been imagined, but clergy and laity alike are

under the simple rule of submitting themselves to the powers that be, unless their commands are plainly contrary to God's own Word—then does it not seem that many of our present difficulties must vanish like smoke? For not only are the ritual practices, about which there is so much controversy, entirely untouched by anything in the Bible, but so also are the Courts of Judicature, in which those practices have been condemned.

But suppose the rule I suggest is not accepted, what other shall we propose, so as at once to satisfy the demands of Scripture, and to secure with any probability some *modus vivendi* with the State? For if we accept Disestablishment, as has been proposed, we are not free from the control either of Parliament or of the Law Courts. Nor is it easy to foretell either the mode of Disestablishment or its consequences. Should we have the same freedom of access to the people that we have now? Should we have the means of supporting our ministers? Should we escape the danger of a still further schism—the separation into two or more Churches of those who are now divided into parties? And, talking as we do about unity, can we bear the thought of a fresh schism without horror? Can we think of our present party divisions without grief?

As we are now, though our relation to the State may not be what we should like, it might be very much worse. Parliament has not interfered with our "Liberty of Prophesying" nor with our Church Services according to the old accustomed ritual. Those who know Parliament best, tell us that if we were only united in what we wanted for the better fulfilment of our work, it would almost certainly be granted. And if the Courts of Law are not what we like, we should be much worse off if there were no Courts at all, no means of defending either our spiritual or our civil rights; if we had to complain with Habakkuk: "The law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth."

Our Judges are not infallible any more than we are, but they are famed all over the world for their learning, their integrity, their patience and diligence in hearing both sides, and in finding out the truth as far as they can. What is perhaps still more important, we have a Bar, composed of men of the greatest ability and the highest character. Whatever our cause may be, we have the opportunity of getting it brought before the Court in all its force. And if there is any reason to think that justice has not been done us, we can have the matter tried again in a rehearing.

There are some now who wish that, as in former years, we had Bishops for our Judges in ecclesiastical suits. But

Bishops have no longer the monopoly of learning. And in our days the Bishops are so much better employed in their spiritual duties, that they have neither the time nor the aptitude to act the part of Judges. The judicial mind, the power of taking in and balancing both sides of an argument, and of deciding independently of preconceived opinions, is of far more consequence than, a previous knowledge of the facts and the particular points of law involved in any case. These latter are brought forward by counsel on either side, and in a difficult matter the Judges can make themselves acquainted with them. The former can seldom be acquired except by long habit.

Let us not be like Cowper's kite, which in trying to get higher broke its string and came to the ground.

Instead of fretting because things are not just what we should like, let us take our circumstances as God's Providence.

Suppose, for instance, we were a Church of Christian Moors. Suppose the Sultan of Morocco, in a strange fit of liberality, had given us leave to hold our services, only on the condition that our ministers wore the turban and burnous, should we reject the concession? I trow not.

Let us, I say, make the best of our circumstances, and remember that our task is to let our light shine before men.

In an age of false doctrines, heresies and schisms, let us cultivate truth, unity and concord. Let us try to understand our brethren who differ from us, to compare notes, to meet together in the spirit of love, whether at a round table or in a court of law, and so by all means to understand what we ought to do.

In an age of lawlessness, let us set the example of loyal and dutiful obedience to those whom God has set over us.

Then we need fear nothing.

ROBERT W. KENNION.

Acle Rectory.

ART. II.—THE PASSOVER.

OF the three great festivals in the Christian year, only one, that of Christmas, bears a name which is a plain definition of the event to which the day is devoted and dedicated. Of the many interpretations which have been assigned to *Whitsunday*, that only which explains the two first syllables as identical with *wisdom* traces a connection with the gift of the Holy Ghost, the effusion of *wisdom* from on high, which the Church then celebrates. But Easter, the "Queen of Feasts," most strange to say, goes under a heathen name—a name which is derived through Saxon sources, but is ulti-