

*in a new constitution, can bring order and regularity to our church ; nothing short of the admission of the laity into our councils will give us strength and energy.* The laity alone have in their hands what can supply our wants. Before we can avail ourselves of it, we must allow them to have some voice in its disbursement. This is human nature. No free nation will allow itself to be taxed, directly or indirectly, unless it has a voice in the disbursement of the moneys raised by those taxes. That this change will, under God, effect the desired purpose, is no mere vain imagination. Experience is acknowledged on all sides to outweigh the most subtle arguments ; and experience will tell us, that the very measures here proposed *have effected the very end desired*, under similar, or even much worse circumstances. No one can deny this, who is acquainted with the history of the church in the United States. Her situation at the time of the revolution was far worse than ours now is. In the words of one of her historians : "a few years nearly overthrew the work, which had been slowly carried forward by the exertions of a century and a half, and had not omnipotence interposed, the ruin would have been complete. The fostering hand, to which the American church owed a long continuance of care and protection, was withdrawn ; and the "society for propagating the gospel" no longer rendered its accustomed aid. Many of the clergy were thus left entirely destitute, and some were obliged to betake themselves to secular employments for support. By an unjust decision, the lands held by the society for propagating the gospel, and situated in Vermont, were confiscated and applied to the purposes of education. An equally unconstitutional sentence, obtained through the united efforts of sectarians and infidels, despoiled the church in Virginia of its glebes and even of its houses of prayer ! While, in addition to all these calamities, Episcopalians in general became subject to unmerited and cruel political prejudices. Most of their churches were destitute of worshippers ; their clergy had departed, or were left almost entirely without maintenance ; no centre of unity remained, and no ecclesiastical government existed." Such was her condition then. For years she struggled to rise from this blow, and to live down those deep rooted prejudices which her former connection with England and the loyalty of many of her members had raised against her.

So late as 1811, she could only number eight Bishops and about two hundred clergy. Since that period, and especially within the last few years, she has risen like a Phoenix from her ashes. In the language of the historian before quoted, "Her dioceses are twenty-two in number, under the superintendence of seventeen Bishops, with the venerable Bishop White still at their head. Her clergy amount to eight hundred, and are daily increasing in devotion, in learning and in zeal. Her missionaries are studying the language of China, bending