

Added to this, is the greater appreciation of liberty. There are now no rulers in civilized countries, in the sense in which these were understood a hundred years ago. Political absolutism in Great Britain died with James II. In France it expired with Napoleon III. In Germany it is trying hard to maintain itself, in the person of the young Monarch; but its foothold is uncertain, and its feet will slide in the land of Luther, in due time. Even in Russia, the present Emperor is finding it difficult to keep his vow, "to protect the principles of autocracy, as firmly and unswerving as did my late and never-to-be-forgotten father." In the United States of America, absolutism never had more than a temporary resting-place. And in our own country, we may have absolutism in affairs of state. Indeed, it is affirmed at intervals by the "outs," that the "ins" are the very embodiment of it. But if Canadians are ruled by a group of despots, either at Toronto or Ottawa, their despotism is so carefully concealed, that our people seriously believe that their governments are *of* themselves, and *by* themselves, and *for* themselves.

Then liberty is widespread also, in ecclesiastical affairs. There are no popes in name now but one, and he seems less dictatorial than formerly. The clergy in all sections of the Protestant Church sit in Conference with unordained representatives of the people. And a decreasing tendency is manifest, for a class in the church to legislate for the masses. More and more are the people demanding the right to participate in the business of the local church, and of the denomination with which it is affiliated. Here again is a favorable condition for the advancement of the Congregational way. Modern ecclesiastical liberty may be said to have been born and nurtured in Congregationalism. At a time when the people were under the domination of the clergy, or the King, or the parliament, in the temporal and spiritual affairs of the churches, our churches asserted the right of the people, under Christ, to perform all the functions of a Christian church; therefore, the present freedom, and the large appreciation of it, is the result, in great part, of our long, earnest protest against ecclesiastical lordship, and advocacy of the largest liberty for all, consistent with the teachings of the New Testament. No other section of the church has so completely adopted Tertullian's maxim, and labored and suffered to make it dominant in the church. "*Humanis juris et naturalis potestates est unicuique quod putaverit, colere.*" It is the right of man, and comes to every one by nature, to determine what manner of divine worship of God he considers best.