

THE  
CANADIAN PRESBYTER.

JULY, 1857.

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THE SYNOD OF 1857.

Self-government has ever been the distinguishing feature of the Presbyterian Church. We have had our Synods from time immemorial. We have claimed and asserted the right of establishing in every State an *imperium in imperio*—a Spiritual Government in the Church distinct from that of the Civil Magistrate. This lies at the very foundation of the Presbyterian polity. Other Church Communion may have held the same doctrine, but no other has so uniformly and firmly acted it out as our own. In Modern History the Presbyterian Church is celebrated as the great champion of religious liberty.

The value of such a form of Government as ours cannot be overestimated. It is identical with that which all free States have adopted in civil affairs—preferred above all others as securing the true liberty of the subject and the best order of the Commonwealth. No Church can get on well without something like it. Our Congregational friends, notwithstanding their cautions and protests to the contrary, are compelled to adopt a system, which, although nominally different, is yet essentially similar to our own. The Church of England with its various Colonial outshoots is struggling with might and main, for the restoration of the Church's right to govern itself, by its own representatives in assemblies of its own appointing. The Queen in Council has granted this liberty to the Episcopal Church in Australia, and just recently the same boon has been conceded to Canada. The unusual spectacle was lately witnessed in Toronto, of a Synod of clergymen and *lay delegates*, met to deliberate concerning the affairs of the diocese. And upon the whole, considering that the thing was new to them, this assembly conducted their proceedings in a peaceable and orderly way. While some did bow with too much servility at the Episcopal throne, there were yet others who acted and spoke with dignity and freedom. The absolute reign of the Episcopate is gone from the date of the inauguration of free and delegated Synods. As the ministers and laymen acquire experience they will make their influence be felt in the government of their Church and in the maintenance of her Christian rights and liberties.